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Identity Change

A Dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction
of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in

Sociology

by

Shelley Noelle Osborn

December 2010

Dissertation Committee:
Dr. Jan E. Stets, Chairperson
Dr. Peter J. Burke
Dr. Kirk Williams

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The Dissertation of Shelley Noelle Osborn is approved:

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Committee Chairperson

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ACKNOWLEGEMENTS

I first wish to acknowledge the professional support and mentorship provided by Dr. Jan E. Stets. Her encouragement, availability, and knowledge were instrumental in seeing me through coursework, qualifying exams, and the dissertation. I would also like to thank Dr. Peter J. Burke for his time, expertise, and patience. Dr. Kirk Williams provided guidance, gave practical advice, and helped me to think things through in a new way. All three asked the difficult questions that will make me a better scholar.

From the moment I applied to the university through the completion of my Ph.D., Anna Wire, Graduate Affairs Assistant, has been an incredible asset. She helped me navigate the intricacies of graduate school and did it all with unfailing professionalism and a constant smile.

I would like to thank my parents, Gary Osborn and Sharleen Osborn, who encouraged me to pursue an education. I know that both of them are extremely proud that their encouragement took me this far. Mary Osborn was instrumental in seeing me through a very difficult time and I am very grateful for everything she did. To my sister, Caren Polen, I owe you a world of thanks for providing family support while I was pursuing this degree. You are a most amazing woman and everything I could have wished for in a sister. For Jeff Polen, keep taking care of my sister.

Dr. Michael J. Carter was my student mentor through this process and provided me with tangible and intangible support throughout. You really are super Dr. Carter. Two fellow cohort members deserve special recognition. Cory LePage, who offered humor, dinners, and perspective. For Joanna Norton who provided encouragement when

it was crucial, a laugh when it was needed, and a break when it was desired. You will always be one of the single best things that happened to me when I returned to grad school. I am blessed for having you in my life.

I was lucky enough to complete my first graduate degree in the company of Deborah Diep, Jenny Luker, and Annette Templeton, who have remained my very dear friends. Through our regular dinners, I had an outlet to discuss ideas, air frustrations, and stay on track. I share this degree with the three of you in spirit.

Lastly, and in many ways most importantly, I wish to acknowledge and thank. Rajeev. For the dissertation, you know everything you have done to make this happen; I am forever grateful. For me, knowing that you are always going to be there for me sustained me through this journey. Thank you for our dinners at home, vacations to Sonoma and Monterey, and all things shared. You are truly amazing.

ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Identity Change

by

Shelley Noelle Osborn

Doctor of Philosophy, Graduate Program in Sociology
University of California, Riverside, December 2010
Dr. Jan E. Stets, Chairperson

Using identity theory, this dissertation investigates how the incongruence between reflected appraisals and identity meanings influence identity change. This study also examines the effect of status, salience, commitment, and changes in social situations on identity change. To examine how identity processes are related to identity change, three identities are examined: the gender identity, the ethnic identity, and the student identity. Data were obtained from 1,514 undergraduate students at a large western university during the 2008-09 academic school year. A longitudinal research design was used. All data were collected via the Internet to minimize class disruption, ensure easy access to the survey, and maintain privacy. A key finding is that identity meanings change in the direction of reflected appraisals. This is one way that individuals can minimize the distress created when situational meanings do not match identity standard meanings. Study limitations and areas for future research are provided.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

INTRODUCTION

This doctoral dissertation advances identity theory (Burke and Stets 2009) by examining how the social context influences identity change. Within the self, there are multiple parts; each of these parts is termed an "identity" defined as an "internalized positional designation" (Stryker 2002[1980]: 60). Identities are the names given to the expectations and meanings associated with the social positions that individuals occupy, the groups that individuals belong to, and the unique ways that people define themselves. It is these meanings and expectations that are incorporated into individuals' self-concepts and define who they are.

Identity change involves changes to these sets of meanings that define who one is as an occupant of a social structural position, a member of a group, or as a unique individual (Burke and Stets 2009; Cooley 2005[1902]). The social context is the totality of the situations and environments in which individuals interact socially. Social contexts have been an important part of identity theory from its inception; however, they have not always been an explicit consideration in theoretical tests, especially in the perceptual control model in identity theory (see Burke and Cast 1997; Burke and Franzoi 1988; Stets and Harrod 2004 for notable exceptions).

In the perceptual control model, the social context often comes into play through reflected appraisals, which are our judgments (or perceptions) of how we appear to others with whom we interact (Stets and Harrod 2004). When reflected appraisals confirm individuals' identities, termed *identity verification*, identity meanings are less likely to change. However, changes in the contexts in which identities are played out can alter

reflected appraisals, which can change identity meanings (Burke 2006; Burke and Cast 1997; Cast, Stets, and Burke 1999). Moreover, some actors are capable of changing others' perceptions, thus altering the reflected appraisals they receive (Cast 2003; Cast, Stets, and Burke 1999).

A new school, a new job, or a new relationship can lead to individuals being deprived of the interpersonal interaction patterns they've established. The loss of these interactions also means the loss of the reflected appraisals from these individuals. New people with whom to interact *afford* an opportunity for change and sometimes *demand* change. An example of the former is when changing schools gives individuals an opportunity to interact with others who have no prior knowledge of "who they are." Examples of the latter are when individuals' self-views are not confirmed in interaction and they are forced to change (Burke and Cast 1997; Cast, Stets, and Burke 1999) or find other individuals who will confirm their self-views (Swann 1999[1996]; Swann, Wenzlaff, and Tafarodi 1992).

In this dissertation, I investigate how incongruence between reflected appraisals and identity meanings affect identity change. To do this, I measure the set of meanings that comprise three identities (the gender identity, the ethnic identity, and the student identity) at two points in time. I also measure the reflected appraisals for each identity along the same dimensions used to measure the identity meanings. In this way, the discrepancy between the two sets of meanings, as well as the direction of the discrepancy and the direction of the identity change, can be assessed. The gender identity and the student identity are conceptualized as role identities, defined as identities based on being

an occupant of a social structural position. The ethnic identity is conceptualized as a social identity based on membership in a group.

To date, identity change has been investigated only for identities conceptualized as role identities (Burke 2006; Burke and Cast 1997; Cast, Stets, and Burke 1999). The ethnic identity is included to investigate identity change in a social identity. The ethnic identity was also chosen because it is a social identity based on ascribed membership and is likely to be an important way that individuals categorize both themselves and others (Ethier and Deaux 1990). One's sense of an ethnic identity can incorporate past and current cultural traditions, language spoken at home, neighborhood composition, and friends that belong to the same ethnic group. These factors might make the ethnic identity comparatively more resistant to change (Ethier and Deaux 1994; Ethier and Deaux 1990). Evidence that the ethnic identity changes through theoretically hypothesized processes provides additional evidence of the robustness of identity theory.

The multiple identities individuals possess based on roles, social groups, and who they are as unique persons are hierarchically organized in our self-concept. In the structural emphasis in identity theory (Stryker 2002[1980]), multiple identities are ordered by salience, defined as the probability that an identity will be activated in a situation. More salient identities have a higher probability of being activated in multiple situations or across situations. Once activated, behavior is generally consistent with identity meanings—or, behavior is enacted to bring about a match between identity meanings and reflected appraisals if a discrepancy is perceived in the interactional setting (Stryker and Burke 2000).

The social structure is integrated into identity theory by including the social relationships that reflect individuals' positions in the social structure (Serpe 1987). This is done through the concept of commitment, which is one of the main factors that determines the placement of an identity in terms of salience (Serpe 1987; Stryker and Serpe 1982). Commitment is defined as 1) the number of social relationships tied to an identity and 2) the emotional significance that others have to the self (Owens and Serpe 2003). If individuals are tied to many others through an identity, and especially if they have strong feelings for these others, the identity will be high in their salience hierarchy. I investigate how salience and the strength of one's ties to others influence identity change. Specifically, the main effect of salience and commitment on identity change is examined.

The social structure facilitates or constrains relationships by bringing people together and keeping them apart, thus influencing the likelihood of creating and maintaining commitment to others and in turn, the processes that affect the ability and choice to enact an identity (Serpe 1987). Research has demonstrated the relationship between commitment and salience (Callero 1985; Stryker and Serpe 1982). What is missing is including these concepts in the perceptual control model to examine the effect of commitment and salience on identity change. The inclusion of theoretically important factors from the structural emphasis in a study using the identity model in the perceptual emphasis furthers the call for integration between these two emphases in identity theory (Burke and Stets 2009; Stryker and Burke 2000).

Another aspect of the social context that is investigated in the dissertation is status, defined as a system of rank-ordered positions based on a shared standard of value, such as wealth (Ridgeway and Walker 1995). Identity theory research has examined the role of status; specifically, how education, occupation, and income (Cast, Stets, and Burke 1999; Cerven, Burke, and Harrod 2009; Stets and Cast 2007; Stets and Harrod 2004) and racial/ethnic background (Cerven, Burke, and Harrod 2009) influence the verification process. These studies have shown that whites, and those with more education, more income, and a more prestigious occupation, use their high status to further their goal of identity verification by using behaviors that connote power and control (Stets 1997). High status individuals are more successful at identity verification than lower status individuals, in part, because they have the power and ability to define (or redefine) the meanings and expectations that comprise identities (Burke 2004).

The present study examines the role of status; however, the focus is the effect of status on identity change, not on the verification process. I examine how the social structural positions associated with gender and race/ethnicity are related to identity change. Specifically, I hypothesize that higher status individuals (men and whites) will experience less identity change. This furthers our understanding of how the internal processes inside the self interact with the larger social structure to achieve interactional goals.

Identity change is less likely when individuals are in regular contact with others because knowing someone well means there are certain reactions and behaviors that are expected (Baumeister 1998). Oftentimes the pressure to live up to these expectations is

high and the result is stability in identity meanings. Direct changes to individuals' social contexts, such as the birth of a child (Burke and Cast 1997) or incarceration (Burke and Asencio 2007), can lead to identity change because these events change the conditions under which interaction occurs. Likewise, changed interactional conditions occur during other transitional life events, such as entering a university.

It is expected that transitional life events, such as becoming a college student, can lead to identity change. Major life events can be expected to cause a significant disruption to one's sense of self, and more specifically, the meanings held in identity standards. Additionally, there are other changes individuals encounter more regularly that may lead to identity change. Thus, this research examines disruptions to social contexts, outside of school, that may influence identity change. Specifically, changes in employment status and living arrangements are investigated.

Against this backdrop, identity change is investigated with college students at a large western university. College-aged individuals are no longer adolescents, but they have not yet assumed adult responsibilities; thus, individuals in this age group are perhaps freer than they have ever been or ever will be (Arnett 2000). A survey was administered via the Internet to students at two times during the winter and fall quarters. The focus is on freshmen because entering college for the first time represents an important change in the social environment, which has implications for identity change. All students in the selected classes were included so that the effect of other social environmental changes, as indicated above, could also be investigated.

The following chapter begins with an overview of symbolic interactionism, which puts forth an explanation of how a self develops in interaction with an environment that is distinctly social. Identity theory, which developed out of symbolic interactionism, provides the theoretical orientation for this dissertation. It is discussed at length in the next chapter, which highlights those aspects of the theory most relevant for identity change. At the end of that section, the current study on identity change is detailed, including a review of scholarship that notes some limitations in our current understanding and how this dissertation addresses some of those limitations.

THEORY

This chapter provides a comprehensive background to identity theory, paying particular attention to those aspects of the theory most relevant for identity change. These include the importance of the social context and social interaction, the bases of identities, how identity meanings are measured, how identities are theoretically ordered in an individual, and the processes that help to explain the stability of identities and identity change. Identity theory grows out of symbolic interactionism, so I begin with an explanation of its theoretical underpinnings.

Symbolic Interactionism

Symbolic interactionism is a term coined by Blumer (1986[1969]) to explain the ideas of George Herbert Mead (1977 [1934]), who was trying to identify and explain the processes that create a "self." For Mead, the word "self" denotes that which is *reflexive*. Individuals can see themselves as both a subject and an object. Individuals experience themselves first as subjects, then as objects when they see themselves from the standpoint of others with whom they interact. Mead's basic premise is that the self is a *social product* that acts with *purpose* and *creativity*. Each of these key ideas is discussed in what follows.

To say that the self is a *social product* is to say that the self develops in interaction with the environment (Mead 1977 [1934]). Here, the influence that Charles Darwin had on Mead is evident. Darwin's ideas of biological evolution forever changed how philosophers saw the mind (Mead 1977 [1934]). Philosophers began to see the need to interpret human thought and action as developing out of the interplay between

individuals and their environment. After Darwin's ideas were advanced, it no longer seemed reasonable to study the person as a separate entity devoid of contextual influences. When viewed as an organism, the study of individuals could not persist without recognizing the influence of society. Just like biologists study animals in their natural environments, humans should be studied objectively and naturalistically in their environments (Cooley 2005[1902]; Mead 1967[1934]). Since a self cannot be formed without the community, the community of individuals and their social interactions need to be included in any study of human behavior.

Social interaction is sometimes a "conversation of gestures," or what Blumer (1986[1969]) called "non-symbolic interaction." Gestures result when individuals respond to another's actions without interpreting that action. For instance, ducking to avoid an errant pitch is an example of a reflexive reaction without interpretation. However, most social interactions—and the social interactions that create a self—require interpreting the actions of the other by trying to determine what is meant by what is done. If the batter starts to wonder if the errant pitch was intentionally aimed at his head, the batter is interpreting the actions of the pitcher and their interaction is no longer a conversation of gestures alone. Because of the primacy of social interaction, Mead believed that it was the starting point for human inquiry. The appropriate unit of analysis should not be individuals' personality characteristics or society's influence on individuals; the unit of analysis should be the social interaction itself (Charon 2006).

Mead's second idea was that the self acts with *purpose*. This means that individuals act *intentionally* toward a thing based on the meanings the thing has for them.

Each object is defined according to the use(s) that it has at that time; in fact, individuals often only notice things in their environment that are of immediate or potential use. This is one of the central ideas of pragmatism, a philosophy to which Mead subscribed. Each situational goal leads individuals to define the objects in their environments in a particular way. Individuals do not define objects solely as they are given (Charon 2006). As the goals change, an object's use changes; when the use changes, the definitions change. Individuals are constantly assessing, interpreting, defining, and acting towards objects and in interaction depending on their goals.

Through interaction, individuals learn how to classify and define objects both real and abstract and how to act toward them (Stryker 2002[1980]). Importantly, individuals do not define each object separately. All aspects of an interaction are defined and behavior is organized based on all of the definitions. Situations, not just objects, are defined by how persons respond to them in a social context. Moreover, the definitions do not solely determine individuals' actions because arriving at a definition of the situation is a joint effort between the people involved. Thus actions are not determined solely by the definitions that are applied, but the definitions heavily inform the actions.

The meanings that objects have, which are determined by how persons respond to them in a social context, require the "use of significant symbols" (Mead 1967[1934]) or what Blumer (1986[1969]) called "symbolic interaction." For instance, upon seeing someone eat a strange fruit like chayote for the first time, one would determine that it can be eaten and would add "edible" to any existing meanings such as "green" and "pear-shaped." That the fruit is edible, green, and pear-shaped are just three of the meanings

the object could have. If persons perform a ritual at which the fruit is eaten, an additional meaning would be added to its existing meanings—namely that the fruit is an important part of that culture's customs and traditions. All definitions and meanings derive from how others respond to things, including how they respond to individuals as objects.

The meanings of most things are derived from interacting in society using the structure provided by language. Individuals can guess at the meaning of an object; however, it is usually not enough to act intentionally toward objects for which only inferred meanings are known. Language is, to Mead, a set of significant symbols. A significant symbol is anything that calls out in the self what it does in another. Beginning with the assertion that the self emerges in social interaction, Mead explained that the self emerges first in language, then in play, then in formal games.

Language is a powerful set of significant symbols because it can represent objects both real and abstract. Individuals use language to communicate with others. People also use language when they think or "talk to themselves." For instance, thinking of a "glass" means that individuals have a symbol or representation of it in their mind. Language is so precise that there are different symbols for different representations of a category like "drinking vessel." Thus different representations of a cup, glass, chalice, tumbler, mug, or goblet can be called up. Likewise, representations exist for abstract concepts like peace (e.g., a dove), forgiveness (e.g., an olive branch), and patriotism (e.g., a flag). These abstract ideas are comprised of a set of meanings. It is necessary that a word call up in others what it does in the self or there could be no discussion. For social interaction to occur, significant symbols (e.g., chairs, chayote, and patriotism) must be

universal—they must mean approximately the same thing they do to the self as they do to others who share the same language (Mead 1977 [1934]).

Once the rudiments of language have been acquired, the self arises through imaginary playmates and when children "play at" something. With imaginary playmates, children initially play both the role and the counter role, literally "taking the role of the other," such that they might serve tea as the host and then accept it as the guest. Thus the self develops out of interactions with imaginary friends. Imaginary play evolves into play with particular others; thus, at that stage, children have a self that has formed out of the attitudes of specific others toward them.

The simple play of young children evolves into more complex games during which the child must take the role of all of the others in the game. Instead of taking the role of one other (the host in the example above) children must know what everyone intends to do for their own play to proceed (Mead 1977 [1934]). It is in the higher order, more complex world of games that the generalized other develops. The generalized other develops when individuals can take the attitudes of a general, non-specific other that is in their group. Thus, not only do individuals experience and incorporate the attitudes of direct others, they also incorporate the ideas and attitudes of generalized others, an amalgamation of the attitudes of others in their social groups. In this stage, children add the views of the generalized other to the particular views of the groups to which they belong. A self can be said to emerge when children can take the role of the other and determine their course of action based on a common end (a shared social act).

Since no two individuals interact with the exactly the same (imaginary and real) others, the self that arises in opposition to others has its own unique individuality. Moreover, it is initially fragmented since its creation is based on countless others—all of whom are different. Writing before Mead, William James (1890) noted that the self is actually a collection of selves that result from the many different others that people come into contact with. The result is that people have as many selves as they have others that know them in a particular way.

To further this idea, we can turn to Cooley's (2005[1902]) concept of the "looking glass self," which he defines as a somewhat definite imagination of how one appears in the mind of another. During direct contact with different members of society, individuals are reflected in many peoples' mirrors; thus they develop unique selves. The self breaks up, divides, and differentiates such that one's self-feeling is actually a whole made up of various sentiments—added to this are the influences of culture, history, and other societal factors. Cooley thus notes that a self can be innumerably variable; however, over time, the self develops coherence and there is uniformity of the self.

The looking glass self has three parts. The first part is the imagination of how an individual looks to another person. The second part is that individual's imagination of the other person's judgment of that appearance. The last part is a self-feeling (such as shame or pride) based on the individual's imagined judgment of the other person. These are termed "reflected appraisals" since they denote appraisals (judgments) as reflected by those with whom individuals interact. Reflected appraisals represent the meanings that inform individuals of how they are coming across in a situation.

As an example, imagine a family is together at a holiday dinner and a woman is telling her grown daughter how to cook a turkey. The woman imagines she appears, to others, as knowledgeable and helpful. She feels that others judge her well for her knowledge and willingness to help. She may feel pride as a result, and will likely continue in her actions. Alternatively, the woman could imagine she appears meddlesome and overbearing to others and that others judge her harshly for interfering. As a result, she may feel shame and discontinue her actions. In both examples, the self that the woman presents depends on the social reactions that are received, *as interpreted by the self*.

Recall that the self is a social product that acts with purpose based on the meanings things have, but that is not the whole story. Individuals cognitively interpret their environment, the objects in their environment, and the meanings of these objects before they respond which makes individuals *creative* as well. This is Mead's third idea. While individuals are products of their environments, they act back on their environments and their actions become part of the human environment. This makes the environment an interpreted one, which is vastly different from the environments of animals. Individual action occurs within the context of the environment and the environment emerges from individual action. Both are vital to understanding the emergence and development of the self.

The above is also related to ideas drawn from *pragmatism,* the philosophical school to which Mead belonged. Pragmatists look at the relationship individuals have to their environment—especially in contrast to the relationship other animals have to their

environment (Charon 2006). As Charon notes, objects in people's environment do not speak for themselves—individuals need to actively understand them and decide what to do with them. The process of interpretation that actors engage in needs to take center stage (Blumer 1986[1969]). This stands in contrast to other theoretical orientations in sociology and psychology active at the time such as behaviorism that treated humans as organisms that respond to stimuli—thus bypassing the interpretative process. Symbolic interactionism argued for agency at a time when many held the view that individuals are merely cogs in wheels that respond to their environment without meaning or intention.

The empirical problem with the "self" as described above is that, as a *process*, it has no location inside an individual and is hence difficult to study. The dialogue between the self as a subject and the self as an object is ongoing. Thus, studying the self is next to impossible since it is a continuous process with the self constantly looking from itself and back on itself. What has been amenable to study is the *self-concept*. The self-concept is the *product* of the dialectic between the self's ability to see itself as both a subject and object (Gecas 1982). While the self is dynamic, the self-concept is seen as a structure of attributes, often referred to as personality characteristics or traits, and their evaluations. These evaluations largely deal with the affective dimensions of the self such as self-esteem (Rosenberg, Schooler, Schoenbach, and Rosenberg 1995).

The self-concept as a structure of attributes and evaluations has led many to see the self as stable and unchanging. It is this view that explains why behavior across different situations and across time is generally consistent for any individual. Specifically, since individuals' self-concepts are the same, their behaviors are the same.

When a self-concept does change, it is often seen as a temporary change driven by a particular situation so that while there is outward change, the inner core of the person is thought to stay the same. However, as noted by Mead, "As a man adjusts himself to a certain environment he becomes a different individual" (1967[1934]: 215). Mead goes on to note that being a different individual alters the community because the changes that individuals make change the contexts to which they respond. Just as individuals become different, the world becomes different.

