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THE CHAMELEON FACTOR:
THE MENTAL MANAGEMENT
OF MULTIPLE ROLES
(AND WHAT IT REVEALS ABOUT THE ORGANIZATION OF CULTURE)

By

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

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This project uses a unique theoretical lens that integrates research from sociology, cognitive science, cognitive anthropology, and psychology to examine the “logics of action” inherent in daily role performances. I draw on 60 in-depth interviews with working parents from a variety of occupations to demonstrate how people establish themselves in various role-identities, as well as how people switch among and/or overlap established role components. I have found that like chameleons, most social actors possess the adaptive ability to alter their identifications of self-in-role, in part or in whole, to match the physical and mental environments in which they reside. This adaptive ability operates as an important means by which people reduce the probabilities of experiencing role conflict and role stress, even in those cases where the normative constructs of their roles may seem to be at odds. I note that culture plays an important part in the process of adaptation. It ingrains, reinforces and refines the capacities – that is, the skills, moods, habits, needs, goals, and situated modes of thoughts and action – out of which people construct the practices they use to establish and/or change their role-based positions. By demonstrating that people draw selectively from available cultural resources in developing lines of action, I address the question of what gives cultural practices their pervasive influence. Hence, my project serves double duty. By providing valuable

information about how people mentally manage busy lifestyles, my project is of use to both individual role players, struggling with competing priorities, and corporate policy makers, eager to engage a productive and motivated work force. At the same time, I look at a crucial piece of the sociological puzzle: the organization of culture. I demonstrate not only that people use culture strategically, to pursue valued ends, but that some cultural elements can be used to control, anchor, or organize others. In this way, the project makes a new contribution to the field of cultural sociology.

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DEDICATION

To my husband, sons, and daughter

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CHAPTER ONE

Multiple Roles and Mental Adaptation

“How many roles do I play on any given day? A lot! When I wake up in the morning, I don't know, the alarm goes off at 6:45 and I am in bed with my wife, it's early in the day, I think of myself as just a husband, a spouse. But it's maybe just 15 minutes until the kids get up and then I have to switch over to something else. I am down in the kitchen in my robe and pajamas making the breakfast and packing the lunches for the day. So there are some more roles for me - Dad, of course, but you know, I am the cook, the chef, the organizer of homework, the washer of dishes, I pack their lunches, help them dress. The dog needs to be fed and let out in the yard and, so let's add pet-owner into the mix. So I have already switched into what, 4-5 roles and it's barely 7:30 in the morning.

Most days, my kids miss the bus and I end up driving them to school. My wife has to get out early and since I mostly work at home, this job falls to me. So I am a chauffeur too. The drive there is all about kid stuff. We talk about what activities are going on after school or I tell some corny jokes. So on the way in I am mostly “all Dad”, or, I guess “chauffeur Dad”. After they get out of the car though, then it's different. Then I can finally switch into “me-mode” and think about what I have to do for the day. Do I have any meetings I have to go to? Any deadlines approaching? Any clients I have to meet? What do I have going on? Some days, I swear I think the car gets back home on automatic pilot because I don't remember making any conscious decisions getting there; I am so wrapped up in my own thoughts.

I get home and it's maybe just 8:30, my wife is usually on her way out the door. There's time for a quick kiss and "have a good day" and then it's just me, the dog and the goldfish. I usually clean up the kitchen, pour a second cup of coffee, and jump in the shower, still kind of working out my day. By 9:00 or 9:30 I am dressed and at work at my desk or on the phone or the computer or something. So that is when I am finally into my other roles. I am a psychologist, a student, a writer. I am either working with my clients or working on my book, depending on the day.

I try to stay in "work-mode", I really do. But it's not easy, especially when you work at home. The phone rings, the doorbell rings, the oil truck is here to fill up the tank, the UPS man comes and the dog barks like a banshee, then she wants to go out. My neighbor comes over to ask a favor. There are always interruptions that force me to turn my attention away from my work and put it somewhere else.

I try to keep "one foot in the door", keep working in my head even though I have to go answer the door or the phone or let the dog out. Sometimes I can do it. Talk on the phone while I answer the door, let the dog out while looking over an article. Sometimes I can't do it. Have you ever tired to work when your kids are home sick and giving you that sad, bored, how-can-you-work-don't-you-love-me look? I have to be Dad at those times and let my other stuff go or the guilt will kill me. Then there are the moments when my mind just wanders. Usually around lunch, but other times too. I may be sitting at my desk, I may look like I am working, but I'm not. I am somewhere else. Daydreaming, I guess, if you can call thinking about the kids or what to make for dinner daydreaming. Sometimes I just take a break when I catch myself drifting; sometimes I force myself to focus back on my work. But sometimes, I am just not in the mood and I have to go do something else, be

someone else for a while. I go to the health club, maybe I do the food shopping or some laundry, I call a friend on the phone. I get it out of my system and then get back to work.

This goes on until about 3:45 when the bus pulls up and then I am back to Dad and chef and teacher and maid service and all the things that 2 busy kids require. I try to hang on to my work self sometimes, try to work while they are eating and talking and all, sometimes I can do it and sometimes I can't. When I find my temples ache and I'm starting to snap at the kids, that's when I give it up. But there are times when I have to do it, you know, if I have a deadline coming up fast then I have to keep my work self going longer, whether it's stressful or not. On most days, my wife is home by 5:00, and it's "hi honey, how are you" while we make dinner and help with homework and clean up the kitchen and feed the dog again.

After dinner we mostly just play with the kids and read books before they are off to bed, 8:30 at the latest. But I have a habit of editing and doing paperwork while the kids are playing at the kitchen table and my wife is talking to me about her day. Sometimes I like to let it all blend sometimes like that, sometimes I don't. Thursday night is poker night for me so I am out of here after dinner. Tuesday night she is out. After the kids go to bed, I try just to be a husband and spend time with my wife, but that's not always as easy as it sounds (laughs). Some nights I end up back on the computer and then I do some research without meaning to or answer some e-mails. You know, it's just the kind of work I do, it will always be there and creep back in if I let it. Then there are the bills to pay and e-mails to answer, phone calls to make, maybe friends will come over on the weekend, or, if we are really lucky, we'll go out to dinner or a movie. But usually we are lights out ourselves by 11:00.

This sounds like a lot, I know. In fact, I'm tired just saying all of this, what goes on for me in an average day, but really, it's not that bad. In fact, I think my days go along pretty well, almost automatically at times, so really, the whole thing is pretty smooth. OK, there are times when it isn't so good, when I am stressed out or feeling like I just need to do less or be less. But for the most part, it's not hard being me."

"John"*², a married, father of two, and a graduate student in the psychology department of a major university, works from home as an occupational therapist. I begin with this rather lengthy quote from John to illustrate two simple themes that inform the organization of this project. The first is that we all play multiple roles. The second is that individuals can separate, switch, or overlap their role performances as necessary, moving in and out of role-based frames of thought and action. Because these observations can be made with remarkable frequency in daily life, their importance is often cloaked in what Heider (1958) called the "veil of obviousness". I hope to open that veil a bit for these deceptively commonplace observations by introducing a systematic way of understanding their profound influence on modern social life.

Although the way John organizes his roles is somewhat atypical (i.e., he works from home and he (not his wife) is the primary caregiver to his two children), the number of roles he plays and the amount of movement he makes among these roles is not unique. Like many of us, John is a spouse, a parent, a neighbor, an employee, a friend, a poker player, a health club member, a cook, a chauffeur, a maid, and (on a good night) a member of a movie audience. He routinely switches among these roles as the situation warrants, playing the role of parent with his children, the role of husband with his wife, the role of poker player on Thursday night. He overlaps roles when necessary, often

working at home in the presence of his children, his wife, or both. He manages interruptions that force him to shift his attention, in all or in part, from one role to another. He daydreams, he loses focus, he finds he's "not in the mood" and so he moves out of his work role into others, only to switch back to work mode later in the day. Despite the fact that John has a demanding daily schedule and many roles to play, he finds, for the most part, that he moves among his roles easily, without experiencing undue amounts of stress or conflict.

I want to know how he does it.

How does the average person manage all the diverse roles they play in daily life? How do we switch among or overlap our multiple roles without becoming incapacitated or overwhelmed by the need to do so? These questions become even more poignant when we consider the fact that many of our roles (such as employee and parent) contain inconsistent cultural scripts, expectations, or guidelines for behavior. Business people, for example, are largely expected to focus their thoughts and attention on maximizing profits for the company, regardless of social relationships (indeed, such is the origin of the phrase, "It's not personal, it's just business"). Parents, by contrast, are expected to focus on the selfless nurturing of children, regardless of monetary considerations (Hays 1996). How do we, as social actors, accommodate the different normative and cultural expectations of diverse roles such as these, as millions of working parents must? How do we reconcile these cultural expectations with our own personal goals and interests? How do we shift and switch among our various roles (as John does) on a day-to-day, moment-to-moment basis? How do we manage the interruptions, the moods, the constraints of

time and space, and the needs of others without falling prey to the negative consequences of role conflict, confusion, or strain?

“The Chameleon Factor: The Mental Management of Multiple Roles (and what it Reveals about the Organization of Culture)” is a project that developed out of my interest in answering these types of questions. Role performances are demanding and complex affairs wrought with possible tensions. Yet most individuals manage these performances (as John does) with ease, switching, overlapping, adapting, discarding, and rearranging roles as necessary. I am fascinated by the processes through which individuals manage role repertoires as part of their daily lives and the cognitive adaptivity that these negotiations demonstrate. I refer to this type of adaptivity as “the chameleon factor” - an under-researched aspect of role movement through which we change parts of our social identity as necessary to match the physical and mental environments in which we reside. When John can think like a psychologist while changing diapers or clean the kitchen while “talking shop” on the phone, he displays his chameleon-like ability and the prowess of his adaptive mind.

Like John, we each have the amazing mental ability to rigidly assign meaning and isolate the self in a single role and then, in the very next moment, release our hold on these rigid definitions and allow our roles to blend.¹ In this way, we replace one mental structure (that of separating roles) with another (one that forgoes separation). It is this type of mental flexibility that allows us not only to switch roles, but to switch our way of organizing ourselves and responding to our social environment. For instance, we can experience the world as children vis-à-vis our parents, *and* as parents vis-à-vis our own children, all during a single evening’s meal! By investing in a number of social roles, we

organize our lives as a diverse portfolio of loosely coupled selves. By allowing ourselves to freely move among these roles, we experience our social world as both stable and continuously variable, truly a remarkable mental accomplishment!

Research to date, however, has not faced squarely the implications of this type of mental flexibility on modern social life. Indeed, while there have been a number of important studies in recent years that examine how social actors manage the complex demands of multiple roles (see, for instance, Ashforth 2001; Drew, Emerek, & Mahon 1998; Garey 1999; Moen 1992; Simon 1995; or Turner 1990), few - if any- focus on the individual's cognitive flexibility or the ease of these performances.² As a result, we have no conceptual framework that allows for the rich variations on role performances that John describes. We have no language that accommodates the flexibility of social actors as they come to terms with the epistemological pluralism promoted by their multiple roles.

What undergirds my interest in the adaptivity of social actors in response to the demands of multiple roles are three sets of dialectical oppositions. One pertains to the tension between the freedoms offered by pluralistic societies and multiple role involvements, on the one hand, and the constraints imposed by organizational structures and social institutions, on the other. Another deals with the contradictory nature of role performances: just as roles are governed and guided by explicit social norms and expectations, there must be sufficient ambiguity to maintain individual level autonomy. Still another deals with the ecology of a role identity as it is rooted in both close intimate relations and abstract social groups.

I am intrigued by the myriad ways individuals come to terms with these oppositions in their day-to-day, moment-to-moment experiences. How, for instance, is a

particular role activated and coordinated with other roles one may retain? How does an individual switch their attention between diverse (even potentially conflicting) roles? How do roles combine in form and function? In short, how do cultural directives, social constraints, and individuals' different ways of conceiving and enacting multiple roles come together? In looking for answers to these types of questions, I find myself falling out of line with most role theorists – and most sociologists – for whom the answers might be “not easily”.³

According to what may be loosely termed “role theory” (which spans the disciplines of sociology, psychology, and anthropology), roles are relatively inflexible structures, difficult to combine. This difficulty stems from the fact that for most role theorists (as well as for most sociologists), role enactments are primarily conceptualized in their visible, behavioral form. That is to say, most role analysts examine how a role behavior is shaped by the demands and rules of others, by social sanctions for conforming and non-conforming behavior, and by the individual's own understanding of the conceptions of what the “correct” behavior should be (see Biddle & Thomas 1979; Zurcher 1983). Because roles are situated behaviorally, an insufficient fit between roles and behaviors is seen as an impetus to change roles. If diverse behavioral expectations of different roles impinge simultaneously on the performer, it can result in feelings of role confusion, conflict, or strain. As a result of this positioning, the constant movement among and the overlapping of multiple social roles (which John describes as part and parcel of his everyday existence) is seen as inherently difficult for the individual.⁴

I find that the disposition in role theory to either flee from role complexity or couch it in negative terms discounts both role multiplicity and cognitive flexibility as empirical

phenomena (see also Coser 1975). The problem, I have come to realize, lies with the very definition of the term “role”, as well as the propositions that follow from it. Although this pivotal concept is so widely employed that it scarcely seems to require definition, its very ubiquity conceals the fact that it operates to constrict our understanding of modern social life. Therefore, before I can offer my answers to the question of *how* individual actors manage multiple social roles, we must further examine how sociologists use the term “role” and the problems that stem from this usage for our understanding of the types of adaptive everyday role performances that John describes.

Traditional Views on Role Performances

Social role is probably the most important abstraction in micro-sociology, for a role links the person – the thinking, acting individual – to a structured status in a set of role relations, which, in turn, is a component of a larger social structure (Biddle & Thomas 1979). The role, the status, the set of social relations, and the social structure are in turn normatively moderated, just as they generate their own distinctive cultural meanings. In this way, social roles have long operated as an important conceptual bridge linking individual agency to social structure (Callero 1994). Central to this orientation, of course, is the term role, which sociologists typically use to refer to the behavior expected of individuals who occupy particular social categories.⁵ Those categories include statuses (or positions) in formal and informal systems alike – fathers in families, professors in universities, members of a movie audience, or customers in a market. Roles can also reflect the cultural values of a society, such as “hard worker”, “concerned citizen”, or “yuppie” (see Zurcher 1983).

Social roles, thus defined, establish a practically grasped, shared sense of reality – a social field. This social field provides the basis for the recognition of particular kinds of persons and corresponding kinds of agency or knowledge. In this sense we can say that social roles are part of the “cultural toolkit” (Swidler 1986): they are recognized, understood, and shared with varying degrees of specificity and knowledge by members of any given culture. Indeed, for the average individual, a social role provides a definition of self, a persona that one may enact. Consider, for instance, that when asked the question “Who are you?” most individuals will typically answer in terms of specific social roles: I am a wife, a high school teacher, and a mother of three (see Ebaugh 1988).

The conceptual bridge between social-structural relations and individual role behaviors lies with the concept of *expectations*. Role expectations are comprised of the rights and privileges, the duties and obligations, of any occupant of a social position in relation to persons occupying other positions in the social structure (Biddle & Thomas 1979). Thus for every role enactment, the individual has a set of social expectations of the proper range of involvement. Different expectations correspond to the different roles individuals perform or enact in their daily lives, such as attorney, father, or friend. For instance, most people hold preconceived notions of the role expectations of an attorney, which might include filing briefs, arguing cases, or advising clients. These role behaviors would not be expected of a receptionist in the same law firm. Appropriateness or propriety is used for the evaluation of the enactment process, reflecting the fact that role expectations have a normative or evaluative character.

