

Identity Status and Interpersonal Style

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A group of 22 undergraduates at a large Midwestern state university were interviewed to determine their "identity states," i.e., identity foreclosure, identity diffusion, identity moratorium, moratorium-diffusion, or identity achievement. A distinctive interpersonal style, both toward peers and toward authority, was associated with each identity status. For example, the identity foreclosed people were talkative, compliant toward authority, and covetous of the regard of peers; the identity moratorium people were rebellious toward authority and counter-dependent toward peers. The significance of these findings for a theory of identity development is discussed.

INTRODUCTION

This article describes an empirical attempt to integrate two research areas: theories of identity development from one direction and notions about interpersonal style from another. The central proposition is that a specific level of identity formation, the individual's identity status, will be associated with a distinctive interpersonal orientation.

Identity formation is one of the engaging yet elusive topics in contemporary psychology. Erik Erikson (1956, 1958, 1959a,b, 1969) has written most frequently and most cogently here. He feels that adolescence confronts the youth with important psychological tasks to be mastered: he must be able to

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develop a sense of workmanship so that he can choose and attend consistently to a vocation, an ability to compete actively with others, and the capacity to partake of meaningful sexual intimacy. A firm sense of self, a coherent identity, is prerequisite to making these commitments:

The process of identity formation emerges as an *evolving configuration* — a configuration which is gradually established by successive ego synthesis and resynthesis throughout childhood; it is the configuration gradually integrating *constitutional givens, idiosyncratic libidinal needs, favored capacities, significant identifications, effective defenses, successful sublimations and consistent roles*. (Erikson, 1956, p. 71)

If all goes well, by the close of adolescence

An increasing sense of identity . . . is experienced preconsciously as a sense of psychosocial well-being. Its most obvious concomitants are a feeling of being at home in one's body, a sense of "knowing where one is going," and an inner assuredness of anticipated recognition from those who count. (Erikson, 1959b, p. 118)

Erikson views psychological growth in terms of the resolution of a sequence of conflicts or crises (Erikson, 1959a). Four of these crises or stages precede adolescence: "trust vs. mistrust," "autonomy vs. shame and doubt," "initiative vs. guilt," and "industry vs. inferiority." Successful negotiation of each stage gives rise to the necessary strength and cohesiveness within the personality to confront the subsequent one. However, should a crisis not be adequately resolved, the individual is the more vulnerable to difficulties presented by the subsequent stages. A crisis, then, is a decisive turning point which is followed either by greater health and maturity or by greater weakness. For Erikson, it is at adolescence that the products of the previous crises are to be integrated within a personally appropriate, coherent identity.

Clearly, if this process goes awry, identity breakdown of some kind results, and Erikson is at his best in describing the loss of identity suffered by many of his young patients. However, he never describes the variations which healthy identity formation can take.

James Marcia (1966, 1967, 1968) has made two important emendations to Erikson's work. He has developed a typology of "normal" outcomes to identity formation, and he has operationalized much of Erikson's terminology.

Marcia has four categories of identity status: Achievement, Moratorium, Foreclosure, and Diffusion. The first three of these are construed as points on a continuum, ranging from the more to the less mature, but it is not clear how or when one passes from one stage to another. Similarly, it is not established whether Diffusion is a psychopathological variant of the identity formation process and as such should be separated from the normal hierarchy. The present research addresses itself, in part, to these questions.

Marcia understands Erikson to posit that identity achievement is based on a personal resolution of the questions surrounding occupational choice and religious and political ideology. As an individual approaches adulthood, he must

discover a vocation which he can perform and which will gratify him. He must also develop a world image or ideology which will allow him to understand what is happening around him and provide him with a base from which to make important judgments and decisions.

Commitment to an occupation or ideology by itself does not capture the essence of identity formation, however. Marcia proposes that a period of search, of experimentation, is necessary developmentally. For him, identity achievement is defined by the act of becoming *committed* to an *occupation* and an *ideology* and of having experienced a *crisis* (a period of active decision-making) in making these investments.

Marcia (1968) has written an interview schedule to place the individual in one of the four identity statuses. The questions are short and straightforward (i.e., What are you majoring in? What do you plan to do with it? Ever considered anything else? How do your folks feel about your plans now?). A person who has been in crisis but who has finally developed a personal, coherent stance with regard to occupation and ideology is placed within the identity achieved group. Those who have passively accepted the identity proffered by their family have experienced identity foreclosure. People who are still seeking their own commitments and values are in the identity moratorium phase. Those who have become immobilized with self-doubt and alienation or who have confronted identity issues minimally are within the identity diffused group.

Marcia and his colleagues have undertaken a number of empirical studies using the identity status classification and have found significant differences between the groups in authoritarianism, cognitive style, and moral ideology (Podd, 1969; Marcia, 1966, 1968). These studies indicate that the identity statuses have construct validity, that they seem to measure a significant dimension that underlies real differences between individuals.

