SOCIAL IDENTITY SIMILARITY EFFECTS ON AN EVALUATION OF BLAME

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Abstract

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Work on the social construction of identity has emerged concurrently from different areas, each attempting to explain the plethora of identities present in society. Two such attempts, identity control theory and social identity theory, each attend to different portions of the social identity dynamic. Integration of these two approaches has the potential to increase understanding of interpersonal judgments. Traditionally, work utilizing Social Identity Theory has been examined using a distribution of resources model. For this research evaluations of blame between subjects are examined in order to determine if in-group favoritism and out-group denigration as found in resource distribution studies are present in a post behavior evaluative framework.

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Introduction

Traditionally research on the nature of identity in social psychology focuses on the relationship between society and an individual and how this influences the formation and composition of their identity (Owens 2006). Most research has focused on favoritism shown by the person toward the group with which they are affiliated and denigration of groups which they are not. What has received less attention is the expression of this identity when evaluating another member of the community. These evaluations, or judgments, moderate behavior expressed by society toward referents and have effects on identity development. What is of interest to a theory of identity is how individual group affiliations of the person evaluating works in conjunction with the group affiliation of the person being evaluated to produce an appraisal that can then influence the evaluated person’s behavioral expression of their identity. Along with the social psychological theoretical interests, of interest to society is how to predict how one person will evaluate another in many areas such as politics, law, or business to only name a few.

Attempting to speak definitively to what identities are is difficult if not impossible due to the diverse treatment of the subject in the varying literatures. A reasonably good starting point though is an old definition generated by Sheldon Stryker, a luminary in identity research, which gives us a general understanding from which to build. He originally stated that identities are “internalized designations of positions claimed and validated in social interactions (Stryker & Craft 1982 p.162). This idea has seen substantial refinement and moderation over the years but most research in the field of identity still proceeds from the spirit of this definition.
Before examining interactions between individuals it is necessary to have a working understanding of how a cohesive identity is formed and the interactions between its generative processes. Numerous theories have been proposed as to what leads to the formation of our identities. Information from cognitive psychology, symbolic interactionist sociology, personality psychology, and biology has been used to provide a basis for these theories. Each has found favor and then been discarded for something else when they were found to deliver only incomplete answers to the question of how humans form identity.

A few reasons exist for the incomplete answers provided by the various theories that have been found to be inadequate to the task. One of the main reasons that each seems so promising in one area only to be found insufficient in another is that they each deny the complexity of the human organism and seek to place the creation and expression of something as intricate as identity in a single facet of humanity. Each theory provides an explanation for the process of identity formation and identity based behavior specific to their own area of expertise. In doing this they present only a partial picture of the whole. With such a partial model it is difficult to achieve clear predictability of an individual’s behavior. This project examines the core of the process of identity formation and focuses on the creation, encoding, and expression of identities by examining the overlap of the individual level work found in cognitive and social psychology and the group level work of symbolic interactionist sociology.

To examine the expression of these identities it is useful to focus on the evaluations of others and examine how individual identity factors of both participants precipitate a specific judgment. Social psychology examines the behavior of inter-group
dynamics and their influence on judgment while the area of judgment and decision making in psychology examines processes and factors manifest in the individual during such decision making. As identity is a dynamic system and is being modified by social interaction this will allow us to look at an important intersection point of social interaction and examine how basic interaction and communication with others effects and is effected by our unique identity combinations.

Identities supply a wide range of behavioral information. A small part of this is the impact that sharing identities has on how we evaluate others. One of the main functions of identities is to tell us who we are in relation to others and how we should interact with them. This study seeks to examine how identity similarity influences judgment in such a way that people who are more similar to the evaluator will be judged less harshly as they are present within the same social group as the evaluator. As the person being evaluated becomes less similar it is suggested that the evaluation will become more negative as peripheral group benefits to the evaluator become less likely.

The Self and Society

The incorporation of identities into the self is understood to be a lifelong process. It results from interaction with the specific agents of socialization with which a person interacts, as well as those basic physiological characteristics, such as sex or age that society uses to constitute an identity group. While not existing as an organization in the traditional sense, these groupings present behaviors characteristic of other more typical cultural microcosms such as boundary defense and group promotion. These different agents of socialization are current members of these various groups and by interacting
with these people one learns behaviors to interact with the world. A social judgment of whether different behaviors are appropriate comes from these and other interactions. These behaviors are consequently incorporated into part of the person’s repertoire along with the group identities to which they are connected (Arena & Arrigo 2005).

During these interactions we observe behavior that seems to be successful and then use this as the base for how we react to similar circumstances. In doing this it is possible for us to attempt to understand how our own behavior is being understood by the social group which we are attempting to identify (Arena & Arrigo 2005). As we learn the rules of behavior of this group we come to identify ourselves with this social group, and by incorporating this and other group identities we create an idea of who we are. These different groups may be based around common behavior, physical characteristics, or social location, or even simple geographic location. This conception of the construction of identity through social interaction has a greater and greater influence as we move into the 21st century toward a much more technologically connected, urban, and above all heterogeneous society (Harvey & Katovich 1992). The widely different types of self that will be represented could greatly influence judgment due to the complexities of these group interactions. This increasing complexity will persist with the ever greater mixing of groups in the population.

Numerous theories of identity have been formulated to explain different facets of how to understand the “I” in relation to the “others” or, more generally, society. A few contemporary examples of these ideas serve to illustrate different portions of identity behavior. First it is necessary to differentiate society from an amorphous mass into discreet categories. Identity control theory (ICT) presents a uniquely sociological
approach for understanding how different identities are manifest in society. This is done by assuming that while identity is inherently individual, society creates the identity places in the social structure that are available to be incorporated by the individual. Following this reasoning while the process of identity incorporation and formation is performed by the individual the definitions of the basic building blocks of identity such as female or middle class member are created and transmitted to the person by society.

Along with this, ICT suggests some basic ideas about both how the identities that make up a person interact and why these distinctions exist in the first place (Burke 2004). Furthermore it is necessary to understand how these different groups will interact and behave in regards to both those people in the specific group with them and those who are not. In regards to this description of behavior social identity theory presents a broad useful guideline for how members of in-groups and out-groups will interact and evaluate one another (Turner, Brown, and Tajfel 1978) along with the underlying metacognitive processes that lead to such behavior (Hogg, Abrams, Otten, & Hinkle 2004). These two theories present a reasonably full picture of the construction and interaction between an individual’s identities; it is necessary though to pay closer attention to both approaches conceptual and methodological features to have a workable framework that one may then attempt to apply to real life.