Given this formulation, certain behaviors are considered appropriate for certain roles while other behaviors are considered inappropriate. For example, it is appropriate for a

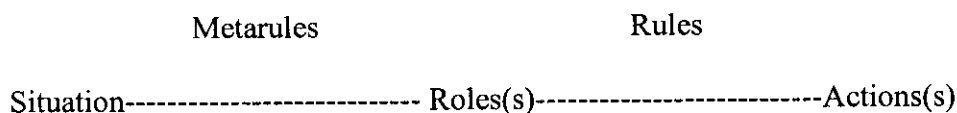
doctor to dress fairly conservatively, ask a series of personal questions about one's health, touch one in ways that would normally be forbidden, write prescriptions, and show concern for the personal well-being of clients. Electricians or shopkeepers may also show concern for the well-being of their clients, but if they start touching their clients, especially where doctors are allowed to touch, they will get in trouble. They will have stepped outside of the norms associated with their roles. Thus, those who occupy a particular position and are charged with the role are either rewarded or punished depending in part on how successfully they carry out their duties and fulfill social expectations (Hewitt 1989). Indeed, because roles consist of a set of rules and norms that function as plans or blueprints to guide behavior, they operate as an important means by which individual activity is socially regulated.

Role theory, from this perspective is predictive; it implies that if we have information about the role expectations for a specified position (e.g., sister, firefighter, professor), a significant portion of the behavior (actions) of the persons occupying that position can be predicted. Indeed, a number of theorists contend that a substantial proportion of observable, day-to-day behavior is simply persons carrying out their roles (Ashforth 2001; Zurcher 1983), much as actors carry out their roles on a stage (Goffman 1959) or ballplayers theirs on the field (Mead 1934).

Role theory further presumes that role behaviors are evoked by situations and that the content of roles is socially constructed. A simple illustration, derived from March's (1994) conception of the "logic of appropriateness" (as outlined by Montgomery 1998, p. 99), will make this point clearer. As Montgomery (1998) indicates, "a situation evokes one or more roles; these roles contain rules of appropriate behavior. Adopting the label

metarules for the mapping from situation to roles, and the label rules for the mapping from roles to actions, the basic conceptual scheme looks like this:

FIGURE 1.1: From Situation to Action



The point is that when we know what role someone is playing, we know both what to expect from the individual and how to judge the role performance. One of the latent effects of this formulation, however, is to reinforce the more common idea (which is both affirmed and resisted in the modern consciousness) that the individual is somehow separate from the role (see Hewitt 1989). Indeed, the heavy emphasis on rules and obligations underlies an interest in the “structures” – including roles – that support and constrain behaviors. Especially during the heyday of sociological structural-functionalism, sociologists were keen to stress their interest in the systematic relationships among patterns of behavior rather than in the behavior itself or (more importantly) in those whose behavior it was (Goode 1973).⁶

Thus, having elaborated the concept of role in this way, sociologists soon encountered its limitations. Students of formal organizations, for instance, discovered “bureaucracy’s other face,” its informal structures, including its informal roles, that complemented and even sometimes contradicted its formal ones. For instance, all that a professor does, even as professor, cannot be explained by reference to the role “professor” or the patterned relationships of authority and communication in which the role is implicated. As flesh

and blood human beings, real professors may often fall short of the demands placed upon them, think of alternative ways of doing things, and – very crucially – pay attention not just to those patterns of conduct that they have learned to enact (as occupants of the role professor) but also to those patterns that they have invented as they have interacted with specific others over months and years.

Thus contemporary role theorists – especially those associated with the camp of Symbolic Interactionism – challenged the rigidity of structurally-based definitions of role, arguing that it would be more profitable to emphasize the fluid process of role-making (Turner 1978) rather than the conformity to role demands.⁷ Because our role performances are not simply predetermined by social structures or social situations, the argument goes, a slightly more sophisticated conception of a role performance would point out that the rights, duties, and obligations of a role provide a framework within which individuals construct and interpret their actions, and not a set of rigid guidelines for conduct (Hewitt 1989). Roles, in this revised formulation, are not fixed or prescribed by society, but constantly negotiated by individuals in the process of social interaction. As part of that interaction, each individual actively tries to define the situation (understand her role within it), choose a role that is advantageous or appealing, play that role, and persuade others to support the performance (Plummer 1991).

On a purely conceptual level, this formulation would seemingly account for the processes of role movement and adaptivity that interest me. Like symbolic interactionists, I contend that people are not just passive reactors to situations, programmed by society with fixed patterns of roles to enact. Instead, they are active agents who develop plans of action out of the bits and pieces supplied by their culture and who attempt to execute

these plans in social encounters. By stressing the fact that role performances are continually negotiated between individuals in the process of social interaction, contemporary theorists have pointed out that individuals actively define and shape role behaviors. This focus on the interaction and the meaning of roles to participants shifts the attention of role analysts away from stable norms and values toward more changeable, continually adjusting social processes. In this way, modern definitions of role readily accept role performances as adaptive.

It seems quite natural, given this perspective, that sociologists would elaborate a role theory suited to the analysis of mental adaptivity, an analysis that accounts for successive, overlapping, or simultaneous role performances. However, while most social researchers maintain a multidimensional conceptualization of the self that accepts and explores role multiplicity as an empirical phenomenon (cf., Burke 1991; Callero 1985; Collier 2001; Gecas 1982; Gergen 1971; McCall & Simmons 1978; Rosenberg 1979; Stryker & Serpe 2001; or Thoits & Virshup 1997), the sociological and social-psychological literature also indicates that role-identities tend to be cognitively segmented and buffered, suggesting that individuals are capable of performing *only one role at a time* (Ashforth 2001; Collier 2001; Marks & MacDermid 1996).

I find this suggestion problematic. In modern social life, role performances are rarely limited to simple social ecologies (for instance, enacting the role of parent *only* in the home or the role of employee *only* in the office). It follows from this proposition that the multiple roles we perform in everyday life will, by necessity, at some point overlap or be experienced simultaneously. Indeed, if we think back to the opening quote by John, he clearly indicates the necessity of both partially and/or completely overlapping his role

performances. Recall that we heard John speak of his need to “keep one foot in the door” (that is to say, maintain a mental focus on his work role) when interruptions force him to perform another, unrelated task (such as answering the door or walking the dog). In this way, John is able to partially overlap two or more roles. We also heard him say that he often works at home in the presence of his children and his wife (overlapping the roles employee, parent, and spouse in the process). Given the cultural ubiquity of such statements (indeed, who *doesn't* deal with interruptions or the presence of others when working!), why do social theorists contend that individuals perform only one role at a time?

The answer to this question is quite complex, but can be most clearly understood by referencing the notion of *salience*. Following identity theory (see Stryker 1968, 1980), salience is defined as the probability that a role (or a role-identity) will be invoked in a given situation. Salient roles are the ones that are relatively important in a given context, and thus the focus of an individual's attention (Hogg & Terry 2001). A woman who hears her infant daughter crying in distress, for instance, may find that her role as mother becomes highly salient, prompting her to pick the child up and comfort her. In this way, salience accounts for the impact of a role-identity on social behavior.

Situations, of course, vary in the degree to which they are “open” to interpretations or definitions that call for one role rather than another. However, situations themselves do not determine the roles invoked in them. Rather, the relative salience of a role to a situation is a function of one's *commitment* to the role-identity, where commitment is defined by the social and personal costs entailed in no longer fulfilling the role (Stryker 1980). These costs are understood as a function of the strength

of ties to others in social networks to which one relates by virtue of playing a particular role. To the extent that one's relationships to specific others depend on being a particular kind of person, one is 'committed' to being that kind of person. For example, Callero (1985) surveyed blood donors and found that the greater the number of important relationships associated with the act of donating blood, the more salient the donor role-identity was to the individual. The basic proposition is that the more strongly committed a person is to a role – in terms of both interactional and affective commitment – the higher the level of role salience will be (Callero 1985; Thoits 1991). In other words, commitment is the source of the salience attached to a given role-identity (Stryker 1980). Thus we arrive at identity theory's specification of Mead's (1934) famous formula: commitment shapes identity salience shapes role choice behavior.

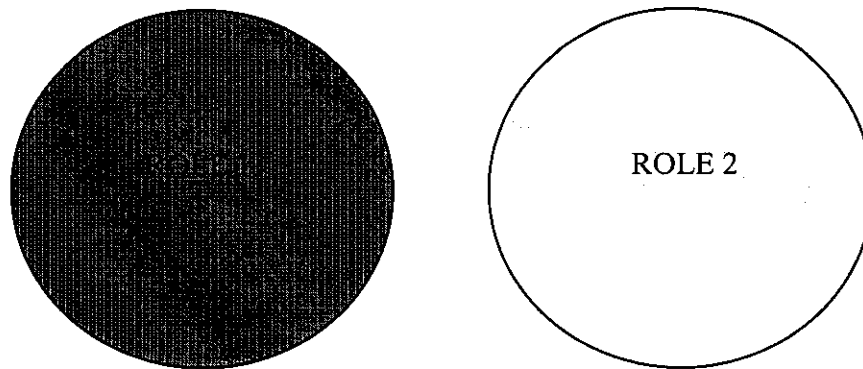
But what influences the choices people make among behavioral options? What determines role salience? A number of social-psychological theorists (e.g., Burke 1980; Callero 1985; McCall & Simmons 1978; Rosenberg 1981; Stets & Burke 1996; Stryker 1968, 1980; Stryker & Serpe 1982, 1994) answer these questions by reference to a *salience hierarchy*. This concept refers to the readiness of the individual to act out a role in a given situation or over many situations (Stets 2006).⁸ Directly implied in this definition is the general proposition that a role-identity's location within the hierarchy will raise or lower its threshold of invocation (Rosenberg & Turner 2007). That is to say, those roles positioned near the top of the salience hierarchy are more likely to be invoked in a particular situation than those near the bottom (Hogg, Terry, & White 1995). People may not be aware of how salient a role-identity is in their hierarchy, but their behavior will inform them as to its ranking (Stryker & Serpe 1994).⁹

Because salience is defined behaviorally (Stryker 1987), with its conceptual core residing in interaction (Stryker & Serpe 1994), shifts in the relative salience of a role in the salience hierarchy are likely to be caused by their situational relevance (Ashforth & Johnson 2001; Stets 2006). For instance, situations that are structurally isolated – through independence of personnel, by virtue of calendar, clock, and so forth – will likely call up only a single role. Conversely, situations that overlap structurally will call up more than one role. In such instances the relative salience of those roles called up becomes an important predictor of behavior (Callero 1985; Gergen 1971; Rosenberg 1979; Stryker 1989; Stryker & Burke 2000; Stets 2006), for as one role becomes salient (or active for the individual), others necessarily become less so (Ashforth & Johnson 2001).

Indeed, because role-identities are understood as discrete psychological entities (Collier 2001; Marks & MacDermid 1996), role salience is positioned as an “all or none” phenomenon (see Ashforth & Johnson 2001), such that multiple roles *cannot* be salient for the individual at the same time.¹⁰ The salience hierarchy thus operates as an important means through which *discrete* role-identities are organized for the individual (Marks & MacDermid 1996). Accordingly, the movement among multiple roles can only be accomplished through shifts in their relative salience.

We can conceptualize this point visually if we picture a role as a circle that encompasses our social identity.

FIGURE 1.2: Roles as Circles



The circles define each role as a discrete psychological entity, a complete gestalt. If we put these circles on their sides, and imagine them like CD's in a CD player, changing from classical to rock to jazz at the push of a button, then we have an image of what a traditional conceptualization of role salience might look like. Only one CD can be played at a time; only one role can be salient. Therefore, when we listen to the music of Bach, we cannot simultaneously listen to (and enjoy) the music of Beethoven. Similarly, when we engage in the performance of one role, we cannot simultaneously engage in the behavioral performance of another, different role. Thus, when we answer the door to our neighbor, or let out the dog, we cannot also effectively perform our role as a paid employee. Salience, thus defined, is a function of an “either/or” logic (see Zerubavel 1991, p. 34-35); that is to say, it organizes our experiences into *either* this or that, either Bach or Beethoven, either our role as a pet owner or our role as an employee. According to this logic, we switch role performances the way we switch CD's: from one gestalt to another, from one discrete role-identity to another, much like climbing stairs.

In this way, role movements have been described as if they could be captured in a snapshot – as if they occurred only at particular times and in particular, discretely organized sequences (Moen, Dempster-McCain, & Erikson 2004). Although this formulation is entrenched as the standard sociological image of role movement, I argue that we need a different, even a radically different, interpretation to fully capture the impact of the modern world upon the person. Although there are certainly times when it is necessary to isolate one's thoughts and behaviors to a single, salient role performance (consider, for instance, a doctor performing a difficult operation or a pitcher in the midst of the World Series), in purely practical terms, it seems unlikely that *anyone* could consistently park all of their role-identities, in a real sense, forget who they are, when a particular role is salient. Indeed, in everyday reality people are faced with multiple definitions of self and held accountable for their membership in different social categories, often at the same time (Simmel 1955). As such, we can (and often do!) perform roles in a way that does not always fit with the notion of fluctuating, context-based salience (c.f., Abrams 1992).

Moving Beyond Tradition

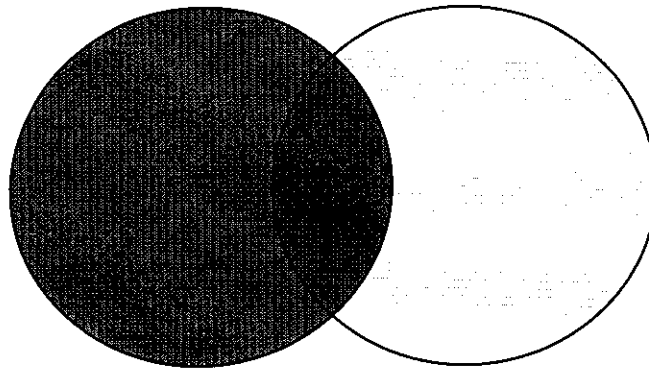
If we think back once again to John's description of his role-playing capacities, then it becomes clear that the traditional conceptualization of role salience accounts for *part* of his story, but *not* all of it. Those times when John moves *completely* out of one role (father) and into another (employee) can be explained through reference to a traditional salience hierarchy as the movement from one discrete role to another. But what about those times when John's roles are not grounded in some specific bounded gestalt? What

role can we say is most salient for John when his focus is neither singular nor exclusive, for instance, when he works in the presence of his family, taking care of both his children and his paperwork, simultaneously?

I contend that these types of role performances – which, again, John describes as part and parcel of his everyday existence - are examples of *simultaneous salience*. To say that various roles (such as dog-owner, psychologist, father, husband, or home-based employee) can be simultaneously salient is to say that these roles may be active for the individual *at the same time*. When roles are simultaneously salient, the individual can identify with multiple roles simultaneously without giving up any of them to claim membership in another. Instead of always maintaining a single, exclusive focus on one role, individuals can craft complex role-identities based on a “both/and” logic that allows for the experience of *both* this *and* that - both one role and another - at the same time.

Simultaneity can be experienced as either a partial or a complete overlap of roles. Partially overlapping roles still preserve the traditional notion that our role performances are independent and bounded, as each role can be depicted as a discrete part of the whole. Once more we can utilize circles as a visual aid in conceptualizing this possibility.

FIGURE 1.3: The Partial Overlap of Multiple Roles

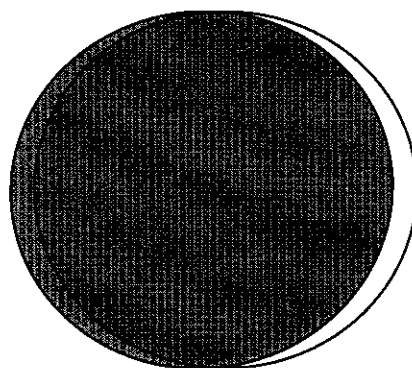


When the circles partially overlap in this way, so too do our role-identities. In such cases, we experience our social world from two (or more) partially conjoined, but intact, points of view. When John experiences his roles in this way, he creates such role-combinations as dog owner/psychologist or neighbor/employee. The decision of how much effort is allocated to each role is left to the individual. Individuals may choose to maintain a mental focus on one role (e.g., employee) while enacting another role (e.g., neighbor) behaviorally, or they may choose the opposite configuration (behaviorally engaging with the role of employee while mentally focusing on their role as neighbor). The point is that partially overlapping roles allow the individual to experiment with diverse styles of engagement before settling on one that suits both cognitive and situational needs.