Mann *et al.* (1970) have also developed a personality typology for young adults, but theirs rests on interpersonal style, not on identity status. First, they constructed a detailed scoring system to reflect the affect beneath each statement (each "act" in Mann's nomenclature) spoken by an individual in a group. The scoring categories themselves are relatively self-explanatory: e.g., Moving Against, Expressing Affection, Denying Distress, Showing Dominance. An example of a statement scored Moving Against would be, "You don't talk. You haven't said a word in the group yet"; of Denying Distress, "This silence doesn't make me anxious"; of Showing Dominance, "Let's split the group up into two small ones and meet in separate rooms." Mann and his coworkers then tape-recorded and scored each session of four college discussion classes during an academic semester. Through factor analysis, they differentiated eight clusters of students, in terms of their affective style of interaction with the instructor.

For instance, one group were the rebellious, creative males who accepted nothing the teacher said until they had reworked it in their own way. However, at times, these same people sought to fuse with the teacher and to establish

themselves as his chosen favorites. They seemed to feel as if they magically knew what was in his mind, but should he start to assert authority they would quickly withdraw from him.

The conceptual association on which the present study is based is that the interpersonal style of a young adult, as captured by the Mann scoring system, may well relate to his identity status, as defined by Marcia. A description of the methodology used to examine this proposition follows.

METHOD

Subjects

The subjects in this study were 22 liberal arts undergraduates at a large Midwestern state university. They were members of an unstructured course in "interpersonal behavior" taught by the author in the fall of 1969. Thirteen were male and nine female. The majority were juniors and seniors; the mean age of the group was 21. However, two of the women were over 30. All were Caucasian, save one Hawaiian. The class that term numbered 26, but four could not participate in the study. The course met three times per week for 1 hr during one academic semester.

Procedure

During the semester, after the close of the class, each subject was interviewed and tested, individually, by the writer or one of four colleagues. The subject was administered Marcia's Identity Status Interview³ and three projective tests: the Rorschach, the TAT, and the Early Memories Inventory. Each was then asked to write a 10- to 20-page autobiography according to an exhaustive outline (Murray, 1938, pp. 402-410) and to complete a log, describing in one or two words how he had spent each hour over the previous week. These tasks required a total of some 6 hr and the subjects were paid fifteen dollars.

In the scoring of the interview, the subject was given an identity status rating on each of the four areas (i.e., identity achievement in occupation, moratorium in religion, etc.). These four ratings were averaged to find the overall identity status. In making this final evaluation, the scoring procedure was not

³The Marcia interview was modified somewhat in this study. Extending the work of Marcia and Friedman (1970), we assumed for both sexes that arriving at a coherent, independent set of standards for sexual behavior, one that was not simply a reflection of the parental view, was as fundamental an identity task as deciding on a vocation or developing a political or religious ideology. Therefore, a section addressing attitudes toward sexual relationships was appended to the Identity Status Interview.

entirely arithmetical. The general tone of the interview was of greatest moment.⁴

After the identity status ratings were complete, all subjects could be placed in one of five categories: Diffusion, Foreclosure, Moratorium, Achievement, and Moratorium-Diffusion.⁵ These subgroups ranged in size from two to six members.

Each of the 39 class sessions was tape-recorded and scored with the Process Analysis Scoring System, a modification of the Mann classifications (Gibbard and Hartman, 1973). Frequency tables of mean activity rate for each group toward peers and toward the leader were constructed and analyzed through one-way analysis of variance. Next, profiles of affective response toward peers and toward the leader were developed for each identity status. Various affective categories were dropped or combined because they contained so few entries. Finally, the differences between the identity status groupings in affective response toward peers and toward the leader were tested with the Kruskal-Wallis statistic, a rank-ordering method similar to analysis of variance. (Analysis of variance could not be used because the data were not independent of one another and were not normally distributed.)

From this point on, the author worked alone. He attempted to understand each person individually in terms of all the information gathered about him: the Identity Status Interview, the Rorschach, the TAT, the Early Memories Inventory, the autobiography, the log, and the interpersonal data from the class.⁶ A separate picture of every subject was developed, as one might with a diagnostic case in a clinical setting. Then those in each identity status were examined as a group to ascertain what life themes and styles they held in common. The aim was to understand each identity status and the differences between statuses as fully as possible. The methodology here is a frank compromise between a case-study orientation and a larger-sample empirical study. It was hoped that the strength of each approach could be combined to lead to a more fundamental understanding of the entire process of identity formation.

What follows, then, is a sketch of those in the various identity status subgroups, emphasizing the contrast in interpersonal style between each status. The final section articulates the implications of these case studies for the theory of identity development. The identity diffused, the least developmentally advanced group, will be discussed first.