It will be helpful to articulate at the beginning a basic understanding of the two theories before an in-depth description takes place. Each of these theories, originating in different disciplines as they do, possesses a different frame from which they work and seek to understand identity. Deaux and Martin (2003) in their attempt at integration first attempt to understand each theory’s position relative to the other.
Identity control theory, a sociological approach, places a participant in a social system whose behavior is then predicated upon position and interpersonal connections within the system. The arrangement and type of social connections influence each of its concepts as even individual internal thoughts are simply a mentalist representation of these arrangements. For identity control theory, other psychological processes inside the individual are either not present or not discussed in relation to identity behavior.

Conversely, social identity theory (SIT), a psychological theory, focuses its efforts on discussing the nature and extent of these internal processes. Social arrangements are present only to the extent that they serve as context for this system. Different groups are presented in most cases as arbitrary distinctions neglecting the textured structural components present in the major group identities such as gender, race, and class. This is a basic description of the focus of both theories that is explored below. While both theories move toward the traditional domains of each other in interesting ways, work in each still remains parallel rather than a concerted effort at integration. Each does very different things, but if the goal is a complete understanding of identity behavior and a pragmatic application of science then only through the utilization of both might we come to a complete model. Deeper descriptions of each theory will help to understand both their nature and how we might integrate them.

**Social Identity Theory**

To understand social identity theory, an exploration of its deeper cognitive roots is necessary. An issue presented as the socio-cognitive influences in social identity theory is vital to understanding how humans organize and display the information about people.
and objects they come in contact with. This represents the balance to the prominence of
the influence of society that has been traditionally found in sociological identity work.
These cognitive processes can serve as an explanation for how the interaction between
society and identity is mediated by the psychological processes of the individual to
produce the social creation of identity reflected in behavior. This defines the specific
mechanisms by which the theorized internal identity processes are taking place. After
being exposed to social stimuli these cognitive processes encode and retrieve the
organizational data that makes up the identity meanings of the individual.

Use of similarity in memory and making judgments has been the focus of much
discourse and is known collectively by different terms depending upon the specific
research context. In the memory literature, this concept of grouping items by their similar
attributes is known as categorization. Stereotype is the term employed in a social setting
for heuristics used in decision-making when one has a relative dearth of information and
a decision needs either to be made often or quickly when it is not possible to conduct in-
depth, complex analysis (Devine & Sherman 1992). These processes, while having great
utility in many situations result only in “in the ballpark” type answers and this problem is
exacerbated in cases where little, or even purposely inaccurate, information is all that is
available. This idea in a social situation is increased by the possibility that attributed
object characteristics rather than being inherent to the social group are instead socially
fabricated.

The specific memory process underlying identity processes is the concept of
declarative memory. Declarative memory as defined in the work of Eichenbaum (1997) is
the relational representation of the encoding of items in regards to their pertinent
relationships such as similar characteristics. This refers to the network of associations that make up memory and allow us to categorize information in such a way as to have a frame of reference when we encounter novel objects. In this instance “novel” object does not simply refer to novel classes of objects such as encountering aliens for the first time. Instead it indicates how we can understand that a four-legged chair and a three-legged chair possess a relationship to one another. When novel objects are encountered fitting this description we may refer to both as chairs. This conception for our purposes allows us to understand the basic cognitive processes underpinning stereotypical constructs for social identity theory as well as some of the homogeneity present in the role identities in identity theory. These constructs allow a person to reduce the amount of work and more importantly time necessary when making judgments when meeting new people for the first time.

This process of categorization is a primary component of SIT and has been found to be a basic part of adult cognition which is learned as a person moves from childhood into interacting with the world on an adult level. Fischer and Sloutsky (2005) found differences in how children perform this task relative to adults. They found that during childhood, around the age of five, a similarity based model is utilized in which children use feature similarity to judge what something is. In this case an animal which possessed features of an animal that they had prior knowledge of as being a cat would be judged to be a cat. They found that this model over time is replaced by a categorical model. This model instead of being based on similarity is based on categories. This categorical model predicts that if something is a member of a familiar category then a person is more likely to generalize the properties of that item to other members of the given category. In the
case of our cat this means that all those things that mean cat, furry, small, etc. would
generalize to everything that possessed the cat label. Instead of moving from
characteristics to label, a person begins to move to a system where first the label is
established and from the label characteristics are applied.

This type of transition makes a lot of sense when examined from a societal
perspective. As people age they become more enmeshed in society and instead of
collecting all information firsthand we employ labels already established by society and
the richness of information present inside our culture. An interesting feature of this
transition is that while it imparts the advantages mentioned earlier it also leads to greater
accuracy errors when attempting to identify and describe objects. Children who use a
similarity approach exhibit greater accuracy for individual items as opposed to adults
who make use of the categorization approach.

These ideas relates to identity in regards to the creation of meaning. For identity,
when characteristics come from a label instead of the other way around those who
identify as a labeled group are assumed to posses the characteristics of the label rather
than the personal characteristics of the individual informing someone about the label as a
member of the group. These characteristics, whether in such things as dress or actions,
amount to cultural meanings far beyond what is actually present. In the formation of
identity we define internally what has been socially constructed to be the meaning of each
of our individual identities. In other words a person represents what it means to be a
woman, an African American, or a member of the upper class etc. At the same time
expressions of this identity are present to allow other members of this person’s group to
recognize the person as a member (Turner, Oakes, Haslam, and McGarty 2003). While
how a person organizes information has interesting possibilities in regards to the social creation of meaning, and by extension identity, for purposes of this paper I focus on the efficacy of how a person organizes information and potential differences between the depth of what information a person possesses about their identities and others’ unshared identities. These basic cognitive processes have been extended in social identity theory (SIT) into the concept of self-categorization theory. This theory posits cognitive processes as a means to understand what underlies group behavior. As mentioned earlier this theory articulates the process by which a person uses categories to organize the information about various groups around them.

This theory suggests that a person generalizes this information held in the heuristic to all members of the group exaggerating similarity within groups while at the same time exaggerating differences between groups. This creates an interesting phenomenon that manifests in face to face situations that is important to understanding judgment processes. Categorization of self revolves around perceived similarity to a prototypical group member representation. “A prototype is a subjective representation … of the defining attributes of a social category (Hogg, Terry, and White 1995) and implies that we interact with another individual not as an individual but instead as an in-group or out-group member.

The prototype interestingly does not serve as a static representation but is instead dynamic, changing in response to the characteristics of the current out-group. This concept, referred to by psychologists as metacontrast, results from the need to minimize in-group difference and maximize out-group difference, and is a result of an attempt to maximize meaning in any particular social context. Those categorizations serve to
maximize meaning and interpret information being processed through the senses becoming integrated into understanding (Voci 2006). Since interpersonal interactions and not just individual level processes are being examined it is necessary to look beyond the abstract process of the individual and observe the structure inherent in the formation of the identity categories themselves.

Identity Control Theory

Identity control theory (ICT) differentiates social identities into categories based upon both the interactions between the individual and society and the interaction between identities held by the persons themselves. This distinction, while serving as an interesting taxonomy of all possible identities, suffers from an overdependence on the primacy of society as the cause of all human behavior and characteristics. This theory serves well as an explanation of why and what categories form as well as how groups preserve their internal consistency and maintain their boundaries. ICT creates three identity categories personal, role, and group, within which different processes and relationships are placed.