It is also possible, however, that our multiple roles will conjoin to form a more holistic gestalt where the boundaries around each role-identity fade and the contents flow

into a rich *mélange* (see Figure 1.4). When multiple roles are conjoined in this way, their meaning and behavioral consequences may reside in the amalgamation itself. In this form of simultaneity, the circles would completely overlap:

FIGURE 1.4: The Complete Overlap of Multiple Roles



When the circles overlap in their entirety, we experience the full impact of simultaneously salient roles. Instead of two (or more) conjoined pieces, our roles overlap to form a dense connection, such that we do not clearly know where one role ends and another begins. John experiences his roles in this way when he lets them “blend” at night into a mixture of father/husband/home-based employee. When multiple roles overlap and blend, they accumulate content and meaning beyond the sum of their parts, a kind of *role synergy*. Individuals achieve this synergy when they mentally focus on *and* behaviorally engage with two or more roles at the same time.

This type of conceptualization, however, is simply missing from most role theoretic analyses. Although culturally we seem to have broad acceptance of the possibility of simultaneously salient role-identities (indeed, commonly used terms such as “student

nurse”, “working parent”, or “Reagan democrat” imply role overlap), most sociologists continue to give preference to behaviorally defined role performances and thus do not adequately account for the empirical possibility of simultaneity. As a result of this positioning, researchers presume that the individual who overlaps and/or constantly switches roles will experience role confusion, strain, or conflict. While this result may be true for some people in some circumstances, it is also true that bringing multiple role-identities to bear on a situation may facilitate rich and circumspect actions. For example, when a mid-level manager faced with a financial dilemma thinks from the perspective of upper-level management *as well as* from the perspective of lower-level employees, he can chart a more productive course of action than he could if he retained the focus of only one of these reference groups.

To talk about roles as organized only in a salience hierarchy and the movement among roles as a pathway from one discrete role to the other, is thus to miss something important: the opportunity to explore the creativity and flexibility of social actors responding to their cultural environment. I find this absence especially problematic as neither the condition of simultaneity, nor the mental flexibility necessary to achieve it, is limited to home-based employees or working parents like John. While individuals undoubtedly have preferences for how much they segment (isolate) or integrate (overlap) their various social roles (see for instance, Christena Nippert-Eng’s (1996) superb analysis of the daily organization of home and work roles), *anyone* can experience simultaneously salient role-identities. Indeed, I content that each and every one of us is capable of moving among and overlapping multiple social roles. When we consider that there are probably few among us who have not carried on a *specific* role-related cell-

phone conversation while in the midst of *other* role-related activities (such as food shopping, dining, or driving), then we get a more exact idea of how common these practices really are.

Addressing the Chameleon Factor

The need to address both role adaptivity and simultaneity offer an excellent set of opportunities for social theorists to develop a further connection with cognitive research for without a fuller understanding of cognitive processes, we cannot properly understand the mental agility of social actors managing multiple roles. While much of role theory presumes a thoughtful, phenomenally aware participant (Callero 1994; Hewitt 1989; Turner 1985), cognition remains a mediating variable for most theorists (Ashforth 2001), one that merits attention to the extent that it can be seen as an “explanation” for social behavior. While few researchers would argue that a role performance is not simply a behavioral response but also a mental, cognitive one, cognition is not seen as an absolute condition of a role performance. The cognitive engagement of role players thus remains a fascinating and underdeveloped aspect of role theory (c.f., Collier & Callero 2005 or Morgan & Schwalbe 1990).¹¹

To further comprehend the mental capacity and creativity of social actors in response to the demands of multiple roles (what I have referred to as “the chameleon factor”), I have adopted an integrated sociocognitive perspective on role enactment processes, one that treats cognition and behavior as *equally* weighted realms. By positioning cognition and behavior as equally important to role performances, I have developed a model that essentially redefines what it means to perform a role. This model includes four “role

typologies”: “single focus” (where the individual is completely consumed, both cognitively and behaviorally, in a single role), “behavioral overlap” (where two or more roles partially overlap so the individual is able to enact one role behaviorally, without investing intense cognitive effort in the performance), “cognitive overlap” (where roles partially overlap as the individual mentally focuses on a single role identity without the necessity of performing it behaviorally), and “complete overlap” (where two or more roles overlap in sum both cognitively and behaviorally).

I utilize this model as a heuristic device to explore the social meanings and connectedness of role performances, as well as the environmental and internal cues that shape these meanings. I examine the strategies that individuals utilize to sustain each role typology, as well as the strategies and conditions that allow the individual to move among typologies, switching and/or overlapping roles as necessary. Throughout I question how sociocultural and affective conditions temper and amend these experiences. Toward this end, I am less interested in predicting outcomes of behavior than I am in understanding how social resources and affect create different manifestations of self-in-role and different role-related responses.

My emphasis on *both* the behavioral *and* the cognitive configurations of self-in-role is unique. This position places my inquiry squarely in the emerging field of “cognitive sociology”. Cognitive sociology is, at its base, a sociology of thinking. Drawing upon a long tradition represented by Emile Durkheim, Karl Mannheim, George Herbert Mead, and Alfred Schultz, cognitive sociology recognizes that we think not just as individuals, but also as social beings and products of particular social environments. I directly incorporate research from cognitive scientists concerning the neural mechanisms

of the brain (specifically, the distinction drawn between processes of “automatic” and “deliberate” cognition) to build my model of differential role typologies. I move beyond the neurological details of mental processing, however, opting instead to locate and analyze cognition in its sociocultural context.

By using methods of analysis that bridge cognitive science, psychology, cultural studies, and sociology, my project explores nuances of role performances that are often overlooked or underemphasized by traditional approaches. This combination of perspectives tells us something new, not only about individual level creativity in daily role playing experiences, but also about the relationship between culture and thought. It allows us to witness, for instance, the conditions under which culture both constrains and enables the individual social actor. By identifying and itemizing the influence of “the chameleon factor” in everyday role performances, I address the issue of what gives cultural practices their pervasive influence.

In this way my project serves “double duty”. The empirical case study makes a substantive contribution to our understanding of daily role-based performances and organizational strategies. At the same time, I look at a crucial piece of the sociological puzzle: the organization of culture. My unique theoretical lens and deep interdisciplinary engagement allows me to demonstrate that some cultural elements can be used to control, anchor, or organize others. In this way, the project extends previous lines of inquiry into the micro-level motivations of social action and makes an important empirical contribution to the growing literature on culture and cognition.

Studying the “Chameleon Factor”

My observations in this project are informed by 60, two-to-four hour interviews with full-time parents from a variety of occupational fields. Each respondent lives and works within 90 minutes of a major metropolitan center of the Northeastern United States. During the interviews, I asked my respondents questions about the types of roles they play on any given day, the duration of their role performances, their awareness of role switching or overlapping practices, the physical and mental partitioning of their roles, their preferences for role segmentation or integration, their role audiences, their social resources, and their thoughts and feelings about their roles and role performances. (A full copy of the interview questionnaire that I developed is included as an appendix to this text). All interviews were tape-recorded, transcribed, and coded.

In addition to the formal interviews, each respondent was asked to keep a detailed logbook of their daily role activities. Respondents were asked to write in the logs at regular intervals (9:00 AM, 12:00 PM, 3:00 PM, 6:00 PM, and 9:00 PM) for a duration of three days, detailing such information as the role(s) they are currently playing, the environment they are in, the type of situation they are in, the types of objects around them, the type of clothes they are wearing, and the presence or absence of role-set members or significant others. Notes and personal observations on such information as the number of times respondents thought they switched roles, the social desirability of the switch, and their thoughts and feelings about their role(s) were also included.

In addition, I incorporate observations made on-site while conducting the interviews. Eight pre-test interviews and dozens of less formal discussions with family, friends, and acquaintances supplement the formal interviews and logbooks. Altogether, these are the conversations that helped generate and illustrate the thoughts that appear in this project.

There are several reasons why I selected full-time parents from a variety of occupations for my field work. First, parents are “ever-available” and always “on-call” for their children (see Zerubavel 1991). No matter what other roles these individual play or how they choose to integrate these roles into their daily lives, parents have at least one other dependent person (their child) making demands on them and relying on them at all times. Because we culturally assume that parents take full responsibility for the care of their children (Hays 1996), these individuals must switch and/or overlap roles simply to incorporate other, distinct roles with their parenting responsibilities.

Second, after some preliminary investigations, I decided I wanted subjects from a variety of occupations. I expected role switching and overlapping to be greatly influenced by factors such as occupational membership and economic status. Yet, pretests pointed to the opposite result. Lawyers and doctors, teachers and students, blue collar workers and white – I found each were engaged in the processes and practices of switching and/or overlapping roles. While different people chose different strategies to negotiate their multiple roles, these choices were rarely specific to occupational status or class. This fact indicated to me that the processes I was interested in studying were more widespread culturally than I had imagined. By engaging in conversations with respondents from a variety of occupations, I am better able to pinpoint the social and supra-individual factors that influence negotiation strategies. These conversations enrich my theoretical work and provide some level of generalizability to my observations.

I conducted the interviews between 2003 and 2005. Over and over again, I met with gracious people who opened their lives to my questions.

Of the formal interviews, 30 were with men and 30 were with women. Occupations included attorney, student, writer, psychologist, internet entrepreneur, teacher, artist, garbage-man, shop-owner, train conductor, and many others (listed in full in the appendix to this document). Twenty of my respondents worked from home, while the remaining forty worked outside of the home environment. Because of their diverse occupations, incomes ranged from a low of \$28,000 per year to a high of \$135,000 per year.

Diverse racial categories were well represented with 29 respondents self-identifying as white, 15 as African-American, 10 as Asian American, and 6 as “other”. Two-thirds of my respondents were married at the time of the interviews, while the remaining twenty were either divorced (18) or widowed (2). All respondents had at least one child, while the average number of children per household rested at 2.

In the tradition of qualitative research championed by Lamont (1992), Hochschild and Machung (1989), Hays (1996), Swidler (2000), and others, my sample is nonsystematic yet it offers as broad a representation of the research subjects as possible. I began contacting subjects by distributing a short questionnaire to randomly selected parenting groups within a pre-assigned radius of a major northeastern metropolis. At the end of this document, I explained what I was interested in and asked eligible respondents if they would be willing to volunteer for an interview and write in a logbook. To supplement this list, I asked the people interviewed for the names of friends or associates who also fit the research criteria. I used no more than two subjects starting from any one chain.

Throughout the following discussion, I have protected the confidence of the people with whom I spoke in several ways. First, I have used pseudonyms in place of real names, not only for my respondents but also for their friends, family members, and co-

workers. Second, I do not disclose the names of the cities and towns where respondents live, their places of work, places of worship, schools, or other geographical information that might serve to pinpoint their locale. Further, I have regularly changed demographic, workplace, and familial information about individuals wherever it does not affect the point under discussion.

I have settled the issue of how to use my interview data in the following way. Throughout this project, I present detailed information about a composite subset of respondents so that the reader can get to know them, as I did, in an up-close and personal manner. Yet, this project is not an ethnography, nor is it meant to provide readers with an overview of the habits of specific people in a specific time and place. It is a theoretical inquiry meant to highlight my conceptual interests in the cognitive flexibility of the average individual. Allowing readers detailed access to a small group of subjects serves my theoretical purposes. By presenting these individuals like characters in a book, the reader is better able to see that the processes and practices I describe are *not* linked to specific personalities; rather, the same person can engage in a number of seemingly contradictory practices. This point may not have been as clear if I did not give my readers an in-depth understanding of *who* my respondents are and *how* they manage their various roles on a daily basis.

Documenting the Chameleon Factor: A Map of Things to Come

Most role players (men and women alike) have the creative ability and mental flexibility to accommodate multiple social roles – often at the same time – without becoming disabled by inefficiency, a sense of conflict, or a sense of loss. As the pages

that follow reveal, inefficiency and stress can be side effects to the demands of multiple role performances, yet most individuals have the mediational means and cultural tools necessary to negotiate and manage multiple roles both successively and simultaneously. Those who have mastered role negotiation processes actually report *less* stress and role conflict in their daily lives than their less experienced counterparts. Similarly, those who receive high levels of social validation across role performances report a greater ease in switching and/or overlapping roles. Interestingly, this validation can stem from many sources, including the self, significant others, generalized others, and abstract communities. Role players with high levels of experience and validation are adept at avoiding the negative pitfalls traditionally associated with role multiplicity. Thus I assert that role conflict stems not simply from the need to perform two or more roles with inconsistent scripts, but from a lack of the necessary social resources that allow for adaptation.

For some, this assertion may be difficult to accept. Traditional sociological approaches stress stability in social action and imply that particular orientations to action are characteristic of human behavior (see DiMaggio 2003). Following the work of cognitive researchers, I argue that adaptation, rather than stability, is the norm. Cognitive research tells us that there are several distinct varieties of action, including hot and deliberate, cool and calculating, and (consistent with Bourdieu's [1990] approach) automatic. I assert that these orientations differ both psychologically and sociologically, and the differences matter to everyday role performances. My task in the pages to follow is to demonstrate how.

In Chapter Two, I present in full the model of differential role typologies that fuels my analysis in the remaining chapters. In order to represent the utility of this model, I explore certain aspects of cognitive theory in more detail. I explore the differences between automatic and deliberate cognition, explaining how these differences help establish the capacity of individuals to participate in multiple orientations to action. By positioning the cognitive and behavioral dimensions of role performance as two correlated but analytically distinct dimensions (each arranged as a continuum ranging from deliberate one end to automatic on the other), I effectively stretch the meaning of role enactment to include 4 role typologies: single focus, behavioral overlap, cognitive overlap, and complete overlap. Examples help me both explicate these typologies and illustrate them in action.

My task in Chapter Three is to elaborate the sociocultural practices that give rise to each role typology. In this chapter, I examine how people select among parts of a cultural tool kit or repertoire, picking up and putting aside various cultural themes or practices, in order to establish and sustain their position in a given role state. As such, I explore variations in the ways culture is appropriated, mobilized, and linked to the performance of each role typology. (I leave the equally important question of how people shift from one part of their repertoire to another, in the process shifting from one role state to another, for a later chapter).

I've uncovered two comprehensive practice sets: situated practices and intuitive practices. Situated practices include those means by which individuals assess the external conditions and constraints of a social situation and adjust their role typology to fit. As such, situated practices (such as selective interaction or routinization) result from

justificatory motivations to action; that is, they are justified by the presence of external stimuli. Intuitive practices – such as goal targeting or affective alignment -, in contrast, result from internal or operant (Klinger 1978) motivations that are stimulus-independent (that is, *not* motivated by external factors located in the physical environment).

In Chapter Three, I focus my efforts on outlining how situated practices lead to the establishment of the four role states. In Chapter Four, in contrast, I discuss how intuitive practices lead actors towards the same ends. By attending to both justificatory and intuitive motivations simultaneously, my description of the cultural practices that establish role states allows us to witness a more complete view of cultural-in-action, one that accepts the fact that structure and agency exist in complex, but not immutable, states of interdependence.

Having emphasized the malleability of culture and the adaptivity of social actors, these chapters thus lead us to a very interesting – and unresolved – piece of the sociological puzzle: the organization of culture. Indeed, what we see in the interactant application of the varied cultural practices that I describe is the fact that some cultural elements *can* be used to control, anchor, or organize others. Thus it is that at the end of Chapter Four I suggest that it is the *weight* assigned to particular pieces of culture in particular situations - rather than some form of cultural depth or power - that accounts for their pervasive influence. My task in the next chapter is to further explore this assertion.

I address this task in Chapter Five by exploring how respondents *switch* from one typological position to another. It would be wrong to believe that, once determined, the respective weight of motivational cues remain fixed. My task in Chapter Five is to examine how the weight assigned to different cultural practices allows them to

interconnect or disconnect and thus lead to different typological outcomes. Toward this end, I explore two ways that weight is moved: *pushes* and *pulls*.

To push weight, as I describe it, is a voluntary action. It is conscious choice made by a social actor to reassign the weight given to a role specific cue or motivational factor, a choice that leads to the shifting of role-based positions. This is not to imply, however, that all reassignments are made by choice. Social actors may also be *pulled* by the weight of cultural elements – for example, by unexpected telephone calls or sudden changes in mood - leading to involuntary switches in typological configurations. In this chapter, I use a close-up lens to examine the details of these two switching practices in action.