⁴ Elsewhere (Donovan, 1975), the author describes the research subjects and the scoring of the Identity Status Interview in depth.

⁵ As the rating of the interview progressed, it became evident that a fifth, intermediate category (Moratorium-Diffusion) was needed, so that those who clearly displayed characteristics of both identity moratorium and identity diffusion would not have to be listed exclusively in one or the other.

⁶ In another article (Donovan, 1975), the author discusses the daily activity of the subjects, as represented in the logs, and their Rorschach performances. The present article focuses on the distinctive interpersonal style of each identity status.

RESULTS

Identity Diffusion

Only three subjects were placed in the Diffusion category. One of these refused to complete the research materials, saying that "it was an invasion of privacy." The information that we have about this group is limited because of its small size and the reticence of its members.

These people were diffused in that they apparently had no plans or committed choices:

I have no major, General Studies. I have enough credits in Psych. and Math. No plans. Nothing crosses my mind . . . No tangible ideas [of what I will do] right now. I'm waiting for the summer. In the winter I'm on a down. This summer I'm going to split.

With regard to politics, religion, and sexual relationships, these individuals were vague and troubled and confused:

[What are your views about sexual relationships?] That reminds me of a question given to inmates in a mental hospital. [pause] I can't answer that. I can't answer that question — I don't really know about my parents' views.

These people not only had made few choices but were unable to define their preferences or feelings. "I don't know" and "I'm not very settled about that" were frequent answers. They were in direct contrast to the identity foreclosed, who were so sure of what they wished to be.

The parents of the identity diffused did not appear to understand them very well or to be very involved with them: "Dad doesn't know where I'm at." Either the parents had definite but stereotyped ideas about what sort of future their child should have (a college professor), which the child, in turn, totally rejected, or they offered few ideas at all in this regard.

Something seemed to have gone wrong as these people were growing. One subject described her father as "grouchy" and finally said that she had always been afraid of him: "I was very apt to go along with him just to keep the peace." A second stated that he had been disappointed in his father because he was not the "aggressive, masculine, American man." He had previously described his mother as "edgy" and "neurotic." The third portrayed the more concretely unhappy events of a father repeatedly whipping him with a belt and calling him "dumb" and "stupid."

In sum, in each family there seemed to have been a damaged identification with at least one parent; either the child didn't respect him or he feared him.

There was a curious early memory which two of this group held in common. Both recalled frequent serious injury: e.g.,

[earliest memory] I was playing cowboys and Indians. I slipped on something and hit my head on the step. I had about seven stitches or so. That's what I remember. My father was at work. My mother was up on the second story, I guess, watching it

Table I. Activity Rate Toward Peers:
Group Means^a

Diffusion	$\bar{X} = 16.67$
Foreclosure	$\bar{X} = 193.50$
Moratorium	$\bar{X} = 295.20$
Achievement	$\bar{X} = 146.50$
Moratorium-diffusion	$\bar{X} = 25.00$

^aExpressed in terms of "acts." One-way analysis of variance: SS between = 262,562.90, df between = 4; SS within = 173,243.47, df within = 17; $F = 6.44$, $p < 0.05$.

from there. She wasn't paying too much attention. I mean she heard me crying but she didn't get too excited and stuff.

The memory is accepted calmly, like any expected occurrence. No one seems to have cared, but this is not surprising to the speaker. Early, the identity diffused seemed to have experienced themselves as helpless victims, awaiting much harm and little care from the world. Feelings of "inferiority," "alienation," and "ambivalence" were often mentioned. In one way or another from the beginning of their lives, these people felt that they did not belong. This sense of insecurity and estrangement continued to the present. Of all the students we interviewed, these seemed to have the lowest sense of self-esteem. They were frightened, sad people.

Elsewhere (Donovan, 1975) there is a full description of the projective test protocols of the identity diffused. These indicate that their fear and projected anger had become strong enough to compromise ego functioning. A number of the test responses were within the borderline psychotic range. Severe psychopathology was more evident within this subgroup than any other.

Table II. Activity Rate Toward the
Leader: Group Means^a

Diffusion	$\bar{X} = 6.60$
Foreclosure	$\bar{X} = 47.67$
Moratorium	$\bar{X} = 87.60$
Achievement	$\bar{X} = 54.00$
Moratorium-diffusion	$\bar{X} = 25.00$

^aExpressed in terms of "acts." One-way analysis of variance: SS between = 21,406.92, df between = 4; SS within = 38,500.03, df within = 17; $F = 2.37$, $p < 0.10$.