Two Variants of Symbolic Interactionism

The above ideas and tenets of symbolic interactionism define the perspective as a whole. From the above, two divergent strands of symbolic interactionism were formed. These are the *traditional* and *structural* variants (Burke and Stets 2009). Both follow the theoretical principle of Mead that the *self must reflect society*. The traditional and structural variants believe that the self is multifaceted since it reflects the complexities of society. However, the complexity of the society is treated differently in each variant of symbolic interactionism. Additionally, the two variants differ in the proper methods they believe should be used to study human behavior.

The social structure in *traditional* symbolic interactionism (Blumer 1986[1969]) is one in which individual actors within society constantly create and recreate it. Organizations only appear stable because individual agents are constantly reproducing the structure by their actions. Society is always in a state of flux with little organization or structure since individuals can define objects and situations anew in each interaction.

Methodologically, the traditional approach advocated by Blumer takes as its starting point an empirical world that "has to be dug out and established through observation" (Blumer 1986[1969]: 21). Thus, laboratory settings are not appropriate because they are incapable of capturing the intricacies of the empirical world. Blumer, and adherents to his methodological position, assert that too much social inquiry uses advanced statistical procedures to establish relationships between variables that inadequately represent empirical reality. Moreover, hypothesis testing is only useful and appropriate if it epitomizes the theory from which it's been deduced and if the hypothesis test is followed by an exhaustive search for negative (or counter-factual) cases. Most often, hypothesis testing is inadequate to this task.

This approach challenges researchers to get out into the real world and acquire first-hand experience of that part of the social world they wish to explain. Also important to note is that Blumer does not believe that the self can be "operationalized" or that it is appropriate to do so. Blumer asserts that the concepts and propositions of symbolic interactionism should be judged by how useful they are for the direct examination of the empirical world, not for how well they fit "the alien criteria of an irrelevant methodology" (Blumer 1986[1969]: 49; Guba 1981). (See also Husserl 1970[1954]; Schutz 1997[1932]).

The *structural* variant of symbolic interactionism (Stryker 2002[1980]) maintains that society is differentiated, organized, stable, and lasting. One way that society is differentiated is in the *positions* that people occupy in the social structure. The social structure consists of a number of positions, such as CEO, male, mother, and student.

Each position is assigned a particular value or worth that is communicated through an individual's possessions and consumption. For instance, a CEO has more possessions and is able to consume more goods compared to a student. *Status* is the term used to define this system of rank-ordered positions based on a shared standard of value, such as wealth (Ridgeway and Walker 1995). Persons with high status are those persons with better social structural positions. Attached to these existing social structural positions is a set of behaviors and attitudes, derived from each culture, that define what types of actions are appropriate and expected. There are usually multiple expectations tied to a social position that let individuals know how to think, feel, and act. These are the *roles* associated with the social positions.

Roles help individuals successfully interact with others in a full information system (we know that they know that we know…. how to act). Roles provide a partial explanation for why the social order is organized and stable in that it is self-perpetuating. Individuals do what they are "supposed to do" and what others expect them to do when in a role. Likewise, others do what is expected of them and what others expect from them. In this way, patterned interactions at the micro level sustain the larger social structure. As Stryker notes, most people spend most of their time doing the same things with the same people and are therefore locked in "interactional networks" (Stryker 2002[1980]: 65).

Contrary to the methodology described above, structural symbolic interactionism (Stryker 2002[1980]) argues that *because* the everyday world is so complex, great care must be taken to exercise as much control as possible over observations. Appropriate

methods include statistical techniques, selecting appropriate historical cases, and laboratory experiments. This methodology comes closer to Mead's pragmatic philosophy, which advocates for inductive investigation and constant empirical verification of hypotheses.

A typical approach to studying the self and social interaction is to start with the premise that society is stable and action is patterned. Research starts by looking at one person's actions to see if these actions hold across persons—if the actions are patterned. In this way, research arrives at a "type" of person. Then the focus is expanded to look across persons to see the larger societal patterns. For example, suppose an observation is made that an Asian Indian woman scores high on a measure of collectivity. Moving outward from this one person, more women are observed from the same area to see if the pattern holds. Research expands again to include men to see if the pattern is consistent across women and men from India. In this tradition, even though observation begins with an individual acting or responding in a particular way, observation should be linked back to the social structure in which it developed and to which it is tied.

Summary of Key Ideas of Symbolic Interactionism

Symbolic interactionism sets forth Mead's ideas of the processes that create a self. The self is a *social product* that acts with *purpose* and *creativity*. The meanings, definitions, and cultural expectations that are developed in social interaction occur primarily through language, which is seen as a set of significant symbols. After language is acquired, the self emerges through play and games. The definitions, or meanings, that are applied to objects, situations, and the self all depend on interactions with others;

nothing occurs in a vacuum. Because of this, the contexts in which individuals find themselves, or place themselves, are of paramount importance. The social context in which interactions occur is also important because the definitions of objects, individuals, and interactions are created during social interactions and exert an influence on future interactions. Social interactions produce a self that is initially fragmented since the looking glass self is a combination of "imaginings" of how individuals appear in the minds of others.

Symbolic interactionism has two variants—the traditional and the structural. For both, the appropriate unit of analysis is the interaction itself. In traditional symbolic interactionism (Blumer 1986[1969]), individuals create and recreate the social structure. Society is always in a state of flux because individuals constantly change how they assess, interpret, define and act towards objects and in interaction. Methodologically, direct observations are necessary to adequately and appropriately study the intricacies of society and human behavior. Adherents to this view do not believe that the self can be "operationalized" or that it is appropriate to do so.

The structural variant (Stryker 2002[1980]) sees society as differentiated, organized, stable, and lasting. The social structure consists of positions that are assigned unequal value or worth. The roles attached to these social positions define the set of behaviors and attitudes, derived from culture, that define what types of actions are appropriate and expected. As the self reflects society, the self is seen as differentiated, organized, stable, and lasting. Methodologically, this approach maintains that laboratory

experiments and statistical techniques are preferable because society is complex and these methods allow for a greater level of control over factors of theoretical interest.

Individuals are born into a world that is going to shape much of how their self develops. Particular patterns of interaction are already established among parents, family members, and individuals outside the family; thus, the existing social structure individuals are born into consists of many enduring, patterned interactions and relationships. These interactions help form the self. Once a self is formed, many of its encounters occur in the very contexts that produced it, so it is imperative that the self and its interactions are related back to the social contexts from which they emerged and in which they occur.

Identity Theory

I turn now to identity theory, which developed primarily from the structural variant of symbolic interactionism. Recall that the self-concept is seen as the product of the dialectic between the self's ability to see itself as both a subject and object (Gecas 1982). While the self is in a state of flux, the self-concept is a structure of attributes, characteristics, traits, and evaluations that develops unity over time. However, the self-concept can still be divided into constituent parts; each part of the self is termed an "identity," which is defined as an "internalized positional designation" (Stryker 2002[1980]: 60). Identities are the names given to the social positions that individuals occupy, and the expectations and meanings associated with them, which individuals incorporate into their sense of who they are. Although this definition focuses on social

positions, it is applicable to identities that are associated with the groups one belongs to and the unique meanings attached to the self.

Recall that when individuals act with purpose, they are acting toward a thing (e.g., a chayote) based on the meanings the thing has for them (e.g., green, pear-shaped, edible, used in rituals). Through interaction, individuals learn how to classify and define objects and all aspects of interaction. Persons then organize their behavior based on all of those definitions (Stryker 2002[1980]). Because the self is reflexive, identities are among the "objects" that get classified and defined. Thus, identities develop through a process of classification and categorization when the self reflects on itself and sees itself as an object in relation to other objects in its environment (Mead 1977 [1934]; Owens 2003; Stets and Burke 2000). Identities are what it *means* to be who one is.

To assess these meanings, identity theorists turned to the work of Osgood and his colleagues (Osgood, Suci, and Tannenbaum 1957). Osgood et al. asserted that there are many dimensions of meaning, and that these can be measured using a series of adjective scales, where the anchors are labeled with polar opposite meanings (e.g., good and bad). Individuals place a mark between the two poles for a given word (e.g., chayote). The meaning of "chayote" is determined by the set of ratings for all adjective scales. Using factor analysis, Osgood and his colleagues found that three primary dimensions occur for a wide variety of stimuli and can account for about half of the variability in how individuals respond. These emergent dimensions were "good/bad," "weak/strong," and "active/passive." These represent the evaluation, potency and activity (EPA) dimensions of meaning, respectively.

Affect control theory (Heise 1977; Robinson and Smith-Lovin 2006) uses these EPA dimensions to assign a rating (from –4 to +4) for actors, behaviors, objects (of the behavior), and settings for a variety of cultural situations in order to define events and determine the affective reaction of people to these events. Each one of these items (actor, behavior, object and setting) is defined independently. For example, a 1978 North Carolina database of ratings yields an EPA profile of 2.52, 1.50, and –0.13 for "mother." A 1998 Texas database for the EPA ratings of "mother" yields 3.03, 2.22, and 0.05. A 2003 Indiana database yields a "mother" EPA rating of 2.48, 1.96, and 1.15. Although no clear pattern emerges for "evaluation" and "potency," mothers were rated as more "active" (-0.13 to 0.05 to 1.15) through the years.

Some meanings may be universal, such as "provider" for the father identity. However, many meanings vary across individuals within a society because of the unique meanings that develop in interaction with others. For example, some may assign the meaning "aloof" to father while others assign "involved." Additionally, meanings can vary across societies resulting from different cultures and socialization. For instance, Ontario Canada EPA ratings for mother in 2001 were 2.19, 1.75, and 0.32. The evaluation rating of 2.19 is less than any of the American samples, perhaps indicating that Canadians see mothers as less "good" than Americans do. In addition to the EPA meaning dimensions, other meanings are derived from the population under study to ensure a comprehensive list of meanings that can be used to define each identity. This is discussed in more detail in a later section.

In addition to addressing what it means to be who one is, as introduced above, identity theory addresses many other sociological and social psychological phenomena such as human thought, behavior, emotion, and interaction. There are three different emphases within identity theory that focus on how identities are negotiated in interaction, how the social structure influences identities and behavior, and how the internal processes inside the self interact with the larger social structure to influence behavior and achieve interactional goals. These emphases are labeled *interactional, structural, and perceptual,* respectively (Burke and Stets 2009; Stryker and Burke 2000).

The interactional emphasis of McCall and Simmons (1978[1966]) focuses on the negotiation with others that is necessary for successful enactment of an identity. This approach has remained largely theoretical in that a clear pattern of research has not emerged (Stets and Burke 2003). The structural variant (Stryker 2002[1980]) emphasizes how an individual will likely behave in a situation when multiple lines of action are possible. Individuals' ties to the social structure are also a focus of theory and research in this area. Early work in the perceptual emphasis (Burke 1980; Burke and Tully 1977) addressed how behavior could be predicted by knowing the meanings of a role identity for different individuals. Later work expanded on these ideas and incorporated a perceptual control systems approach to understanding the internal dynamics of identities (Burke 1991; Burke 1996). More recent work (Burke and Stets 2009) also emphasizes how individuals are embedded in the social structure. The key features of the interactional, structural, and perceptual emphases in identity theory are developed more fully in the following sections, which address the different bases of identities; measuring

the meanings that define identities; the stability of identities; status and resources; how multiple identities are ordered inside an individual; and the conditions under which identity meanings change.

Bases of Identities

There are three bases of identities. First, individuals have identities based on roles. These *role identities* most closely match the discussion to date in which social structural positions and the roles attached to them have been emphasized. Additionally, individuals have *social identities* based on the social groups they belong to. Lastly, individuals have *person identities* based on the unique meanings that define the self. Identity theorists began by studying role identities (Burke and Reitzes 1981; Burke and Tully 1977) and have historically emphasized the role identities that connect an individual to society and how these types of identities influence behavior (McCall and Simmons 1978[1966]; Stryker 2002[1980]). This early emphasis on role identities is also likely due to the influence of Goffman's (1959) dramaturgical approach in which individuals act out roles on a stage in front of an audience.

Regardless of whether an identity is based on a role, social group or category, or the person as a social entity, theorists agree that individuals possess multiple identities rooted in all of the identity bases. Following the edict that *the self reflects society,* individuals have as many identities as they have social positions, group memberships, and stable perceptions that are controlled. Also, there is widespread recognition by identity theorists that the social structure in which persons are embedded, although fully formed at birth, is nevertheless dynamic and changing. Therefore, role positions and

social categories change; person identities can also change. All identities contain a large set of meanings derived from culture. All identities are related to behavior in that behavior is consistent with the meanings in the identity. For instance, if "provider" is part of a father's identity, his behavior should reflect this and his actions might include working full time, buying things for his family, paying all of the bills, etc.

Role Identities

Role identities are the meanings that reside in the self and are attached to the roles associated with the social positions we occupy (Stryker 2002[1980]). These meanings are the cognitive representation of the identity (Burke and Stets 2009). The "role" part of a role identity contains the meanings obtained from the culture about how to think and behave as a member of the social position. Roles are the expectations tied to social positions that prompt expectations for behavior from individuals to others and from others to each individual. The unique part, the "identity" of the role identity, is derived from how individuals interpret the role attached to their social position. McCall and Simmons (1978[1966]) referred to these as the "conventional" and "idiosyncratic" components of role identities. The conventional component represents the role and is related to the expectations tied to the social position. The idiosyncratic component represents the unique interpretations that individuals bring to their roles.

Role expectations can be general or specific, rigid or lax (Burke and Stets 2009; Stryker 2002[1980]). To the extent that the expectations are fairly rigid and persons conform to them (Turner 2009), patterned interactions are created that lead to a stable social structure. This is an example of "role taking" in which individuals generally do

not deviate from the expectations associated with a role. Turner uses the military to illustrate a system that restricts free operation within roles even to the extent that missteps are punished.

Very rarely do roles require absolute adherence to rigid role boundaries and there is room to engage in the process of "role making" (Turner 2009) where individuals have the freedom to make each role uniquely their own. Although the social structure is stable and patterned, it can be changed when roles are open enough to allow changes in the social structure. When this occurs, the social structure is not always reinforced. The extent to which "role making" and "role taking" occur is determined by the social structure. All structures impose some limits on the definitions and hence the interactions that are possible.

When two people interact, they do so by relating to each other in terms of specific roles (Burke and Stets 2009). Each role is related to a counterrole; for instance, the role "wife" is related to the counterrole of "husband." In fact, a role is usually related to more than one counterrole, such as "doctor" being related to "nurse" and "patient." Oftentimes two people only know each other based on the positions they occupy—such as a doctor and a patient. Unless the doctor and patient become something else to each other (e.g., friends), they are unlikely to relate to each other in any other way. By extension, role identities are related to counter role identities (Burke 1980). For instance, the student role identity is related to the teacher role identity. Each person thus assumes a different role identity in interaction and acts independently, but in consort with a complementary counterrole identity. Behaviors are thus complementary to others.

Because of the roles that individuals are expected to adhere to as occupants of social positions, others come to expect them to be a particular sort of person based on the meanings and expectations associated with each role. Since identities are comprised of "role" and "identity" meanings that are shared and unique, respectively, successful interaction often requires negotiation. It is through this interaction and negotiation with others that meanings come to be shared (Burke and Stets 1999; McCall and Simmons 1978[1966]).

Before discussing research involving role identities, two specific aspects of roles that have implications for identities and identity change are reviewed. First is the concept of role conflict, which exists when contradictory expectations are attached to a position in a social relationship (Stryker 2002[1980]). The source of the conflict can be a single other, as when a boss demands that an employee follow directions, yet be innovative. Or the source of the conflict can be different others, as when a mother wants her son to succeed in academics while a father wants his son to excel in sports. *Intrarole* conflict exists when conflicting expectations are associated with the same role, as in the above example of the individual trying to adequately fulfill his "employee" role expectations by being simultaneously innovative and obedient. *Interrole* conflict exists when fulfilling one role's expectations means another role's expectations cannot be met. The example of the child as "athlete" or "academic scholar" given above is an example of this type of conflict.

The second concept is role strain, which is defined as the difficulty one feels in fulfilling role obligations (Goode 1960; Stryker 2002[1980]). Role strain is ubiquitous

and constant and occurs for a variety of reasons such as not accepting (or only partially accepting) the norms and expectations associated with a position, holding contradictory expectations, and shifting behaviors and normative orientations when one's social position changes. Role strain and/or role conflict can be reduced in a number of ways. First, individuals can withdrawal from the relationships that created the problem. Second, individuals can accept the expectations of one role and relinquish the other. Third, individuals can try to place the conflicting roles into specific, non-overlapping time-slots such as trying to separate work from home in terms of activities and the relationships related to each.

Role identities have been used to study the influence of identity meanings on behavior. Reitzes and Burke (1980) determined the meanings of the college student identity and assessed the extent to which the various meanings influenced alternative behaviors. Information was collected from college students on educational expectations, participation in social activities, and grade point average. Consistent with theoretical expectations, they found that respondents whose student identity closely matched the meanings of a graduate student identity were more likely to report wishing to obtain an advanced degree and had higher GPAs. Also consistent with their identity meanings, these respondents were less likely to participate in social activities.

Student identity research was extended by Burke and Reitzes the following year (1981) using the same data obtained and described above. Performance variables in the research were future education plans and participation in social activities. Controlling for father's level of education and family income, they found that students high on academic

responsibility and low on personal assertiveness were more likely to indicate they planned to obtain an advanced degree. With the same statistical controls, they found that those low on academic responsibility, but high on intellectualism, sociability, and personal assertiveness were more likely to engage in social activities.

In addition to the role of "student," identity theorists have studied how meanings related to the gender role identity influence one's behavioral choices. Gender identity is the degree to which individuals see themselves as masculine or feminine. It is considered a "master identity," like age and race, in that it is associated with multiple as opposed to particular situations (Burke and Cast 1997). Using a sample of approximately 500 students, Burke and his colleagues investigated how gender identity influenced inflicting physical and sexual abuse on a partner and sustaining physical and sexual abuse from a partner (Burke, Stets, and Pirog-Good 1988). Using meanings obtained from validated instruments such as the M (Masculinity), F (Femininity), and MF scales of the Personal Attributes Questionnaire (PAQ) by Spence and Helmreich (1978), researchers measured the gender identity of respondents. They found that men and women with more feminine gender identities were likely to inflict and sustain higher levels of abuse. Given that individuals act in ways consistent with their identity meanings, Burke and his colleagues theorized that those with a feminine gender identity were more oriented to their dating partner (which led them to seek unwanted sexual activity) and were more excitable (which led to physical outbursts).

Research later examined how the gender identity and mastery identity (which share the meaning of control) influenced exercising control over a dating partner (Stets

1995). A key finding was that gender identity was a stronger predictor of controlling one's partner than gender alone. Individuals with more masculine identities were more likely to perceive that they controlled their partner. Those with a feminine gender identity scored low on mastery and it is theorized that this led them to try to exert control over their partner to compensate for their desired level of mastery compared to their actual level of mastery.

This line of research was further extended by examining gender both as a status characteristic and as an identity (Stets and Burke 1996). Gender (along with race/ethnicity and age) is a social difference based on a nominal characteristic that has become an indicator of status differences (Ridgeway 2006). Ascribed characteristics like occupation and education also serve as indicators of status. In our society, people generally believe that certain groups of people (e.g., men, whites, younger adults) are more competent than others (e.g., women, non-whites, and older adults) and are thus held in higher esteem. A hierarchy of esteem and competence is thus created whereby those at the top are believed to possess greater knowledge and abilities applicable across a wide variety of tasks. For instance, the general population believes that men are more competent in areas relevant for success—such as math, logic, and reasoning skills. This hierarchical ordering of esteem and competence is so pervasive that even those disadvantaged by it believe it to be true (Ridgeway 2006). For instance, both men and women believe that men are more competent and thus both sexes hold men in higher regard.

Incorporating gender as status, Stets and Burke found that males were less likely than females to express negative behaviors when involved in problem-solving tasks with their spouse. However, individuals with a more masculine gender identity, regardless of whether the individual was male or females, were more likely to express negative behaviors during their interactions. Similar to the theoretical argument presented above, Stets and Burke found support for the position that women, because they occupy the low status position compared to males, counteract this disturbance to their self-concept by increasing their negative, oppositional behaviors.

Stets (1997) examined status, behavior, and marital interaction for a sample of newlyweds. She videotaped newlyweds discussing a problem area in their marriage. Building on research in 1996 (Stets and Burke) that found that wives used more negative behavior in conversation than men, Stets (1997) found that spouses with low status (younger, less educated and having lower status occupations) also used more negative behaviors in conversation compared to their higher status partners. Stets notes that low status other are often judged by a stricter standard, which make it difficult for low status actors to prove their worth. However, the process of keeping low status actors "in their place" is not completed because lower status individuals do not seem to internalize the view that they are worthless and thus do not behave in ways that confirm that self-view. Specifically, Stets found no differences in self-assessments of self-worth by gender, age, education, or occupational prestige. Thus, the negative behavior of low status others is an attempt to *offset* membership in the low status group and counteract the negative views that others have of them. Theoretically, the six studies just reviewed (Burke and Reitzes

1981; Burke, Stets, and Pirog-Good 1988; Reitzes and Burke 1980; Stets 1995; Stets 1997; Stets and Burke 1996) demonstrate that individuals act according to the meanings that define their identities. Individuals constantly monitor and select behavior that is consistent with how they see themselves.