I find that people with high levels of important social resources (such as experience, social validation, and a certain level of socioeconomic status) are better able to control these shifts and make voluntary movements among role states, thus reducing their experience of role conflict (regardless of the number of roles they actually perform). People who are low on the necessary social resources are more likely to be forced into involuntary switches that result in feelings of role conflict or strain. The necessity of switching suggests a need to reevaluate the relationship among institutional constraints, logics of action, and cultural meaning. As such, I assert that culture lies not in central tendencies, but in the interactions of dispositions, resources, and domains, and that role conflict results not simply from the need to perform two or more roles, but also from a deficit of resources resulting in the prevention of adaptation.

In Chapter Six I conclude my analysis with more general theoretical observations about multiple roles, role mobility, mental adaptivity, and cultural organization in everyday life. This is where I discuss the benefits of this type of inquiry for both the

study of culture and for the everyday experiences of social actors. Here, I enumerate what I have found to be the most important cultural implications of the chameleon factor, reflecting on the behavioral and scholarly implications of these findings. I argue that this project highlights the fact that individuals use culture strategically, and that the cultures into which individuals are socialized leave much room for choice and variation. In the end, the reader will come to see not only how culture constrains and enables social action (DiMaggio 1997; Swidler 2001), but how it is that people transcend the biasing effects of culture on thought. Because my research interests are fueled by the experiences of everyday life, I take care here to highlight what these processes mean to the average social actor.

I also discuss in this chapter how my model, as a heuristic, may prove useful in enumerating other, more macro, levels of decision making. Toward this end, I tie it to other arenas, including the national, the political, and the organizational. I present numerous examples to support this line of inquiry, including the rise of the green movement, the European Union, and the economic status of China. In this way I demonstrate how my model can help address the challenge of understanding the cognitive aspects of major collective events, in which large numbers of persons rapidly adopt orientations that might have appeared culturally alien to them only a short time before.

Giddens (1991) once wrote that “What to do? How to act? Who to be?” were the focal questions for everyone living in circumstances of late modernity (p.70). While the theoretical perspective of this project opens a new paradigm for social researchers, the project is foremost devoted to understanding how we, as modern social actors, answer these difficult questions and come to terms with the epistemological pluralism promoted

by our multiple roles. Accordingly, I now turn my attention to exploring these processes in more detail.

CHAPTER 1 ENDNOTES

¹ These types of focusing activities are referred to by Eviatar Zerubavel (1997) in *Social Mindscapes* as sociomental processes of classification. Simply put, sociomental classification is a process of organizing “order out of chaos” (p. 1). As Zerubavel argues, individuals erect “mental fences” as a means of simplifying and ordering their social environment. This process results in the classification of slices of reality that have particular meaning for the individual(s) creating and maintaining the boundaries. Different mindsets are implicated in this form of boundary work, including “rigid-mindedness” (which operates as a means of compartmentalizing information according to the mutual exclusivity of categories), “fuzzy-mindedness” (which constructs a boundless-continuous world uninterrupted by compartmentalization), and “flexible-mindedness” (a mindset that allows for the existence of the borders and boundaries set by compartmentalization, while also allowing for the movement of these borders to create shifts in meaning). Throughout this project, I will examine how these types of socio-mental processes (specifically flexible-mindedness) are manifest in the configuration and enactment of multiple social roles.

² Indeed, the bulk of sociological research on multiple roles that has been produced in recent years focuses on either the relationship between the performance of multiple roles and the health and well-being of the performer or on the psychological effects of combining roles associated specifically with paid employment and family. While this research has provided tremendous insight into what, generally, are the mental health outcomes of multiple roles, I am more specifically interested in *how* multiple roles can be combined and *which* circumstances might lead to these psychological benefits and/or disadvantages.

³ While research finds multiple roles to be associated with both positive and negative consequences, much attention has been given to the problems associated with multiple role performances. Role overload and role conflict are two of the most well-known examples, with role overload referring to the experience of lacking the resources, time, and energy needed to meet the demands of all roles and role conflict describing an incongruity between the expectations of one role and those of another. Role overload and conflict often lead to difficulties meeting role expectations, known as role strain (Goode 1960). Various negative psychological problems can follow from role strain, such as cognitive dissonance (see Festinger 1959). At the same time, some evidence suggests that multiple roles provide opportunities and advantages. In their theory of role balance, for instance, Marks & MacDermid (1996) found that people who are able to fully participate in a number of different roles experience not only less role strain but also lower rates of depression and higher self-esteem. Similarly, Rose Laub Coser (1975) argues that it is among multiple roles that individuals are able to express individuality and act autonomously in accordance with or in opposition to normative expectations. Thus multiple roles are important for the development of personality and intellect. Neither Marks & MacDermid nor Coser, however, addresses *how* multiple roles combine in form and function or the ease of adaptation.

⁴ I will not attempt a complete specification of role theory here, focusing instead on those concepts and formulations that are most relevant to analysis of multiple role enactment. Readers interested in more complete specification are directed to see Turner (1986), Montgomery (1998), Biddle & Thomas (1979), or Zurcher (1983).

⁵ The term has been used in a variety of ways by sociologists, depending on the focus of their studies. See, for instance, Biddle & Thomas 1979, Coser 1979, Goffman 1959, Goode 1960, Linton 1936, Parsons 1951, 1979, Turner 1968, Znaniecki 1965, or Zurcher 1983.

⁶ The greater interest in early role theorists in the role rather than the person is a predictable form that a sociology of modern society might take. Modern life, in many respects, is impersonal, emphasizing the requirements of roles rather than the characteristics of those who perform them (Hewitt 1989).

⁷ Indeed, a number of theorists argued that *conventional* roles – those formally defined, well-known standards such as “professor”, “mother”, or “president” – on which structurally oriented sociologists

focused, were only one kind of role. Alongside them must be set another kind of role, the *interpersonal* role, which consists of a patterned and repetitive set of relationships between individuals who have a history of interaction and whose roles are a product of their interaction rather than of prior social definitions. See, for instance, McCall & Simmons (1978), Plummer 1991, Stone 1977, or Turner 1962.

⁸ This definition is drawn from Stryker (1968, 1980), but other researchers have defined the term in different ways. For McCall & Simmons (1978) for instance, the salience hierarchy is the person's "own preferences as to the subset of role-identities he will enact in a given situation" (p. 84). In this formulation, the salience hierarchy helps predict behavior in the short run. Longer run predictions are determined by the "prominence hierarchy" – the relatively enduring aspect of the self that focuses on what role is most important to the self as a whole. More prominent role identities influence which roles individuals prefer to enact in a given situation. In this sense, I find that Stryker's salience hierarchy has the same effect as McCall & Simmon's prominence hierarchy – it captures the more enduring rather than fleeting source of behavior. For this reason, I prefer to simplify the account by referencing Stryker's definition.

⁹ The relevance of salience to behavioral outcomes, such as the amount of discretionary time one devotes to roles (Serpe & Stryker 1993; Stryker & Serpe 1982) or to activities related to given roles (Nuttbrock & Freudiger 1991; Serpe 1987; Serpe & Stryker 1987) is reasonably well established.

¹⁰ While Stryker & Serpe (1994) make reference to the possibility that two or more roles may exist in the same location in a hierarchical order, it is not explicitly specified *how* this possibility can occur. Instead, explicit reference is given to the fact that role-identities are ordered in relation to one another such that one, rather than another, can be said to have more (or less) of some quality or characteristic of salience (see Ashforth 2001, Marks & MacDermid 1996, or Stryker & Serpe 2004).

¹¹ In recent years, a number of contemporary thinkers have recognized the relevance of linking role identification processes to cognitive theory (e.g., Burke 1992; Collier & Callero 2005; DiMaggio 1997; Farr 1987; Howard 1994; Morgan & Schwalbe 1990; Stryker 1991), arguing that roles are sustained by cognitive structures that simultaneously serve as an element in the construction and reproduction of social structure. Much of this research agenda focuses on schematic processing, positioning role play as a process of recognition rather than a process of creation, such that the individual's ability to create and modify informational content remains under-examined. This leaves unanswered the question of how multiple roles combine in form and function.

CHAPTER TWO

Modeling Multiple Roles:

From Single Focus to Overlapping Performances

Let disaster befall the man who would try to isolate a single branch of knowledge;

He might observe facts but he could not grasp the spirit giving them life.

Gabriel Monod 1923

My aim in this chapter is to understand how individuals combine multiple roles in both form and function. Having argued that traditional sociological assumptions about role performances miss a crucial element (an element I refer to as the chameleon factor), my task here is to explain how recent research from the fields of cognitive psychology and cognitive science can help fill this gap. While a number of sociological theories (e.g., role theory, identity theory, social identity theory) acknowledge the individual-level calculations and complex judgments that sustain role performances, cognitive processes are not the analytic focus of traditional analyses. In contrast, I focus on cognition as an *essential* element in role performances, reevaluating traditional assumptions by microtranslating presuppositions to the cognitive level. Specifically, I explore how the mind's ability to process information *both* deliberately *and* automatically can be utilized to stretch the concept of role enactment beyond traditional behavioral based definitions. In so doing, I develop a model of role enactment that accommodates the normative conditions of role multiplicity and simultaneous salience. This chapter presents this model in full, as well as the cognitive research that supports its development.

Why look to cognitive research to answer sociological question? What makes cognitive psychology useful to sociologists or role theorists? Sociologists who write about the ways that culture enters into everyday life necessarily make assumptions about cognitive processes. Such assumptions, while largely metatheoretical to sociologists, are keenly empirical from the standpoint of cognitive psychology (DiMaggio 1997). While thirty years ago, behaviorism made psychology essentially irrelevant to the sociological study of culture (see DiMaggio 1997), recent foci of psychological research (e.g., schemata, categories, mental models, and so on) are much richer in cultural content than the formal operations or intellectual capacities that once preoccupied cognitivists and developmentalists (DiMaggio 1997; Rogoff & Chavajay 1995). Contemporary theories of human cognition model, on the one hand, how social structure is represented and sustained by the processing systems of individual actors, and, on the other, how these internalized representations of social structures shape social processes (Howard 1994). While sociological theories have often been criticized for downplaying or disregarding the micro-level motivations of social actors (see Ignatow 2007; Plummer 1991; or Vaisey 2006), social cognitive theory focuses specific attention on people's thought processes, feelings, and mental activities and their consequences for social behavior and social outcomes (Fiske & Taylor 1991). As such, cognitive theory is essential for our sociological understanding of how actors perceive, evaluate, and negotiate the social world.

Since the mid 1990's, there has been increased recognition that sociology can benefit from recent work in the field of cognitive psychology (see Bergeson 1995; Cerulo 2002, 2006; Collier & Callero 2005; DiMaggio 1997, 2002; Howard 1994; Ignatow 2007;

or Vaisey 2006). And, indeed, in recent years, common ground between the disciplines has grown.¹ The major development within sociology has been a shift to a more complex understanding of culture (DiMaggio 1997). A generation ago sociologists viewed culture as a “seamless web” (Swidler 1997) – unitary and internally coherent across groups and situations. By contrast, recent works depicts culture as fragmented across groups and inconsistent in its manifestations (Martin 1992). Contemporary sociologists thus view culture as rule-like structures that constitute resources which can be put to strategic use (Bourdieu 1990; Sewell 1992; Swidler 1986). Addressing how individuals use culture strategically to pursue valued ends requires more elaborate cognitive presuppositions than prior theoretical approaches (Bergeson 2005; Cerulo 2006; DiMaggio 1997; Ignatow 2007), making it sensible for sociologists to turn to cognitive psychology as a resource.

Yet many sociologists remain suspicious of cognition (DiMaggio 1997; Howard 1994). There is an assumption that cognition is primarily a psychological, intra-individual level process that has little to do with social structure (see Howard 1994). This assumption has been furthered by the fact that cognition has been classified within psychological social psychology (D’Andrade 1995). While cognitive processes are, unarguably, situated within the human mind, a number of prominent theorists contend that these processes are *not* simply physiologically constrained human responses to stimuli, but also unmistakably social acts (Zerubavel 1997) bounded by specific normative constraints (see Cerulo 2006; DiMaggio 1997; Howard 1994; Ignatow 2007; Vaisey 2005). Zerubavel (1997), for instance, argues that the mental categories we use to define our environment are neither products of nature nor of individuals’ mental idiosyncracies, but, rather, products of particular socially established “thought styles”,

“thought communities”, or “thought traditions” (pg.70-80). In this way, independent thinking is positioned as the embodiment of group thinking (see Nippert-Eng 1996).

This is not a new idea, but a common thread in the works of such eminent theorists as Emile Durkheim ([1912] 1965), Max Weber ([1904] 1976, Karl Marx (McClellan 1977), Alfred Schutz (1973), Schutz and Thomas Luckmann (1973), Peter Berger and Luckmann (1968), Michel Foucault ([1966] 1973), Karl Mannheim (1936] 1985), Ludwig Fleck ([1935] 1981), and Thomas Kuhn ([1962] 1970). For each, knowledge is rooted in more or less universal embodiments that are generalizable and associated with ideas, images, and social situations in culturally specific ways. The task of contemporary sociologists interested in the culture and cognition link is to learn how different thought communities construct meaning and categorize knowledge differently (Cerulo 2002; Ignatow 2007; Nippert-Eng 1996; Zerubavel 1997). Indeed, this is the general bases of the growing subfield known as “cognitive sociology”.

While my inquiry into the role-playing capacities of modern social actors falls distinctly within this field, it also differs from prior approaches in important ways. Cognitive sociologists, for instance, typically examine how cognition varies according to different cultural contexts, illustrating the ways in which cognitive processes become institutionalized dimensions of these settings (see Cerulo 2002, p. 3). Typically, commonalities across communities are not imagined to be of much interest, nor are the neural, psychological, emotional, or bodily processes that may be associated with various forms of knowledge (Ignatow 2007). Indeed, it is rare for sociologists – even cognitive sociologists – to link group thinking to specific brain structures, neural, or bodily processes.

In contrast, I pay specific attention to how these types of processes produce social knowledge, applying these insights to stretch prior definitions of role performances. Cognitive psychologists suggest that in order to successfully propel their owners through complex and demanding social environments, minds must be equipped with *two* complementary cognitive skills (McCrae 2000). On the one hand, they must sensitize actors to the invariant features of their immediate social environment. In such cases, research indicates that information processing can occur automatically (without using full cognitive capacity). On the other hand, to guide behavior in a truly flexible manner, minds must also be responsive to the presence of unexpected (i.e., novel or surprising) stimulus inputs (Baars 1997; McClelland et al 1995; Shallice 1988). On these occasions, information is processed in a controlled, deliberate fashion (a condition that requires considerable cognitive capacity (Ostrom, Skowronski, & Nowak 1994). In this way, cognitive researchers note two very different forms of cognition (one automatic and one deliberate) located in two different regions of the brain (the neocortical and the hippocampal).

Although there is a substantial amount of literature on the mind's complementary processing systems, little of this literature has been incorporated into a sociological framework.² I argue that the distinction between automatic and deliberate processing, and the conditions under which each occurs, are of tremendous importance to the sociological understanding of modern role playing dynamics. As demonstrated in the previous chapter, we need a better understanding of how and why people switch among frames, logics, or schematic responses, as well as a better understanding of how people overlap these responses to experience multiple orientations to action.³ By exploring the

cognitive capacity of social actors in more precise detail, we are better equipped to understand how multiple roles are constructed, maintained, and redefined in inherently dynamic social situations.

In the pages to follow, I dig deeper into the substantive claims of the cognitive literature to demonstrate how research on the mind's dual processing system can shed light on many important (and unanswered) sociological questions. I specifically utilize the distinction between automatic and deliberate processing to develop a model of role enactment that includes the possibility of partial and/or completely overlapping performances. Before I present this model in full, however, it is necessary to explore the neural foundations of the mind's independent processing systems in more detail. To do so, we must situate ourselves within the field of social cognition.