Table III. Member-to-Member Patterns of Affective Response: Group Means^a

	<i>n</i>	Expressing Hostility	Expressing Affection	Showing Dominance	Showing Submission	Expressing Distress
Identity diffusion	3	4.3	3.3	3.3	2.0	6.7
Identity foreclosure	5	90.8	32.2	18.4	68.6	64.6
Identity moratorium	5	72.8	32.0	5.6	73.0	47.8
Identity achievement	2	59.5	33.5	6.0	33.0	34.5
Identity moratorium- diffusion	6	19.0	5.5	2.2	9.7	19.0

^aExpressed in terms of "acts." (Those subjects with a total activity rate of ≥ 5 are included.) Kruskal-Wallis one-way analysis of variance by ranks: $df = Y, H = 11,944, p < 0.02$.

The behavior of these students in the class reflected withdrawal, noninvolvement, and some inappropriateness. They were extremely quiet, speaking an average of less than one sentence per session to their peers (Table I), and equally as little to the teacher (Table II). When they did speak they expressed some Hostility, Affection, and Submission, little Dominance, and much Distress relative to their other contributions (Table III). It was as if they felt shy, frightened, and vulnerable before their peers. They did not speak often and seemed to assume that they must be diplomatic and agreeable (Affection and Submission) lest they be turned on. Once in a while, anger and frustration burst through their vigilance (Hostility). One subject was silent for nearly all of the meetings.

Table IV. Member-to-Leader Patterns of Affective Response: Group Means^a

	<i>n</i>	Expressing Hostility	Expressing Affection	Showing Dominance	Showing Submission	Expressing Distress
Identity diffusion	2	1.0	1.5	3.0	0	0.5
Identity foreclosure	5	12.8	7.2	12.8	6.0	15.0
Identity moratorium	5	23.8	2.8	6.6	17.6	17.2
Identity achievement	2	18.5	6.5	8.5	1.5	19.0
Identity moratorium- diffusion	3	15.0	9.3	5.0	4.7	5.7

^aExpressed in terms of "acts." (Those subjects with a total activity rate of ≥ 5 are included.) Kruskal-Wallis one-way analysis of variance by ranks: $df = Y, H = 9956, p < 0.05$.

Midway through the term, he suddenly yelled "shit" and stretched himself on the floor. Later he mentioned that he had done this to dramatize his feeling of ineffectualness within the group.

If the identity diffused were furtive around their agemates, they seemed nearly terrified of the teacher (Table IV). They hardly ever spoke to him and when they did they showed little direct Hostility. If they disagreed, it was in task-oriented ways (Dominance). It was as if they were affectively paralyzed by him. By their silence and compliance, perhaps they were asking him to protect and not to hurt them. However, other material, such as the autobiographies, in which feelings of spite toward authority were clearly stated, convinces us that these people might also have hated the teacher. Possibly they hoped that their restrained, circumspect behavior would keep him from discovering this. The fact that they addressed him so little may indicate that they had little faith in even propitiation where powerful figures were concerned.

Identity Foreclosure

Of the 22 subjects, six, five males and one female, clearly exhibited Foreclosure. These people had internalized their parents' plans for them, particularly with regard to occupational choice. For example, one had decided to go to law school and then enter his father's legal firm. This was what his parents wanted as well:

Mother wants me to go into father's practice. Their childhood ambition for me and my brother was to go into law practice.

Another said:

I plan to be a clinical psychologist. Have since high school. Mother said she would have been a psychologist. She has a lot of influence on me.

The careers these people chose were entirely consistent with upper middle class aspiration: two wished to be physicians, one a minister, one a lawyer, another a business executive, and the last a clinical psychologist.

In their attitudes about religion, politics, and sexuality, these students were more liberal than their parents, but the similarity with the familial views was still manifest:

My religious beliefs are not very different from my parents'. Our beliefs are not basically different. I never doubted the basic concepts. Dad's a big analyzer. Dad is a model. I have a lot of respect for him. He's a model for a lot of things I do.

It seemed that these people had not rejected, or reworked, much of what their parents had offered. In this overt sense, the identification of the children with the parents was conscious and apparently unambivalent: "I am truly my parents' child and only theirs."

Not surprisingly, the identity foreclosed portrayed their homes, particularly early in their lives, as loving and affectionate:

[Try to recall your earliest memory.] We were real young. My mom used to hold me [and my brother] and rock us together . . . I would look around. Mom would tell us stories, and we would listen to little records, and Mom would comment about them. [What feelings come back with this memory?] . . . The feelings are of love and closeness, motherliness, the way my mother must have felt about us.

The identity foreclosed students as children evidently had high self-esteem. As young adults, this continued. This may have been an outcome of being highly valued by their parents. They seemed not to doubt that they were worthwhile human beings or that they would have successful, fulfilling lives:

I think I am a good person who has the strength of my convictions. I hope to lead a happy life, yet I don't want to float along effortlessly. I know that I'll have to work hard to get a Ph.D., yet I feel that I can do it, and I feel I will be happy doing it.