Personal identities are those individual level characteristics that guide choice of which specific identities are chosen in the other two identity groupings. These identities as defined by Burke are “culturally recognized qualities, traits, and expectations” (Burke 2004). They represent personal characteristics that influence the choices that are made when a person is deciding which roles and groups they will participate in. This category is the least well defined of the three presented in ICT and represents a conglomeration of traits that have social, physiologic, or psychological bases.
Work by Hitlin (2003) to explicate this category has found some success in linking personal identities to values and their effect on creating a cohesive effect among a person’s social identities. He characterizes them as being at the core of the self exclusive to the individual, but subject to social patterning mediated by the concept of values. This characterization hypothesizes socially created values which are non-coercive and instead are being striven for by the individual. While the placement of this category in the broader theory of both SIT and ICT creates some problems, its importance in influencing the next category is straightforward by suggesting an understandable sorting mechanism for who will take on what roles and subsequently acquire which role identities.

The second category of identities presented in ICT is role identities. Role identities represent the identities incorporated by the person from their specific places in society’s structure and the activities they perform. These roles may be mother, doctor, or criminal among numerous others. This category is the most heavily studied in ICT and as such is the most fully understood in terms of being defined by society. The local culture maintains standard definitions for the responsibilities, limitations, and codes of conduct for each role as well as maintaining processes to curb deviation and award fulfillment. The adoption and dissolution of these roles is dynamic as they are semi-permanent and do not stay stable throughout the life course. The final category, group identities, could be construed as more permanent and enduring due to their tendency to be based upon more lasting social categories which are retained throughout the life course.

Third, group identities are those things such as gender or ethnicity that identify a person within a subsection of the population. They may also be much simpler and transient such as club member or even class member, but in either case they establish a
commonality between a portion of the population that allows for differentiation between an in-group, those members who share this connection and an out-group, whose members do not. This category in ICT is especially relevant as it serves as a theoretical bridge between the work done in ICT and that done in Social Identity Theory. This point of connection between the two theories results from the importance of understanding both the process of organization as well as how this information has been organized when seeking to understand interpersonal evaluation and judgment. This group of identities serves as a reference point for a person in relation to another person. While role identities may have specific structural relationships such as one person’s student identity interacting with another’s professor identity, group identities establish the relationship between an individual and the remainder of society and the expectations and interactions of these relationships. These identities establish exhaustive categories in which everyone will fall.

While it may appear that these different types of identity represent discrete classifications these should only be taken as a general ordering at best. Overlap and change is very much possible. Attempting to determine whether someone is functioning in their role identity as a teacher or their group identity as a teacher is heavily contextual and the answer may shift depending of the situation or the person with whom they are interacting. This dynamic nature of identity leads to other questions that must be answered, specifically how one decides on a set of identity behavior to use in a given situation.

A key assumption of ICT is that each person maintains not one cohesive identity but as many identities as groups they interact with which leads to the idea of identity
salience. This is where a person must make a decision about which identity-derived action will be utilized. For SIT an underlying assumption is the distinctness of each identity and their lack of interaction. This suggests a compartmentalization of identity with each identity standard being discrete from another (Stets & Burke 2000).

An alternative presented in ICT breaks salience into two concepts: that of salience and activation. Salience in ICT is the probability that a given identity will be activated while activation is used to describe whether the behavior is actually carried out. In both theories the situational match to the identity is the deciding factor in determining activation of identity. In ICT identities are arranged in salience hierarchies unique to the individual that determine their probability of activation independent of their fit to the situation. This results in cases where identities may have low fit for the situation, but due to their prominent place in the salience hierarchy are activated anyway (Stets & Burke 2000).

The interchangeable nature of different identities in identity research complicates interpreting their findings. These theories have been used to explain behavior associated with national identities (Mummendey, Kessler, Klink, and Mielke 1999), political party (Greene 2004), and even football hooligan groups (Van Hiel, Hautman, Cornelis, and Clercq 2007). The impression that identities should display a unified range of responses regardless of which one is being evaluated neglects the underlying idea that identities are definitional heuristics for behavior. This problem is mitigated somewhat by the concept of identity salience hierarchies which suggests that different identities may be more salient depending on the individual. The hierarchy implies that higher levels of commitment, a concept used by Burke and Reitzes (1991), are present in these situations
causing the individual to be more tightly bound to one identity definition than another. This still only goes part of the way in explaining how identities may function differently for different people. While utilization of the different identities is based around the salience hierarchy this still ignores the information contained within the identity. This information is behavioral information and it is reasonable to assume that information varying from identity to identity will affect behavioral outcomes both in everyday life and in research. It is only through examination of the contents of these identities coupled with the more traditional behavior arising from inter-group cognitive processes that we may be able to understand the full range of identity behavior.

This being said, access to this information would at first seem problematic as we fall prey to a problem found in psychology of being unable to directly access internal processes. Thankfully we may take the much easier course of simply asking them to describe their understanding of what it means to them to hold a particular identity and what portion of their behavior they feel comes about from it. Along with this sociologists may move a step farther back and observe society and the social structure itself where the participants themselves received this information. Examining the social structure and its effect on identity and subsequently behavior gives us a fuller understanding of identity processes and opens up pre-existing literatures on race, gender, and inequality for social psychological consumption.

Recent work (Hunt, Jackson, Powell, & Steelman 2000) highlights the need for the examination of what information is presented in these identities, specifically race, by advocating a move from what is termed color blind social psychology. It is suggested that the importance of race has been demonstrated in a variety of other areas in sociology and
needs to be addressed in opposition to the universality currently assumed in many group processes. Hunt (2003) specifically addresses the contributions that may be made to identity theory by an examination of the social structure. He discusses identity structure as both social product and social force. Identity structure as social product posits a top down model and examines basic sociological claims regarding group differences reproduced at the identity level. Conversely identity structure as social force moves from bottom up and examines whether identification as a group member on top of actual group membership, potentially signifying greater identity salience, affects attitudes and behaviors. A rigorous experimental testing of these ideas is as so far unavailable, but these ideas are indicative of the benefit of a more textured understanding of identity processes. It also serves to highlight the amount of work that is still necessary to fully elaborate an integration of the two theoretical approaches.