Social Identities

In addition to the social structural positions individuals occupy, individuals are also members of groups and categories. Identities based on the groups one belongs to or joins are the bases of social identities. A group is defined as people who cognitively feel they are members of the same social category and feel they belong to the group (Hogg 2006). Persons belong to groups often because of nominal characteristics such as racial/ethnic background. This is considered a "similarity-based" group and is comprised of formalized, impersonal associations. In addition to being born into certain groups based on nominal characteristics, persons can join "interaction-based" or "common-bond" groups, which involve direct attachments between members (Hogg 2006). Examples would be groups organized around an activity or ascribed membership such as being a member of a place of worship or joining a fraternity.

When individuals claim a social identity based on group membership, they see themselves as like other members of a group (the in-group) and unlike people not in the group (the out-group). The tendency is to accentuate within-group similarities, while accentuating between-group differences and to categorize the self into inclusive social units that depersonalize the self—*I* becomes *we* (Brewer 1991). This is similar to Thoits and Virshup (1997) who conceptualize role identities and social identities as referencing

"me" and "we," respectively. For instance, "I am a cashier" and "We are Wal-Mart employees." Another way to distinguish between the "me" and "we" is to see the role identity as *performance* and the social identity as a *membership* (Burke and Stets 2009).

Burke and Stets also differentiate role identities from social identities in terms of how each references the self. Role identities reference the self as "me as role," while social identities reference the self as "we." So while the role identity of "cashier" might be enacted against the counterrole identity of "shopper," the social identity of "Wal-Mart employee" might be enacted at a labor rally. Seeing oneself as similar to other members of the in-group, there will be uniformity of perception (e.g., feeling exploited) and uniformity of action (e.g., picketing). The tendency for uniformity of perception and action (Hogg 2006) further distinguishes social identities from role identities. Recall that role identities operate opposite counterrole identities, which means that there is negotiation as each person attempts to fulfill the expectations of his own role. Behavior is thus complementary with one's role counterpart. For instance, the role identity "waiter" is enacted with "patron" and each individual has different thoughts and behaviors associated with their role identity.

Once in a group, an individual begins the process of social categorization where they answer for themselves, "What are the attributes of this group?" Attributes include perceptions, attitudes, feelings, and behaviors. Social identities share this in common with role identities, which also provide individuals with a set of self-meanings and expectations for thought and action. To the extent that perceptions, attitudes, feelings, and behaviors are predictable, uncertainty is reduced as individuals come to expect

certain things (Hogg 2003). The attributes are represented as prototypes and serve as the basis for developing social identities—collective ideas about self-conception that let members know who they are, what they believe, what they feel, and what they should do. Whereas the cognitive representation of role identities is the meanings held in the identity standard, the cognitive representation of social identities is the prototype.

Social identities become active through *accessibility* and *fit* (Hogg and Terry 2000). Accessibility is when a person calls up a social categorization because it is valued, important, and frequently employed and/or it is self-evident in a given situation. For instance, being a woman is self-evident and frequently employed. Once called up, persons try to "fit" the social category to the social context. The underlying questions are, "Are the social categories enough to distinguish the various people involved? How well do they explain the behavior?" Individuals will cycle through as many social categorizations as necessary until they arrive at one that fits the data well. For instance, if someone sees a woman acting assertively toward a male co-worker, they might assume that she is the male individual's manager. If they determine this does not fit, they will look for another social categorization (e.g., she is older than the male) to explain her behavior. As will be explained more fully in a later section, role identities are activated through salience, which is the probability that an identity will be activated in a situation.

Research in the perceptual emphasis of identity theory on the ethnic identity, a social identity based on membership in an ascribed group, has only recently begun (Cerven, Burke, and Harrod 2009). In this new research, the meanings associated with one's ethnic identity are determined based on ethnic-related behaviors and practices.

Researchers find a personal and a heritage dimension to the ethnic identity that work to sustain the self and the group, respectively. These two dimensions were relevant for all racial/ethnic groups studied.

Brewer (1991; 2003) posits that the drive to establish and maintain social identities is due to a tension between two opposing needs that individuals have. First, individuals want to be seen as similar to others. Second, individuals want to be seen as unique from others. The sense of belonging is accomplished by *inter-group* comparisons. Individuals can see themselves as "like" other members of their group by noting how they are "unlike" members that are not part of their group (how they differ from relevant out-groups). The desire for distinctiveness is accomplished by *intra-group* comparisons. Whereas they may be like other group members (and like the group prototype) compared to out-groups, there are still many ways they are distinct from individuals within their own group. Individuals achieve optimal distinctiveness when the two competing forces are in balance.

Person Identities

Person identities are tied to the unique aspects of the self. They are not tied to the social positions an individual occupies and they are not based on a group someone belongs to by birth or joins later in life (Stets 2006). With person identities, there is no out-group or counter-role attached to the meanings or behaviors. Because the meanings are unique to individuals, behaviors that flow from these meanings are also unique. This relationship to behavior is different than role and social identities in which behavior is complementary to others and similar to others, respectively (Burke and Stets 2009). The

meanings that measure person identities define each person as a unique individual. Like role identities, the cognitive representation of person identities is the identity standard (Burke and Stets 2009). Person identities reference "me" as opposed to "me as role" (role identities) and "we" (social identities).

Person identities operate across situations and societal positions. They can thus be seen as "master" identities (Burke 2004; Burke and Stets 2009) in that they can direct the roles one takes on and the social groups one joins. For instance, having a "controlling" person identity (Stets 1995) might lead individuals to take on roles where that identity can be routinely played out. Individuals might gravitate toward an occupation where they can exercise control by giving orders instead of taking them (Collins 1990). In the chronology of identities, person identities are the most recent and therefore the least developed (Stets 1995; Stets and Carter 2006).

Person, role, and social identities are also different in terms of the outcomes associated with each in terms of self-authenticity, self-efficacy and self-worth. Successfully enacting person identities lead to a sense of authenticity, a belief that a person is being and acting as they really are (Burke 2004). When role identities are enacted successfully, they result in a sense of self-efficacy, a feeling of being able to control one's environment (Burke and Stets 2009). Social identities lead to a sense of belonging and self-worth (Cast and Burke 2002; Stets 2006; Stets and Burke 2000). Because social identities are derived from and evaluated by reference to in-groups, a high degree of motivation exists to favorably evaluate groups. In essence, the positive

evaluation of the group "rubs off" onto the individual and the individuals derives a feeling a self-worth (Hogg 2006).

Research already reviewed (Stets 1995) examined how the mastery identity, conceptualized as a person identity, interacted with gender identity to influence the extent to which an individual attempts to control his/her dating partner. A new research line involves the moral identity. The moral identity, like all identities, is comprised of internalized meanings; in this case, the meanings that define the self as a moral individual. It has recently been noted that society is possible only through the agreement by individuals to use the morals of society as a generalized other—as a guide to controlling their actions (Charon 2006).

Stets and Carter (2006) examined how the moral identity influences moral behavior and moral emotions. The moral identity is measured by assessing how people view themselves along the justice and care dimensions. Using the Burke-Tully method (explained in detail in the next section), respondents rate themselves along 12 bipolar characteristics indexing the care (caring/uncaring, unkind/kind, helpful/not helpful, stingy/generous, compassionate/hardhearted, friendly/unfriendly, and selfish/selfless) and justice dimensions (honest/dishonest, unfair/fair, untruthful/truthful, not hardworking/hardworking, principled/unprincipled) of the moral identity Moral behaviors were assessed by responses to four situations: returning extra money a cashier gives you, returning a wallet, donating to a charitable organization, and giving money to a homeless person. These represent the "moral" behavior; respondents could also indicate engaging in the opposite behavior (e.g., not returning the wallet).

Moral emotions included guilt, shame, embarrassment, pride, empathy and sympathy (Tangney 2003; Turner and Stets 2006), which are considered self-relevant emotions (Tangney 2003) in that they have positive or negative significance for well-being. They reference the self, which is to say they are felt when individuals self-reflect and self-evaluate. Individuals can be aware they are doing this, or it can happen outside their level of awareness. The emotions that individuals feel depend on these processes as well as what type of attributions (internal or external) are made. Moral emotions are grounded in interaction, but they reference society in the form of moral standards, personal expectations, and social conventions. They aid in self-regulation by providing immediate and salient feedback about our thoughts, intentions, and behaviors (Tangney 2003). Stets and Carter found that the moral identity was related to behaving morally for all situations except giving money to the homeless. Moreover, individuals whose meanings were more strongly tied to the moral identity experienced stronger negative emotions when they did not behave morally.

This research line has been extended (Stets, Carter, Harrod, Cerven, and Abrutyn 2008) to examine how the moral identity, absolute status, and relative status influence moral emotions and moral behaviors that in turn help to sustain the normative order. Using vignettes, approximately 500 survey respondents indicated how they behaved and how they felt the last time they were in several situations where there was a choice to do the "good" or moral behavior or not—such as allowing a drunk friend to drive home or defending unkind words said about a friend. Eight emotions were included; however, the focus was on the moral emotions of anger, empathy, shame, and guilt (the other four were

happiness, sadness, fear, and pride). The moral identity was measured as it was by Stets and Carter in 2006. Absolute status indicators were gender, race/ethnicity, and income with males, whites, and incomes of $50,000 or more as high status. Relative status was indicated by the presence of higher or lower status others in the situations that individuals were asked to recall.

Researchers found that the moral identity and status (both absolute and relative) exert a direct influence on which emotions were reported and also indirectly influence what emotions are felt by acting through normative or non-normative behavior. For instance, whites are more likely to report the other-critical emotion of anger; non-whites and those with low incomes are more likely to report the other-suffering emotion of empathy; and women are more likely to report the self-critical emotion of guilt (Turner and Stets 2006). Researchers concluded that experiencing moral emotions and having a high moral identity help to ensure that moral behavior is enacted, which maintains the normative order of the larger social structure.

Measuring the Meanings of Identities

Identity meanings provide the conceptual and operational bases for detecting changes in people's identities; thus, they are of vital importance to research on identity change. Measuring identities in identity theory consists of measuring the meanings that define each identity. As mentioned, these dimensions of meaning may involve the cultural meanings of evaluation, potency and activity (EPA) used by Heise and his colleagues in affect control theory. In keeping with structural symbolic interactionism, identity theorists often include additional meanings for each identity that reflect the

opportunities and constraints associated with different identities. These meanings are obtained from the population under study to ensure that they are applicable (Burke and Tully 1977) and that they capture the conventional and unique dimensions of meaning. For instance, for the role identity of "student," meanings can include "hardworking" or "lazy." The opportunity structure is present for students to be one or the other—but not both. If students want to be hardworking, there are classes they can take in which they will work hard. Likewise, if students want to be lazy, there are opportunities for this as well such as going to parties rather than studying. As mentioned, identities are measured using the semantic differential approach developed by Osgood et al. in which the poles represent opposite meanings.

In identity theory, this approach was first used to assess the meanings of "boyishness" and "girlishness" for sixth, seventh, and eighth grade school children (Burke and Tully 1977). Thirty-four adjective pairs were presented to children who responded to the question stems, "usually boys are…," "usually girls are…," and "as a boy/girl I usually am…." Each item was rated on a scale from one to five. Using discriminant function analysis, five of the 34 items were sufficient to capture almost all of the commonly held meanings of the difference between boyishness and girlishness and correctly classified 91% of the cases.

The college student identity was first studied using this method in 1980 (Reitzes and Burke). Meanings were selected (based on pretest data) that best characterized the college student identity and four counter-role identities: non-college peer, high school student, employed graduate, and graduate student. A discriminant function analysis

yielded four meaning structures, labeled academic responsibility, intellectual curiosity, sociability, and personal assertiveness. College student identity was measured using the stem, "As a college student I am…" followed by each of the 24 meanings in a semantic differential format. Identities were classified by their similarity to the mean of the college student identity or one of its counter-roles. This yielded individual scores that were classified as "college student-like," "graduate student-like," etc. based on variability from the mean.

As mentioned, Stets and Carter (2006) used 12 bipolar meanings: honest/dishonest, caring/uncaring, unkind/kind, unfair/fair, helpful/not helpful, stingy/generous, compassionate/hardhearted, untruthful/truthful, not hardworking/hardworking, friendly/unfriendly, selfish/selfless, and principled/unprincipled to study the moral identity, conceptualized as a person identity. Their research focused on how the moral identity influences behavior when individuals are faced with moral dilemmas, such as returning a wallet they find or donating to charity. Consistent with theory, those with high moral identities behaved morally.

One particular advantage of this method is that shared dimensions of meaning across identities can be measured (Burke 1991). For example, Stets (1995) notes that males generally experience greater levels of mastery (having control over the things that affect their lives), compared to females, since masculinity encourages independence, dominance, and competitiveness. Thus a masculine gender identity shares the meaning of "control" associated with a mastery identity. Reitzes and Burke (1980) also note that the college student role identity shares dimensions of meaning with several of its

counterroles (e.g., graduate student, non-college peer, employed graduate) used in their study. If shared meanings exist across identities, they can interfere with one another if the meanings contradict (this is similar to role conflict or role strain discussed previously). Alternatively, identities that share meanings can support one another if the shared meanings are in concert. Additional advantages of this method for measuring identities are that it is a quantitative measure, uses meanings derived from the population, incorporates the multidimensional aspects of an identity, and taps into both the idiosyncratic and shared meanings of identities.

The Stability of Identities

The roles attached to social positions come with a set of behaviors and attitudes that define what types of actions are appropriate and expected. These multiple expectations let individuals know how to think, feel, and act. To the extent that the expectations are strict and persons conform (Turner 2009), they create patterned interactions. They also create stable identities, as individuals internalize the meanings associated with these expectations. Likewise for social identities, when individuals see themselves as similar to their in-group they accentuate within-in group similarities. The uniformity of perception and behavior, once internalized, create stable patterns of interaction and identities. Similarly, person identity meanings are derived from culturally recognized characteristics that individuals internalize (Burke and Stets 2009). For all identities, these internalized meanings act as a goal to achieve.

The perceptual emphasis in identity theory incorporates the above, especially the internalization of meanings, into a conceptualization whereby identities operate via a self-

regulating negative feedback loop. Before looking at identities specifically, I first discuss negative feedback loops as understood in engineering systems. I then discuss how this has been applied to humans and how it is incorporated into the perceptual control emphasis in identity theory.

In engineering systems, outputs can be controlled (e.g., the speed of a train) by feeding information about the output (the speed) back into the system as an input. This is called negative feedback (Burke and Stets 2009; Powers 1973). In this way, a steady output can be maintained despite varying amounts of inputs. For instance, a steady speed can be maintained despite varying levels of fuel or energy. Imagine a sophisticated car that is automatically set to maintain a constant speed of 35 miles per hour. If the car is traveling downhill and starts to increase its speed, this information is fed back into the system and the amount of fuel is decreased. Conversely, if the car is climbing uphill, the system will increase the amount of fuel to maintain a constant speed. Again the goal is to maintain a constant output (speed in this case) despite disturbances to the environment such as incline, decline, or even inclement weather.

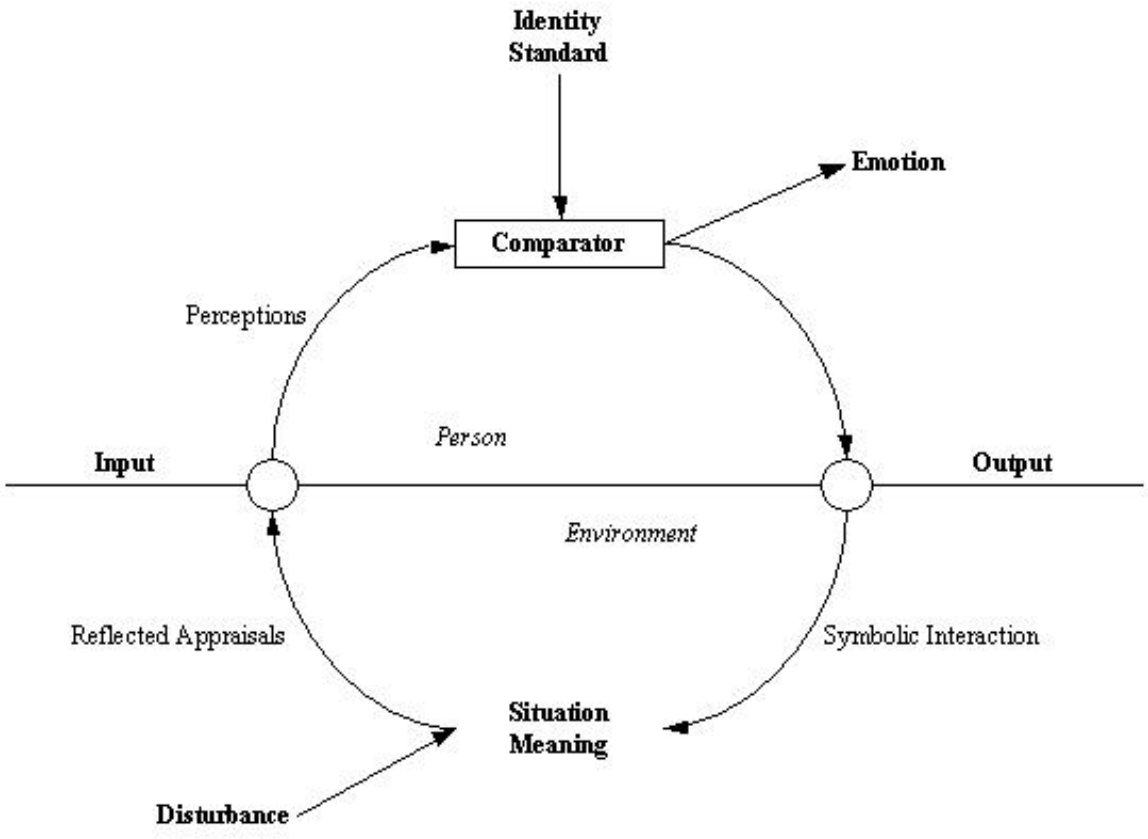
Powers (1973) applied this concept of negative feedback to individuals, with the important modification that humans do not control their environment by controlling outputs (their behaviors), but by controlling inputs (their perceptions). Behaviors are enacted in service to the goal of maintaining a constant perception of how things are. The goal is to maintain constant inputs (perceptions) despite disturbances to the environment such as new contexts, novel situations, and other people.

It would be extremely difficult and labor-intensive if individuals had to spend inordinate amounts of time countering disturbances they perceived in social interactions (Burke and Stets 2009). If other people never saw individuals in terms of how they see themselves, if the looking glass self and the concomitant reflected appraisals never matched their own self-views, this is what individuals would spend their time doing. Instead, individuals construct self-verifying opportunity structures that satisfy the need for self-confirmation (Swann 1999[1996]). The equivalent of these structures for biologists is "ecological niches" that organisms inhabit because they are capable of regularly satisfying their biological needs (e.g., safety and a constant food supply).

One way these opportunity structures are created is by excluding anyone who does not confirm a self-view (Swann 1999[1996]). When exclusion fails, or is not an option, and individuals are confronted with someone who disagrees with a self-view, individuals can display "identity cues" which are designed to confirm one or more self-views. These cues can be clothes, possessions, or word choice. For instance, say a sloppily dressed (but wealthy) man walks into a luxury car dealership and is ignored by the sales staff. He may conspicuously display his expensive watch as an identity cue that signals to others his monetary wealth. A third way to create an opportunity structure is to act in ways that elicit self-confirming responses. Swann (1999[1996]) reviews research in which individuals with negative self views quickly got others to adopt the negative self-view by saying things like "I know you will think I am dumb for saying this, but…." One or all of these techniques can be employed to try to bring about and then maintain consistent perceptions.

Turning specifically to the identity control model in identity theory, the self controls identities by controlling perceptions of how one is coming across in a situation. Controlling these perceptions means to control (or attempt to control) the reflected appraisals from others. Identities are comprised of six components (Burke and Stets 2009): an identity standard, perceptual input, a comparator, emotions, output, and situational meanings—all of which are organized into a control system (see Figure 1).

Figure 1. Identity Model



The meanings within each identity are set to particular levels. Each meaning that is applied to the self in a role, in a social group, or as a person can vary. For instance, a person can see himself in the student identity as very hardworking, somewhat motivated,

and not at all competitive. For the moral identity, a person can see himself as very principled, somewhat kind, and not at all friendly. The *identity standard* represents the levels at which these meanings are set. It is conceptualized as the "set point" of these meanings. The identity standard is a goal the self tries to achieve by adjusting perceptual inputs to match it.

Perceptual inputs are the meanings of the self in the situation based on feedback from others (the reflected appraisals). In social interaction, individuals assess how they are coming across in the situation by reading the reactions of others. Reactions that are perceived as self-relevant serve as inputs into the feedback system. This feedback, or input, is fed into a *comparator*, the third component of an identity. The comparator determines the extent to which perceptual inputs match identity standard meanings. If there is a match, identity verification is said to occur (Burke and Harrod 2005; Burke and Stets 1999; Riley and Burke 1995; Stets and Harrod 2004). However, if input meanings are at odds with identity standard meaning, it registers a discrepancy and there is identity non-verification. These verification and non-verification processes provide insight into how and why identities remain stable and how and why identity meanings change, respectively.

Emotions arise from identity verification and identity non-verification, resulting in positive or negative emotions, respectively. A great deal of research has been done examining the role of emotions in the identity verification process. Consistent with theoretical predictions, Burke and Harrod (2005) found that spouses reported negative

emotions regardless of whether spousal identity meanings were more positive (exceeded their identity standards) *or* more negative (fell below their identity standards).

On the other hand, laboratory experiments using the worker identity by Stets (2003; 2004; 2005) and her colleagues (Stets and Asencio 2008; Stets and Osborn 2008) have found that individuals over-rewarded for the work they perform (identity meanings exceed their identity standard) report positive emotions, whereas workers under-rewarded (identity meanings fall below their standard) report negative emotions. Stets (2005) explains that individuals may not have time to cognitively process the non-verifying feedback, so they feel positive emotions when they receive positive non-verifying feedback. An additional explanation is that the worker identity may not be salient to study participants. Asking participants to adopt the meanings associated with the role of worker does not guarantee that they have done so. Thus workers may not have been motivated to verify the worker identity. Emotions research has been extended to the specific emotions of anger (Stets and Tsushima 2001), and the emotions of anger, empathy, shame and guilt, known collectively as moral emotions (Stets and Carter 2006; Stets et al. 2008).