Even though these families were warm and gratifying and the children happy and optimistic, the parental concern appeared stifling as well as luxuriant. It was difficult for the child to rebel against or become autonomous from his loving, interested parents. Apparently the experience of withdrawal of approval, or of simply sensing oneself in disagreement with the parents, made the growing person feel guilty and alone. The identity foreclosed had become sober, stable, responsible young adults. However, they were not independent, curious, or very aware of their own thoughts and feelings — not very psychologically developed.

Certainly, sexual and aggressive impulses seemed particularly inhibited. Repression was the principal defense mechanism of these people, and they used it often. This TAT story illustrates most of the familial and intrapsychic dynamics which distinguished the identity foreclosed. (The card pictures a nude woman in bed and a man dressed, standing and turning away from her.)

[Card 13MF] These two are married. Let's say they've had a fight. Say they haven't . . . a rough one. [pause] Say the guy's her brother. She's drifted from home or something. She ran away from home. She tried to make it on her own. She couldn't make it or something, and maybe she prostituted herself. He's been tracking her down, but she killed herself. She's still nude, just after the affair with the guy. She has no feelings now, but before her death, feelings of hopelessness, shame, worthlessness. Guy feels bad that he couldn't find her sooner. Family would have accepted her back no matter what. He feels guilty for maybe driving her out. Feels close but feels guilty over what she did to herself. Almost expect it to turn out this way.

There has not been a fight. There is no sexual relationship between the main character and the girl; they are brother and sister. She left the family and expressed her sexuality, which caused her to be abandoned and destroyed. The only aggression in the story is directed inward by a guilty person toward herself. The main character has a strong, rigid superego and feels guilty and responsible for things that he has not done. The story ends with the rebel punished, as one would "almost expect."

In interpersonal settings, the identity foreclosed were hard-working, talkative, and constructive. They were the ones to maintain a group or a community but not to turn either in new directions.

Table I indicates that these students actively exchanged with their peers. They talked more than three of the other four subgroups. Table II shows that they also spoke a good deal with the teacher. The affective quality of what they said to their agemates was tempered (Table III). They did disagree frequently (Expressing Hostility), but through listening to the tapes it was evident that when they disagreed it was in polite, neutral, task-oriented terms, not overtly hostile ones. Their Affection was likewise kept in check somewhat. They attempted to lead the class, in a responsible, benevolent fashion (Expressing Dominance), but something about the group experience, no doubt its unstructured character, where rules and goals were unclear, was upsetting (Expressing Distress).

Their behavior toward the instructor differed little from the manner in which they approached their peers (Table IV). They sometimes openly disagreed (Hostility) and also attempted to sway him on task-oriented grounds (Dominance). They expressed some Affection and Submission toward him, and they voiced a good deal of Distress. In sum, they seemed somewhat in awe of the teacher and dependent on him, trusting and hoping that he would help them to deal with their anxiety about the class. One might have guessed that identity foreclosed students would be more deferential and less confrontative toward authority. Their behavior here indicates that they had freedom of movement within them. Given the lead of more boisterous classmates, they could answer back to the teacher somewhat. Yet they remained cautious and constructive. For the most part, they eschewed the more heated battles for the control of the group.

Identity Moratorium

The largest group in the study was the Moratorium status. Eleven of the 22 subjects were classified here. However, there were important differences between many of those in this category. One subgroup seemed to be actively seeking solutions to personal conflicts, to be exploring for emotional commitment. Others appeared to be doing likewise to an extent, but their lack of defined goals and values also had a highly defensive, diffused flavor. They were avoiding commitment even as they were involved in its search. It was more appropriate to treat these latter students separately as a fifth identity status, "Moratorium-Diffusion." This section will deal with identity moratorium, and the identity moratorium-diffusion group will be discussed last since their place in the hierarchy is most ambiguous.

Five subjects remained in the identity moratorium status. They were more directly engaged in self-confrontation than were any of the other students.

Their indecision was particularly apparent in occupational choice. For most this was troubling, but they seemed to feel that they should know the self and the world more widely before settling on a vocation:

I don't know what I'll do. I've got a long time. It's a big place out there. I know lots of nice people. I'm going to leave school at the end of the semester and take off for 4 or 5 years Until you've extracted yourself, on your own, without your culture to support you, you don't know what you've got. Have a chance to examine just yourself.

Neither had these people made up their minds about political, religious, and interpersonal commitment, but they had become emotionally involved in facing these problems.

Unlike the identity foreclosed, the identity moratorium students did not mirror their parents' value system or way of living. Often, though not always, they were in direct opposition to the parental life style:

My father is a professional military man, war decorated. I applied for a C.O. and then decided to give it back. I've been disowned since Christmas. I've been paying my own way through here since then.