*Multiple group membership*

In using these ideas to understand group behavior in regards to making an evaluation, it is necessary to understand not only how evaluations are made between groups but also the effects that multiple group memberships have for evaluation. To understand evaluation in a real world context it is necessary to discard the standard model that examines singular identities and instead look toward those that account for the plethora of concurrent and at times conflicting affiliations that are present in even the most mundane situations. A multi-identity model allows for greater variation in behavior by differentiating homogenous groups by the different identity combinations of the individuals that make them up. Multi-identity highlights the continuously present
connections that exist linking one identity to other identities. This would allow us to understand how the influence of internalized role expectations from a masculine identity would influence behavior inside a context where behavior relating to a feminine identity was called for. Or even in the cases of seemingly unconnected identities such as how the experiences of a straight white male differs from a homosexual black male in their expression of masculinity. Along with understanding the connections that exist, by virtue of knowing about these other connections it would be possible to gauge level of commitment to these identities to aid in predicting behavior rather than attempting to predict behavior using a single identity such as gender or ethnicity (Roccas and Brewer 2002).

The effect of multiple group memberships on perceptions and judgment has only recently begun to attract interest in the research literature. Justice research has been examining these issues and has developed some interesting ideas as to their effects. Clay-Warner (2001) examined perceptions of injustice, or those times where the legal system is dysfunctional, and asserts that multiple group membership can be used to explain the differential recognition of such phenomena. Using the group value model of procedural justice, which has its roots in social identity theory, she suggests that people fail to recognize injustice when it would damage their self esteem in regards to group identity. This situation can be better understood when multiple group behavior is examined. Clay-Warner found that when someone is a member of multiple groups with varying levels of status that the person identifies with the lower status identity, especially when it is perceived to be based around an unfair or unstable social hierarchy.
Clay-Warner explored these ideas in a study that examined perceptions of gender bias between male and female judges and attorneys. The research investigated factors such as inappropriately familiar address, comments about appearance, and sexual innuendo. Based on the ideas presented in the group model of procedural justice it would be expected that people who maintain both high status and low status identities would identify most with the low status identity. It was found in this case that female judges identified with the lower status identity of being female and found a significant difference where female judges perceived more instances of procedural injustice than male judges in the courtroom.

Another study by Roccas (2003) found conflicting results in examining dual group membership in a series of studies. She studied perceived level of status and the subsequent identification. In this study someone was a member of two high status groups, two low status groups, or a combination of a high status and low status group. She found that when someone was a member of a high and low status group, they valued the high status group more and identified more with it than the low status group.

These findings contradict what Clay-Warner found to be occurring. Some of the differences between the two studies revolve around the types of identity groups that they were examining. Clay-Warner was looking at gender and job while Roccas was examining academic affiliation. This could suggest that all group affiliations are not created equal and that some, such as gender, could possibly occupy a higher level in the identity hierarchy. Another potential factor of influence on the different result is the different measures that were being used to examine identification with identities. Clay-Warner was assuming that recognition of threats to the status of a lower status identity
signified identification with that identity while Roccas used direct questions as to the importance of the respective group memberships. The differing methodologies suggest another question about the best way to determine the identity affiliations of an individual. The quandary exists about whether it is more efficacious to allow the individual to decide which of their identities are the most important or instead utilize indirect methods that gauge importance by how much attention is paid to interactions predicated on the identity. Either way these studies reflect the current work in the area of multiple identity and its effects on behavior and judgment. While inconsistencies exist in the literature greater experimental exploration in an effort to further articulate this theory will allow for a greater accuracy in gauging the effects of multiple identities.

Brewer and Roccas (2002) attempt to formulate a formal theory of multi-group identity which they term social identity complexity. They find that when there is great overlap between different identities a relatively simple structure emerges that behaves as a single cohesive identity. When the identities are not fully convergent the self is more complex. They found that social identity complexity is affected by stress which decreases identity cohesion. In times of stress a person decreases in social identity complexity and interacts from the standpoint of one of the less complex constituent identities that normally is only a single part of their more complex integrated self. In-group threat would have the effect of decreasing social identity complexity and increasing the potential for salience of the single threatened in-group resulting in lower tolerance of the out-group. Complexity is measured by first using a questionnaire to gauge identities that are relevant to the respondent and then using further questions to calculate an overlap complexity index and a similarity complexity index. Overlap complexity is the extent that
the respondent believes that members of one of their identity groups are typically members of another of their identity groups. Similarity complexity is how similar they feel members of their different in-groups are to one another. Each of these two measures is utilized in determining the relative identity complexity of the individual with higher scores indicating lower complexity in the representation of multiple identities.

Attempts have been made by Gresky, TenEyck, Lord, and McIntyre (2005) to apply this theory. They found that social identity complexity theory could be utilized in an in-group threat situation to alleviate stereotype threat, a situation where knowledge of poor group performance creates such sub par performance. They found that reduced math performance by women could be made equal to men by increasing their awareness of their social identity complexity. This was accomplished by drawing a map of the different identities that make up their self.

Explanation of multiple identities has only recently been explored in identity control theory (Burke 2003; Stets 1995; Stets and Harrod 2004). Since it is possible, and very prevalent for a person to occupy multiple positions in society, examination of multiple identities is necessary in identity theory to understand the scope of identity behavior. Stets and Harrod (2004) make use of Burke’s Identity Control theory in order to explicate the mechanisms behind the interactions of multiple identities. They posit that in instances of the concurrent verification of multiple identities that cannot both be verified the identity meanings will shift to become more similar in order to reduce discrepancy. They base this on the perceived negative affect associated with the inability to verify an identity. This negative affect when either one or the other identity cannot be
verified motivates the individual to shift identity meaning in ways that make the identities more easily verified concurrently.

These diverse theoretical areas and methodologies which are being utilized in an attempt to understand multiple identities underscore its importance. Once again interaction between ICT and SIT would be beneficial to each by explicating the totality of the process. Recognition of the social structural arrangements would be beneficial in predicting identity complexity in the individual, while cognitive process are central to understanding the shift found in discrepant identity meanings presented in ICT. A holistic understanding of identity is necessary to increase the predictability of interpersonal behavior and evaluation.

Evaluation, Morality, and the Individual in Society

The legal system presents a formal arena within which varied groups of people are asked to make evaluations about the actions of others. It presents a formal response from society in regards to the behavior of the individual. This represents a formal interaction point where society is directly delineating what is and is not acceptable within the socially created moral system. The effects of this formal legal feedback are a specific example of societal influence on identity both in its influence on the specific person and by example to the rest of society. The legal system has long been held to hold not only an instrumental function of deterring crime, but also exists to affirm the moral structure of a society (Durkheim 1947; Mead 1917). Violations of group standards raise questions about group identity and invoke passionate responses by its members (Sunshine and Tyler 2003). Work examining the concept of procedural justice seeks to uncover the
interconnections between the justice system, morality, and group identity (Tyler and Blader 2003). This arrangement may influence the development of a separate moral identity explored by Hart, Atkins, and Ford (1999), in which identity verification depends on a moral attribution of self. This fits with the general conception of a personal identity for SIT and ICT and is even more important for Hitlin (2003) as moral values underlie his entire concept of the personal identity. This moral identity is beneficial when incorporated into the self because it leads to other identities which bring responses from society favorable to the success of the individual.