Social Cognition

The dual processing model synthesizes much of the work that contemporary researchers are conducting on cognitive processes. While automatic and deliberate processes are often viewed as opposites, or at least as endpoints of a continuum, recent theory proposes that they are two separate, independent dimensions that together form the basis of the adaptive mind (Lakin 2006). An adaptive mind is one that can enable its owner to override automated action plans and produce novel behavioral outputs as and when these responses are needed. That minds routinely achieve this level of cognitive flexibility is one of the acknowledged triumphs of mental life (Macrae 2000).

According to recent development in the cognitive neurosciences, flexible, adaptive processing is believed to be attained through the operation of two

complimentary mental modules: the neocortical and the hippocampal learning systems (McClelland et al 1995). The neocortical system comprises people's generic beliefs about the world (i.e., semantic memory, schematic knowledge), beliefs that accumulate gradually through repeated exposure to specific stimulus events (Macrae 2000). Given the need for stability in people's perceptions of the world, the contents of the neocortical system (e.g., beliefs, expectancies, norms) are highly resistant to modification or change. The hippocampal system, in contrast, serves a different function in mental life in that it enables perceivers to form temporary representations of novel or surprising stimulus events, representations that commonly gain access to consciousness (Baars 1997).

There are good reasons why the mind requires the operation of two independent operating systems. As schematic knowledge (i.e., neocortical system) provides the cognitive backdrop against which the stimulus world is construed, it would be problematic if these mental contents were susceptible to modification following a single surprising experience. Under such conditions, purposive action would be a desirable though unattainable behavioral goal. At the same time, however, actors must also be able to respond rapidly and adaptively to novelty and surprise; indeed, survival may depend upon this ability (Norman & Shallice 1986; Shallice 1988). It is through the possession of two complimentary cognitive systems that mental functioning is accorded the *stability* and *plasticity* it requires if actors are to chart a smooth passage through life's turbulent waters (Johston & Hawley 1994; McClelland et al 1995; Macrae 2000; Smith 1990).

In the following sections I review what it means for a cognitive process to be either automatic or deliberate, an important first step in creating a sociocognitive model of modern role playing dynamics.

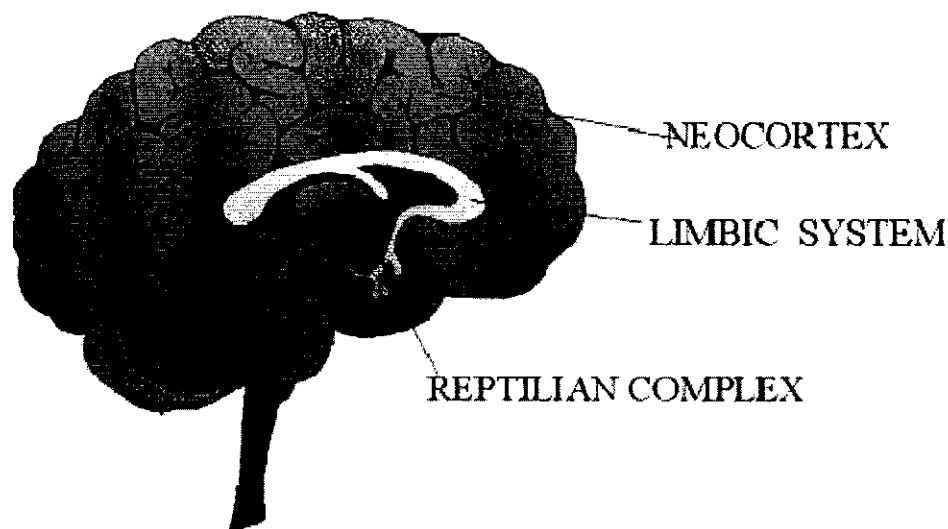
Automatic Cognition

Given basic cognition limitations and a challenging stimulus world, social actors need some way to simplify and structure information processing (Macrae 2000). The sheer amount of resources needed to process all information in a controlled and deliberate manner makes this possibility exceedingly unlikely (Bargh & Chartrand 1999). To consistently behave in a purposive manner in a highly information driven social context, actors must possess stable internal representations (i.e., mental models or schemas) of the environments in which they operate (Johnson & Laird 1983; McClelland et al 1995). As Gilbert & Hixon (1991) observe, “the ability to understand new situations in terms of old and general beliefs is certainly among the handiest tools in the social actor’s kit” (p. 509). Indeed, knowing what to expect – and exactly where, when, and from whom to expect it – is information that renders the world a meaningful, orderly, and predictable place. But how does the mind realize this objective? The answer lies in the application of automatic processing.

As alluded to earlier, cognitive neuroscientists associate automatic cognitive processing with the neocortical area of the brain. The neocortical area (or neocortex) is the outer layer of the cerebral hemisphere - in evolutionary terms, the “newest” part of the cerebral cortex, hence the name “neo” (see Figure 2:1 below).⁴ The cortex is the area of the brain that receives and processes information from the senses. The neocortex serves as the center of higher mental functions for humans as it is associated with the organization of perceptual information, abstract thinking, and language (Rakic 1988). It contains some 100 billion cells, each with 1,000 to 10,000 synapses (connections), and

has roughly 100 million meters of wiring, all packed into a structure the size and thickness of a formal dinner napkin (Rakic 1988).

FIGURE 2:1 The Neocortical Area of the Brain



The cells in the neocortex are arranged in six layers, labeled I to VI by neuroscientists (with I being the innermost and VI being the outermost).⁵ The different cortical layers each contain a characteristic distribution of neuronal cell types. Each type is associated with specific functional properties: vision, hearing, touch, the sense of balance, movement, emotional responses, and other feats of cognition (Creutzfeldt 1995). It is important to note that the cortical layers are not simply stacked one over the other; there exist characteristic intraconnections between the different layers and neuronal types with span all the thickness of the cortex (Mountcastle 1997). These connections both send and receive information, allowing the layers of the neocortex to function in sum to produce a meaningful perceptual experience of the world (Rakic 1988). Cognitive researchers position this activity as the realm of automatic cognition.

What does it mean to say that someone has responded in an automatic fashion? In everyday language, we use the term “automatic” to mean that something happens immediately and without conscious reflection. These qualities that spring to mind from our everyday use of the term are actually components of automatic cognitive processing in the way psychologists define it, but there is more. An automatic process is one that is triggered directly and immediately from stimuli in the environment, rather than initiated by conscious choice (Moskowitz 1995). Once cues in the environment unconsciously trigger a response, if it is automatic that response will run to completion without disruption, all the while providing benefits to the perceiver in terms of mental efficiency (Lakin 2006). These steps largely occur without one’s awareness, so that consciousness is not involved in any stage of the processing (Bargh 1994, 1997).

Automatic cognition is generally characterized as implicit, un verbalized, and rapid (D’Andrade 1995), representing an efficient, scripted, and routine form of everyday action (DiMaggio 2002). It is also referenced by various commentators as impulsive, emotional, and based on stereotypes (D’Andrade 1995; DiMaggio 1997; Metcalfe & Mischel 1999). Our ability to recognize an upturned mouth as a smile is an example of automatic cognitive processing, as is the inference that the smiling person is friendly (Fiske & Taylor 1991). Through automatic cognition, social actors simplify and structure perceived information into a meaningful whole (Fiske & Neuberg 1990; Lakin 2006; Macrae 1998; McClelland et al 1995). Automatic cognition is considered second nature to us (Metcalfe & Mischel 1999), and can easily be pursued while we are focused on other things (Bargh 1997). Indeed, crucial features of automatic cognition are its opacity to introspection and its insulation from higher processes of reflective judgment (Fiske &

Taylor 1991). Simply put, automatic cognition allows us to process information and carry out complex routines without consciously thinking too much about it (Markus 1977).

How does a process become automatic? Through practice, repetition, and habit (Moskowitz 2005). Indeed, cognitive researchers propose that a response that is routinely paired with a specific set of environmental features will eventually, with time and practice, lead to the automatic activation of the response with the stimulus (Bargh 1990, 1994, 1996; Fiske & Neuberg 1990; Lakin 2006). In this way, the root of the concept of an automatic process can be traced to Willam James' (1950[1890]) definition of a *habit*: "A strictly voluntary act has to be guided by idea, perception, and volition, throughout its whole course. In an habitual action, mere sensation is a sufficient guide, and the upper regions of the brain and mind are set comparatively free" (pp. 115-116). Echoing James, a number of prominent cognitivists define automatic processes as mental habits (Bargh 1994, 1997; Moskowitz 2005), "patterns that become the deep groves into which behavior falls when not consciously attended" (Wegner & Bargh 1998, p. 459).⁶

Cognitive researchers describe four elements necessary for identifying an automatic process: lack of conscious intent, efficiency, lack of awareness, lack of control (Bargh 1997; Moskowitz 2005). As stated earlier, an automatic process is one that is not consciously initiated, but determined by the stimuli to which we are exposed. For instance, when we look up at the sky, we do not intend to see its color. The color is simply perceived and recognized. If a response like this occurs despite a lack of conscious intent to initiate it, then it relies on an *unintended process* (Moskowitz 2005). Unintentional automatic responses, like recognizing that the sky is blue, do not require a specific goal (Lakin 2006). As another example, if I ask you to ignore the meaning of the

words written in this sentence, and focus only on whether the shapes of the particular letters are curved or angled, you are still likely to extract the meaning of the words despite being explicitly asked to intend to do otherwise. Extracting word meaning is automatic, and occurs even when we have no conscious intent to comprehend a word's meaning (Moskowitz 2005).⁷ Thus, even when we should ignore word meaning, we automatically attend to it. This is the essence of unintentional, automatic processing.

Rather than being constrained by limits on people's ability to attend to a stimulus, *efficient* processes are able to operate even in the face of such limits (e.g., being rushed, working on many tasks simultaneously, having divided attention). An efficient process requires relatively little mental energy or effort (Bargh 1994). Indeed, it requires so little cognitive effort that it can occur despite other, ongoing mental activity; it will run to completion without being disturbed (Moskowitz 2005). You can, for instance, strain your memory to recall the year that Mark McGwire and Sammy Sosa chased (and broke) Roger Maris' home run record (it was 1998), or the year that Barry Bonds broke the home run record again (it was 2001), while at the same time you detect that the color of a passing car is red. Color detection is an efficient process: it can occur despite the more difficult task of retrieving trivia from long-term memory (Bargh 1997). Efficient, automatic processes persist despite the mind's being engaged in multiple tasks (Moskowitz 2005). In social cognitive research, many of the processes we use to characterize other people – as well as ourselves – proceed with such efficiency.

The inability to consciously recognize that any mental activity is taking place is another mark of an automatic process. The feeling that “gears are churning” is absent. People may be aware of the output of an automatic process (they experience the sky as

blue), but remain unaware of the occurrence of some mental process that they have actively performed that has caused the output to be experienced (Bargh 1997). Further, phenomenal immediacy is said to exist because actors lack awareness that any mental production exists (Moskowitz 2005). The perception of nonverbal behavior is often cited as a classic example. Cognitive researchers note that people are able to detect nonverbal signals from very thin slices of behavior without realizing that such cues are being sent and received (Palmer & Simmons 1995; Zebrowitz & Collins 1997). Nisbett & Wilson (1977) provide another citation classic, focusing on how much people lack awareness of the processes contributing to their perceptions. In a clever and much reproduced experiment, participants were asked to memorize a series of word pairs. For some, the pairs of words included the pair “ocean-moon”. Shortly after finishing this task, participants were asked to answer some mundane questions, included among them a question that asked them to name a laundry detergent. Remarkably, the number of people who responded with the brand “Tide” was double for people who had previously seen the word pair “ocean-moon,” yet these people saw no way in which the word association task could have influenced their responses, a hallmark of automatic processing (Nisbett & Wilson 1977; Wilson & Brekke 1994).

A final mark of automatic processing is the inability to stop the process from happening. Once the stimulus that triggers the process is present, the process will start – and, once it is started, it cannot be stopped (Bargh 1994, 1997). Even if a person consciously decides not to perform the process prior to seeing the triggering stimulus, knowing full well that the stimulus is about to be presented, the person cannot stop its occurrence in the face of this preparation (Bargh 1997). To stick with the running

example of color perception, if I asked you to look at the sky and *not* perceive its color, you could not do it. The mere presence of the stimulus (the sky) triggers an automatic response (color perception), regardless of any goals you may have to prevent this response from happening. This inability to control a response despite the conscious intent to do so is the last feature of an automatic process.

It is important to note, however, that these four characteristics (lack of conscious intent, efficiency, lack of awareness, lack of control) do not always occur in an all-or-none fashion (Lakin 2006). Although a process that has all four characteristics would certainly be considered automatic, processes that are characterized by three, two, or even one of these features have also been historically referred to as automatic (Bargh 1994, 1997). Thus, there are varieties of automaticity that differ in degree of fit to the standard criteria (Fiske & Taylor 1991). *Preconscious automaticity*, for example, represents a completely automatic process as it corresponds to the initial unconscious processing of incoming information (Lakin 2006). Preconscious automaticity can be initiated by the presence of environmental cues without requiring conscious attention (Neely 1977; Shiffrin & Dumais 1981). Thus, an organism entirely governed by preconscious automatic cognition responds moment by moment to environmental stimuli according to the affective responses engendered automatically by perception of a stimulus (Fiske & Taylor 1991). A classic example is an aversive response to dangerous stimuli, but many other responses exhibit the same features. Presentation of the stimulus automatically engages motivational systems as a result of the connections between perceptual affective and motor systems. This analysis occurs without intention, control, or awareness, and is largely effortless.

Yet automatic cognition is not confined simply to innate responses. *Goal directed automaticity* represents a different form of automatic cognition because it corresponds to intentional controllable processes that become automatic over time (Lakin 2006). Goal-dependent automaticity is thus automatic according to *some* of the four criteria, such as lack of awareness of the process itself, not needing to monitor the process to completion, and one's not intending all the specific outcomes (Fiske & Taylor 1991). But it also varies by the perceiver's goals, so it is partially responsive to intentional control. Goal-dependent processing is not entirely automatic in that it requires intentional processing and depends on the task undertaken (Bargh 1994). Goal directed processes with substantial automatic components – such as typing, driving, or perhaps rehashing the same old issues in a relationship – illustrate this category.

Conditioned responses represent perhaps the most famous examples of goal-directed automaticity. An essential part of learning is being conditioned to respond automatically and appropriately to situations by repeated association of a hot response to a stimulus (Ross & Nisbett 1994). James Blair's (1995) account of the development of a normal capacity for moral response is an account of the automation of an aversive response to another's distress through a process of conditioning by caregivers. In this example, morality is the intellectual elaboration of a basic "hot" process, the activation of one's own distress circuitry by perception of another's distress (Blair 1995; Moskowitz 2005).

From this perspective, automatic processes are controllable in several respects: one can choose not to respond based on the retrieved memory, but instead to respond in a new fashion constructed from the retrieved instances or to respond by altering the usual

response; one can change the retrieval process itself by changing one's state and, therefore, some of the relevant memory cues; one can refocus one's attention; or one can change one's goals (Lakin 2006). In this way then, automatic cognitive processes can be both highly automatic *and* amenable to control (Bargh 1997). Skilled behavior, for example is both, for while experts rely on their automated skills, they can also manipulate their skills at will. (I will argue that role performances are yet another example).

Another form of automatic processing called *postconscious processing* is a less pure form than the other two as it fits somewhat fewer of the standard criteria for automaticity (Fiske & Taylor 1991). It occurs when initial conscious processing has unintended outcomes (Bargh 1997). One may be fully conscious of an input from the environment or of an internally generated thought, but that material may subsequently have unconscious, unintended influences on one's responses (Lakin 2006). Situational priming is a good example of postconscious processing. In situational priming, one is initially aware of the stimulus, but not necessarily the effects of its accessibility on later judgments (Ross & Nisbett 1994). Salience effects that depend on consciously noticing a person's novelty, compared to one's expectations, are another example of postconscious processing (Fiske & Taylor 1991). Perhaps the best example, however, is one's mood. Moods that are completely conscious can prime an actor to subsequently think in mood-congruent ways (such as optimistic or pessimistic), but one may not be aware of the connection (Fiske & Neuberg 1990).