Output serves a dual purpose. First, output (behavior) is consistent with meanings held in the identity standard in the absence of any disturbance. Research already reviewed demonstrates this core theoretical idea that behavior is reflective of the self-meanings in the identity standard. Second, output can also be meaningful behavior whose purpose is to bring perceptual inputs in line with the standard. In this way, it is a

function of the relationship between perceptual meanings in the situation (described below in more detail) and identity standard meanings.

Situational meanings exist in social contexts; they are what individuals seek to control so that their self-in-situation meanings match their identity standard meanings. Individuals only try to control the meanings that are relevant to the salient, or enacted, identity; individuals do not try to control all meanings in a situation (Burke and Stets 2009; Stets and Carter 2010). If how individuals are coming across in a situation is perceived to be inconsistent with identity standard meanings, behavior is enacted until the situation meanings match the identity standard meanings. The meanings that are specific to the situations we are in are thus learned as these adjustments are made.

Identity theory assumes that identities resist change via the verification process. Specifically, when *perceptual input* (in the form of reflected appraisals) enters the control system it is *compared* to the meanings held in the *identity standard.* If the system registers no discrepancy, this means that self-in-situation meanings match identity standard meanings and the identity has been verified. Once the identity has been verified, nothing different needs to be done because meanings in the situation and meanings in the standard are congruent. Positive emotions ensue. This process of identity verification helps to explain the stability of identities, or more specifically the stability of the meanings held in the standards of identities.

Status and Resources

Recall that persons with high status have better social structural positions in the system of rank-ordered positions based on a shared standard of value (Ridgeway and

Walker 1995). Status is important in identity theory because it influences the identity verification process and identity change; however, to understand this effect it is necessary first to understand the concept of resources. Resources are defined as anything that sustains or enhances individuals or their interactions (Burke 2004; Freese and Burke 1994; Stets and Cast 2007). This definition underscores the importance of seeing resources in terms of what is *done* to sustain the self, identities and situations (Stets and Cast 2007). This defines resources as a process, not as an entity, and thus explains what resources *do*, not specifically what they are (Burke and Stets 2009; Freese and Burke 1994).

A distinction is made between active and potential resources (Freese and Burke 1994; Stets and Cast 2007). Active resources function to support the person or interaction in an immediate situation. They are tied to signs, which are stimuli that call up the same or a similar response previously evoked by anther stimulus (Burke and Stets 2009). For instance, a speedometer is a sign of the speed of a car. Active resources are varied; examples include a pen to write something, a car to provide transportation, and approval from significant others. They are in use in the "foreground" of interactions, and are personally experienced by the individuals that use them (Stets and Cast 2007).

Potential resources can be used to support the person or interaction in a future situation; they are in the background and are related to anticipated experiences. Potential resources are tied to symbols (as opposed to signs), which derive their meaning from social consensus, as opposed to signs, which are directly experienced (Burke and Stets

2009; Stets and Cast 2007). For instance, a car has symbolic meaning when it conveys the wealth and status of its owner.

Identity theory classifies two different sets of resources, referred to here as Set I and Set II resources. "The first set is the resources whose levels, flows, and transformations are indicated in the identity standard" (Burke and Stets 2009: 109); they are the resources controlled by interrelated systems of interaction. The second set is resources used to control the first set. Burke and Stets (2009) provide the example of a truck driver delivering gasoline: the gasoline delivery, controlled by the driver, is an example of Set I resources. The truck and roads used to deliver the gasoline are Set II resources. Set II resources are used to control the resources that bring about Set I resources (identity verification). It thus follows that persons who control more Set II resources should be in a better position to achieve identity verification.

Stets and Cast (1997) studied the link between resources and identity verification. Their investigation concentrated on "valued" resources—the material and non-material processes that maintain and improve individuals' existence. *Valued* resources are those that are likely to be consensually important in a culture, such as esteem and status. Their premise is that individuals use resources to confirm their own views, and others' self-views, during social interaction. Stets and Cast classify valued resources as personal, interpersonal, and structural.

Personal resources are things such as high levels of self-worth and self-efficacy that, in general, make individuals more effective at accomplishing their goals (Cast and Burke 2002; Stets and Cast 2007). Specifically, self-worth helps to buffer the self from

feedback inconsistent with meanings held in the identity standard and self-efficacy allows individuals to believe they are capable of achieving the goals they set for themselves—such as identity verification—and to persevere despite occasional failure (Cast and Burke 2002; Stets and Cast 2007).

Interpersonal resources are things like "taking the role of the other" in interactions and being liked and trusted by others with whom one interacts (Stets and Cast 2007). They arise within relationships and help support individuals and interactions. Taking the role of the other, and being like and trusted, can lead to support in relationships when conflict arises (Cast 2004) and can bind actors together and lead to trust and commitment to the relationship (Burke and Stets 1999).

Structural resources are those resources tied to or controlled by persons based on their positions in the social structure (Burke and Stets 2009; Stets and Cast 1997). This could include greater income, greater occupational prestige, and a higher level of education. Using these resources, high status actors demonstrate their knowledge and skills related to culturally relevant tasks. These actions, in turn, encourage deference, increase their access to structural resources, and provide increased status. This in turn provides further opportunities to structure social interactions to accomplish goals, such as identity verification.

In identity theory, researchers have examined the role of status; specifically, how education, occupation, and income (Cast, Stets, and Burke 1999; Cerven, Burke, and Harrod 2009; Stets and Cast 2007; Stets and Harrod 2004) and racial/ethnic background (Cerven, Burke, and Harrod 2009) affect the verification process. These studies use status

as, in essence, a proxy measure for the resources that individuals in privileged positions can control. In other words, structural resources are operationalized as whether or not individuals possess one or more markers of high status. These studies have shown that whites, and those with more education, more income, and a more prestigious occupation, will use their high status to further their goal of identity verification by using behaviors that connote power and control (Stets 1997). They will be more successful at identity verification than individuals with lower status because, through their control of more resources, they have the power and ability to define (or redefine) the meanings and expectations that comprise identities (Burke 2004).

Cerven, Burke and Harrod (2009) also examine how generational status, knowledge of one's own ethnic background, and level of certainty about one's ethnic identity influence the identity verification process. Whites, as the high status group, were better able to achieve identity verification. Respondents with more knowledge of their ethnic background were also better able to verify their ethnic identity, as were those with lower levels of uncertainty. They also found that as individuals became more embedded in American culture, it became harder for them to verify their ethnic identity. Additionally, in general, respondents who had difficulty verifying their ethnic identity reported lower levels of self-worth and self-efficacy. Theoretically, these findings point to the multiple ways in which control over resources by higher status individuals can help the self to achieve identity verification.

The Hierarchy of Identities

Because of the complexity of the society, individuals possess multiple types of all identities. People hold multiple meanings about themselves as unique individuals, as occupants of social structural positions, and as members of groups. The multiple person, role, and social identities people possess are organized into a hierarchy in our self-concept. Identities are ordered differently depending on the interactional, structural, and perceptual emphases within identity theory; each of these is discussed in turn.

In the interactional approach (McCall and Simmons 1978[1966]) identities are organized into a *prominence* hierarchy, or "ideal self," that reflects how individuals like to see themselves based on their ideals, desires, and the things they believe are important. In this view, individuals are aware of the prominence of their identities. The prominence hierarchy is a relatively enduring ordering of identities that keeps the self and its actions stable across situations and through time.

An identity's position in the prominence hierarchy depends on six factors. The first and most important factor is the personal commitment to the identity. This reflects the extent to which an individual is committed to the contents, or meanings, of an identity. If one has staked one's reputation on performing a role identity well, the identity will be high in the prominence hierarchy. Since individuals know what is important (prominent) to them, the second determinant of the prominence hierarchy requires self-assessment to determine if one is living up to one's imaginative view of the "ideal" role performance. The role performances that individuals believe come closest to their ideal are the identities that are most important. Third is the amount of support in the

form of appraisals that are provided by relevant others. For these appraisals to count, individuals need to believe that the evaluations are coming from competent individuals. Moreover, some opinions are more personally valuable than others. Particularly competent or valuable appraisals will be more heavily "weighted," according to McCall and Simmons; thus, the overall social support is an average of support from all relevant others. Resources (e.g., money, time) that are invested in the identity are the fourth determinant of the prominence hierarchy. The fifth and sixth factors, respectively, are the material benefits (e.g., money, prestige, favors) gained from an identity and the inherent gratifications (e.g., a sense of self-efficacy) obtained.

McCall and Simmons refer to these factors as commitment, self-support, social support, investment, extrinsic, and intrinsic gratifications, respectively. Although they note that the most important of the six factors is personal commitment to an identity, McCall and Simmons state that the relative weight of all of the factors change over time as individuals interact in society. For instance, the *investments* made might be the primary factor that determines the placement of an identity in the prominence hierarchy for a beginning golfer. *Social support* for the identity might be most important as the person struggles with his game and relies on the encouragement of others to keep playing. Perhaps upon entering and winning tournaments, *extrinsic rewards* are most important. Finally, the golfer might play for "love of the game" and the *intrinsic rewards* become more important. Many of the above factors require social interaction and thus underscore the importance of the social context in which identities are enacted.

In the interactional approach, identities are also organized into a salience hierarchy, or "situational self," that reflects the momentary preferences for specific goals. (Salience in the structural approach differs, as is discussed on the next page). Whereas in the above example, the factors that determined the prominence hierarchy spanned the course of an individual's lifelong relationship with golf, immediate changes in the context can temporarily shift around the identities in the salience hierarchy. The rewards desired will make one identity more salient than another. For instance, the identity of the experienced golfer who is playing for intrinsic gratification can temporarily be placed lower in the salience hierarchy if he is challenged to a tournament. In that case, his "golfer" identity might be replaced with a "competitive" identity given the immediate situation. Whereas the prominence hierarchy explains behaviors across situations and time, the salience hierarchy explains choices made in the immediate social context, as determined by what identity is most likely to result in the desired reward.

The salience hierarchy is determined by five factors; first is its position in the prominence hierarchy. The second determinant of an identity's place in the salience hierarchy is the support currently needed for the identity. Also at work are the intrinsic and extrinsic rewards that have usually been gained by enacting the identity. The fifth determinant is the opportunity for successful role identity enactment in terms of the amount of rewards that can be obtained.

In the structural emphasis (Stryker 2002[1980]) multiple identities are ordered into a salience hierarchy. However, identity salience in this view suggests stability across time and situations in that it explains why some identities are more likely to be activated

in a situation or in multiple situations (Stryker and Burke 2000). Thus, for interactional theorists, prominence explains stability of self and lines of action (behaviors). For structural theorists, salience explains stability of self and lines of action. In the structural emphasis, individuals are unaware of the ordering of their identities in the salience hierarchy. An identity's order in the salience hierarchy is determined by one's behavior. For instance, spending time studying instead of spending time with a friend indicates to the self that the student identity is higher in salience than the friend identity.

Identities higher in salience are the identities that are more likely to be enacted. Either the self or another in a situation can invoke an identity. In other words, the self can purposefully call up an identity in a situation or other persons in the situation can encourage the person to play out the identity (Owens and Serpe 2003). For instance, an individual can freely chose to call up an identity, say an "economist" identity, to explain "credit default swaps." Alternatively, someone could call up the identity, in essence putting the individual on the spot, by asking at a party, "Hey! Why is our economy in such bad shape?"

The amount of commitment one has to the identity is one of the main determinants of its place in the salience hierarchy. Commitment has two dimensions. The first is the extensive or interactional dimension that denotes the number of social relations tied to an identity; it can be measured by the number of persons one interacts with and the time, energy, and resources expended. The second is the intensive or affective dimension, which refers to the depth and emotional significance of the ties individuals have to others (Owens and Serpe 2003). It can be measured by the costs

incurred to existing relationships if the identity is relinquished (Stryker and Burke 2000). The salience hierarchy serves to organize identities in a way that reflects the fact that society is complex, differentiated, and organized hierarchically. The self is linked to the social structure through the salience hierarchy and it is the social structure (our ties to individuals) that often determines which identity is enacted. For instance, an individual who knows 20 people as a university professor and 5 as a yoga instructor would be expected to have a professor identity that is higher in salience than that of a yoga instructor.

There has been an extensive amount of research documenting the relationship between salience and commitment (Callero 1985; Stryker and Serpe 1982). For instance, using a sample of incoming freshmen at a residential college, Serpe (1987) examined the relationship between interactional commitment, salience, and affective commitment at three time points. Interactional commitment was operationalized as the number of people the individual became friends with through each identity. Salience was measured using a method of paired-comparison scaling in which individuals chose one identity over another using all possible unique pairings. A sample question was, "Which of the following is more important to the way you think of yourself: coursework or dating?" (Serpe 1987: 48). Given that the sample was incoming freshmen and the potential "loss" of others through a new identity was not realistic, Serpe used reflected appraisals as a proxy measure for affective commitment. He theorized that if individuals received high positive evaluations from significant others related to specific roles, this meant they would have a great deal to lose if they no longer functioned in those roles. Thus, he

measured affective commitment as how good or successful the individual's parents and best friend thought they were in the context of each identity.

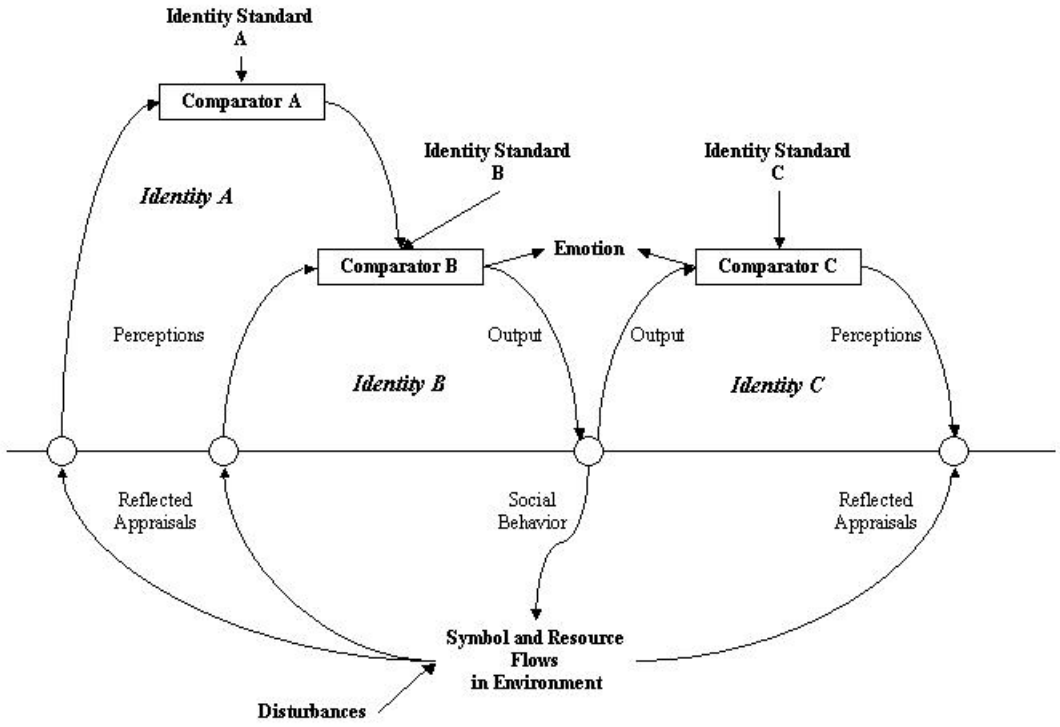
A questionnaire was administered in September, October, and December during one academic school year. Serpe's research used five identities associated with college student life: athletic/recreational, coursework, dating, extracurricular, and personal involvement. In a separate survey, college freshmen in their first semester were asked how free they felt to decide what to do in each of the areas; this was used to assess the social structural constraints associated with each of the five identities. Less freedom to do what they wanted indicated an identity with high social structural constraints. In ascending order of freedom, students ranked the identities coursework, extracurricular, athletic/recreational, personal involvement, and dating. Residential first-time freshmen students were purposefully chosen since they have many opportunities to break old interaction patterns and establish new ones.

Consistent with identity theory, which assumes an overall coherent structure of the self, Serpe found a great deal of stability across time for the structure of the different identities. Specifically, the hypothesized effect of both interactional and affective commitment on identity salience was supported. Change in an identity's placement in the salience hierarchy occurred for those identities with less rigid social structural constraints—namely the athletic/recreational and dating identities. Thus, when individuals are free to choose their interactions, they increase the likelihood of invoking an identity, which raises its salience.

Perceptual identity theorists order identities in a hierarchy based on a control system (Burke 2003). Recall that the identity model for one identity consists of two interrelated processes that denote stimuli from the environment and internal processes. Within an individual reside all of the meanings for a particular identity—the meanings define how one sees oneself in a particular identity (identity standard). These meanings that define the identity are judged against the self-perceptions of others; these generate reflected appraisals of how persons are coming across in a situation. If reflected appraisals do not match the identity meanings, individuals will likely modify their behavior so that subsequent reflected appraisals match their self-definition. The process operates to control meanings in the environment so they align with identity meanings. Alternatives to accomplish this goal, should behavior be insufficient, include altering perceptions, exiting the situation, or changing the identity standard meanings.

Each identity has a feedback loop or control system. When two identities are activated in a situation, both control systems are activated and each tries to maintain meanings in the situation consistent with the meanings in their respective identities. Burke (2003) diagrams the simultaneous enactment of one higher level identity and two lower level identities; that figure is reproduced as Figure 2. Outputs from the lower level identities are behaviors enacted in the environment. In this model, output from the top-level identity's control system is fed into the identity meanings of the lower level identity. An identity is more likely to be played out within and across situations depending on the success of matching identity meanings with reflected appraisals.

Figure 2. Model for Three Identities within a Person



Identity Change

To say that identity change has occurred is to say that the meanings that define who one is have changed. As an example, one individual may become *more* responsible, studious, and motivated in the student identity. Another individual might become *less* responsible, studious and motivated in the student identity. When these meanings shift along a continuum of meaning, identity change has occurred.

There are four conditions under which identity change occurs (Burke 2006; Burke and Stets 2009). First, identity change can occur if two or more identities with shared meanings have conflicting standards and are activated together in a situation.

Simultaneous activation of identities with shared meanings, but with different standards, results in verifying one identity at the expense of not verifying another identity unless both undergo shifts in their meanings so that they can be verified simultaneously. This is similar to the neuroscience statement that neurons that fire together, wire together. Burke (2006) investigated these ideas using the spousal and gender identities of newly married couples since both share the meanings of masculinity and femininity. Those with a more feminine identity in one year increased the femininity of the spousal identity in the following year, and vice versa.

Second, behavior that does not match an identity standard can lead to identity change because the identity standard will shift in the direction implied by the behavior. For example, Stets (1997) found that low status individuals engaged in negative conversation tactics when their self-worth was disturbed. She theorized that over time, an individual's control identity would shift towards being more dominant to match their behaviors. Research in 2006 (Burke) confirmed this hypothesis. Burke measured the spousal and gender identities of newly married couples along the dimensions of masculinity and femininity. He also collected information about the household chores each spouse engaged in; these also varied in terms of how traditionally masculine (e.g., lawn maintenance) or traditionally feminine (e.g., dishwashing) they were. He found that, over the course of one year, the spousal identities of individuals who were engaging in more masculine behaviors than their identity standard's meanings became more masculine. Those engaging in more feminine behaviors became more feminine.

Third, through taking the role of the other, an identity standard can adapt to another person's identity to bring about what is termed a mutual verification context (Burke and Cast 1997; Burke and Stets 1999). Burke and Cast (1997) measured the gender identities of newly married couples as well as the extent to which each "took the role of the other." This was measured by responses to five items (scored 0=never to 4=very often), such as "I understand my spouse's feelings quite well" and "I have difficulty seeing my spouse's viewpoint in an argument" (reverse coded). They found that greater role taking led to shifting one's gender identity toward their spouse's gender identity. Specifically, men become more feminine and women become more masculine. This occurs so as to reduce conflict and persistent discrepancies between self-in-situation and identity standard meanings.

Last, changes in the context in which identities are invoked can change the meanings held in the identity standard. For instance, Burke and Cast (1997) investigated how the birth of a first child affected the gender identities of newly married men and women. First, they investigated the extent to which identity change occurred and found that both men and women's gender identities remained quite stable over time, but that change did occur. They hypothesized and found that, with the birth of a child, men became more masculine and women became more feminine in their gender identities. These findings are explained by noting first that persistent mismatches between an identity standard and inputs are likely when individuals take on new roles, such as that of parent. Because the roles of mother and father are "gendered," identities shift in those directions with the birth of a child. Second, the parent role (once entered into) can be

seen as an obligatory (as opposed to a voluntary) identity (Thoits 2003). Thus, persistent disturbances are more likely to lead to identity change since many behavioral changes, like exiting the situation, are not possible.

Burke and Asencio (2007) also investigate the contextual factors that lead to identity change with a sample of incarcerated adults. Noting that identity change depends on the conditions under which interaction occurs, Burke and Asencio examined the influence of reflected appraisals from guards, peers, and significant others on the identities of individuals in a drug rehabilitation program. They found that the extent to which reflected appraisals became internalized and led to identity change was conditioned on which identity was investigated as well as the source of the reflected appraisals.