Of specific relevance for the current research is the utilization of this moral structure and its effects on a person’s judgments of others. Moral judgment represents a controlling mechanism of society to influence the formation and transformation of socially created identity roles. In addition though the individual identities themselves interact to modify the expression of the behavior and change the behavior from that required by a strictly moral system. The interaction between identity groups and blame has been examined in several contexts. Specifically the similarity between jury members and the defendants they are asked to make judgments about is a popular topic in the research literature. The influence of group membership on decision making is especially important in a trial context as in civilized modern society it is here that social structural tension comes to be resolved. If these same structural inequalities are present there then it is a flawed system as change within the system is no longer possible.
Identity Similarity and Jury Decision Making

The similarity between juries and the defendants and the victims that they are asked to make judgments about, exerts interesting influences on the outcome of such social judgments (Gleason and Harris 1975). Many different situations have been examined in the research literature, focusing mainly on relationships of the defendant and victim’s race, gender, and socio-economic status.

Racial tensions in America have historically made the ascribed social status of race of specific importance in assessing judgment patterns in the legal system. The differences between African Americans and Caucasian Americans have become enshrined as one of three main topics in research examining biased decision making. This is especially true in the court system. Landwehr, Bothwell, Jeanmard, Lueque, Brown, and Breaux (2002) examined the effects of authoritarianism on the common finding that due to social status African American defendants overall, and especially when there are white victims, are judged more harshly than white defendants. They found that race seems to influence decision making only in the cases where the juror scores high on a scale of Authoritarianism. These results are interesting as it has been found that it is very common for African Americans to be judged more harshly in almost all cases highlighting the possibility that egalitarian judgment of greater similarity leads to equality in social decision making.

This study serves to highlight issues with SIT and its utility in explanation and prediction. Basic SIT would predict in this situation that normal group processes should be in effect. In the instances that the group membership between the defendant and the
jury members are shared more positive evaluation should occur. With the theory being seated in psychology as it is, it tends to ignore the effect of the social structure surrounding the individual. This can have unexpected consequences since it uses the assumption that the only factors affecting inter-group evaluations are those in-group/out-group processes highlighted in the theory. The introduction of ICT with its focus on socially created networks as the basis of identity offer a more textured prediction. In the case of those groups that have relationships historically built into the social structure increased positive or negative evaluations may function on top of the traditional inter-group processes. The most well known example of the potential for this phenomenon is the doll research by psychologist Kenneth Clark which was the basis of the landmark Brown vs. the Board of Education Supreme Court decision. Here in direct contradiction to in-group bias when asked to chose between white and black dolls African American children ages 5-7 over 60% of the time would choose the white doll and describe it as being nicer than the other doll (Hendrie 1999). This is a clear example of the socially supplied definition of a person’s group identity overriding typical group processes suggested in SIT. In the case of the preceding example specific racial combinations produced greater reaction, such as in the case of a black defendant and white victim, that were moderated by the presence of a personal identity, authoritarianism, which presumes strong group boundaries. The differentiation between authoritarianism, where specific group differences are perceived and egalitarianism, where there is less of a social group differentiation could also be linked to use of stereotypical thinking by authoritarians making use of this socially supplied inequality arrangement.
In addition to the similarity between the defendant and the victim, similarity between the jury members themselves and those involved in the case can influence the decision that is made. In a study conducted by Wuensch, Campbell, Kessler and Moore (2002) the effect of similar gender as well as ethnic status of the accused and jurors was examined for patterns in belief of the validity of a rape victim’s accusation. They found unsurprisingly that female jurors favored female victims, while in regards to the racial issues they were surprised to find a gender difference in that a male juror’s finding in favor of a white victim versus a black defendant was almost twenty times more likely than the reverse. These findings were not supported for the female jurors, though they demonstrated a comparable trend in regards to similarity. This gender difference could also be understood as in the previous study by the differences in egalitarian versus authoritarian thinking (Landwehr et al., 2002). The behavior of the male white jurors demonstrates that specific combinations of identity groups display unique behaviors arising from the socially constructed meanings inherent in their identity heuristics. The incorporation of these identity behaviors with the literature on blame is necessary to have a complete understanding of the interpersonal evaluative process.

**Spontaneous Evaluative Factors and Blame**

Traditionally theories of blame associated with the concept of morality have focused on stage theories that assume a rational decision making process. These describe the rational steps that a person would move through when seeking to determine the blameworthiness of a person for an action. These theories have been reexamined and found to be wanting by Alicke (2000) for their lack of description of the influences of
factors that would cause deviation from a rational choice model. Alicke suggests a culpable control model of blame which takes into account those conditions that increase or decrease ascriptions of blame. He finds that personal control is central to the understanding of blame ascriptions and that as it increases the level of blame ascribed to that person should increase as well. While this corresponds to traditional theories of blame he adds spontaneous evaluative factors that serve to modify linkages in the rational decision making chains with which blame ascriptions are reached. These factors serve to mediate the interpretation of the individual’s actions by the evaluator. These work in three ways by exaggerating the casual control of the person, by lowering the standards required by the person for evidence, and causing them to purposively seek out information to support their assertion. Together these form what Alicke terms the “blame validation model of structural linkage assessment”. Work by Mazzocco, Alicke, and Davis (2004) suggests that in-group out-group behavior as described by social identity theory is beneficial in seeking to understand blame ascription. This concept is referenced in Alicke’s culpable control model of blame where he discusses normative expectations related to social category information. Normative expectations can be understood as schema or heuristics of organization as discussed above (Alicke 2000). This conception of social category information can be more easily understood as stereotypes as they represent information possessed by the individual about the generalized behavior of a social group. This implies that the effects of this social category information is much more an influence than would be expected as in SIT it comes from base level socio-cognitive processes and is applied before and outside of contextual factors. The utilization of normative expectations occurs when incorporating information from a
person’s environment as well as what information is subsequently recalled from memory at a later time. This would suggest that normative expectations based on social group knowledge would guide judgment almost independently of the actual situational factors present. This implies that a more efficient method of understanding judgment behavior would be to examine the contents of the normative expectations possessed by the individuals.

Attempting to understand the factors that influence one individual’s evaluation of another utilizing this model of blame leaves a large gap in our understanding as numerous identity factors can be said to influence this process. Group prototype processes discussed by SIT touched on in this theory as normative expectations would suggest that the sensitivity of the structural linkages to such effects would make them at best noisy predictors of behavior. An application of the ideas present in SIT and ICT would serve to increase our predictive power by explicating the internal group processes and the specific social network arrangement of the individual’s social demographic factors.