Social actors rely on each of these processes (preconscious, goal directed, and postconscious) to organize their perception of events and determine how to act (Bargh 1994, 1997; Lakin 2006). A person who displays automatic cognition is highly attentive

and interactive with information (Kunda 1990), but responds based on schemas and/or emotions without analyzing the response (Bargh 1997). For this reason, automatic cognition is associated with the realm of institutionalized culture, of typification, of the habitus, of the cognitive shortcuts that promote efficiency in both learning and response (D'Andrade 1995; DiMaggio 1997; Fiske & Taylor 1991; Lakin 2006). Thus, in automatic cognition, we find the mechanisms by which culture shapes and biases thought (Markus & Kitayama 1991).

This is not to imply, however, that individuals are at the mercy of their culture. While we are often, paradoxically, more aware of the contributions of the world out there than our own contributions to our cognitive responses, we are, nonetheless, able to control our cognitive processes (Moskowitz 2005). Indeed, when sufficiently motivated, people can override programmed modes of thought to think critically and reflexively (DiMaggio 1997). People' degree of control over their thoughts has recently sparked a lot of interest from cognitive researchers (see Higgins 1996; Palmer & Simmons 1995; or Uleman 1999), who refer to the process variously as cold and/or deliberate cognition. In the following section, I explain what it means to say that a cognitive response is a result of controlled or deliberate processing.

Deliberate Cognition

Automatic, routinized cognition, while highly useful, presents only one type of cognitive process. Social actors are also capable of intentional planning, reflection, and deliberation. Indeed, we can control our behaviour over the long term by anticipating consequences, thinking through alternatives, and checking hypotheses for their truth or

likelihood using rules of inference. These higher cognitive capacities are aspects of “cold” cognition or abstract reasoning (Lakin 2006). Logic, probability and decision theory are paradigm cases. Deliberate cognition is not automatic, or stimulus driven, and does not automatically engage the affective systems. It is essentially intentionally-controlled (or deliberate), internally driven, and motivationally neutral (Macrae 2000).

Cognitive neuroscientists associate deliberate cognition with the hippocampal region of the brain. The hippocampus is an area buried deep within the forebrain.⁸ It is specifically located in the medial temporal lobe (see Figure 2:2). It belongs to the limbic system and plays major roles in short term memory and spatial navigation. Humans (and other mammals) have two hippocampi, one in each side of the brain (see Figure 2:3 below). In humans, the hippocampi are shaped something like a banana. The curved, convoluted shape reminded early anatomists of a seahorse. The name, in fact, derives from the Greek word for seahorse (in Greek, *hippos* = horse, *kampos* = sea monster).

FIGURE 2:2

The position of the hippocampus in relation to the cortex

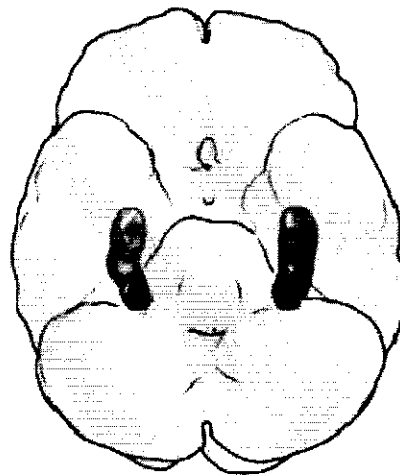
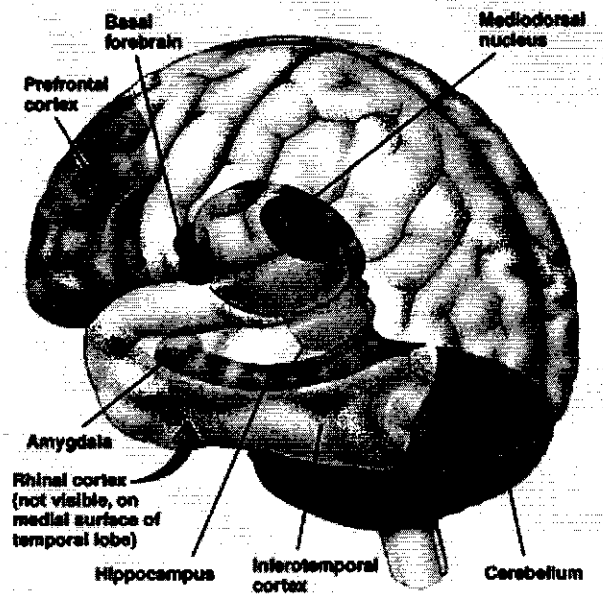


Figure 2:3 Imaging of the Hippocampus

The hippocampus is located in the medial temporal lobe. In this illustration of the inferior surface (underside) of the brain, the frontal lobe is at the top, while the occipital lobe is at the bottom.

The hippocampus has been historically associated with olfaction (due to its location next to the olfactory cortex), emotion (due to its categorization as part of the

limbic system), behavioral inhibition (based on observations of animals with hippocampal damage), and spatial navigation (due to the spatial firing fields of its neurons) (Squire 2002). Yet each of these functions has been, in its turn discounted. The most convincing lines of thought at present link the hippocampus to spatial memory tasks and the formation of new memories.⁹ Indeed, contemporary neuroscientists describe the function of the hippocampus in terms of three cognitive processes associated with memory formation: the rapid encoding of events as associations among stimulus elements and context, the encoding of episodes as sequences of events, and the linking of episodes by common features into relational networks (Baxter 2007; Eichenbaum 2004).

How is the hippocampus linked to these functions? Cognitive neuroscientists suggest that the hippocampus acts as a gateway. In order for somatic markers (that is, emotional signals) from the prefrontal cortex or amygdala to access those brain areas responsible for higher-order reasoning, context information from the hippocampus must unlock the nucleus accumbens (NAcc) gate, allowing this information to pass through (Thagard 2006). If this information cannot pass through the hippocampus (due to damage or injury), we lose the ability to form new memories.¹⁰ Neuroimaging studies further show that extensive neuronal networks are activated in the hippocampus when factual information is acquired (Baxter 2007). In this way, it is understood that the hippocampus is responsible for our ability to rapidly learn about individual experience as well as recall what we have learned (Thagard 2006). The hippocampus also helps us separate representations of our experiences, in contrast to the neocortex, which gradually extracts regularities over many experiences (Baxter 2007).

Cognitive psychologists thus associate the hippocampal region with our ability to direct, regulate, and control our behavior and cognitions (Moskowitz 2005; Wegner & Bargh 1998). Control is defined as the ability to influence something in a certain direction (Wegner & Bargh 1998, p. 450). Controlled cognitive processes are the thus ones for which people are responsible, for which they are accountable to social as well as personal standards (Fiske & Taylor 1991). Unlike automatic processes (which can be employed while we focus on other things), controlled, deliberate processes are likely to command full thought and attention and require considerable cognitive capacity (Ostrom, Skowronski, & Nowak 1994). This form of cognition is thus referenced as explicit, verbalized, and - as compared to automatic cognition - slow. (D'Andrade 1995).

Cognitive psychologists have identified a number of facilitating conditions for controlled cognition. For instance, research suggests that people shift into deliberative modes of thought relatively easily when their attention is attracted to a problem (DiMaggio 1997). In experimental studies, for example, researchers create false recollections of a story among laboratory "witnesses" by presenting inaccurate information or asking leading questions (Loftus et al 1989). But when the task is changed to ask subjects to think carefully about the source of particular bits of information, the experimental effect is diminished or eliminated (Johnson et al 1993), suggesting that the need to pay attention to a problem requires a deliberate cognitive response (Moskowitz 2005).¹¹

People also utilize deliberate cognition when they are strongly motivated to do so by dissatisfaction with the status quo or by the moral salience of a particular issue (Fiske & Taylor 1991; Moskowitz 2005). For example, although racist schemata are accessible

to most white Americans, whites can override such schemata to some extent through awareness and reflexivity (Devine 1989; DiMaggio 1997).¹² People also shift into deliberate modes of processing when existing schemata fail to account adequately for new stimuli (Fiske & Taylor 1991). For example, research on the psychology of intergroup relations suggests that people in task groups initially code others on the basis of stereotypes, but shift to more deliberate evaluations when faced with strong inconsistent evidence (Schneider 1991).¹³

Each of these are different situations in which one may be aware of or potentially control one's thoughts. In this way, controlled deliberate cognition is said to occur when one has a choice, particularly when one makes the harder choice among alternatives, and when one pays attention to the intent (Fiske & Taylor 1991, p. 294). How do people make these choices? Through reference to their *needs*, *motives*, *incentives*, and *goals*. A *need* is a drive state, usually conceived of as arising from a physical deficit (such as hunger). A *motive* may be conceived of as a quasi-need as it involves a similar process of being driven to reduce some perceived discrepancy (although no physical deficit may be present). *Incentives* are those people/things in the environment that will reduce the drive (the tension state) associated with a need or motive. *Goals* are the end states people seek to attain by having pursued an incentive and addressed a need/motive. It is through these four elements that people regulate and control their thoughts and actions (Moskowitz 2005).

The role of needs is central to determining the nature of a cognitive response (Deci 1992). Goals, for instance, will affect a person's behavior differently, depending on what kind of need is the source of that goal (Deci & Ryan 1991). For example, if two

people in a music class are asked to create a composition, they each have the same goal, yet the motive they are seeking to satisfy will alter the nature of the goal that is selected and pursued (Deci 1992). The first person (we'll call her Britney) may set the goal of pleasing others, whereas the second person (let's call her Alison) may focus on creating an interesting piece of work. Alison's goal is in the service of a motive to derive intrinsic joy in an artistic process, whereas Britney's goal is in the service of a motive to be liked. Goals in the service of autonomy, competence, and social integration needs lead to greater creativity, higher cognitive flexibility, greater depth of information processing, and more effective coping with failure (Deci & Ryan 1991). When one's goals are not marked by autonomy of choice, such as when one is given a discrete task to perform by an authority or when a goal is selected based on a social obligation, performance suffers (Moskowitz 2005).

It is possible that a person's motives and needs produce more wishes and desire than can be realized. In such cases, it is necessary to select among goals. For example, one's needs for social contact and affiliation will likely produce more goals than could be pursued at any point in time. These could include goals like attending a party, talking on the phone, visiting a chat room, going to a bar, watching a play with friends, going to the park, and so forth. Only one goal can be selected at any point in time to satisfy the need for social contact. The choice as to which goal to pursue involves deliberating over the *feasibility* (i.e., thoughts about whether the goal can be realized) and *desirability* (i.e., the value of the goal) to one's wishes and desires (Ashforth 2001; Gollwitzer 1990, 1993). It also depends on the ability of the current situation to address the goal selected (Gollwitzer 1993).

Attaining the goal that has been selected also requires a choice among multiple paths. Thus, having deliberated among goals and deciding one to pursue (such as going to a play), the next task for the individual engaged in a deliberate cognitive process is the successful implementation of a particular goal-directed action (Moskowitz 2005). This task may be simple when the necessary goal-directed action is routine (for instance, if one has season tickets to a theatre), but it may be complex if one is undecided about where and how to act (What play should I see? Who should I go with? How do I get there?). In complex cases, the implementation of goal-directed action needs to be prepared through the individual's reflecting on when, where, how, and how long to act, thus creating a plan for implementing deliberate cognitions (Gollwitzer 1993).

When obstacles are placed in the way of goal attainment, or when failure is encountered, people do not simply quit. Rather, they often step up their efforts to pursue the goal. *Persistence* is thus one of the features that marks deliberation (Moskowitz 2005). Such regulation is also marked by *flexibility*. The way in which people act in pursuing a goal is determined by the appropriateness of a given goal-directed behavior (Fiske & Taylor 1991), yet the goal may be attained via many alternative paths. For example, if the goal is to be popular, it may be pursued through having parties, giving compliments, or helping others. If the situation allows flexibility, then when one goal is blocked, another may be pursued, all of which can be deemed appropriate. The point is that for many goals, multiple alternative pathways to achieve them exist such that if one attempt to achieve a goal is disrupted or fails, the individual does not need to give up on the process (Moskowitz 2005).

Of course, not all goal pursuits are successful. Sometimes they fail. We may, for instance, try having parties, giving compliments, and helping others yet still never attain the popularity we desire. Although we may persist at first, eventually we may revise our commitment and desire to pursue this goal – eventually lowering its importance, if not giving up on the goal altogether (this is known as *disengagement*). While the roles of commitment to a goal, of evaluating and reevaluating the feasibility and desirability of a goal, and of self-efficacy (perceived personal ability) as it relates to whether we persist in or disengage from pursuing a goal are important factors to be considered in reference to deliberate processing, they are somewhat beyond the scope of this review.¹⁴ These issues are raised primarily to highlight the types of elements that determine *how* we control our thoughts and behaviors in interpersonal interaction, for control of thought ultimately refers to the capacity to initiate, terminate, and inhibit any of these components (Fiske & Taylor 1991). These factors further illustrate the necessity of selecting, implementing, and regulating a controlled, deliberate process. It is the *necessity* of deliberation that is the key factor for the purposes of this analysis.

Just as there were degrees of automaticity (from preconscious, to postconscious to goal-dependent), so too are there degrees of deliberation (Fiske & Taylor 1991; Uleman 1989). Of the deliberative processes, the least controlled are *spontaneous*, occurring without awareness or intent but requiring some capacity and being subject to inhibition and termination. *Ruminative processes* are conscious but not consciously goal-directed. *Intentional processes* are directed toward some goal and are fully controlled by personal standards and goals. The most controlled processes are ones for which people are *responsible*, for which they are accountable to social and/or personal standards.¹⁵

As a case in point, consider people's most immediate inferences about each other. Some social inferences – such as encoding behavior in terms of relevant personality traits (Uleman 1987,1989) - seem to occur rapidly at encoding, as part of the process of understanding another's behavior. These inferences are spontaneous in that they occur without explicit intent or much awareness. Moreover, this type encoding can be increased or decreased (Bassili & Smith 1986) by task instructions, and it does require short-term memory capacity (associated with the hippocampus) (Newman & Uleman 1989), so it is not fully automatic. Encoding other people's behavior in terms of trait terms is thus an example of an unconscious, unintended, spontaneous inference (Fiske & Taylor 1991). (Note that at this point this variety of deliberative process overlaps with the least automatic type of processes described earlier, goal-dependent automaticity).

Ruminative processes, in contrast, are conscious processes that are not goal-directed (Wegner et al 1987). Consider, for example, the frustrating problem of trying to suppress a single intrusive thought, such as trying to *not* to think about food while dieting. Being on a diet can make us far more preoccupied with food than when not dieting. The cause is not just being hungry, but the fact of food being forbidden that makes it so preoccupying. Denial increases our rumination about the forbidden object even if that thinking is counter-productive to our stated goals (as people find to their dismay when prohibiting themselves or others from seeing a particular person, drinking alcohol, or even trivial habits like nail-biting). When not successfully repressed, a single intrusive thought may lead to brooding and rumination; that is, unwanted thinking about a particular object for a long time (Fiske & Taylor 1991). The only way out, as successful

dieters know, is to find a substitute thought.¹⁶ Intentional, goal-directed thinking is thus a possible way out of negative rumination.

When is it fair to say that people intend a particular train of thought? People may be said to intend their train of thought and resulting interpretation if they perceive themselves as *having options* to think about it in other ways (Fiske & Taylor 1991). If on reflection a person understood that another interpretation was possible, then the way the person thinks may be considered intentional (Thagard 2006). When a person does have options, one particular choice is likely to be easier and others are likely to be harder (Fiske & Neuberg 1990). That is, the person's accustomed way of thinking is the easy way, and *making the hard choice* is likely to be seen as especially intentional, by ordinary observers, psychologists, and even legal experts.¹⁷ People implement their intended way of thinking by *paying attention* (Fiske & Taylor 1991). For example, if a person wants to overcome a habitual stereotype applied to another person, paying attention to nonstereotypic attributes is an effective route (Fiske & Neuberg 1990). Intentional thought is thus characterized by having options, making choices, and paying attention to the outcome.