The average age of this subgroup was 21. All four of the males were colorful in dress, two had noticeably long hair. These students tended to be assertive, talkative, and rapid in movement. The others referred to them frequently as "interesting" or as "leaders." They were attractive, visible, likable people.

The family backgrounds and childhoods of these people were somewhat unusual. All had fathers who were successful; four were business executives, one a professor of law. All five mentioned that they were the "sensitive" child or "depended on to do great things" or more intelligent than their siblings. By their report, each was active and headstrong during childhood. In many cases, this led quickly to conflict between parent and child:

[early memory] Trying to crawl out of my crib, finally succeeding after hours of attempting it and having my mother come in and put me right back where I was Frustration. I guess I expected to be lauded for the fact that I got out, and instead I was just thrown back in again.

It is unclear, of course, whether these early memories are accurate, but it is significant that the identity moratorium students continually assert through their memories that they had the identity of the independent, rebellious, "chosen" child from the start.

As young adults, these people were competent, autonomous, and active, and, in addition, they possessed the interesting capacity to experience and describe their feelings in a clear, deep way. They were unlike the identity foreclosed in that they did not make continual, characterological use of repression and denial. Neither were they hampered by the ego disorganization and low self-esteem of the identity diffused. They could integrate memory, thought, and affect in an unrepressed, direct fashion:

We lived in the country and so you got around by horse, an old worn out mare, rode to school, rode everywhere. I used to go riding up in the hills behind the farm, used to follow the chicken hawks. Once came upon a honey tree. That was too much. I

thought that the old, hollowed-out trees that the bears eat out of are fantasy, but I found one — pot of gold at the end of the rainbow.

In this way, the identity moratorium people displayed highly developed ego functioning as independent individuals. However, there was a specific difficulty in object relatedness. Their energy, their curiosity, and their restlessness made some mercurial. Often they did not remain with one person, in one place, or with one task long enough to accomplish a great deal. It was as if they would be overdefined and imprisoned in some way should they commit themselves to anything or to anyone. For these reasons, two even refused to write the autobiographies: "What I was 5 minutes ago is not what I am now. The terror is being forced to stop to make the contradictions glaring."

Interpersonally they were prone to counterdependence and quick disagreement. The classroom data are relevant here. As might be predicted, the identity moratorium people were the most active in the group, in interacting both with peers and with the teacher (Tables I and II). Toward their agemates they expressed a good deal of Hostility both in terms of overt anger and in terms of more intellectualized disagreement.

Emotionally responsive, they communicated considerable Affection as well. But principally they showed a great deal of Dominance and comparatively less Submission and less Distress than did the other active group, the identity foreclosed. The identity moratorium students, then, were nearly obsessed with competitively controlling the group and with establishing a central place for themselves within it.

The flavor of their interaction with the instructor was equally distinctive. They spoke to him a great deal, and they expressed great Hostility and disagreement, limited Affection, and considerable Submission and Distress. In summary, they were locked in a direct power struggle for control of the group — sometimes they felt they were winning, sometimes losing, but it was the struggle they sought. For example, one shouted at him: "OK, Jim. Are you in or out of this group? In or out Jim? Which is it going to be?"

On other occasions, they identified with him and tried to feel his equal, standing above the group and wryly observing:

I like you and I think that you like me. There is a strange understanding I think we have of each other's thoughts It's a vague feeling but I have it nonetheless.

[same speaker] I had a strange relationship with Jim in the group. Jim knew what was going on. Something would happen; someone would say something; I would smile and look at Jim, and he would have the same little "I know too" smile on his face. I asked him about it but he would never come across.

Most of the other students kept a respectful or mistrusting distance from the teacher. Beyond either stance, there seemed to be few available, well-formed thoughts about him. The identity moratorium students had a more developed and intense relationship with him. Either they wished to joust or they felt allied.

Identity Achievement

The Achievement group, in some ways the most mature, differed widely from the others. It was very small, only two subjects. Both were female, and both were in their middle or late thirties, much older than any of the other students. Because this status is so small in number and because these two people were so much older than the other students, the comparisons and conclusions here are provisional.

They were the only subjects who seemed to have a coherent, settled occupational choice which was not a foreclosed one. Their political, religious, and interpersonal values were less stable and well integrated, but here, too, they were close to having evolved permanent, personal positions that were not simply an acceptance of the parental or community norm:

I am in the field of social work. My undergraduate degree is in music, I want to go into a field involving people. I want to do adolescent work in the community

I'm trying to adapt to the new morality. Loosening moralities are a very good thing. I find myself pretty liberal. My ideas have definitely changed during the last few years as my own kids have reached teen-age. My oldest daughter is on the pill with my permission. That took some thinking.