A simple starting point for this study is to attempt to examine traditional group processes, specifically the in-group out-group bias, in regards to an evaluation of blame. SIT would suggest that in those situations where a person is evaluating another person and they are both members of the same in-group a more positive evaluation should result. ICT while not directly addressing interpersonal evaluation would look toward the internalized identity meaning and its attendant instructions for interaction. It is not possible or even desirable to develop a specific contrasting hypothesis between these two theories. Instead an exploration of the mediation potential of different identities meanings on the traditional in-group bias will be pursued.
In order to do this a manipulation of similarity on a range of identities between the observer and the person being evaluated will help to understand whether traditional ideas apply, or if there are differential application of these premises based upon differences inherent in the various identities being used. In other words if SIT is a complete explanation of group processes then in-group favoritism should be present and evaluations of in group members should be higher overall than evaluations of out-group members. If instead the information unique to the various identities generated by the social structure has an effect then mediation of the SIT processes should be present.

Methods

To test this hypothesis, a questionnaire was designed and administered to undergraduate students currently enrolled in an introductory sociology classes at a large Midwestern university. Participants were asked to anonymously report basic demographic data such as sex, age, ethnicity, birthplace, and parental income range. Three of these variables sex, age, and parental income range were inserted into vignettes that the participants were asked to read and were then queried about. Multiple forms of two vignettes were included with each questionnaire varying the combinations of these variables between the two questions and among each version of the questionnaire. The specific version of the questionnaire that was received by the participant was independent of their individual characteristics allowing for variation in the amount of similarity between the participant and the person referenced in the vignette. All forms of this questionnaire can be found in Appendix A. This methodology is based upon the “factorial survey approach” first delineated by Rossi and Anderson (1982) and later utilized in

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[1] IRB approval 06E240 11-27-06
examining subgroup variation in social judgment by Byers and Zeller (1998). Variation in social judgment based upon subgroup characteristics such as gender has been inconsistent, but this study seeks to examine subgroup similarity as a possible clarifier of this relationship.

The vignettes presented as little information as possible to minimize the amount of extraneous information that could influence the judgment of the participant. A generic version of these vignettes is as follows.

[Case #]. [Generic sex appropriate name] a [Age] [Sex] was ticketed for doing 45 MPH in a 35 MPH zone while driving on West Oak Street at 5:00 p.m. on Thursday October 12th 2006. Income disclosure as part of the program established that [Generic sex appropriate name] earns [Income amount] per year establishing him in the [Income class descriptor] income class.”

Along with this demographic information, different times, places, and speeds were given between the two vignettes in the questionnaire, but the amount over the speed limit was held constant at ten miles per hour for both vignettes. Each of the demographic variables possesses multiple values creating a 2x2x3 design. Twelve potential unique combinations of characteristics, which both the participant and the figure in the vignette may occupy, are generated. This design has the potential to allow for single item similarity comparison, or full differentiation to examine multi-identity similarity across subgroup variation. Sex was broken into the traditional male and female categories. Age was restricted to a young adult option of twenty years and an elderly adult option of seventy years. Parental income was broken into three separate ranges of 1-24,999, 25,000-49,999, and 50,000 and above based upon national census information obtained for the local area. Each of these ranges represents thirty percent of the distribution of the state population. These variables represent social identity groups which are salient to those who could be present in the research sample. Each respondent will occupy each of
these identities at some level. This will allow for either similarity or difference between
the participant and the figure in the vignette on each of these identities permitting the
effect of identity congruence to be examined on the individual identity level. It will also
be possible to examine the various interactions that may be present by looking at the total
identity congruence between the evaluator and the person presented in the vignette.

After reading the vignettes five questions were presented to gauge a variety of
information as to the respondent’s perceptions of the situation and individual
characteristics of the transgressor. Question 1 presented choices consisting of dollar
amounts where the participant is asked to choose how large a fine should be administered
for the legal transgression. Starting with $1, an almost negligible fine, and moving to
$800 dollars – something that relative to the income of the transgressor would be almost
prohibitively large. This question serves as a fairly simple measure of the sanction the
participant feels is appropriate for the transgression based upon the information presented
to them. This question should be the most directly related to the in-group favoritism
predicted by SIT in those situations where the respondent is a member of the same group
as the person in the vignette lower fines should be chosen. Question 2 asked the
participants to determine how likely they feel that the person in the vignette is actually
guilty of the crime for which they are being punished. This question examines less
explicit areas of culpability and attempts to tap the participant’s belief that the person is
really guilty of the crime. Low scores on the question would suggest that the situation
itself is suspect due to a lack of believability of the vignette or perceived inequality in the
criminal justice system towards specific social groups. Questions 3 and 4, asks about how
severe the respondent felt the crime was and if they agree with punishing the defendant
respectively. Each of these questions attempt to gauge perceptions of the crime dependent upon the nature of the criminal. Each of the three preceding questions target less explicit areas in which the in-group favoritism predicted by SIT may be employed. Lower evaluation of guilt, severity, or desire to punish for a crime would all be the predicted outcomes based upon SIT resulting from a modification of the structural linkages in Alicke’s culpable control model of blame. Divergence from these patterns might suggest a more textured explanation. Finally, question 5 seeks to directly gauge the amount of perceived similarity between the participant and the person in the vignette by asking directly to what extent do you identity with the person participating in a very common occurrence of being fined for speeding.

Each of the questions was represented by a Likert scale consisting of seven options for question 1 and six options for questions 2 through 5. Question 1 presented seven dollar amounts starting with 1 dollar as an option for those who felt almost no fine was appropriate. The next six choices started at $25 dollars for the second option and doubled at each option to reach $800 at choice seven. Participants were instructed to circle the response that best represented how they felt about the question. Each question was accompanied by a description following the question which explained the directionality of the scale. No word anchors were used beyond this description in the text of the individual question. For example on question 2 a response of 1 indicates that the person believes that the individual in the vignette is completely not guilty while a response of 6 would indicate that they were completely guilty. When they finished one set of questions participants were instructed to move onto the next vignette and finally when finished to turn the questionnaire in to the researcher. The hypothesis for this study
is that in the cases that participants are evaluating figures in the vignettes with the same
gender, age, or income an increase will be observed in positive bias for that person’s
behavior. Effects of this positive bias will be a decrease in support for the punishment of
the individual. This means lower suggested fines, a lower perception of their guilt, a
decreased perception of the severity of the crime, and less agreement with the punishing
of the individual. If traditional SIT processes are found to apply these effects should be
found to increase as total similarity between the participant and the figure moves from
0% to 100%. Deviation would indicate that other processes are playing a role and that
factors presented in identity theory is potentially influencing their behavior.