Controlled, deliberate cognition may thus appear at first glance to be more complex than automatically derived processes. As I have highlighted, however, recent research indicates that deliberate processes offer people *more* flexibility than their automatic counterparts, allowing them to adjust and fine tune their plans of action. Recall, for instance, that automated responses are often provoked by specific stimuli (Fiske & Taylor 1991) and run to completion once activated. In contrast, research shows that deliberate cognitive processes can depend on a variety of individual and contextual

factors, such as the strength of the situation and the presence of significant others (Devine 1989), and can also be adjusted to fit situationally determined needs (Deci & Ryan 1991) as well as a variety of social standards and personal goals (Moskowitz 2005).

Automatically activated responses can further be inhibited by controlled processes when there is enough time and cognitive capacity for a conscious expectancy to develop and inhibit the more spontaneous, automatic response (Neely 1977). Thus, through controlled, deliberate processing, we can focus our attention on the task at hand *or* we can put something out of our mind if necessary (Fiske & Taylor 1991), allowing us leeway in the determination and modification of any plan of action.

It is in the interaction of these processes (deliberate and automatic), however, that we truly emerge as social thinkers (DiMaggio 1997; Fiske & Taylor 1991; Lakin 2006; Moskowitz 2005). In daily life, we often rely on categories and schemas derived from automatic cognitive processes. Yet, although we may use categories effortlessly to conserve our limited resources, we are not doomed to rely on this preconceived knowledge. Instead, this tendency is matched by our ability to process information deliberately; that is to say, by our ability to be able to process and fit together seeming inconsistent pieces of information to pursue valued goals. Further, through deliberate processing, automatically activated categories can be revised and updated with the addition of new knowledge.

Such flexibility in processing allows for plasticity in the mental system (Fiske & Taylor 1991). As researchers note, the ability to flexibly allocate our attentional and processing resources allows us to reduce the effort we expend on some tasks so that we may increase our ability to process other tasks (Bargh 1997; Lakin 2006). Plasticity in

processing has lead cognitive researchers to conclude that rather than cognitive misers, unable to cope with new and or challenging situations (Fiske & Neuberg 1990), we humans are actually cognitively flexible, efficient, and adaptive beings (Moskowitz 2005; Thagard 2006). As I will demonstrate in the following section, this adaptivity is a hallmark of our role-playing capacities.

Developing a Sociocognitive Model of Role Enactment

The distinction between automatic and deliberate processing, and the conditions under which each occurs, are of tremendous importance to the understanding of modern role playing dynamics. Recall that traditional, behaviorally based definitions of role enactment focus on the heirarchical organization of roles, such that as one role becomes active (or salient) for the individual, others necessarily become less so. According to this positioning, roles are experienced by the individual in an all-or-none, one-at-a-time, fashion.

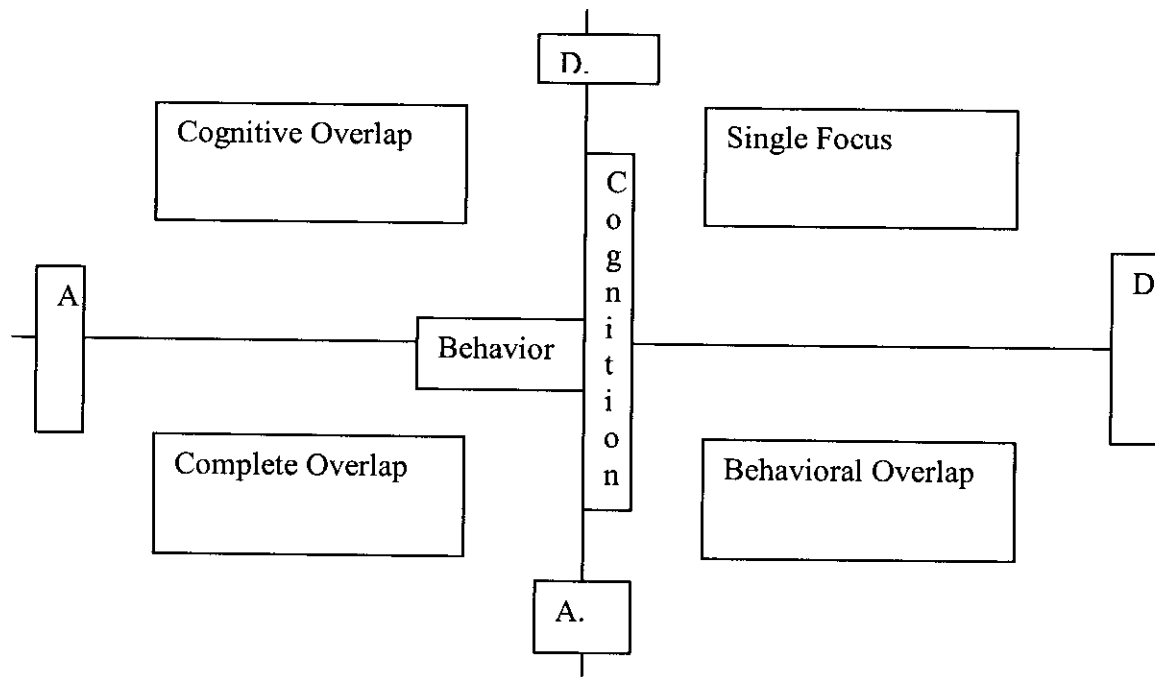
Modern life, however, is one of flux and movement. As such, it is often necessary for people to partially and/or completely overlap their role performances, moving in and out of role-based frames of thought and action. (My previous discussion of the multiple roles implicated in cell-phone use stands as a case in point). Because roles are defined behaviorally, however, with their conceptual core residing in interaction, there is little sense of process to traditional definitions, of *how* the individual might combine multiple roles in form and function to experience simultaneously salient role-identities. By paying closer attention to our cognitive capabilities, we can resolve this problem.

The notion of automatic and deliberate cognition suggests that external rituals and stimuli can interact with mental structures to generate differentiated role performances. Thus, in positioning our social selves, we can react automatically to the stimuli we encounter, *or* we can adjust our reactions to fit a variety of situations and goals. We can rely on preconceived role schemas developed from consistent practice, *or* we can develop unique role-related responses by refocusing our attention and our intent. We also have the flexibility to toggle back and forth between these possibilities, overriding preconceived notions and allocating cognitive effort as necessary. Cognitive processing can thus help explain the capacity of individuals to maintain distinctive, even inconsistent action frames, which can be invoked in response to particular contextual and/or internal cues. Simply said, our way of thinking effects our ability to separate and/or overlap our roles. Our adaptive minds lead us to adaptive role performances.

Traditional conceptions of role performances treat cognition as a mediating variable, instead of an absolute condition of a role performance. If we consider the cognitive and behavioral dimensions as *equally* weighted realms in the analysis of a role performance (instead of weighing behavior over cognition), it is possible to model our capabilities for simultaneity and adaptivity. Using the work of Hewitt (1989) and DiMaggio (2002) as a springboard, I consider the cognitive and behavioral aspects of role enactment as two correlated but analytically distinct dimensions, as arrayed in Figure 2:4. This model (the “Sociocognitive Performance Table”) positions the Y axis as the cognitive dimension of a role performance (ranging from automatic (A) on one end to deliberate (D) on the other) and the X axis as the behavioral dimension (again ranging from automatic to deliberate):

FIGURE 2:4

The Sociocognitive Performance Table



The intersection of the cognitive and behavioral dimensions yields 4 ideal-typical role enactment typologies (also referred to hereafter as “role states”): 1) “single focus”, 2) “behavioral overlap”, 3) “cognitive overlap”, and 4) “complete overlap”. Each role state

operates as a heuristic, formulated to portray how different configurations of behavior and cognition result in different ways of focusing the self-in-role(s). The first, single focus, is characterized by deliberate cognition and deliberate behavior. This is a state in which the actor is consumed *both* cognitively *and* behaviorally in a single role identity. In the next typology, behavioral overlap, deliberate behavior couples with automatic cognition, such that behavioral performance takes precedence over cognitive role engagement. Actors here achieve partial role overlap by engaging with the behavioral elements of two or more roles while remaining cognitively on “automatic pilot”. Partial overlap is also achieved in the state of cognitive overlap, defined by automatic behavior and deliberate cognition. In contrast to behavioral overlap, the actor here achieves deliberate mental focus on a role(s) without deliberately engaging the role(s) behaviorally. Instead, the behavioral performance is largely automatic. The final typology, complete overlap, is defined by automatic cognition coupled with automatic behavior. Because both cognition and behavior are automatic in this state, diverse cognitive engagements can be performed in tandem with diverse behavioral performances, resulting in a complete (rather than partial) overlap of roles. Examples will help me both explicate these typologies and illustrate them in action. (Note however, that the more thorough discussion of *how* individuals maintain position in each role state, and with what consequences, is reserved for the next chapter. My goal here is simply to establish the definitions of these ideal types by roughly sketching each framework).

Single Focus Role Play

A single focus role state is defined through the crossing of deliberate cognition and deliberate behavior. This typology thus promotes a more self-conscious and a less automatic role enactment such that the actor is consumed both cognitively and behaviorally in a single role. In such cases, both cognition and behavior are *deliberately* centralized on a single role identity, causing the individual to isolate themselves within the role. The single focus role state is conceptually similar to traditional definitions of role enactment in that it results in the salience of a single role-identity. It is conceptually different from tradition, however, in the fact that salience is addressed along two continuums (cognitive and behavioral) instead of one (behavioral).

What does it mean to deliberately isolate the self into a single-focus role state? In the simplest terms, it means that both one's thoughts and one's behaviors are centered on a single role. Bridget, a high school French teacher and married mother of preschool-age twins, provides an example:

Maybe it is the language thing. I don't know. I just know that when I am in front of the class, that is all I am. I am a French teacher. I think it. I act it. That's what I am at that moment. No more.

Alex, a married minister with three children, concurs with Bridget:

I am a busy man and I play a lot of roles for a lot of people. It is the nature of what I do. But that is not to say that I am not capable of being just one thing at one time. When I am up on the pulpit, I am leading my flock. I am 100% their minister in mind and body. To be less than that would be an insult to my congregation.

Like most modern social actors, both Bridget and Alex have numerous roles to play. Yet each is able to focus their thoughts and behaviors into a single role-identity when necessary. This focus requires that both thoughts and behavior be congruent with the chosen role, a process that requires considerable cognitive effort as well as a

deliberative behavioral response. It is only through this effort that individuals can isolate the self in a single role.

An aspect of “rigid-mindedness”(Zerubavel 1991) is necessary to achieve this effect. As Zerubavel (1991) describes it, the rigid mind is one that prefers entities to be insular, compartmentalizing according to the mutual exclusivity of categories (p. 70). Role players utilize rigid-mindedness as means of separating multiple roles and selecting out singular role-identities. Here Alex makes specific reference to this point:

I have to be very strict in my mind to do what I do. It's not like my other roles are not accessible to me when I am ministering. They are. My wife is often sitting front and center. My children are right downstairs. I have to separate myself. I have to consider my wife just another member of the congregation, and not an intimate partner to really maintain my focus. It's what is expected of me at the time.

A single focus role state is a deliberate, extreme sequestering of the self both cognitively and behaviorally in a single role achieved through rigid-minded compartmentalization and separation from other roles. It is characterized by a strict adherence to single, chosen role and the partitioning of the self into a mutually exclusive category. Interestingly, for both Bridget and Alex, the effort to achieve the single focus typology is warranted by both the situation and the expectation of others. Bridget accesses a single-focus role as a French teacher when she is in front of her class. Thus she is influenced in her focusing efforts by her location as well as the presence of her students. Alex becomes 100% minister while standing on the pulpit in front of his congregation. He uses the structure and social expectations of the situation to support a rigid-minded, single focus, role typology.

Given the institutionalized nature of much of our social lives, roles (such as teacher or minister) do tend to be bounded in both space and time; that is, they are more relevant in certain physical locations and at certain times of the day and week. Consider, for instance, the fact that public school teachers are “off” on Saturdays or that ministers often part with their congregation by 1:00 PM Sunday. Even the role of parent, while “ever-available” (Zerubavel 1981), is nonetheless less salient when one’s own children are not present.

Because our roles are often more relevant in specific places and times and with specific role-set members than in other places or times with other people, single focus role play is often a result of particular social situations. Consider, for instance, an academic presenting an important paper at a conference, a pitcher in the midst of the World Series, or a new parent trying to soothe a crying infant – each example represents a situational demand requiring that one focus both thought and behavior on a single role-identity. A pitcher who lets his mind wander, after all, will not be as effective at striking out batters as one who maintains focus. A parent who tries to cook dinner and rock an infant simultaneously may find both the meal and the child suffer from lack of physical engagement. A minister who thinks about his wife as his partner during his sermon may not be able to convince his flock of his message. As these examples make clear, a single focus role state may be suggested by situational demands or social expectations, but the choice of focus is ultimately in the hands (and mind) of the individual.

This point is exemplified by Christopher, a writer and married father of three school-aged children, who works out of a make-shift office on his enclosed back porch. Because Christopher works from home in a space that serves multiple functions, his

physical domain is not as clearly marked symbolically and/or culturally as those described by Bridget or Alex. Indeed, when Christopher goes to work, there are no other people present and few social expectations (excepting loose editorial deadlines). The only way Christopher can access his work role is to deliberately give it his full attention:

Working from home can be difficult. Writing can be difficult. To write at home in the space I have I really have to be able to focus my mind on that role, that part of myself, and try to ignore the other parts. No walking around wandering the house or doing other stuff. I have to sit down at the computer. I have to get in the zone, my mind, my body, everything. For me, that is how it is, to be this person, in this place, it is all about concentration and focus. I can't let anything else in.

Many respondents who work from home feel the same way as Christopher: that they must utilize their rigid minds to deliberately focus their thoughts and behaviors in order to successfully access their work identity. Without this concentrated effort, the single focus typology cannot be attained. Mike, an information technologies expert and a married father of a toddler, concurs:

So I have this gig where I work from home, which is great. No more commuting. But there are a lot more distractions at home than at the office. For one thing, the office frig is always empty and ours isn't [laughs]. So I have found that to be successful here I have to focus. I really have to pay attention to what work needs to be done and just sit down and do it. I have to concentrate. I also have to stay out of the frig.

Because environmental cues and role-related others may be lacking for home-based employees like Christopher and Mike, they are forced to rely heavily on mental effort, thus exemplifying the mental acuity necessary to achieve a single focus typology. Individuals like Christopher and Mike who work from home yet wish to sequester themselves in a work-related identity *must* focus their thoughts and behavior on the performance of the chosen role as there may be few external cues to aid their efforts.

Thus, it is only through deliberate, concentrated effort that Christopher is able to “get in the zone” and write. It is only through deliberative effort that Mike is able to sit down to work (and stay out of the frig). In this way, concentration emerges as a key element to a single focus role performance.

Concentration is closely linked to personal discipline. Raj, a home-based web-page developer and married father of two, provides an example of this link when I ask him how he is able to work at what is ostensibly the “family” computer:

When I sit down to work on any given day, there is a mess in front of me. There are the children’s computer games, Pooh Bear, Leap Frog, whatever the names. There are bills in a file, half read piles of mail. But I can’t focus on any of that. To start looking at that would mean I would be someone else. If I am to work and to satisfy my clients, and yes, make money, then I must focus on those tasks that will get the job done. It is not so easy as it might sound. It takes discipline and concentration to focus yourself in that way. But once I am settled, I am OK. and it works for me.

In a similar vein, Jenna, an artist and single mother of a 7 year old, describes the focus necessary for her to work in the garage:

Self-discipline is important for any artist. The only way to create real work is to put your heart and your soul in to it. Your whole being. I can’t do that if I am worrying about what’s for dinner or stopping to answer the phone or any of those types of things. I have to focus. I have to concentrate. I have to keep it there. When I can do that, then I know I can make something real. That is what I want. So I keep my eye on that prize. If I can do that, that’s when I am an artist at work. Only then.