At 21, probably both these women were identity foreclosed. On the projective tests, one sees the same repression and pollyanna-ish emotion which distinguished the identity foreclosed. They also showed the qualities of conventionality, stability, and lack of curiosity that were so typical of the identity foreclosed students. They seemed to have a similar reverence for family and the same strict conscience as well.

There is some additional research evidence indicating that the foreclosed and achieved positions are closer in women than in men. Marcia and Friedman (1970) found that identity achieved and identity foreclosed women were similar to each other and different from identity moratorium and identity diffused females along the following dimensions: the former two subgroups chose more difficult college majors, had higher self-esteem, and were more authoritarian and less anxious. In sum, they had a more confident but more rigid, other-directed stance.

By their late 30s, they had experimented with and developed vocational plans, and to a lesser degree political, religious, and interpersonal positions and values, which were no longer foreclosed but which were realistically based on individual needs, interests, abilities, and experiences. These commitments of the identity achieved had a personally tested quality. For this reason, it seemed likely that in their future lives these choices would remain relatively firm.

In appearance and style, these women were unremarkable. Consistent with their age, they were less anxious, less labile, and probably less emotionally involved with the group than the other students.

Toward those in the group, they were calm and nurturant. They expressed as much Affection but less Hostility, Dominance, and Distress than the other two active subgroups, the identity foreclosed and the identity moratorium people. They were not concerned with competitive battles for leadership or power and were more interested in developing controlled but warm relationships. They also seemed to need reassurance from peers less than the people in the other two verbal subgroups (were less frequent in Expressing Distress toward peers).

Toward the instructor, they were measured and respectful. They experienced a moderate amount of Hostility, Affection, and Dominance. They did express Distress frequently, which indicates more openness to their own authoritarianism and wish to be led than many of their counterdependent, younger classmates. They seemed less preoccupied with fighting with the leader; many authority issues by this time were either resolved or dormant.

In the class, the identity achieved were well-controlled, tolerant, active people. They were less concerned with personal conflicts than many of the other students, e.g., with low self-esteem like the identity diffused or with independence like the identity moratorium people. Most prominently, the identity achieved women wished to take care of the others and assure that the experience would be constructive and not harmful. This was probably much the way they behaved as mothers in their own families. One drew this parallel herself:

Very often I found myself acting as a go-between at Canterbury [where the group often met informally]. That later had some bearing on what happened after class. This is similar to a mother's role at home, where, when she is convinced of the need of two antagonists to confront each other directly, she does a bit of undercover spadework in an effort to get the two set up for a constructive session.

Moratorium-Diffusion

The Moratorium-Diffusion status was the most difficult to understand. It was far from a coherent group. However, one characteristic that its two males and four females had in common was that they were entirely undecided about occupational plans and about most personal values as well. They appeared in search of some resolution in these various areas, but their effort often seemed more self-protective than exploratory. They were not satisfied with their parents' way of life, but neither could they become productively involved in fashioning one of their own:

Let's say I'm a Psych. major. I have no idea what I will do with it. I try not to plan more than a week in advance. My parents would like me to settle down and get married. That seems pretty far off right now. Mother would love it, if I stayed right at home I have plans to go to Africa this summer, go to Europe by myself in the fall. After that I don't know.

This illustrates the continual question with these people, whether they were drifting toward diffusion or whether they were hesitantly seeking moratorium.

This subgroup was of mixed physical appearance. Three of the girls were somewhat "hip" looking, but the two males and the last of the girls were conventional in appearance. Their average age was 21; five were seniors, one a sophomore.

The families of these people were exceptional, although the relationships between husband and wife seemed difficult in most. The fathers were all moderately successful businessmen but not nearly so wealthy as those of the identity moratorium students. In one family, there was obviously great conflict between the parent and the child. In the others, the feeling was vague, but the children seemed disappointed in the atmosphere of the home and in their past and present interactions with parents. The warmth of the foreclosure home was not communicated, nor the dynamism of the moratorium family, nor the bleakness of the diffusion household.

Mother and I argue. I do things to provoke arguments, I see her as myself. She had talent and looks, ended up with four kids and debts and a husband I wouldn't marry. I see it and strike out against it. There's a possibility that I might end up the same way.

This ambivalence probably began in early parental identifications, but it flavored nearly everything that these people undertook as young adults. This conflict toward self and toward the world was the central characteristic which the identity moratorium-diffusion individuals shared. They were never convinced that even their most enjoyable plans would work out. They seemed always prepared for disappointment, depression, and flight:

My major is Philosophy. [What are you going to do with it?] Nothing, work part-time. I'm planning to go to art school in the fall. If I weren't in school, I would read, write, work at menial jobs, lay out in the sun . . . my parents are disappointed: I was going to be a doctor. I'm not sure that I want to do anything. I'm not sure that it's such a good decision to go to art school. I could see myself just taking off.