Summary of Theory and Research on Identity Change

Beginning from its earliest roots in symbolic interactionism, identity theory has recognized the importance of the social context for social interaction. The social contexts in which identities are played out produce reflected appraisals, which of are vital importance to both identity stability and identity change. Reflected appraisals can be altered as a result of losing specific others, gaining specific others, or even when the reactions and feedback from others fluctuate. The salience of identities and commitment to identities are directly linked to one's interactional contexts in that they create expectations for identity performances. The social context, specifically the social positions that one occupies, influences one's status and the resources one can control. Disruptions to social contexts, such as transitioning to a new social environment, have

implications for identity change. Each of the above—reflected appraisals, salience, commitment, status, and disruptions to social contexts—have been studied in identity theory; however there are limitations to these studies.

Bases of Identities

Two studies have examined identity change with the spousal identity and gender identity (Burke 2006; Burke and Cast 1997). Burke (2006) found that individuals with more feminine identities in one year increased the femininity of their spousal identity in the following year, and vice versa. This research also demonstrated that behavior that is inconsistent with identity meanings shift the meanings of the identity over time. Burke and Cast (1997) showed how changes in individuals' social contexts, like becoming first-time parents, change identity standard meanings. These researchers also found that individuals who took the role of their spouse incorporated aspects of their spouse into themselves thereby changing the gender identity meanings. While these studies are strong, they do not address identity change with either person or social identities.

The ethnic identity is thus studied in this research so that identity change can be investigated using a social identity, which has not yet been done in identity theory. Identity theory has examined identity change only with identities conceptualized as role identities. Evidence that the ethnic identity changes as a result of discrepancy and other theoretically relevant variables would provide additional evidence of the robustness of identity theory.

The ethnic identity was purposefully chosen also because it is a social identity based on ascribed membership, which might make it more resistant to change than other

identities (Ethier and Deaux 1994). Additionally, it is possible that features unique to social identities, compared to role identities (Burke and Stets 2009), might differentially influence identity change For instance, social identity meanings are tied to social groups as opposed to being tied to a particular role and counterrole, which implies that the meanings are tied to more others. This might make identity meanings tied to social identities more resistant to change. Lastly, behavior for social identities is similar to others, whereas behavior for role identities is complementary to others. If individuals are less free to determine their courses of action, if they are restricted in their behaviors to be "like" others, this could inhibit changes to their identity meanings.

Reflected Appraisals

Burke and Asencio (2007) examined the influence of reflected appraisals from guards, peers, and significant others on the drug user, worker, and criminal identities of individuals in a drug rehabilitation program. Their study used single measures of identity meanings and reflected appraisals. For example, the criminal identity was anchored with 1 corresponding to being a "law abiding person" and 5 corresponding to being an "unlawful person." Using these single measures of identity meanings and reflected appraisals, they found theoretical support for the idea that reflected appraisals are internalized and lead to identity change. This finding was conditional based on which identity was investigated and the source of the reflected appraisals.

In this dissertation, I use meanings along a multitude of dimensions to measure the identity standard at two points in time. While measures based on single indicators have successfully been used in identity change research, as noted above, using the *set* of

meanings is important because it captures both the idiosyncratic and cultural meanings attached to an identity. Reflected appraisals are measured using the exact and full set of identity meaning items; this has not yet been done in identity change research. This is an important theoretical and methodological advancement in the study of identity change because it captures the *direct* correspondence between identity standard meanings and reflected appraisals. It is therefore the most accurate and comprehensive way to obtain a measure of discrepancy that reflects the incongruence between self-in-situation meanings and identity standard meanings.

The Hierarchy of Identities

In the structural variant, identities are tied to the social structure through commitment, and commitment (strong ties to multiple others) influences the order of identities in the salience hierarchy. Recall that the salience hierarchy is the likelihood that an identity will be activated. Research by Serpe (1987) investigated identity change in terms of the stability and movement within the salience hierarchy. Identities that moved up in the salience hierarchy were those identities with less rigid social structural constraints—namely the athletic/recreational and dating identities—those identities for which individuals were free to choose their interactions. In other words, freedom to choose to enact an identity caused it to move up in the salience hierarchy.

Theorists have indicated that theoretical integration is needed between the structural and perceptual emphases in identity theory (Burke and Stets 2009; Stryker and Burke 2000). One way this can, and has, been done is to include theoretically important factors from the structural emphasis in studies within the perceptual emphasis in identity

theory. I further this integration by including measures of salience and qualitative commitment in my examination of identity change. Specifically, the main effect of salience and commitment on identity change is examined. One way that commitment can exert an influence on identity change is because strong ties to multiple others create expectations for identity performances. To the extent that this results in consistent behavior and consistent reflected appraisals, identities higher in commitment can be expected to undergo less identity change than identities lower in commitment. As indicated, when individuals are around others that know them well, they often do not change. Similarly, identities higher in salience are expected to undergo less change.

Status and Resources

As noted, identity theorists have examined how status, generally as a proxy measure for structural resources, affects the verification process (Cast, Stets, and Burke 1999; Cerven, Burke, and Harrod 2009; Stets and Cast 2007; Stets and Harrod 2004). Recall that structural resources are tied to or controlled by persons based on their social structural positions (Burke and Stets 2009; Stets and Cast 1997). High status actors further their goal of identity verification by using behaviors that connote power and control, and by successfully demonstrating their knowledge and skills, which encourages deference.

In addition to structural resources, high status actors may also possess more personal resources, such as high levels of self-worth, which can buffer the self when self-in-situation meanings do not match identity standard meanings. Likewise, high self-efficacy allows individuals to believe they can accomplish goals they set for themselves

and to persevere even if they occasionally fail (Cast and Burke 2002; Stets and Cast 2007). In general, personal and structural resources can make individuals more effective at accomplishing their interactional goals; therefore, it is expected that high status others will experience less identity change.

Disruptions to Social Contexts

In addition to the openness of the social structure, there are times when individuals are perhaps more open to change than at other times. Because identity change depends on the conditions under which interaction occurs, direct changes to one's social context, such as the birth of a child, can lead to identity change. Similarly, Burke and Asencio (2007) investigated the contextual factors that lead to identity change with a sample of incarcerated adults. These research studies have shown that transitional life events are an important theoretical context for examining identity change. During these times, the social environment is substantially altered, as is the case in the current study when individuals generally spend more time at school and less time with family.

Research has shown that transitional life events, such as becoming a parent for the first time can lead to identity change. Similar to the transition to parenthood, entering college is a major life event that is based on a recognized stage in the life cycle. Unlike becoming a parent, which often signals a period of time when individuals enter and settle into long-term adult roles, the college years are typically a period of frequent change and exploration (Arnett 2000). When someone becomes a parent for the first time, they are acquiring a new identity (mother or father). This is somewhat different from becoming a college student, which could be seen as shifting meanings from "high school student" to

"college student." While both life events can lead to identity change, different life events are likely to lead to different identity change.

The above are major life events that would be expected to cause a significant disruption to one's sense of self, and more specifically, the meanings held in the identity standard. Additionally, there are smaller, situational changes individuals encounter more regularly that may lead to identity change. For example, individuals change jobs, move out of their parent's home, move in with friends and undergo a host of changes to their social contexts that might have an impact on identity change. Therefore, I examine the influence of two of these "smaller" changes—namely, changes to individuals' work and home environments—on identity change.

The Current Study on Identity Change

To examine how identity processes are related to identity change, three identities are examined. The gender and student identities are conceptualized as *role identities.* They are identities tied to the different positions that people occupy in the social structure. The ethnic identity is conceptualized as a *social identity* based on a group comprised of individuals who share the view that they are members of the same social category.

As a role identity, the *student identity* was selected because of its appropriateness to the population studied. The college years (18-25 years of age) are a time of "emerging adulthood," a distinct developmental stage theoretically and empirically distinct from adolescence and young adulthood (Arnett 2000). In the area of work, there is a shift from part-time work that is not relevant to an individual's future career to work that will lead

to the fulfillment of career aspirations. This often includes changes in educational goals as well, such as considering graduate school and changing majors, perhaps more than once. Research indicates that love and dating relationships change from short-term and recreational (in adolescence) to long-term and serious (in emerging adulthood) as individuals consider who they want their life partner to be (Arnett 2000). Additionally, the college years are a time when individuals' values, attitudes, and worldviews become more liberal, such as becoming less ethnocentric and expressing greater social, racial, ethnic, and political tolerance (Pascarella, Edison, Nora, Hagedorn, and Terenzini 1996).

A goal of this research was to make the survey meaningful and interesting to the student population. It was thought that asking students how they see themselves as "students" would accomplish this goal. Additionally, being new to the campus provides an opportunity to enact behaviors not tried in high school or behaviors that are treated differently in college than in high school (e.g., cutting class). In identity theory, behavior that does not match an identity standard can lead to identity change because the standard will shift in the direction implied by the behavior (Burke 2006). For instance, individuals that define themselves as academically responsible, but repeatedly skip class, can expect the meanings in their identity standards to shift in the direction implied by the behavior (away from seeing oneself as academically irresponsible). Thus, although behaviors are not assessed in the current research, different behaviors and the internalization of those behaviors (Baumeister 1998) can lead to identity change.

Gender identity is conceptualized as a role identity because it is a societal category individuals occupy that is associated with role expectations for guiding

individuals' attitudes and behaviors. Additionally, a masculine gender identity is often defined as not being feminine, which illustrates the counter-role identities of feminine and masculine gender identities. It was selected because cultural pre- and proscriptions usually limit the meanings of masculinity and femininity for males and females. In other words, males and females are constrained in their gender identities (Burke and Cast 1997). However, a new environment may provide an opportunity for individuals to experiment with their gender identities. There is evidence that college tends to move students toward more egalitarian gender role attitudes (Pascarella and Terenzini 2005). These findings are attributable to college attendance; in other words, they control for other influences such as maturation. However, it is unknown if a change in this direction will be seen from the beginning to the end of one quarter. Lastly, including gender identity replicates earlier research, but with a different population.

The *ethnic identity* is conceptualized as a social identity. In addition to testing identity control processes with a social identity, it is equally important to consider the impact of transitional events in individuals' lives for social identities. While role identities are directly related to other people through counter role identities, social identities are also related to other people. If identification to a group is supported in a particular context, what happens when individuals leave those contexts? What happens when individuals move into different contexts—as often happens when individuals begin their college education (Ethier and Deaux 1994)? The ethnic identity is included to examine what happens when there is a disruption to the network of social relations that previously supported the identity (Ethier and Deaux 1994). The ethnic identity is also

included to continue a new line of research in identity theory (Cerven, Burke, and Harrod 2009).

Identity Meanings, Reflected Appraisals and Discrepancy

If identity verification has not occurred because meanings in the situation do not match the meanings held in the identity standard, individuals will feel distress, such as experiencing negative emotions (Burke 1991; Burke and Harrod 2005; Stets and Osborn 2008). Individuals will initiate behavior to try to bring the two sets of meanings into alignment to alleviate this distress. Goal directed behaviors will be enacted to bring inputs (perceptions) in line with the identity standard. If the initial behavior is unsuccessful, the control process continues and the individual will again process inputs that are a mismatch to the standard and may try again (perhaps a different behavior) to bring the meanings into alignment and therefore relieve the distress caused by the dissonance. If enough countervailing evidence is perceived (inputs consistently do not match the standard), for instance if behavioral changes (outputs) are insufficient to achieve the desired result (verification), the meanings held in the standard will change (Burke and Cast 1997). In fact, identity meanings held in the standard are always changing, but these changes are slow compared to the speed at which outputs (behaviors) change (Burke and Stets 2009).

Identity non-verification is determined by measuring the degree to which reflected appraisals differ from identity standard meanings. If an identity is receiving verification (inputs in the form of reflected appraisals match the standard) there is no motivation to change the meanings held in the standard. However, if identity verification is not

forthcoming, there is motivation to change the meanings. Identity theory thus predicts that discrepancy will lead to identity change. Moreover, to reduce the discrepancy created by a mismatch between reflected appraisals and identity standard meanings, identity theory predicts that identity change will be in the direction of reflected appraisals (Burke and Asencio 2007; Burke and Cast 1997; Burke and Stets 2009). The following related hypotheses are offered:

H_{1a}: *Higher levels of discrepancy will lead to greater identity change.*

H_{1b}: *Identity change will be in the direction of reflected appraisals.*

The Hierarchy of Identities

Recall that one way identities are theoretically ordered for an individual is in a hierarchy of salience (Stryker 2002[1980]), which is defined as the probability that an identity will be activated in a situation; in essence the readiness to act out an identity within and across situations. Identities near the top of the hierarchy have a higher probability of being activated. In this conceptualization, individuals are unaware of which identities are near the top or bottom—the choices they make (their behaviors within and across situations) are used to infer the placement of identities in the salience hierarchy (Stryker and Serpe 1994). For instance, if an individual talks about being a student to servers at restaurants, with a person she just met, and at a conference with co-workers, identity theorists infer the high salience of her student identity. The salience hierarchy is used to predict what behavior a person will enact when different opportunities are available and these competing opportunities support different identities.

In the identity model in the perceptual emphasis, salience is also conceptualized as the likelihood that an identity will be played out in a situation. Additionally, an activated identity is an identity that is attempting to be verified (Burke and Stets 2009). In trying to verify itself, the identity will guide the behaviors of the individual to achieve its goal. In other words, more salient identities will guide the behavior of individuals and those behaviors will be oriented to achieving verification. Thus, more salient identities have more opportunities to be verified and may have a greater chance of being verified. The following hypothesis is offered:

> *H_2: Identities higher in salience will change less than identities lower in salience.*

The main determinant of the salience hierarchy is the level of commitment one has to the people connected to that identity (Stryker 2002[1980]; Stryker and Serpe 1994). Commitment is conceptualized as the number of ties an individual has to others resulting from an identity and the affective strength of those ties. Commitment is not seen as part of the self-concept. Instead, it is a theoretical and conceptual link from the individual to society that indicates the extent to which an individual's relationships to specific sets of others depend on being a particular kind of person. A person is more committed to the extent that the maintenance of ties to others associated with an identity is important. When individuals have high commitment to an identity, there are negative costs associated with not enacting it because meaningful relationships with others to whom they are tied through that identity might be, at least temporarily, forfeited. If individuals lose the ties to others, or the ties become weaker, the identity will fall lower

in the salience hierarchy. Thus, identities rise and fall in the salience hierarchy as a result of their level of commitment. And the level of commitment is intimately tied to individuals' patterns of interaction.

The ties to others through an identity may become weaker when individuals experience a disruption in their social context, such as transitioning to college. As mentioned, when others know individuals well, it sets up and maintains expectations for certain thoughts and behaviors. In a new environment, there is more possibility for novelty. Additionally, identity non-verification might occur because individuals begin interacting with different people. Different people may lead to different, and perhaps non-verifying, feedback about how individuals are coming across in a situation. So in addition to losing reflected appraisals from one group, individuals likely gain reflected appraisals from another group. These become new meanings with the result that how individuals see themselves may change. Self-change is therefore intimately linked to the interpersonal relationships individuals have and the contexts in which they interact. In this research, the affective strength of ties is used to measure commitment. Like salience, identities to which individuals are more committed should change less; therefore, the following hypothesis is offered:

> H_3: *Identities higher in commitment will change less than identities lower in commitment.*

Status and Resources

In this research, respondents do not differ significantly in terms of their education, occupation, or personal income. They do, however, differ in terms of their sex and

race/ethnicity, so these serve as measures of status differences with high status actors (males and whites) having greater access to resources. Depending on status and the levels of resources controlled, individuals will be better or worse at achieving identity verification in the presence of others (Stets and Harrod 2004). Identity theorists assert that greater resources (held by higher status individual) lead to greater identity verification (Burke 2004; Freese and Burke 1994; Burke and Stets 2009; Stets and Cast 2007).

Those with higher status have greater resources and will be better able to achieve identity verification because they have more control over the situation and situationally relevant meanings. This affords them more opportunities to direct the flow of interactional resources for their own benefit so that identity verification is achieved. For instance, they can direct the flow of conversation, make more suggestions, and persuade others (with lower status) to follow. This deference allows them to be in a better position to bring about a desired goal—such as identity verification. Additionally, high status actors likely have greater access to personal and interactional resources that allow them to sustain less change to their identity standard meanings. Higher status others will therefore experience less identity change; these ideas are formalized below:

H_4: Males, compared to females, will experiences less identity change.

H_5: Caucasian, non-Hispanics, compared to minority individuals, will experience less identity change.

Disruptions to Social Contexts

Identities are *unlikely to change* when individuals have established mutual verifying contexts, situations where two individuals work together so that the identities of both, such as the spouse identities of a husband and wife, can be verified (Burke and Stets 1999; Stets and Burke 2005). People who know a person well expect that individual to carry out established ways of behaving, which has the effect of inhibiting change. The mutual verification of identities has also occurred in a small group setting in which individuals who did not initially know each had to work together on a problem solving task and arrive at a consensus (Riley and Burke 1995). Establishing and maintaining these mutual verifying contexts can be seen as a form of selective interaction (Swann 1987) in which individuals choose to interact with others who confirm their identities.

Individuals have the ability to change the interaction patterns when they are not constrained by their social networks. Individuals can, in these circumstances, redefine who they are and these redefinitions create new and different expectations for their own behavior. This can and often does occur in a college setting when individuals create new social contexts for their identities to be played out. It is not just going to college that affects the change—it is the reduced interactions with family members and old friends and new interactions with new people at college (their reflected appraisals change).

Interpersonal relationships are important if the motivation for change is internal (Baumeister 1998). Establishing or maintaining supportive interpersonal relationships, and ending unsupportive relationships, are crucial for someone who is attempting to change. As in the above examples, it is important, and often necessary, to remove an

individual from established interpersonal contacts to achieve successful change. Sometimes an individual may not want to change, but will be forced to change due to new situations and new interactants. An extreme example of this is brainwashing, which is a deliberate attempt by others to bring about extensive change in a person's self-concept. The most successful brainwashing programs separate the individual from everyone he or she knows (Baumeister 1986).

Regardless of whether change is initiated from the individual wishing to change or if change is initiated from a source outside the individual (such as changes in the social contexts in which identities are played out), new relationships have consequences. Individuals lose the opportunity structure they established, thus making it harder to achieve confirmation of their self-view. The result is often identity change—again, whether it is desired or not. When the self changes, therefore, it is intimately linked to interpersonal relationships (Baumeister 1998); for instance, the breaking of relationship ties. As summed up by Baumeister (1998: 702-3) "the self becomes much more malleable when deprived of contact with the people that know it well."

It is hypothesized, following studies by Harter on self-esteem (1993) and identity change already reviewed, that identity change will be more likely to occur for individuals entering college when their contact with family members and friends they had in high school is first reduced. Identity change is more likely as these old connections fade, and new ones are established. While it might be expected that identity changes occur for students attending a residential campus compared to a non-residential campus, the opportunity for change, I hypothesize, is present regardless of residence status. While it

is true that residential students spend more time away from home (and established patterns of interaction there), all students are likely to experience a break from their old network.

In much of the research involving identity change, other people, through the reflected appraisals received, are the source of identity change. Thus, the social context cannot be divorced from reflected appraisals. Two hypotheses (1_a and 1_b) have already been offered regarding the role of reflected appraisals. Additionally, in the current study, I determine if respondents have experienced two specific changes in their social environment: 1) their living arrangements (e.g., with parents or with roommates) and 2) employment status measured as full-time, part-time, or not employed. Previous research indicates that if change is to occur, it will occur when individuals are away from people who know them well and have come to expect them to act a certain way. The above measures will allow me to determine the extent to which two of the primary interactional contexts in which respondents enact their various identities changed over the course of the study. Thus, I offer the following hypotheses:

H_6: *Individuals who experience a change in who they live with will experience more identity change than individuals who did not experience such a change.*

H_7: *Individuals who experience a change in their employment status with will experience more identity change than individuals who did not experience such a change.*

Summary of Hypotheses

Eight hypotheses are offered related to identity change. Hypotheses 1_a and 1_b state that greater discrepancy will lead to greater identity change; and that identity change will be towards reflected appraisals. Hypotheses 2 through 5 address the theoretical processes in identity theory that *reduce* the likelihood of identity change. Identities higher in salience (Hypothesis 2) and identities to which individuals are more committed (Hypothesis 3) will change less than identities lower in salience and commitment. Based on their higher positional status, it will be less likely for some groups (males and whites) to experience identity change—these are Hypotheses 4 and 5, respectively. The last two hypotheses are related to the factors associated with an increased likelihood of identity change. Hypothesis 6 states that individuals who experienced a change in who they live with will experience greater identity change, compared to individuals that did not experience such a change. Similarly, Hypothesis 7 states that individuals who experienced a change in their employment status will experience greater identity change than individuals that did not experience such a change.

METHODOLOGY

This chapter describes the data collection method, participant recruitment, data collection procedures, study respondents, and the content of the survey instrument. As an overview, identity change was investigated using a sample of University of California, Riverside (UCR) undergraduate students who are 18 years of age or older. Respondents were recruited from 13 undergraduate classes in the winter (6 classes) and spring (7 classes) quarters during the 2008-2009 academic year. Matched data is analyzed for 704 respondents in winter and 810 respondents in the spring.

To investigate identity change, a longitudinal research design was used. The decision was made to collect all survey data via the Internet using an online survey program. This mode of data collection was chosen because respondents could access the survey easily and complete it privately. Additionally, it did not disrupt class instruction.

Data were collected four times over the course of the 2008-09 academic year; one survey at the beginning of the quarter and one survey at the end of the quarter in the winter and spring terms. Most respondents completed a survey twice over the course of one quarter. Extra credit was offered for participating. Students could write a two to four page essay in lieu of participating in the online survey. The essay, in which students described how they thought they had changed since beginning college, was also offered to students enrolled in multiple classes offering the survey in one quarter and to students under the age of 18. Due to subsequent enrollment in courses targeted for data collection, some students participated in both quarters. Additionally, all winter respondents were invited to complete the final online survey at the end of the academic year in June 2009.