Results

Characteristics of the sample

A final sample of 271 participants was analyzed after data collection². Appendix
C contains a full breakdown of the demographic factors. The experimental variables of
gender, age, and parental income were represented in the sample as follows. Gender was
found to be similar to the overall composition of the student body of the university with
57.2% female and 42.8% male. The university composition is 52% female and 48% male
(University Fact book 2006) indicating that women may have been slightly over
represented in the sample. Age was found to be as expected for an introductory class at
this institution with 99.3 percent of the sample being between the ages of 18-22. Only
two individuals were found to be outside of this range being 26 and 27 respectively. It is
possible to be reasonably confident in classifying this sample in the young adult group for

² A small amount, 5 forms (.018%) were returned blank while 6 forms (.022%) were returned incomplete
with only the first set of questions answered.
analysis purposes. Parental income was found to be skewed with only 6 percent of the sample indicating that their parental income places them in the lowest income category. A more appropriate but still low 24 percent indicated that they fell into the middle category, and finally 70 percent indicated parental incomes greater than $50,000.

**Corollaries of Blame**

To begin connections between the questions were examined using a bivariate correlation procedure as seen in Table 1. The amount of the fine indicated by the respondent was found to be significantly positively correlated to the perceived guilt, perceived severity, and agreement with punishing. This would suggest that these three factors are in some way representing different concepts or potentially a single concept that relates to the magnitude of desired punishment for the infraction. As the participant’s judgment of the individual’s guilt, the severity of the crime, and the agreement with punishment increases the amount of fine also increases.

Questions two, three, and four were also found to be significantly correlated to each other supporting the idea of a single concept. This suggests that the amount of the fine is related to the participant’s perception of the individual and infraction. Supporting the idea that similarity is important the extent that the participant identifies with the individual is significantly correlated to the perceived level of guilt and to what extent they agree with punishment, both judgments of the individual, but not with how severe they view the crime. This indicates that while severity of the crime is related to the magnitude of the punishment it does so in potentially a different way than the other two questions.
Table 1

*Vignette question correlations*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Fine</th>
<th>Guilt</th>
<th>Severity</th>
<th>Agree Punish</th>
<th>Identification</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fine</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.168**</td>
<td>.428**</td>
<td>.427**</td>
<td>-.071</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guilt</td>
<td>.168**</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.123**</td>
<td>.408**</td>
<td>.183**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Severity</td>
<td>.428**</td>
<td>.123**</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.418**</td>
<td>.020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree Punish</td>
<td>.427**</td>
<td>.408**</td>
<td>.418**</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.094*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identification</td>
<td>-.071</td>
<td>.183**</td>
<td>.020</td>
<td>.094*</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**= Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
*= Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

These findings roughly match the criteria established by Alicke in his model of blame.

The extent that the respondent judges the figure in the vignettes to be guilty is significantly correlated to the other questions gauging their perception of the offense.

What diverges from the behavior predicted by SIT is that self identification is positively correlated with both perception of guilt and agreement with punishment. As the respondent increasingly self identifies with the person in the vignette these factors also increase rather than decrease as would be predicted by SIT. This was explored further by use of GLM statistical analysis.

*Individual identity congruence*

In order to explicate the findings of the Correlational analysis further investigation was conducted utilizing the three congruence variables. Due to the nature of the research methodology it was possible to run a within groups repeated measures
design in regards to gender as each participant had responded to a vignette which contained a gender congruent and gender incongruent figure. To further aid in clarity this analysis was structured by gender to clearly demonstrate differences in marginal means for each group.

Table 2

Effects of gender congruence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Participant Gender</th>
<th>Mean Difference Vig.1- Vig. 2</th>
<th>F Value</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Amount of Fine</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>-.018</td>
<td>.048</td>
<td>.826</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>-.139</td>
<td>7.812</td>
<td>.006**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Severity of Crime</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>-.297</td>
<td>12.1</td>
<td>.001**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>-.278</td>
<td>25.649</td>
<td>&lt;.001**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self Identification</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>.387</td>
<td>5.615</td>
<td>.020*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>.033</td>
<td>.053</td>
<td>.818</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**= Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)
*= Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

As the Table 2 reveals gender congruence has differential influence based upon the question being answered and the gender of the respondent answering the question. The research design presented a male character in the first vignette and a female character in the second. Subsequently interpreting results based on congruence must take this into account. SIT would posit that as a person moves from an out-group member to an in-group member positive evaluation should increase and negative evaluation should
decrease. For women in this study movement from a male figure in the first vignette to a female figure in the second resulted in instead an increase in their mean responses for the amount of the fine given and perceived severity of the crime. When they were evaluating another woman they tended to give higher fines and perceive the crime as being more severe than when they were evaluating men. Significance was found for men on the perceived severity of the crime only, but taking into account the design of the questionnaire this means that when they were evaluating another man they perceived the severity of the crime to be less than when they were evaluating women. These findings are inconsistent in regards to SIT as men demonstrate the hypothesized in-group bias, but women are found to display an out-group bias. This would seem to indicate the importance of examining identity congruity in order to accurately predict evaluative behavior.

Finally it was interesting to note that while the amount of self identification was not significantly different for women based upon the gender of the person in the vignette. Men when moving from a male figure in the first vignette to a female figure in the second decreased the amount that they self-identified with the figure. Self identification was also highly influenced by age congruence between the respondent and the figure in the vignettes. Participants in the study self identified by almost a point higher when the figure in the vignette was identified as being in their twenties versus their seventies. It is not possible to make a statement about the behavior of older participants due to the nature of the sample, but it does seem that age, at least to the young, is a primary factor in identifying with another individual.
In order to examine the influences of multiple group identity a total identity congruence term was calculated by gauging whether the respondent was congruent on zero, one, two, or all three identity variables. Once this new variable was created an ANOVA was performed utilizing this variable as a fixed factor. SIT can be interpreted to predict that as the figure becomes closer to approximating the respondent’s specific combination of identity group affiliations more positive evaluations should occur. The total identity congruence term was found to be significant only for question 2, the degree which the respondent felt the figure in the vignette was guilty. An examination of the estimated marginal means for this question using Tukey’s HSD test showed that 0% congruence was different from 33%. This suggests that as identity congruence goes up perceived guilt of the figure in the vignette also increases. This would at first seem to contradict traditional in-group bias, but
plotting the marginal means shows that this is not a linear relationship as the means peak and fall as 100% identity congruence is reached as shown in Figure 1. Utilization of Fischer’s LSD test, a less rigorous post test, supports this conclusion as it finds a significant difference of means between 33% and 100%. As complete identity congruence is reached perceptions of guilt are found to be lower than when congruity on only a single identity is present. Further exploration of this relationship, in future studies, will be necessary to fully understand what other variables may be coming into effect to change the direction of this relationship as complete identity congruence is reached.

Findings seem to suggest that the predications of SIT are not universal and are being mediated by other identity factors. It is possible that factors unique to the identities being used in this study influenced the outcome in such a way that the opposite of the
predicted result occurred. The chances of this are high as the social influences on the interplay between gender, age, and income groups are very strong.

Discussion

Ridgeway (2005) has looked closely at developing the links between social structure and interpersonal behavior. Using what she calls “social ordering schema”. These ordering schemas have three important components: they specify relationships between social elements, they are social rather than individual, and when executed, they give rise to observable social structure. This can be taken as a person’s internalized representation of identity theory’s emphasis on an individual’s place in the social network. Using this concept in connection with socio-cognitive processes gives us a deeper understanding of interpersonal behavior.