They felt that they had been cheated, that they should have been more satisfied. They suspected that the problem was within themselves, but they could not define it.

The ambivalence of the identity moratorium-diffusion people preoccupied them and turned them in upon themselves. They seemed less interested in the world than did the identity moratorium or the identity foreclosed students, for example. The identity moratorium people could clearly see the various dimensions of an emotional issue and could separate opposing feelings to understand them better. This was precisely what the identity moratorium-diffusion people could not do. Instead, they became confused and then angry or silent.

Because these individuals did not understand or trust themselves very much, they did not care for unstructured situations such as the class. They liked even less people who might see things within them of which they were not aware — psychologists, for instance. These students used one of two strategies when confronted with a person or situation in the class which made them anxious. Sometimes they withdrew; sometimes they became very hostile.

Examining Tables I and II, we can observe the effects of the first of these tactics. The identity moratorium-diffusion subjects were frequently absent from class; when they did attend, they spoke little either to their classmates or to the teacher.

Tables III and IV indicate how angry these students could be in a few words. Relative to their other contributions, they were hostile and dominant toward their peers and resentful of the instructor. The depth of their Hostility could be startling. In the term paper for the course, one called the teacher a "motherfucker" and a "baboon," because she did not care for one of his interpretations. From other sources, such as the autobiographies, we know that the identity diffused students were equally as spiteful toward the teacher; they were inhibited in expressing these feelings, however. The identity moratorium-diffusion people were not.

These people seemed to fear loss of self-mastery, loss of self-control. They hated and withdrew from the teacher, probably because they had the fantasy that he understood and would manipulate them. Their resistance to him was furious at times, but they spoke little and were absent often, as if they felt that rebellion would do no good. Unlike the identity moratorium students, they were much more likely to leave than to stay to fight.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Although much further work is necessary, this research indicates that level of identity development is directly related to interpersonal style. For instance, identity diffused people interact with peers and with authority in a characteristically different fashion than do identity moratorium people. There are a number of questions brought forward by this research. They are dealt with below.

Save the identity achieved, all the subjects here were in the process of separating from parents and family and becoming independent. College brings this issue to the fore since in most cases this represents the first extended stay away from home. To summarize, the identity foreclosed seemed to have resolved the separation issue by maintaining a highly positive identification with the parents. In this way, they kept the parents with them as loving, internalized objects. The identity moratorium students were far more autonomous from parents; this is why they could confront so many feelings and experiences independently. The identity moratorium-diffusion people were locked in an ambivalent struggle. They could not separate from their parental objects, and they were furious and accusatory toward them. The identity diffused students were also angry toward parents; principally they showed little inclination to separate from parental objects and little hope that staying near them would bring anything but disappointment and misunderstanding. The identity achieved alone seemed to have affected a full independence from family. Certainly, the passage of time and the establishment of their own families were crucial here, but as well

in both cases one or both parents of the identity achieved had died many years before the study. This may have facilitated separation.

Again, with the exception of the identity achieved, the process of individuation and maturation was still obviously continuing with the majority of these subjects and clearly would do so for some years. Too often, the implication of personality theory is that important development does not take place after adolescence. Research such as the present work calls this assumption into question.⁷

If the identity status groupings begin to emerge as discrete developmental stages or alternatives, then the question of how the individual passes from one stage to another becomes central; for example, how might a person mature from identity foreclosure to identity achievement? There is considerable evidence that the two identity achieved subjects here were once identity foreclosed. At 21, by self-report, these two women had chosen occupations which were proffered then by family (at that age one had training in music and was a housewife, the other was a housewife). In addition, they appeared to have had moralistic consciences and unformed personal values in the foreclosed style. The passage of time and undergoing important life experiences, such as moving geographically from the family, marriage, in one case divorce, and child rearing, seem to have been central in maturational advance. However, clearly other individuals could partake of these experiences and mature little. Therefore, personal qualities such as "openness to experience" and "responsiveness to feeling" are also important but very difficult to conceptualize or even to describe.

A related difficulty is the existence of considerable evidence that there is at least as much likelihood of remaining within the same identity status as there is of passing to another one. For example, some of the identity moratorium students seemed counterdependent and rebellious even from childhood. It was difficult to imagine what would ever lead them toward a more stable, integrated stance. All of us have known mercurial, antiauthoritarian individuals who explored the self well into their 30s or 40s. Again, this study affords us only an image of 26 people stopped at a particular moment. The most baffling but significant questions involve how one could develop a longitudinal design which would teach us more about how people such as these developed as they did and how they would be likely to grow in the future.

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⁷ Daniel Levinson's research on the midlife decade likewise indicates that important development occurs well after adolescence (Daniel J. Levinson, Department of Psychiatry, Yale School of Medicine, personal communication).

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