Sample

A list of courses with high freshman enrollment was obtained for each quarter. Before instruction began, an email announcement to each professor was sent in which I set forth the details of my study (see Appendix A for an example). Thirteen courses with enrollment of 3,666 students participated.[1] An effort was made to include respondents from a diverse group of classes. The College of Humanities and Social Sciences (CHASS) comprised approximately 48% of enrollment. Bourns College of Engineering students comprised 35% of enrollment, and 17% of the students were enrolled in courses from the College of Natural and Agricultural Sciences (CNAS). In fall 2008 (the quarter for which data were available), 57% of undergraduates were enrollment in CHASS, 11% in Bourns, and 32% in CNAS.

Of the 3,666 students enrolled, 1,856 (51%) completed the first survey (T_1). Participation in the second survey (T_2) was quite high, with 1,514 of 1,856 students, or 82%, completing the second survey at the end of the quarter. Although participation in the second survey was good, the response rate of 51% for the first survey was lower than expected. With only half of the eligible students taking part in the survey, it is possible that sampling bias was introduced. For instance, it is possible that students that expected to do poorly in the course participated at higher levels because extra credit was offered. Alternatively, students who expected to do well in the course may have participated at higher levels owing perhaps to a higher overall level of motivation to succeed. However, there is nothing in identity theory to indicate that theoretical processes operate for a specific type of individual. This is not to say that different populations do not experience

more or less identity change—just that the processes that produce these changes are the same across different kinds of individuals.

Approximately half (55%) of the final respondents were from CHASS, 32% were from Bourns, and 13% were from CNAS. Although initial participation was about 50%, the demographic characteristics of study respondents closely match the demographic characteristics of UCR undergraduate students. During the time of my study (the 2008-09 school year), 52% of university undergraduate students were women and 48% were men. More females (62%) than males (38%) participated in my study. Approximately 41% of UCR undergraduate students were Asian/Pacific Islander, 28% were Hispanic, 17% were White, and 8% were Black/African American. This closely matched my sample, which contained 45% Asian/Pacific Islander, 31% Hispanic, 17% White, and 7% Black/African American. The average age of students in my sample, 19, was younger than the average age of UCR undergraduate students (approximately 20.5). This was expected because I specifically targeted freshman students. Of the 29,389 UCR undergraduate students enrolled during the 2008-09 academic school year, 95% were enrolled full-time and 5% were enrolled part-time. Likewise, my sample was comprised of 98% who described themselves as enrolled in school full-time.[2]

I made an announcement on the first or second day of class inviting all students to participate in the research.[3] In most classes, I had access to the online course site so that I could post instructions, upload study materials, and email students to remind them of deadlines. This also enabled students to email me directly if they had questions or

experienced any difficulties participating in the research. In other classes, I worked with the professor or a teaching assistant to communicate with students.

The first survey was available on the Internet for 10 days beginning the first day of the winter and spring quarter. The second survey was available for 10 days prior to final exams.[4] Each professor determined the amount of extra credit to provide. Partial extra credit was awarded for partial participation (e.g., ½ credit for completing the first or second survey only).

The spring 2009 data collection was unique in that students that participated in winter were invited via email to complete the June survey. Many students completing the study for extra credit in the spring had previously participated in winter. I reminded these students that extra credit for participation was currently being offered in their class.

Students that participated in the winter that were not enrolled in a spring course offering the survey for extra credit also received advanced notice. They were reminded of their prior participation in winter, and that they had provided their email address so that I could contact them when the follow-up study was being conducted. I provided the dates the survey would be available, the URL, login instructions, and how to retrieve their password if they no longer had it. I stressed how important their participation was to my research since they had participated earlier in the academic year. Since extra credit could not be offered to these students, I instituted a lottery drawing in which 10 students would win $50. Of the 1,510 former respondents, 127 (8.4%) participated for an entry in the lottery.

Survey Instrument

A pilot test in summer 2008 ensured that the instructions provided to students were clear and that concepts were presented in an easy-to understand manner. Respondents required an average of 36 minutes to complete the survey each time. The survey instrument captured the meanings of the gender identity, ethnic identity, and college student identity by having respondents answer questions that described how they saw themselves in each of these identities. A respondent was asked to "think about how you see yourself in terms of…" "being masculine or feminine," "your ethnicity," and "being a student." Responses to these questions were how the meanings held in the standard of each identity were measured.

In identity theory, reflected appraisals are how people see themselves reflected in the actions of others (Burke and Stets 2009). They are the feedback that individuals obtain when they interact with others. The term derives from Cooley's (2005[1902]) idea of the looking glass self—that we come to see ourselves as others see us because their reactions are returned to us, as in a mirror's reflection. Consequently, it was necessary to measure reflected appraisals in a way that allowed for a one-to-one comparison between the meanings held in the identity standards and how individuals think others see them along those same dimensions. Thus, respondents were asked to "think about how you think *other people see you* in terms of…" "being masculine or feminine," "your ethnicity," and "being a student" using the same adjective pairs used to assess identity meanings.

Respondents indicated the salience of each identity (Stryker 2002[1980]), defined as the probability that an identity will be activated in a situation. The level of commitment individuals had to the people connected to each identity was also obtained. Respondents indicated their employment status and with whom they currently lived. Changes in these situational contexts are theoretically hypothesized to lead to identity change. Background information such as sex, age, race/ethnicity, and grade level were also collected.

Preparing Data for Analysis

All data were arranged in a stacked, or *long*, file with T_2 data appended below T_1 data. In this arrangement, a participant can occur as more than one observation and all data, regardless of time of collection, is stacked on top of each other. Scale variables for identity meanings, reflected appraisals, salience and commitment were created when the data was in this *long* form. Survey data from one respondent was removed based on a T_1 discrepancy score for the ethnic identity that was 7.3 standard deviation units above the mean and two standard deviation units away from the next closest observation's discrepancy score.

Additional data preparation was necessary to analyze change over time. This required rearrangement of the data into a *wide* format where each observation contained data for multiple periods. Instead of T_1 and T_2 data stacked on top of each other, T_2 data was placed *after* T_1 data so that change scores could be computed for each respondent that had complete data for T_1 and T_2.

Identity Meanings and Reflected Appraisals

For each identity, respondents placed themselves on a scale between two polar opposite meanings to describe how they saw themselves. For the gender identity, respondents answered 24 such items; for the ethnic identity, respondents answered 17 items; and for the student identity, respondents answered 24 items. These measures were central to the current research since it is these meanings that were hypothesized to change.

For reflected appraisals, respondents placed themselves on a scale between two polar opposite meanings to describe how they think others saw them. Respondent were asked to select the adjective or phrase that indicated "how you think **others** see you in terms of…" "being masculine or feminine," "your ethnicity," and "being a student." As noted, to maintain congruence between identity standard meanings and reflected appraisals, the same adjective pairs were used; that is, 24 items for the gender identity, 17 items for the ethnic identity, and 24 items for the student identity.

Gender Identity

Gender identity (Stets and Burke 1996) was measured using 24 bipolar adjectives originally from the M (Masculinity), F (Femininity), and MF scales of the Personal Attributes Questionnaire (PAQ) (Spence and Helmreich 1978). Respondents were told, "Think now about how you see yourself in terms of being male or female—that is being masculine and/or feminine—and select the letter that describes where you fall on the scale" for 24 items on which the poles were two opposite descriptions. For instance, "Very rough" to "Very gentle" and "Never cry" to "Cry very easily." The positive and

negative poles were varied to avoid a response set bias, in which respondents answer in a systematic way once they realize the valence of a series of items. Response options ranged from A-E (recoded 1 to 5) so all items were scored along a five-point scale.

A logistic regression was performed using the 24 gender identity items to predict participant sex. Fourteen items most clearly distinguished between being male and being female; these items are presented in Table 1. The ten items not used were: not at all emotional/very emotional, very submissive/very dominant, very passive/very active, very home oriented/very worldly, not at all kind/very kind, feelings not easily hurt/feelings easily hurt, not at all aware of the feelings of others/ very aware of the feelings of others, give up very easily/never give up easily, feel very inferior/feel very superior, and not at all understanding of others/very understanding of others.

Table 1. Gender Identity Logistic Regression for Identity Meanings

Item	Coefficient
Not at all aggressive – Very Aggressive	.12
Not at all independent – Very Independent	-.37
Excitable in a major crisis – Not at all excitable in a major crisis	.18
Able to devote self completely to others – Not at all able to devote self completely to others	-.15
Very gentle – Very rough	-.15
Very helpful to others – Not at all helpful to others	.24
Not at all competitive – Very competitive	.21
Highly needful of other's approval – Indifferent to other's approval	-.24
Have difficulty making decisions easily – Can make decisions easily	.13
Cry very easily – Never cry	.86
Not at all self-confident – Very self-confident	.13
Very warm in relations with others – Very cold in relations with others	.25
Very strong need for security – Very little need for security	.27
Go to pieces under pressure – Stand up well under pressure	.12

For each respondent, their individual item scores were first weighted by the coefficient corresponding to each item and then summed to calculate a gender identity scale. A high score reflects masculinity and a low score reflects femininity (Burke and Cast 1997). The scale was standardized (mean=0; std=1) prior to analyses.

Gender Identity Reflected Appraisals

Reflected appraisals were measured using the same 24 bipolar adjectives used to measure the gender identity meanings. Respondents were asked, "How do you think others see you in terms of being masculine or feminine? Please select the letter that reflects where you think they place you on each scale." As with gender identity meanings, response options ranged from A-E and were recoded 1 to 5, so that all items were scored along a five-point scale. The 14 items that most clearly distinguished between being male and being female were used to create the reflected appraisals measure. The coefficients from the 14 items were used to weight each reflected appraisal item and then the items were summed so that a high score means a reflected appraisal of masculine and a low score indicates a reflected appraisal of feminine. For the analyses, the scale was standardized (mean=0; std=1).

Ethnic Identity

To measure the meanings held in the identity standard for ethnicity (Cerven, Burke, and Harrod 2008), respondents were asked to place themselves on a continuum (ranging from A to E) for items that contain pairs of statements that described contradictory characteristics, such that an individual could not be both at the same time. For instance, "Always eat foods associated with my ethnicity" (coded A) to "Never eat

foods associated with my ethnicity" (coded E). Other items included "Never engage in ethnic traditions" (coded A) to "Always engage in ethnic traditions" (coded E) and "Always in my ethnic community" (coded A) to "Never in my ethnic community" (coded E). As seen in these three examples, the "always" and "never" poles were varied to avoid response set bias. All items were recoded from 1 to 5.

The 17 items were obtained from 1) a content analysis of UCR student papers in which they discussed the important aspects, benefits/detriments, and meanings of their race/ethnicity and 2) items from the Cultural Expression of Ethnic Identity Scale (Alba 1990). Research in identity theory (Cerven, Burke, and Harrod 2008) indicated that these 17 items would factor into two subscales reflecting shared heritage (e.g., holding on to beliefs and practices, observing religious traditions, participating in holidays) and personal or performance meanings (e.g., looking like my ethnicity, dating within my community, looking like my ethnicity, and listening to traditional music).

Table 2 presents the principle components factor analysis for the heritage (9 items) and personal (7 items) dimensions of the ethnic identity. One item (always maintain ethnic gender roles/never maintain ethnic gender roles) was excluded because it did not load on either factor. Due to the lack of space, only one characteristic is presented in Table 2 (e.g., "always eat foods associated with my ethnicity") and the opposite pole is omitted (e.g., "never eat foods associated with my ethnicity"). The heritage scale has an omega reliability of .90 and the personal scale has an omega reliability of .81. Items were reverse coded, as appropriate, and summed with a high

score representing a strong heritage ethnic identity and a strong personal ethnic identity. For the analyses, the scales were standardized (mean=0; std=1).

Table 2. Ethnic Identity Principal Components Factor Analyses

Item	Ethnic-Heritage Factor Loadings	Ethnic-Personal Factor Loadings
Always eat foods associated with my ethnicity	.55	
Never engage in ethnic traditions	.72	
Never share my ethnic heritage with my family	.75	
Do not at all hold on to my ethnic beliefs and attitudes	.76	
Never observe the religious traditions associated with my ethnicity	.68	
Always participate in ethnic holidays/festivals	.69	
Know a lot about my ethnic background	.55	
Always maintain an ethnic home	.70	
Always teach others about my ethnicity	.64	
All of my friends are the same ethnic background as me		.60
Always speak the language associated with my ethnicity		.62
Look a lot like my ethnicity		.52
Always listen to music traditionally associated with my ethnicity		.72
Always in my ethnic community		.71
Never date within my ethnic community		.68
Never wear clothing styles associated with my ethnicity		.63
Eigenvalue	4.10	2.88
Ω	.90	.81

Ethnic Identity Reflected Appraisals

To measure reflected appraisals, respondents were instructed to think about their ethnicity, and "select the letter that describes where you think others place you on the scale." All 17 items that were used to measure the meanings in the ethnic identity standard were included. Items were presented in the same order as the identity standard

meanings. A principal components factor analysis was performed to verify that the items yielded the same two factors, corresponding to the heritage and personal dimensions. The items factored exactly as they did for the ethnic identity meanings, including one item that did not load on either factor. That item (maintaining ethnic gender roles) was omitted. Therefore, the 16 items used in the ethnic-heritage and ethnic-personal identities are the same items used for the ethnic-heritage and ethnic-personal reflected appraisals.

Table 3 presents the principle components factor analysis for the heritage and personal dimensions of the ethnic identity reflected appraisals. Scale reliabilities are .92 for heritage and .84 for personal. As with identity meanings, appropriate items were reverse-coded, all items were summed, and the scale was standardized (mean=0; std=1).

Table 3. Ethnic Identity Reflected Appraisals Principal Components Factor Analysis

Item	Ethnic-Heritage Factor Loadings	Ethnic-Personal Factor Loadings
Always eat foods associated with my ethnicity	.58	
Never engage in ethnic traditions	.75	
Never share my ethnic heritage with my family	.77	
Do not at all hold on to my ethnic beliefs and attitudes	.80	
Never observe the religious traditions associated with my ethnicity	.78	
Always participate in ethnic holidays/festivals	.78	
Know a lot about my ethnic background	.60	
Always maintain an ethnic home	.73	
Always teach others about my ethnicity	.65	
All of my friends are the same ethnic background as me		.64
Always speak the language associated with my ethnicity		.66
Look a lot like my ethnicity		.51
Always listen to music traditionally associated with my ethnicity		.75
Always in my ethnic community		.74
Never date within my ethnic community		.69
Never wear clothing styles associated with my ethnicity		.66
Eigenvalue	4.66	3.14
Ω	.92	.84

Student Identity

Student identity (Reitzes and Burke 1980) was measured using 24 bipolar adjectives with responses A-E in between the two poles. Respondents indicated where on the 5-point scale they saw themselves. The adjective pairs were obtained from a study (Reitzes and Burke 1980) in which undergraduate students at a large Midwestern state university provided adjective descriptions that they felt best characterized the college student role and four counter-roles: 1) a non-college student, 2) a high school student, 3)

an employed college graduate, and 4) a graduate student. For each of the five roles, the top 5 or 6 adjectives were selected, paired with its opposite, pre-tested, and then modified to arrive at 24 items. Those 24 items were used in the current research; they are: studious/non-studious, ambitious/non-ambitious, critical/accepting, motivated/unmotivated, dedicated/undedicated, hardworking/lazy, creative/dull, responsible/irresponsible, social/anti-social, involved/uninvolved, friendly/unfriendly, concerned/unconcerned, aggressive/non-aggressive, individualistic/group-oriented, sensitive/insensitive, dependent/independent, open-minded/closed-minded, mature/immature, realistic/idealistic, inquisitive/indifferent, optimistic/pessimistic, and apathetic/interested. Reitzes and Burke's (1980) discriminant analysis of the four counter-roles and the college student role yielded four functions representing academic responsibility (e.g., responsible, mature), intellectual curiosity (e.g., open-minded, creative), sociability (e.g., social, interested), and personal assertiveness (e.g., ambitious, motivated, aggressive).

I performed a principal components factor analysis on all 24 items. The six items that loaded on the first factor were used to measure the college student identity in the current research. These items are presented in Table 4. Items were reverse coded so that a high score reflects the positive pole (e.g., studious, ambitious). All items were summed and the scale was standardized (mean=0; std=1). The omega reliability is .92.

Table 4. Student Identity Principal Components Factor Analysis

Item	Factor Loadings
Studious – Non-studious	.78
Ambitious – Non-ambitious	.78
Motivated – Unmotivated	.84
Dedicated – Undedicated	.87
Hardworking – Lazy	.82
Responsible - Irresponsible	.75
Eigenvalue	3.92
Ω	.92

Student Identity Reflected Appraisals

Reflected appraisals for the student identity were measured using the same 24 bipolar adjectives that were used to measure identity meanings in the identity standard. Each respondent was instructed to indicate, "How you think others see you in terms of being a college student?**"** They then selected the letter that described where they thought others placed them on each scale. The same six items used to create the student identity measure loaded on the first factor in a principal components factor analysis; these six items were used to create the reflected appraisal measure. Results are presented in Table 5. The scale's omega reliability is .95. Semantic differential items were reverse coded, as necessary, summed, and standardized (mean=0; std=1).

Table 5. Student Identity Reflected Appraisals Principal Components Factor Analysis

Item	Identity Meanings
Studious – Non-studious	.85
Ambitious – Non-ambitious	.84
Motivated – Unmotivated	.90
Dedicated – Undedicated	.91
Hardworking – Lazy	.86
Responsible – Irresponsible	.83
Eigenvalue	4.50
Ω	.95

Salience

Respondents were asked to think about meeting someone at a party for the first time and indicate which of five different self-views (or identities), they would talk about first with the person. They could indicate they would talk first about their ethnicity, being masculine/feminine, their physical appearance, religiosity, or being a student. The thing they would talk about first was ranked "1." Respondents ranked "2" which of the remaining four options they would talk about with the person next. Respondents continued numbering 3 through 5, so that 5 was the last thing they would talk about with someone after meeting them at a party for the first time.

Next, respondents were asked to think about meeting a friend of a close friend for the first time and were asked, "Which would you talk about first with the person?" They were presented with the same five identities: their ethnicity, being masculine/feminine, their physical appearance, religiosity, or being a student. They ranked the first thing they would speak to the person about with a "1." Of the four remaining identities, they ranked

with a "2" which one they would talk about second. Respondents continued numbering 3 through 5, so that 5 was the last identity they would talk about with someone after meeting a friend of a close friend.

The question was repeated a third time with respondents ranking the five identities (from 1 to 5) after thinking about going on a date for the first time. Each identity was thus ranked three times. If a respondent ranked their student identity first each time, it would be ranked 1, 1, and 1. All of the rankings were reverse coded so that a high score represented a more salient identity. For instance, a student identity ranked "1" each of three times would be ranked 5, 5, and 5. The rankings were then summed across the three situations. Although three of the five identities are focused on in this research, the rankings of 1-5 were maintained to ensure an accurate representation of the salience of each identity.

The correlations are presented for gender identity salience, ethnic identity salience, and student identity salience in Tables 6, 7, and 8, respectively. Note that there is one measure of ethnic identity salience; separate measures were not obtained for the two subscales (heritage and personal). For the gender identity, the scale's omega reliability is .79; the omega reliability of the ethnic identity salience scale is .77; and for the student identity, it is .82. Salience scales were standardized (mean=0; std=1) for analyses.

Table 6. Correlations for Gender Identity Salience

Variable	(1)	(2)	(3)
(1) Meeting someone at a party for the first time	1.00		
(2) Meeting a friend of a close friend for the first time	.55 *	1.00	
(3) Going on a date for the first time	.59 *	.53 *	1.00

* p<.05

Table 7. Correlations for Ethnic Identity Salience

Variable	(1)	(2)	(3)
(1) Meeting someone at a party for the first time	1.00		
(2) Meeting a friend of a close friend for the first time	.54 *	1.00	
(3) Going on a date for the first time	.54 *	.52 *	1.00

* p<.05

Table 8. Correlations for Student Identity Salience

Variable	(1)	(2)	(3)
(1) Meeting someone at a party for the first time	1.00		
(2) Meeting a friend of a close friend for the first time	.60 *	1.00	
(3) Going on a date for the first time	.59 *	.60 *	1.00

* p<.05

Qualitative Commitment

Commitment is operationalized as the strength of ties an individual has to others that are associated with an identity (Stryker 2002[1980]). For instance, with the student identity, an individual would have high affective commitment if she indicated it was important for her parents, friends, and boyfriend to see her as being involved in activities related to being a student. I include only affective (or qualitative) commitment—the strength of ties. Intensive (or quantitative) commitment, which is the number of ties, is

not included for several reasons. First, freshmen students would not have had time to establish many ties to others through their college student identity since they are new to college. Additionally, pilot test respondents indicated that the question asking how many people they know through their ethnicity and how they see themselves as masculine or feminine (their gender) was confusing.

Respondents were told that people engage in activities related to the different ways they think of themselves. For instance, activities related to being a student could include studying, attending lecture, and attending athletic events. Respondents were then asked to indicate how important it was that others saw them as being involved in such activities. Respondents were presented with a list of the five identities: their ethnicity, being masculine/feminine, their physical appearance, religiosity, or being a student. They were first asked to indicate how important it was that their best friend saw them as being involved in activities related to each of their identities. They ranked each of the five identities from 1-4, corresponding to "Not at all Important," "Somewhat Important," "Important," or "Very Important."