Using a combination of these two concepts it is possible to posit an explanation for the results found in this study. Outside of the presence of a specific social ordering schema general socio-cognitive group processes as presented in SIT operate by utilizing a basic rule of similarity in determining how another individual will be evaluated. When specific social ordering schemas are present this more textured information is utilized in the decision making process even when at times it is in direct contradiction to the positive in-group bias that is usually predicted. Gender in this study was the most differentiated variable and is also a central feature in social structure. Consequently gender would be highly likely to possess a social ordering schema that would contain instructions towards a status hierarchy.
This status hierarchy has been found in the past to be a motivating influence for the presence of out-group favoritism instead of in-group favoritism in lower status groups (Reichl 1997). Favoring the out-group when a person is a member of a low status group potentially has greater benefits than favoring the in-group by acknowledging the status structure and responding in the approved way. This would suggest that status hierarchies utilized by the individual in social ordering schemas would be important in understanding and predicting group behavior in a social environment. For this study it is important to note that the modification of behavior is only found in relation to the domain of the status stratification, in other words the characteristic that the different status groups have been sorted by. The tendency for women to suggest higher fines and a greater severity of the crime when evaluating other women would imply that criminal justice is a potential domain of stratification and those women are reacting in a way congruent with what would be expected of the lower status group. Men, being the dominant social group, express in-group bias as predicted by SIT.

The implications for theory and future research are that a more integrationist approach is necessary. Social identity theory tells us that people will display, while not inherent tendencies, default group processes which have been learned to be the most effective in situations where richer information is not present. In cases where this richer information is present it will be utilized as society has informed the individual that this is a more desirable and/or rewarding pattern of behavior. What these occasions are and what the changed behavior may be is present in identity theory and its emphasis on social position. It is only through the knowledge of both individual socio-cognitive processes
and macro level social structure that an accurate understanding of behavior can be obtained.

Examining these conclusions in regards to total identity congruence is not possible with the current data. The trend presented could potentially be the result of conflicting schemas imparting contradictory instructions to the individual, or an increase in the power of the in-group socio-cognitive bias as the individual becomes more similar to the participant. Possible future directions might be to create an instrument which presents to the participants evaluative questions about all possible group categories for each identity that is present in the analysis. This would allow for mapping of the presence of either in-group or out-group bias in regards to the total identity congruence with the individuals in the vignette. This would make it possible to elaborate on the effects of congruence on specific combinations of identity variables versus simply an increase in overall identity congruence.

What may be gleaned from this study is that this issue is more complex than what SIT would suggest. Knowledge of group membership is not adequate to predict group behavior. Instead it is necessary to also understand the identity groups’ position in relation to one another and the rest of society in order to predict how they may respond to each another. Gender serves as a clear example for this study that while men display typical in-group bias women based upon their different societal position respond in a much different way. Identities serve as ways to distinguish groups in society from one another and it seems incorrect to continue to assume that these distinctions are always separate yet equal in the social hierarchy. Psychological group processes are important as they tell us how individuals behave outside of constraint, but in order to have a complete
picture of human behavior the social contextual influences on the processes must be understood.

Overall the findings of this study support the idea that a merger of SIT processes and the information about social network position provided by ICT is beneficial to a better understanding of interpersonal evaluation. Further refinement of the methodology and an increased emphasis on the contribution of preexisting literatures on identities which are central features to society such as gender, race, and class will be of benefit to understanding how the identity of a subject interacts with the identity of the evaluator to form unique judgment behavior.
References


University Fact Book (2006)


Appendix A: Demographics Form

Please answer some brief demographic questions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnicity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

State in which you lived for the majority of your childhood

Please circle the range that approximates your parent’s average annual income.

- 1-24,999
- 25,000-49,999
- 50,000 or greater
Appendix B: Vignette form series

Police reports given to you as part of the citizen involvement in justice program contain information about two current speeding violations and ask that after familiarizing yourself with the person involved determine what fine you feel would be appropriate.

Case 1. John Smith a 20 year old male was ticketed for doing 45 MPH in a 35 MPH zone while driving on West Oak Street at 5:00 p.m. on Thursday October 12\textsuperscript{th} 2006. Income disclosure as part of the program established that Mr. Smith earns $15,000 per year establishing him in the lower income class.

Questions

1. Circle what you feel would be an appropriate fine.
   $1$ $25$ $50$ $100$ $200$ $400$ $800$

2. How likely do you think it is that the defendant is guilty? With 1 meaning not guilty and 6 meaning they are definitely guilty.
   1 2 3 4 5 6

3. How severe do you feel the crime was in this case? With 1 meaning not severe at all and 6 meaning the most severe possible?
   1 2 3 4 5 6

4. To what extent do you agree with punishing the defendant? With 1 meaning you highly disagree and 6 meaning you highly agree.
   1 2 3 4 5 6

5. To what extent do you identify with the defendant in the description? With 1 meaning you don’t identify at all and 6 meaning you identify completely
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Case 2. Jane Doe a 70 year old female was ticketed for doing 65 MPH in a 55 MPH zone while driving on South Elm Street at 4:30 p.m. on Tuesday Oct 24\textsuperscript{th} 2006. Income
disclosure as part of the program established that Mrs. Doe earns $75,000 per year establishing her in the upper income class.

Questions

1. Circle what you feel would be an appropriate fine.

   $1   $25   $50   $100   $200   $400   $800

2. How likely do you think it is that the defendant is guilty? With 1 meaning not guilty and 6 meaning they are definitely guilty.

   1   2   3   4   5   6

3. How severe do you feel the crime was in this case? With 1 meaning not severe at all and 6 meaning the most severe possible?

   1   2   3   4   5   6

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   1   2   3   4   5   6

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Thank you for your participation please turn in the form to the researcher.
Police reports given to you as part of the citizen involvement in justice program contain information about two current speeding violations and ask that after familiarizing yourself with the person involved determine what fine you feel would be appropriate.

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Questions
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Questions

1. Circle what you feel would be an appropriate fine.
   
   $1  $25  $50  $100  $200  $400  $800

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Questions

1. Circle what you feel would be an appropriate fine.
   
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   1     2     3     4     5     6

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   1     2     3     4     5     6

5. To what extent do you identify with the defendant in the description? With 1 meaning you don’t identify at all and 6 meaning you identify completely
   
   1     2     3     4     5     6

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Appendix C: Participant Demographic Characteristics

Table 3

*Gender Characteristics of Sample*

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
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Table 4

*Age Characteristics of Sample*

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### Table 5

*Race and Ethnicity Characteristics of Sample*

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### Table 6

*State of Birth Characteristics of Sample*

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Table 7

*Parental Income Range Characteristics of Sample*

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