The second question asked respondents to indicate how important it was that their parents or caretakers saw them as being involved in activities related to each of the identities. Again, each identity was ranked from 1-4 ("Not at all Important" to "Very Important"). The final question asked them to think about their boy/girlfriend or significant other and indicate how important it was that this individual saw them as being involved in activities related to each identity (Stets and Biga 2003; Stryker and Serpe 1994).

Each identity was ranked three times. If a respondent indicated that it was "very important" for their best friend, parents, and significant other to see them as being involved in activities related to being a student, the student identity would be ranked 4 each of three times. This coding scheme was maintained so that a high score indicated an identity to which a respondent had high qualitative commitment. The items were then summed across the three questions.

Correlations are presented for the qualitative commitment scales for the gender identity, ethnic identity, and student identity in Tables 9, 10, and 11, respectively. Qualitative commitment related to the ethnic identity is assessed once. The omega reliability for the gender identity is .69. Omega reliability for the ethnic identity is .77. The omega reliability for the student identity is .68. Qualitative commitment scales were standardized (mean=0; std=1) prior to analyses.

Table 9. Correlations for Gender Identity Qualitative Commitment

Variable	(1)	(2)	(3)
Importance for best friend to see you involved in activities related to…	1.00		
Importance for parents to see you involved in activities related to…	.42*	1.00	
Importance for significant other to see you involved in activities related to…	.45*	.39*	1.00

* p<.05

Table 10. Correlations for Ethnic Identity Qualitative Commitment

Variable	(1)	(2)	(3)
Importance for best friend to see you involved in activities related to…	1.00		
Importance for parents to see you involved in activities related to…	.58*	1.00	
Importance for significant other to see you involved in activities related to…	.50*	.47*	1.00

* p<.05

Table 11. Correlations for Student Identity Qualitative Commitment

Variable	(1)	(2)	(3)
Importance for best friend to see you involved in activities related to…	1.00		
Importance for parents to see you involved in activities related to…	.48*	1.00	
Importance for significant other to see you involved in activities related to…	.33*	.36*	1.00

* p<.05

Social Context Changes

Two variables were created to capture the extent to which individuals had experienced situational changes in the contexts in which their identities were played out. First, respondents were asked at T_1 if they worked part-time, full time, or not at all (coded 1, 2, and 3, respectively). At T_2, respondents were asked the same question and were presented with the same response options (part-time, full time, or not at all; again coded 1-3). Any change in employment status from T_1 to T_2 was coded "1." Six "change" combinations were possible: 1) part-time to full-time employment, 2) part-time to not employed, 3) full time to part-time employment, 4) full time to not employed, 5) not employed to part-time, and 6) not employed to full time employment. If respondents did not change their employment status (part-time employment at T_1 and T_2, full-time employed at T_1 and T_2, or not employed at T_1 and T_2), they were coded "0."

Second, respondents indicated both at T_1 and T_2 with whom they currently lived (parents, roommates, boy/girlfriend, self only, or "other"); the response options were coded 1-5. Coding categories were developed for the "other" responses. As with the previous variable, any change from T_1 to T_2 in who a respondent lived with was coded 1. For example, a respondent could live with parents at T_1 and roommates at T_2. If an

individual's response remained constant from T_1 to T_2, the respondent received a "0" indicating that there was no change.

Demographics

Respondents reported their race/ethnicity as American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian, Black/African American, Caucasian/White, Hispanic/Latino, Native Hawaiian or other Asian Pacific Islander, Bi- or Multi-Racial, and "other." For analyses, these were dummy coded into white (1) and non-white (0). Gender is coded male (1) and female (0). These variables were standardized (mean=0, std=1) for all analyses.

Analysis

The unit of analysis was each individual's responses to the T_1 and T_2 surveys. Because some individuals participated in the study more than once, I used the cluster option in Stata to pool their responses. The cluster option specifies that the observations are independent across groups (clusters) but not necessarily independent within groups. Thus, I specified "login_id" as the variable to cluster on to denote the group that each observation belonged to. This option is appropriate for data with repeated observations on individuals, as is the case in this study. Since the dependent variable (identity change) was continuous, I used ordinary least squares to estimate the regression equations.

RESULTS

Hypotheses

I begin by testing hypotheses 1_a and 1_b, which states that greater discrepancy will lead to greater identity change and that this change will be in the direction of reflected appraisals (so as to reduce the discrepancy). The dependent variable, identity change, is calculated as identity at T_2 minus identity at T_1. Discrepancy is measured as reflected appraisals at T_1 minus identity meanings at T_1. This term is then squared so that a departure from zero in either a positive or negative direction indicates a discrepancy between the identity standard meanings and reflected appraisals (Burke and Stets 2009). Because a directional measure of identity change is used on the left side of the equation, a directional measure of discrepancy is needed to balance the equation. Thus, the sign of the discrepancy (either negative or positive) is applied to the squared discrepancy term to obtain a measure of "directional squared discrepancy," which is the independent variable. Identity T_1 is included as a control because identity T_1 is used to calculate both identity change and discrepancy, and to control for any possible regression toward the mean.

Means, standard deviations, and ranges of the variables used to test hypotheses 1_a and 1_b are presented in Table 12 for the gender identity, ethnic-heritage identity, ethnic-personal identity, and student identity. As noted, all variables have been standardized (mean=0, std=1).

Table 12. Summary Statistics for Variables (Directional Change Regressions)

Variable	N	Mean	SD	Min	Max
Gender Identity Change	1513	0	1	-3.79	3.72
Gender Identity Directional Discrepancy^2 T_1	1855	0	1	-6.42	7.32
Gender Identity T_1	1855	0	1	-1.49	2.49
Ethnic-Heritage Identity Change	1513	0	1	-4.17	4.72
Ethnic-Heritage Identity Directional Discrepancy^2 T_1	1855	0	1	-14.13	7.90
Ethnic-Heritage Identity T_1	1855	0	1	-3.09	2.15
Ethnic-Personal Identity Change	1513	0	1	-3.99	6.01
Ethnic-Personal Identity Directional Discrepancy^2 T_1	1855	0	1	-11.67	9.15
Ethnic-Personal Identity T_1	1855	0	1	-2.85	2.52
Student Identity Change	1513	0	1	-4.50	4.70
Student Identity Directional Discrepancy^2 T_1	1855	0	1	-12.36	9.50
Student Identity T_1	1855	0	1	-3.70	1.49

The correlations among the variables for each identity are presented in Tables 13 through 16. At the bivariate level, greater amounts of discrepancy are associated with greater amounts of identity change as seen in the significant and positive correlations between directional squared discrepancy and identity change for all of the identities.

Table 13. Correlations Among Gender Identity Variables (Directional)

Variable	(1)	(2)	(3)
(1) Identity Change	1.00		
(2) Directional Discrepancy^2 T_1	.28 *	1.00	
(3) Identity T_1	-.45 *	-.33 *	1.00

* $p<.05$

Table 14. Correlations Among Ethnic-Heritage Identity Variables (Directional)

Variable	(1)	(2)	(3)
(1) Identity Change	1.00		
(2) Directional Discrepancy^2 T_1	.21 *	1.00	
(3) Identity T_1	-.46 *	-.23 *	1.00

* p<.05

Table 15. Correlations Among Ethnic-Personal Identity Variables (Directional)

Variable	(1)	(2)	(3)
(1) Identity Change	1.00		
(2) Directional Discrepancy^2 T_1	.18 *	1.00	
(3) Identity T_1	-.45 *	-.15 *	1.00

* p<.05

Table 16. Correlations Among Student Identity Variables (Directional)

Variable	(1)	(2)	(3)
(1) Identity Change	1.00		
(2) Directional Discrepancy^2 T_1	.26 *	1.00	
(3) Identity T_1	-.37 *	-.26 *	1.00

* p<.05

The model in Table 17 examines the effect of discrepancy on identity change for the gender, ethnic-heritage, ethnic-personal, and student identities. Discrepancy at T_1 and T_1 identity meanings explain 22% of the variance in gender identity change, ethnic-heritage identity change, and ethnic-personal identity change, and 16% of the variance of student identity change. The significant positive coefficients of directional squared discrepancy for gender identity (β= .15, p<.05), ethnic-heritage identity (β = .12, p<.05), ethnic-personal identity (β = .12, p<.05), and the student identity (β = .18, p<.05) indicate that greater amounts of discrepancy lead to greater amounts of identity change; thus

Hypothesis 1_a is supported. Support is also found for Hypothesis 1_b for all identities in that identity change is in the direction of reflected appraisals. In other words, identity change acts to reduce discrepancy.[5]

Table 17. OLS Standardized Regressions (Directional Identity Change)

Independent Variable	Dependent Variable: Identity Change (Directional)			
	Gender	Ethnic-Heritage	Ethnic-Personal	Student
Directional Discrepancy^2 T_1	.15 *	.12 *	.12 *	.18 *
Identity at T_1	-.40 *	-.43 *	-.44 *	-.32 *
R^2	.22 *	.22 *	.22 *	.16 *

* $p<.05$; N=1454 clusters

I now test the remaining hypotheses. Unlike the models above, the dependent variable is the absolute value of identity change, as opposed to the directional value of identity change. Again to balance the left and right sides of the equation, discrepancy squared, which is an absolute value, is used. Identity meanings at T_1 (as a directional measure[6]) are included as a control. Means, standard deviations, and ranges of the variables used to test Hypotheses 2 through 7 are presented in Table 18 for all identities. All variables have been standardized (mean=0; std=1).

Table 18. Summary Statistics for Variables (Absolute Change Regressions)

Variable	N	Mean	SD	Min	Max
Gender Absolute Identity Change	1513	0	1	-1.11	4.57
Gender Discrepancy^2 T_1	1855	0	1	-0.55	7.81
Gender Directional Identity T_1	1513	0	1	-2.13	2.20
Gender Salience T_1	1854	0	1	-1.70	2.47
Gender Qualitative Commitment T_1	1855	0	1	-2.53	1.62
Ethnic-Heritage Absolute Identity Change	1513	0	1	-1.07	5.49
Ethnic-Heritage Discrepancy^2 T_1	1855	0	1	-0.49	15.14
Ethnic-Heritage Directional Identity T_1	1513	0	1	-1.34	1.76
Ethnic-Personal Absolute Identity Change	1513	0	1	-1.09	7.79
Ethnic-Personal Discrepancy^2 T_1	1855	0	1	-0.51	12.60
Ethnic-Personal Directional Identity T_1	1513	0	1	-1.60	1.75
Ethnic Salience T_1	1854	0	1	-2.30	1.89
Ethnic Qualitative Commitment T_1	1855	0	1	-1.75	1.96
Student Absolute Identity Change	1513	0	1	-0.96	6.03
Student Discrepancy^2 T_1	1855	0	1	-0.46	13.24
Student Directional Identity T_1	1513	0	1	-1.28	1.57
Student Salience T_1	1854	0	1	-3.24	0.80
Student Qualitative Commitment T_1	1855	0	1	-3.78	1.12
Gender	2858	0	1	-0.77	1.31
Race	2822	0	1	-0.43	2.31
Employment Change	2858	0	1	-0.33	3.07
Living Arrangement Change	2858	0	1	-0.20	4.97

The correlations for all of the gender identity variables are presented in Table 19. At the bivariate level, increased discrepancy is correlated with increased identity change as seen by the significant positive correlation between squared discrepancy and identity change ($r=0.11$, $p<.05$). Males are more likely than females to experience gender identity change ($r=0.16$, $p< .05$). Respondents who experienced a change in their living

situation were more likely to experience changes in their gender identity (r=0.09, p < .05). Males have a more salient gender identity, compared to females (r=0.09, p < .05) and whites have a more salient gender identity, compared to non-whites (r=0.05, p < .05). Experiencing a change in one's living situation is associated with having a more salient gender identity (r=0.06, p < .05). There is a positive relationship between living arrangement change and employment change (r=0.08, p>.05) indicating that respondents that experienced a change in their employment were also likely to experience a change in their living arrangements. This relationship is constant across the identities and is thus seen in each correlation matrix.

Table 19. Correlations Among Gender Identity Variables (Absolute)

Variable	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
(1) Absolute Identity Change	1.00								
(2) Discrepancy^2 T_1	.11 *	1.00							
(3) Salience T_1	.03	.01	1.00						
(4) Qual. Commitment T_1	-.03	.00	.04	1.00					
(5) Gender	.16 *	-.03	.09 *	.01	1.00				
(6) Race	-.03	-.01	.05 *	-.03	.00	1.00			
(7) Employment Change	.05	-.01	-.02	.02	-.02	-.03	1.00		
(8) Living Situation Change	.09 *	-.02	.06 *	.03	.02	-.03	.08 *	1.00	
(9) Directional Identity T_1	-.12 *	-.00	.03	-.02	-.05 *	.02	.00	-.00	1.00

* p<.05

The correlations for all of the ethnic-heritage identity variables are presented in Table 20. Increased discrepancy is correlated with increased identity change (r=0.11, p<.05). Respondents who experienced a change in their employment status were more likely to experience a change in the ethnic-heritage identity (r=0.08, p < .05). Non-whites, compared to whites, are more likely to experience discrepancy related to their

ethnic-heritage identity (r=-0.07, p< .05). Respondents whose ethnic identity is more salient are more likely to have high qualitative commitment to the identity (r=0.29, p< .05). Males have a less salient ethnic-heritage identity, compared to females (r=-0.05, p < .05) and whites have a less salient ethnic-heritage identity, compared to non-whites (r=-0.26, p < .05). Whites have less qualitative commitment to the ethnic-heritage identity. Experiencing a change in one's employment status is associated with having more qualitative commitment to the ethnic-heritage identity (r=0.05, p < .05).

Table 20. Correlations Among Ethnic-Heritage Identity Variables (Absolute)

Variable	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
(1) Absolute Identity Change	1.00								
(2) Discrepancy^2 T_1	.11 *	1.00							
(3) Salience T_1	.01	.01	1.00						
(4) Qual. Commitment T_1	.01	-.02	.29 *	1.00					
(5) Gender	-.01	-.03	-.05 *	-.03	1.00				
(6) Race	-.02	-.07 *	-.26 *	-.31 *	.00	1.00			
(7) Employment Change	.08 *	.00	-.01	.05 *	-.02	-.03	1.00		
(8) Living Situation Change	.02	-.03	.03	.02	.02	-.03	.08 *	1.00	
(9) Directional Identity T_1	-.17 *	-.07 *	-.05 *	-.09 *	.02	-.05 *	-.02	.03	1.00

* p<.05

Table 21 presents the correlations among the variables for the ethnic-personal identity. Increased discrepancy is associated with increased identity change (r=0.13, p<.05). When qualitative commitment to the ethnic-personal identity is low, respondents experience greater identity change (r=-0.05, p<.05). Whites, compared to non-whites, are more likely to experience ethnic-personal identity change (r=0.09, p< .05). Recall that salience and qualitative commitment are assessed only once for the ethnic identity. Gender, race, employment change, and living situation change are also constants;

therefore, the correlation matrix for these items are the same as those presented in Table 20 and are not discussed here.

Table 21. Correlations Among Ethnic-Personal Identity Variables (Absolute)

Variable	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
(1) Absolute Identity Change	1.00								
(2) Discrepancy^2 T_1	.13 *	1.00							
(3) Salience T_1	-.00	.03	1.00						
(4) Qual. Commitment T_1	-.05 *	-.01	.29 *	1.00					
(5) Gender	.03	-.03	-.05 *	-.03	1.00				
(6) Race	.09 *	-.04	-.26 *	-.31 *	.00	1.00			
(7) Employment Change	.04	-.00	-.01	.05 *	-.02	-.03	1.00		
(8) Living Situation Change	.01	-.01	.03	.02	.02	-.03	.08 *	1.00	
(9) Directional Identity T_1	-.07 *	-.01	-.03	-.04	-.02	-.06 *	-.01	.00	1.00

* p<.05

Table 22 shows the correlations among the variables for the student identity. As with all identities, increased discrepancy is associated with increased identity change (r=0.21, p<.05). Salience is negatively related to student identity change (r=-0.11, p < .05), indicating that higher levels of salience are associated with less identity change in the student identity. Likewise, qualitative commitment is negatively related to identity change (r=-0.10, p < .05), indicating that increased qualitative commitment is associated with less identity change. A greater amount of discrepancy related to the student identity is associated with lower levels of salience (r=-0.05, p<.05) and lower qualitative commitment (r=-0.05, p<.05). Males, compared to females experience a greater amount of discrepancy related to the student identity (r=0.11, p<05). Respondents whose student identity is more salient are more likely to have high qualitative commitment to the identity (r=0.23, p< .05). Males have a less salient student identity compared to females

(r=-0.12, p < .05) and whites have a more salient student identity compared to non-whites (r=0.13, p < .05). Males are less likely than females to have high qualitative commitment to the student identity (r=-0.12, p> .05).

Table 22. Correlations Among Student Identity Variables (Absolute)

Variable	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
(1) Absolute Identity Change	1.00								
(2) Discrepancy^2 T_1	.21 *	1.00							
(3) Salience T_1	-.11 *	-.05 *	1.00						
(4) Qual. Commitment T_1	-.10 *	-.05 *	.23 *	1.00					
(5) Gender	.05	.11 *	-.12 *	-.12 *	1.00				
(6) Race	-.04	-.04	.13 *	-.00	.00	1.00			
(7) Employment Change	.04	-.01	-.04	-.01	-.02	-.03	1.00		
(8) Living Situation Change	-.01	.01	-.02	.02	.02	-.03	.08 *	1.00	
(9) Directional Identity T_1	-.16 *	-.01 *	.00	-.02	-.02	-.03	.05	.07 *	1.00

* p<.05

Table 23 shows the regression models that tests Hypotheses 2 through 7. The dependent variable is the absolute value of identity change. Discrepancy squared, which is an absolute value, is used. Identity meanings at T_1 are included as a control (see footnote 6). The first thing to note is that, consistent with earlier analyses, discrepancy is a significant predictor of identity change in all of the models. For all identities, the positive coefficients indicate that greater discrepancy leads to greater identity change. This is consistent with predictions from identity theory that when there is a mismatch between identity standards and reflected appraisals (when a discrepancy exists in either direction), the control system will work to achieve verification. One way to achieve verification is to change the meanings in the identity standard, which decreases or eliminates the discrepancy.

Table 23. OLS Standardized Regressions (Absolute Identity Change)

Independent Variable	Dependent Variable: Identity Change (Absolute)			
	Gender	Ethnic-Heritage	Ethnic-Personal	Student
Discrepancy^2 T_1	.12 *	.10 *	.13 *	.22 *
Salience T_1	.02	-.00	.02	-.07 *
Qual. Commitment T_1	-.04	-.01	-.03	-.08 *
Gender (male=1)	.15 *	.01	.03	.00
Race (white=1)	-.03	-.01	.09 *	-.03
Employment Change	.04 *	.06 *	.03	.04 *
Living Situation Change	.07 *	.02	.01	-.00
Directional Identity T_1	-.11 *	-.16 *	-.06 *	-.16 *
R^2	.06 *	.04 *	.03 *	.09 *

* p<.05; N=1,435 clusters

Hypothesis 2 states that identities higher in salience will change less than identities lower in salience. In other words, identities that have a higher likelihood of being activated in a situation will change less than identities that have less likelihood of being activated in a situation. I find that respondents who are more likely to enact their student identity across situations are less likely to alter the meanings in the standard of their student identity (β= -.07, p< .05). Thus, Hypothesis 2 is not supported.

Hypothesis 3 states that identities to which individuals are more committed will change less than identities to which individuals are less committed. I find that respondents who have more affective ties through their student identity are less likely to experience changes in the identity meanings held in their student identity standard (β= -.08, p< .05). This is true only for the student identity, thus this hypothesis is not supported.

Examining the impact of respondent gender on identity change, I do not find that males are less likely than females to experience identity change. This is contrary to Hypothesis 4 in which I predicted that males, compared to females, would be less likely to experience identity change given their higher status. I also hypothesized that whites, compared to non-whites, would experience less identity change on the basis of their higher status (Hypothesis 5). This hypothesis was also not supported.

Hypothesis 6 states that respondents that experience a change in their employment status will experience more identity change than respondents who do not experience such a change. This hypothesis is supported for all identities except the ethnic-personal identity. The significant positive coefficients for the gender identity ($\beta = .04$, $p < .05$), ethnic-heritage identity ($\beta = .06$, $p < .05$), and student identity ($\beta = .04$, $p < .05$) indicate that respondents who experienced a change in their employment also experienced greater gender, ethnic-heritage, and student identity change. Changing one's employment status (e.g., not working to being employed, working part-time to working full time, or even working full time to part-time or not at all) led to identity change for most identities studied in this research.

Hypothesis 7 states that respondents that experience a change in their living situation, specifically who they currently live with, will experience more identity change than respondents who do not experience such a change. Respondents who experienced a change in their living situation experienced greater identity change only for the gender identity ($\beta = .07$, $p < .05$); thus, Hypothesis 7 is not supported.

Exploring Changes in Identity Meanings

Table 24 presents analyses that explore how gender, ethnic-heritage, ethnic-personal, and student identity meanings change depending on one's gender and race. The dependent variable is a directional measure of identity change. Discrepancy squared is also a directional measure. As in previous analyses, the positive coefficient of directional discrepancy T_1 for all identities indicates that identity change is in the direction of reflected appraisals, which serves to reduce discrepancy. Examining gender, I find that males, compared to females, are becoming more masculine in their gender identity (β= .20, $p< .05$). Males, compared to females, have ethnic-heritage identities that are becoming less strong—males are less likely to eat food associated with their ethnicity, less likely to maintain ethnic and religious traditions, less likely to celebrate ethnic holidays and festivals, etc. (β= -.09, $p< .05$). Whites, compared to non-whites, are less likely to maintain the ethnic traditions and heritage associated with their ethnicity (β= -.05, $p< .05$). Neither sex nor race significantly predicts ethnic-personal identity change or student identity change.

Table 24. OLS Standardized Regressions (Directional Changes in Identity Meanings)

Independent Variable	Dependent Variable: Identity Change (Directional)			
	Gender	Ethnic-Heritage	Ethnic-Personal	Student
Directional Discrepancy^2 T_1	.13 *	.13 *	.12 *	.18 *
Gender (male=1)	.20 *	-.09 *	-.04	-.04
Race (white=1)	.02	-.05 *	-.01	.02
Identity T_1	-.51 *	-.45 *	-.44 *	-.33 *
R^2	.25 *	.23 *	.22 *	.17 *

*p<=.05; N=1,436 clusters

Summary of Findings

Hypotheses 1_a and 1_b were supported for all identities. Greater discrepancy led to greater identity change in the direction of reflected appraisals to reduce the discrepancy. Salience (Hypothesis 2) and qualitative commitment (Hypothesis 3) were not supported. Salience was only predictive of identity change for the student identity. Likewise, high commitment to the student identity led to less identity change. Contrary to the hypotheses related to status, males did not experience more identity change compared to females (Hypothesis 4) and whites did not experience more identity change compared to non-whites (Hypothesis 5). Individuals that experienced a change in their employment experienced greater gender, ethnic-heritage, and student identity change (Hypothesis 6). Employment change was not predictive of ethnic-personal identity change. Hypothesis 7 was not supported as individuals that experienced a change in their living situation only experienced greater changes to the meanings in the gender identity.

Exploratory analyses revealed that males, compared to females, became more masculine in the gender identity and were less strong in the ethnic-heritage identity.

Whites, compared to non-whites, became less strong in the ethnic heritage identity. Sex and race were not predictive of ethnic-personal identity or student identity change.

DISCUSSION

Directional versus Non-Directional Measures

This research examined whether identity meanings change in the direction of reflected appraisals. I used a robust measure of reflected appraisals based on all of the meanings measured in the identity standard for each identity. This allowed me to determine both the magnitude and direction of change along multiple dimensions of meaning. I found that for all identities, identity change is the direction of reflected appraisals. Looking at the regression models using the magnitude of identity change as the dependent variable (Table 23), I found that the discrepancy between identity standard meanings and self-in-situation meanings leads to identity change, with greater amounts of discrepancy leading to greater identity change. This finding is supported for all identities. The influence of discrepancy on identity change is consistent with identity theory and provides strong theoretical support for the identity model in identity theory.

Discrepancy was the only consistent predictor of identity change across the four identities. Thus, discrepancy, as the difference between identity standard meanings and what you think others think of you (reflected appraisals), seems to be important to identity theory as a predictor of identity change. Additionally, these findings provide support for a basic idea in symbolic interactionism that we come to see ourselves as others see us. This is important since the reflected appraisal process has received mixed support (Felson 1985).

In a therapeutic setting, it would be important to determine how accurate individuals are at judging the reactions/appraisals of others because individuals could

experience unnecessary discrepancy, and therefore unnecessary emotional distress, because their judgments are inaccurate. From a symbolic interactionism perspective, on the other hand, if individuals define situations as real, they are real in their consequences (Thomas and Thomas 1928 as quoted in Merton 1995). The accuracy of the judgments that create reflected appraisals are therefore of little consequence because individuals will act on these appraisals *as if* they are real.

The regression models that included both magnitude and direction of identity change and discrepancy (Table 17) have greater explanatory power than regression models predicting only magnitude of change using discrepancy (Table 23). This is an important finding and a new addition to identity change research. In past research, the discrepancy term is squared and thus reflects only the magnitude of discrepancy. However, identity theory predicts that identity change will be in the direction of reflected appraisals because this is one way to reduce the discrepancy created by incongruence between reflected appraisals and identity standard meanings (Burke and Asencio 2007; Burke and Cast 1997; Burke and Stets 2009). Findings from the current study indicate that including a directional measure of discrepancy could be a useful addition to identity theory when examining identity change.

Related to the above, the full regression models (Table 23) do not explain much of the variance in the amount of identity change experienced, which points to factors exogenous to the regression models that still need to be identified. One possible explanation is that individuals may have experienced major life changes during the course of the study, which were not accounted for. For instance, individuals could have

been the victim of a crime, suffered the loss of a loved one, gotten divorced, been diagnosed with an illness, or experienced some other catastrophic event like a major car accident or a natural disaster. In addition to personal loss or hardship, individuals could have indirectly experienced these events because they happened to someone close to them (Heatherton and Nichols 1994). Heatherton and Nichols' research indicates that "focal events" such as these are often a part of self-change.

Some identities have an evaluative component whereby individuals are routinely provided with feedback as to how they are performing in a role. For the student identity, these include performance measures such as test and homework scores. Felson (1985) found that when performance indicators are available, they tend to be used in self-appraisals. In fact, these factors were better predictors of perceived academic ability when compared to the appraisals of classmates, teachers, and mothers. Children relied much more on grades than on what other people thought in deciding how smart they were. Performance measures, such as test scores and grade point average (GPA), may play a larger role in how individuals see themselves in their student role. This may be especially true in the current research in which the student identity was measured in terms of academic responsibility.

Another factor in identity change not addressed in the current models is the conflict between multiple identities. Recall that simultaneous activation of identities with shared meanings, but with different standards, results in verifying one identity at the expense of not verifying another identity (Burke 2006). Because each identity has its own feedback loop or control system, if two identities are activated in a situation, both

control systems try to maintain meanings in the situation consistent with the meanings in their respective identity standards.

The hierarchical ordering of identities in a perceptual control system model illustrates how output from a top-level identity's control system is fed into the identity meanings of the lower level identity. Identity conflict, or the effect of higher order identities that change the standards of lower identities, may explain the finding that changes in one's employment status led to identity change (except for the ethnic-personal identity). It is possible that conflict between the worker identity and the identities studied in this research led to identity change. Thus, conflict between multiple identities may have indirectly brought about identity change.

Identity Stability and Identity Change

An assumption in identity theory is that identities resist change through the verification process. However, identity theory also assumes that identity meanings are always changing, albeit at a slow rate compared to the behavioral outputs designed to change situational meanings (Burke and Stets 2009). The amount of change that respondents experienced was calculated by multiplying the average amount of change (an absolute number) by 100 and dividing it by the range of the identity scale. For example, the average amount of change for the student identity was .43 on a scale with a range of 4 [(.43x100)/4=10.8%]. In this research, respondents' gender identities changed, on average, 15.0% of the identity scale (.15 points based on a scale ranging from zero to one). Change in the student identity was 10.8%, change in the ethnic heritage identity was 10.3%, and change in the ethnic personal was 9.2%[7] of the identity scale (the ethnic

and student identities were all based on a scale ranging from one to five). These findings, shown in Table 25, seem to support the basic assumptions in identity theory about both the stability and change of identity meanings.

Table 25. Mean Amount of Identity Change (Absolute)

	Gender	Ethnic-Heritage	Ethnic-Personal	Student
Identity Scale	0 – 1	1 – 5	1 – 5	1 – 5
Average Amount of Change (Absolute)	.15	.41	.37	.43
Change (% of Scale)	15.0%	10.3%	9.2%	10.8%

Changes to the identity standards occurred over an 8-9 week period, which might provide some indication of the amount of change to be expected for these identities. It is unknown if these changes represent a small or large amount of change for this period of time, for these identities, and for this population. Had a benchmark amount of change existed, these data could be compared to those benchmarks. If the amount of change experienced is significantly different from an established benchmark, reasons for these differences could be explored. For instance, is it the result of higher amounts of discrepancy? Or, perhaps more interestingly, discrepancy may interact with other factors such that the amount of identity change is different for the same amount of discrepancy (i.e., the regression coefficient for discrepancy is different for males compared to females, indicating that for every unit change in discrepancy, males change more—or perhaps less—than females). The interaction of discrepancy with salience, qualitative commitment and changes to individuals' social contexts could also be explored with future research.

Exploratory analyses revealed that males, compared to females, were becoming more masculine in their gender identity. Some scholars see societal gender roles as dichotomous and gender identities as based on perceived similarities and differences between the male and female roles (Burke and Cast 1997). In Burke and Cast's research, they hypothesized that the birth of a child would shift men's identities in a masculine direction and women's gender identities in a feminine direction because men achieve "manhood" and women achieve "womanhood" by becoming a parent. Becoming a parent can, in essence, accentuate the differences between men and women and shift their gender identities toward a more traditional orientation.

In the current study, it is possible that more serious dating patterns had a similar effect of accentuating, or polarizing, the differences between men and women and that this led to male gender identities becoming more masculine. Love and dating relationships change during this time of "emerging adulthood" from short-term and recreational (in adolescence) to long-term and serious as individuals consider who they want their life partner to be (Arnett 2000).

Status and Resources

High status individuals can use their favored position to bring about identity verification through their use and control of resources not available to lower status individuals (Stryker and Burke 2000). They are generally more successful at identity verification because, through their control of more resources and by using behaviors that connote power and control (Stets 1997), they have the power and ability to define (or redefine) the meanings that comprise identities (Burke 2004). Research in identity theory

has found that high status individuals based on race, education, income, and occupational prestige are able to resist the influence of others. In these data, I did not consistently find this pattern. As shown in Table 26, non-whites do not consistently experience more discrepancy than whites. Likewise, females do not consistently experience more discrepancy than males (Table 27).

Table 26. Mean of Discrepancy Squared for Non-Whites and Whites

Race	Mean of Discrepancy Squared			
	Gender	Ethnic-Heritage	Ethnic-Personal	Student
Non-White	.05	.37	.23	.56
White	.04	.23	.19	.42
Difference	.00	.14 *	.05	.15 *

*p<=.05

Table 27. Mean of Discrepancy Squared for Females and Males

Sex	Mean of Discrepancy Squared			
	Gender	Ethnic-Heritage	Ethnic-Personal	Student
Female	.05	.36	.23	.43
Male	.04	.32	.21	.71
Difference	.00	.05	.03	-.27 *

*p<=.05

This dissertation examined the main effect of status on identity change controlling for discrepancy and other theoretically relevant variables; hypotheses were not supported. I conducted additional analyses to determine if student grade level was a more relevant indicator of status for this student population. Students provided their grade level (freshman, sophomore, junior, or senior). One variable was created to denote freshman status (coded 1) and non-freshmen status (coded 0); this did not significantly predict

identity change. Splitting respondents into lower classmen (freshmen and sophomore coded 1) and upper classmen (junior and seniors coded 0) also was not a significant predictor of identity change. Gender, race, and grade level do not appear to be particularly relevant status characteristics for this population. As mentioned, it is possible that status interacts with discrepancy; future research can address this issue.

Study Limitations and Areas for Future Research

One limitation of this study is that it did not allow for the systematic tracking of identity change throughout the college years. Much of the literature that examines changes in students brought about by college (Pascarella and Terenzini 2005) looks at change across the college years—from matriculation through graduation. Future research in identity theory can do the same by beginning with one college cohort and examining identity change with freshmen, sophomores, juniors, and seniors over the course of their academic tenure. Using a panel design, freshmen students could be assessed over four years, sophomores over three years, and juniors over two years. Ideally, college seniors could be assessed at the beginning of their final year and followed post-graduation to examine the effect of other life-changes on identity change—such as employment and graduate school. In such a study, it would be important to examine identity change while controlling for other relevant factors, such as age and normal maturation (Pascarella and Terenzini 2005).

Another area for future research, related to the above, is to compare identity change in students, newly married couples, mid-life adults, and retirees. Just as research is needed throughout the college years, research is also needed throughout the life course

(Demo 1992). There are critical life events throughout individuals' lives and it is likely that these events differentially affect individuals. For instance, transitioning into adulthood leads to the diminishing importance of identities like student and son/daughter and the acquisition of new identities like spouse, parent, and worker (Gecas and Mortimer 1987). In middle-adulthood, significant life events are often spaced further apart, so less identity change might be expected owing to less social environmental change. Then, around retirement age, individuals experience dramatic shifts in their social interaction patterns as they retire, lose friends due to death, and perhaps make friends through volunteer and leisure activities (Demo 1992). All of the above have implications for identity change through reflected appraisals, verification, salience, and commitment through changes in individuals' social environments.

It is possible that changes earlier in life have a greater impact on identity change than events that occur later in life. The college years are seen as a time of volitional activity, when individuals are still free to pursue different directions, when little about their future has been decided, and they are more free than they will ever be to explore life's possibilities (Arnett 2000). These conditions may leave young people more open to change. Research on self-concept change supports the contention that this early openness to change may diminish as individuals grow older. Research in self-concept change has found that normative life course changes, such as employment, marriage, and parenthood, may stabilize and socially anchor individuals' self-concepts (Demo 1992). To the extent that these life changes stabilize identity meanings, one would expect to see less identity

change in older adults owing to a more stable environment and established patterns of interaction.

Even when individuals are open to or vulnerable to change, not all individuals experience identity change. As noted, regular contact with individuals that know a person well may impede change despite transitional life events. Future research can investigate other factors that are associated with resistance to change. Likewise, what other factors encourage identity change? Even when individuals change, they don't experience the same amounts of change. Future research can examine differences between individuals who experience the most and least amounts of change. The ways in which these two groups of individuals differ might provide insight into the processes that lead to or inhibit identity change.

Related to the above, while analyses indicate that, on average, identity change is in the direction of reflected appraisals, there were some individuals who did not experience identity change in this direction. In other words, people changed in the opposite direction, or away from reflected appraisals. Who are these people? In what ways do they differ from individuals who do come to see themselves as they think others see them?

Methodologically, I believe there was some confusion generated by the measures used to assess qualitative commitment and salience. Recall that qualitative commitment is measured by asking how important it is that others see the respondent as being involved in activities related to each identity. For this population, it is most applicable to ask about activities related to being a student. Additionally, it was likely easy for

respondents to think of activities related to being a student, such as studying, attending lecture, and attending school athletic events. In fact, these activities were provided as examples. It was perhaps more difficult for respondents to think of specific activities related to one's ethnicity and activities related to one's gender. Moreover, examples of activities related to these two identities were not provided. Thus, it is possible that respondents could not think of specific activities related to the gender identity (their masculinity or femininity) or their ethnic identity and this lead to confusion about how to answer the questions. While sociologists can easily think of gendered activities, such as those related to the division of household labor and tradition gender role attitudes, young college-aged respondents might not as easily call up these activities and may have provided inconsistent responses.

Salience is measured by asking respondents to indicate which identity they would talk about first with an individual they met under three different social contexts: meeting someone at a party for the first time, meeting a friend of a close friend for the first time, and going on a first date. The identity they would talk about first is ranked "one" and the remaining identities are ranked two through five. Similar to qualitative commitment, it is possible that respondents found it difficult to understand what was meant by the questions. They may not have understood or been able to imagine "talking to someone about" their ethnicity or being masculine or feminine. It is perhaps particularly unclear how one would "talk about" being masculine or feminine. On the other hand, it was probably easy to imagine "talking about being a student." Individuals could talk about what classes they are enrolled in; how easy, difficult, or boring the classes are; what their

major is; and when they expect to graduate. Individuals could also talk about student life activities—such as going to parties, events, etc. As a result, respondents would have a common understanding of what it means to talk about being a student.

If respondents lacked this common understanding of how to answer the questions for the ethnic and gender identities, any two respondents may have answered these questions differently for the ethnic and gender identities even if the identities were equally salient. Therefore, these items may not have not have accurately and consistently measured ethnic and gender identity salience. In other words, the measure for these identities may have lacked validity and reliability.

Future research can investigate the effect of salience of identity change using specific behavioral activities to measure salience. For instance, Stryker and Serpe (1982) measured the salience of the religious identity with two items. They first asked individuals to think of meeting people for the first time and indicate which they would tell others about first: doing the work they do, being a husband or wife, being a parent, doing the religious activities they do, or something else. The second item asked respondents to think about a weekend in which they were free to choose what to do. They then asked respondents to rank going to a religious service or activity, going on an outing with or visiting their children, catching up on work, spending time with their spouse, or none of them. Qualitative commitment can likewise be assessed using an alternative method.

The measurement of the ethnic identity began by asking, "Thinking about your ethnicity**,** please select the letter that describes where you fall on the scale in terms of

how you see yourself." The ethnic heritage meanings include eating ethnic food, engaging in ethnic traditions, celebrating ethnic holidays, and keeping an ethnic home. The ethnic personal meanings include having friends of one's ethnicity, speaking the language associated with one's ethnicity, listening to ethnic music, and wearing ethnic clothing. Many of these meanings involve cultural expressions of one's ethnicity. It is possible that students that live away from their parents and families have less time to spend engaged in matters related to their ethnicity during their college years.
If so, changes in these meanings might stem from having less time to engage in these activities, or perhaps changes in the friendship and/or kinship relationships that can occur due to the demands of school. Thus, changes in these meanings may reflect changes in the opportunities present to engage in the above activities related to one's ethnicity.

Lastly, future research can measure the gender identity meanings and reflected appraisal meanings using factor analysis, instead of logistic regression (as used in this research) or discriminant function analysis, which has been used in other identity theory research (Burke and Cast 1997). Using logistic regression and discriminant function analysis both implicitly assume that sex and gender are the same, but they may not be. Both measures force a relationship between sex and gender identity, which may or may not be the case.

Conclusion

Individuals often obtain the verification needed to maintain stable identity meanings over time by establishing mutually verifying contexts (Burke and Stets 1999; Stets and Burke 2005). These contexts are created when positive outcomes occur as a

result of the verification process; for instance, increased love, trust, and commitment to one's spouse when the spousal identity is verified. These positive results, along with verification, tend to reinforce each other and create a situation in which verifying oneself helps to verify another. The result is that the relationship is maintained, which leads to future mutual verification.

However, when verification is not forthcoming, findings from the current study point to the importance of discrepancy, especially as a directional measure, for understanding identity change in identity theory. Understanding identity change resulting from discrepancy is an important undertaking because people are seldom able to create and maintain a constant state of identity verification. If future research replicates these findings, additional research will be needed to understand the factors that lead to discrepancy as it relates to identity change. A particularly useful avenue of research would be to examine the moderating effect of discrepancy on salience, commitment, status, and disruptions to social contexts. Future research might also determine if it is possible to modify the amount and direction of discrepancy. In a therapeutic setting, this could be used to accomplish self-motivated change in a particular direction. For instance, this research could be used to assist someone who wishes to stop using alcohol or drugs, someone who is too controlling, or even someone who wishes to become more academically responsible or develop a stronger ethnic identity.

ENDNOTES

1. One course was an upper division course to increase the number of junior and senior students included in my sample.
2. UC Riverside statistics obtained from the undergraduate profile at http://collegeportrait.ucr.edu.
3. All grade-level students were included for several reasons. First, theoretical predictions indicated that non-freshmen students would experience changes in their social environments in the course of the study that would lead to identity change. Thus, it was important not to exclude these individuals from the study. Second, it would be unethical to offer an incentive to participate in the study to only a subset of the class population. Third, I thought that non-freshmen students would resent having to write a paper for extra credit when freshmen students could complete an online survey to earn extra credit. This resentment would likely create problems for the professors and teaching assistants and have a negative impact on data collection.
4. I wanted to maximize the amount of time between the pre- and posttest and considered extending data collection through finals week. However, I was concerned that students' grades would already be determined and that they would choose not to complete the posttest if they calculated that it would not influence their grade.
5. Let's assume that discrepancy is positive (reflected appraisals are greater than identity meanings). If change should reduce discrepancy, then identity at T_2 should approach reflected appraisals at T_1. This implies that identity at T_2 is greater than identity at T_1, because the reflected appraisals at T_1 are greater than identity at T_1. This implies that change is positive (greater than zero) because change = identity at T_2 minus identity at T_1 and identity at T_2 is greater than identity at T_1. So, when discrepancy is positive (greater than zero), then change is positive (greater than zero). This also holds if discrepancy is negative (if reflected appraisals are less than identity meanings).
6. Directional measure of identity at pretest is calculated as ID T_1 multiplied by the sign of Identity Change (C). This is because the sign of ID T_1, as it enters into the calculation of Absolute Identity Change, is opposite for positive Identity Change as opposed to negative Identity Change. Mathematically, for positive Identity Change: Abs(C) = ID T_2 – ID T_1, for negative Identity Change: Abs(C) = ID T_1 – ID T_2.
7. It was thought that the ethnic identity, a social identity based on membership in an ascribed group, might be resistant to change.

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APPENDIX – SAMPLE EMAIL INVITATION TO PROFESSORS

Dear Professor NAME,

My name is Shelley Osborn. I am a sociology PhD candidate currently working on my dissertation under the direction of Dr. Jan Stets.

I am writing to ask if you will allow me to invite your [COURSE NAME] students to participate in an online survey during the [TERM] quarter. My objective is to document the changes in how students see themselves along a variety of dimensions related to their ethnicity, gender, and being a student.

I selected your class because I am primarily interested in changes in freshmen students and, according to the registrar's office your class has a large number of freshmen enrolled. However, all students 18 and older are eligible and will be encouraged to participate. I have obtained approval from the Human Research Review Board (HS 08-109) for this research.

I will ask students to complete the online survey once at the beginning of the quarter and again at the end. To allow enough time between the first and second survey, I would like to announce the survey the first week of class, [DATES]. I will handle all student inquiries and administrative details including entering iLearn grades if you are comfortable giving me access to your site. That way, you and your TAs will not need to do these tasks.

As this is a non-funded research project, I am asking faculty to offer extra credit to students who complete the survey.

Dr. Stets is currently on leave from UCR as she has taken a position as a Program Officer at NSF. She is available via email (jan.stets@ucr.edu) and I am available via phone or email if you would like more information. I can also provide a copy of the survey instrument for your review and will be happy to meet with you.

Thank you for your time and I wish you a very successful quarter.

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