Like Christopher, Mike, and Raj, Jenna espouses the importance of deliberate thoughts and actions to a particular role-identity. It is only through these deliberations that Jenna becomes an artist-at-work. Indeed, without concentrated focus, Jenna hints that she would not consider herself an artist at all. Self-discipline is necessary for both Jenna

(and Raj) to achieve the necessary focus and access the desired role. As Jenna and Raj suggest, one way this focus is achieved is through reliance on a personal goal – for Raj the goal of making money and for Jenna the goal of creating art. Recall that goal-targeted intentional thoughts are a hallmark of deliberate processing. Jan, an attorney and married mother of a newborn, provides a further example as she describes her transition back to office work after the birth of her daughter:

I went back to work 6 weeks after the baby was born and I know lots of people thought I was kind of nuts. Yea, I am tired and maybe I don't dress so sharp as I use to [laughs], but I can get things done. When I am working I don't let myself think about home too much. If I am going to be successful, you know, taken seriously, then I can't afford to let my mind wander. So I don't. I tell myself to think about what I am doing. I am working reduced hours so when I am at the office I am really at the office, you know what I mean. My mind and body are there. I am focused and attentive. I maintain that focus I and I can get things done. I can't just sit there and think about my daughter, even if I want to. It just won't work. I won't work. Then I won't be taken seriously.

Like Jenna and Raj, Jan uses a goal-directed form of self-discipline to allocate her mental and physical efforts on the role she wishes to play, in her case, the role of “serious attorney”. In the process, she prevents herself from dwelling on thoughts or performing behaviors that might lead her to other, less situationally productive, roles. By definition, the single focus typology promotes one role - one identity - at the expense of others. (Recall that Alex feels that he must mentally and/or physically separate himself from his wife and children in order to maintain a single-focus hold on his role as a minister).

Because it is often difficult for us to sequester ourselves in a single role without our thoughts and/or behaviors leading us to other role-identities, I have conceptualized the single focus typology as an *extreme state*, one that takes considerable effort to sustain. Because single focus role play is an extreme state, it is unlikely that individual role

players will reside in this state for long periods of time. Raj provides an example of this fact:

As you know I work from home. The trouble with this, for me, is that there are many distractions. I can be fairly successful at getting myself going and starting my day at my desk here, but I do find my mind wanders. And my body follows [laughs]. I can't tell you how many times I find myself getting up and walking to the kitchen or the bedrooms. I walk around, I straighten up the house. It's become a habit. My wife actually loves it, but I know it is because my focus is lost.

Mike also has difficulty maintaining a single focus typology:

I don't think I get distracted any more from home than I did when I worked at the office. I mean, there are always people there and sometimes music playing and phones ringing, lots of stuff that can distract you. At home, the stuff is just different. Food. The dog who barks at the UPS guy no matter how many times I tell her not to. The TV. I am not always so good at keeping my mind where it should be. I lose my concentration and then I find myself doing other things instead of working. Walking the dog. Watching some TV. It's normal, I think, so I try not to stress over it too much.

Jan concurs with Mike and Raj that the single focus typology is difficult to maintain:

I like my job. I like myself at work. But still, it's hard. Just to keep the concentration going is hard. Maybe it's the hormones [laughs], who knows. But I am happy on the way home because I know I can just go home and be someone's mother, someone's wife, someone's neighbor, someone else, and not have to work so hard at it.

Like Mike and Raj, Jan touches on the fact that maintaining a single focus role state over a long period of time is inherently difficult for the individual. Single focus role play is 100% deliberative on both continuums (behavioral and cognitive). Because deliberative processing represents an effortful form of cognition, it is common for people, at some point, to seek a release from deliberation and switch into other, more automatic, modes of thought (Bargh 1997; Lakin 2006). Similarly, I have found that it is common

for role players to seek a release from the single focus typology. In such cases, respondents (like Mike, Raj, and Jan) switch out of a single focus role state and into a less deliberative, more automatized, form of enactment.

This is not to imply, however, that the single focus role state is unenjoyable. Indeed, quite the contrary. I have found that individuals often prefer to reside in a single focus state to heighten their experience of self-in-role. As our artist Jenna implied, it is only through this type of effortful focus that she can create relevant works of art and feel truly productive. In this way, the deliberate processing associated with the single focus typology can produce positive results for the individual. These results need not be limited to work-related production, a fact Bridget can attest to:

I am busy person, you know, I do a lot in a day, with work and the kids. So at the end of the day, I like it to be just me and "Jim". I don't want to be with anyone else, I don't want to be anyone else. Just me and him and then we can settle down and relax. No kids, no work, no anything else. We keep that out. We don't even watch TV. That's how I like to end my day. Just that one role: wife. That's relaxing.

Like many of my respondents, Bridget prefers to reside in a single focus role state at the end of the day. Indeed, focusing her thoughts and behavior into her spousal role (after a long day of playing many roles for many people) represents a form of relaxation to Bridget. Thus, although the single focus typology represents an effortful form of role play, it can also be pleasurable.¹⁸ I bring this point up here to highlight the fact that the single focus role state, while extreme, can nevertheless be enjoyable. The overall point, however, is not to cast the single focus state in terms of either positive or negative reactions, but rather, to cast it in terms of the mental effort necessary to sustain it.

Any form of deliberation, whether we enjoy the results of it or not, requires mental effort. As cognitive scientists tell us, this effort cannot be maintained indefinitely (Bargh 1997; Moskowitz 2006; Lakin 2006). Our enjoyment of the effort may prolong the duration of a single focus state, but, at some point, we will succumb to the workings of our automated cognitive systems (see Bargh 1994, 1997). As we shall soon see, the three other role typologies in my model (behavioral overlap, cognitive overlap, and complete overlap) allow role players a release from deliberation through automatized access to other role identities. In this way, the remaining role states necessarily implicate the multiple roles one plays in society.

The State of Behavioral Overlap

“Behavioral overlap”, defined deliberate behavior coupled with automatic cognition, is a state in which two or more roles partially overlap. This overlap is created by the fact that the individual is able to enact one role behaviorally, without investing intense cognitive effort in the performance. The freedom from deliberate cognitive engagement with the behaviorally enacted role allows the individual to invest their cognitive effort elsewhere in another, different, role performance. In behavioral overlap, single role identification is still viable - that is, a recognized portion of the network of roles available to the individual - although an individual’s occupancy is circumscribed by shifts in cognitive focus. Here student/psychologist/married father John explains the cognitive shifts he undergoes while behaviorally engaged in the daily commute:

When I am driving the kids to school, I kind of do a lot of things. I talk to them about their day, of course, but I also make calls on the way home and check my messages to see if any clients are trying to reach me or if anybody has cancelled appointments. I check in with my mom – she

doesn't get out as much any more – to see if she needs anything. I listen to the weather report to make sure baseball practice will still be on for the kids. Stuff like that. I have like a mental checklist of tasks I go through in the car. Usually I can get it all done on the way home.

Because the state of behavioral overlap does not require a deliberate cognitive focus on the behaviorally engaged role, actors like John can place their cognitive effort elsewhere. By residing in this role state, John remains behaviorally engaged with driving his car (in his role as the boy's chauffeur) while he cognitively engages with a variety of tasks related to other roles (such as psychologist, son, parent, or baseball coach). Behavioral overlap allows for these possibilities. Thus, in the state of behavioral overlap, we begin to see how our chameleon-like cognitive abilities allow us overlap our role performances. Paul, a mechanic and single dad, provides another example of this role typology:

I work on a lot of cars at home for extra money. I do stuff, like changing the oil, rotating the tires, brake adjustments, stuff I have the tools for. Here's the catch. "Gabriel" is often home then too. Lots of times in fact, he's right there out in the garage with me, sitting on a stool or on his bike. So we just talk or something. He likes to get his joke book out and ask me jokes and riddles and stuff. It's a good way for us to be together, I guess, but I am also working, you know. I'm still a mechanic and I have to keep fixing that car.

In behavioral overlap, the individual role player remains physically grounded in a single role context – in Paul's case, in the context of a mechanic. As in the single focus role state, this one role still provides a basis for both self-categorization and categorization of the self by others. In contrast to a single focus role state, however, behavioral overlap allows an individual the possibility of identifying with other roles, cognitively reacting to these other roles as necessary. Thus Paul can be a father talking with his son *without* relinquishing his role as a mechanic. Maya, a home-based consultant

and married mother of 2 pre-school aged children, explains further:

I don't often feel like I am only one person, doing one thing. The kids are here a lot when I am working, and I have found that I can keep typing in numbers and organize files and stuff while I am directing them, or my mother who is watching them, how to put the DVD on or where we're hiding the peanut butter these days. I can keep myself working even when I have to put my mind somewhere else for a while. I can be both Maya and mom. In fact, I often am. Neat trick, huh?

Indeed it is! People like John, Paul, and Maya, who reside in a state of behavioral overlap, can engage with the behavioral elements of a specific role while cognitively engaging with the requirements of another, different role. In contrast to the single focus typology, role players in the state of behavioral overlap *release* their rigid mental hold on single focused role-identities. This cognitive release allows space for a variety of cognitive responses. This is the very essence of the behavioral overlap typology, wherein the patterns of one's cognitive focus shift and change. When actors reside in the state of behavioral overlap, what was once a deliberately constructed rigid mental boundary around a single role becomes a porous passageway, allowing for the ebb and flow of automatized cognitive responses related to other role-identities.

In this way, the state of behavioral overlap leaves actors room to engage in what I call "cognitive wandering"; that is to say, it allows the individual to let his or her mind wander to other roles and other possibilities, much like daydreaming. While cognitive wandering, individuals can retain behavioral engagement with a single role-identity. Will, a married carpenter with three children, explains:

I can get into a rhythm when I am working, especially when I am working alone, that I really like. One reason I like it is because it gives me time to think. I can think about the kids and what to do about summer camps, or what to get them for the birthdays, or anything. I can think about "Judy" and the house and where we will go for vacation and what we'll do this weekend and I don't

know, just anything. It kind of leaves me feeling refreshed, you know, kind of like I accomplished a lot mentally while I was framing that roof or something. I like it. That's a good feeling.

The cognitive wandering associated with behavioral overlap allows role players like Will to mentally access a number of different role-identities in tandem with the one they are performing behaviorally. Thus, while framing a house, Will is able to change his pattern of mental focusing to provide cognitive access to his roles as father and spouse. It is a significant fact that instead of finding this overlap stressful, Will finds it refreshing. Recall that in traditional role-theoretic analyses, the overlapping of diverse social roles is often considered in negative terms implying stress and/or conflict. In contrast, as Will suggests, the cognitive wandering promoted by the behavioral overlap typology can have a *positive*, psychological effect on the individual. Mike concurs:

I think I might lose it if I didn't let my mind go sometimes. I mean, it's hard to just be all work and have no other thoughts in your head. I can stay there at the computer sitting at my desk looking for all the world like I am still working, but I can also do other things. I can play around with the system at the same time that I watch a little TV or talk on the phone or something. I don't work like that all day, but I can work like that and I like too sometimes, just for the change and the relief.

Recall that single focus role play demands a rigid adherence to a specific role-identity. Thus, I have characterized the single focus typology as an extreme state — one that is difficult to sustain over long periods of time. Thus role players who frequent the single focus state often find they need to lessen their “cognitive load” by switching to a less effortful mode of cognition. As Mike suggests, the cognitive release achieved by behavioral overlap can serve to relieve the intensity of the single focus role state.

I have thus delineated behavioral overlap as an *intermediary state*, one that allows role players release from extreme deliberation and partial access to the automatic cognitive

system. Like Will and Mike, Christopher finds that his ability to reside in a state of behavioral overlap has many positive effects:

I do a lot of what I call administrative tasks when the kids are home, answering e-mails, searching on-line libraries, organizing references and file, stuff that maybe doesn't need my complete attention. I can easily do that stuff when they are here and I am watching them. I can talk with them or help them with homework or answer questions while I am still working. I think this is good for everybody. I get stuff done that needs to be done, and the kids don't feel ignored. It's win-win. Add in the fact that my wife doesn't have to always be here to watch them for me to work and it's win-win-win.

As Christopher notes, his cognitive wandering has positive effects for both himself and his family. While many respondents concur with Christopher's assessment, this is not to imply, however, that all is well for role players who reside in a state of behavioral overlap. Because it is governed by the automatic cognitive system, cognitive wandering can occur without intent. As working-mom Jan explains, this can be problematic for the individual role player, as well as for those role-related others who expect to see more congruence between an individual's intentions and actions:

I try to be all about work when I am at work but that is a hard task to accomplish. I have a picture of the baby on my desk and I have noticed, especially when I am on the phone or something, that my mind can wander to thoughts of how she is: is she sleeping, is she eating, did the nanny take her outside today. Sometimes I maybe have to ask the client to repeat something or pass it by me again because I wasn't paying enough attention. I don't think that is so good at all and I know they don't think so either. They want your full attention, you know, they are paying for it so it better be there.

The situation that Jan describes is not uncommon. Because behavioral overlap is defined by deliberate behavior coupled to automatic cognition, these cognitive responses are marked by fairly automatic processes. Thus they can be activated without full intent,

and once, activated, they are difficult to suppress (Bargh 1997). If these thoughts are situationally inappropriate, cognitive wandering can lead, as it did for Jan, to problematic results. The same is true if the thoughts that wander in are unwanted. Home-based employee Mike exemplifies this point as he discusses his ongoing mental battle with invasive thoughts of food while working:

So, like I told you, I am trying to lose weight. It's kind of an occupational-hazard for me because to do my job it means I have to sit down at a computer for a long time, every day. I am very stationary so it's easy to gain weight and not even know it, especially in the winter. I'm trying to eat less and maybe move more. But this is what I noticed. I can be sitting at the desk, working away, in the zone, when I feel myself thinking, hhhmm, I wonder what's in the frig? What happened to that left-over Chinese? Do we have any chocolate? Like that. And it's annoying. It's like if you try not to think about food then your mind automatically thinks about food. So sometimes I wish I could just think about work. Which I know is the opposite of what I just told you about liking to kind of let myself go sometimes, but there you have it. Generally I like to let myself go, but sometimes I don't. I guess because the result is not what I want. I like a good distraction, but thinking about food is not a good distraction.

While I do not wish to belinger this point at this time, it is important to note that, as Mike and Jan describe, the cognitive wandering associated with behavioral overlap can be problematic for role players. Behavioral overlap is characterized by a cognitive release from the rigid mental adherence necessitated by the single focus role typology. Whether this release is situationally warranted or even welcome is another question, one that will be considered further in the next chapter. For now, it is enough to realize that the state of behavioral overlap is achieved through behavioral deliberation coupled with automatic cognitive response(s). In this way, for good or for bad, this role state implicates the multiple roles played by the individual.

The State of Cognitive Overlap

As the name implies, the state of cognitive overlap is conceptually similar to the behavioral overlap typology. Both configurations result in a role state in which two or more roles may partially overlap. I consider both intermediary states, in that they provide a release from complete deliberation. In contrast to behavioral overlap, however, the cognitive overlap typology is defined by the crossing of automatic behavior coupled with deliberate cognition. Thus, in a state of cognitive overlap, cognitive engagement remains deliberate and purposeful while behavior moves along automatically. Here the individual mentally focuses on a single role-identity, but without the necessity of performing it behaviorally. This role state thus allows the individual to engage in diverse behavioral performances while remaining deliberately cognitively engaged with a single, separate role. Jenna provides an example when I ask her if she thinks about her work while doing other things:

I think about my art even when I am not making art. I may look like I am cleaning the gargage, my body is cleaning the garage, but my brain is really not. My brain is creating.

This is the very essence of the cognitive overlap role state: actors cognitively engage in a single role (in this case, the role of artist), while behaviorally engaged in another, separate activity associated with a different role(s) (such as homeowner). Linda, a psychologist and married mother of two, provides another example:

I often find that I think about my clients when I am not at work. I can be out in the yard playing catch with "Jack" or working in the garden or out for a stroll with "Bill" or something, and my mind is really not on any of these things. It is with my client, especially if I have client in crisis, then my mind will tend to stay there and try to come up with an insight that will help.

Like Jenna, Linda describes a situation in which she remains cognitively engaged with a single role (psychologist) even as she behaviorally engages with the performative elements of other, diverse roles (such as mother, gardener, or spouse). In this way, the state of cognitive overlap is quite literally where we see our chameleon-like abilities in action. In this typology, we change our role-related actions to suit our environments, our goals, or our immediate needs, all the while retaining our cognitive hold on a separate role-identity.

This chameleon-like state can be achieved through a variety of means, not the least of which is the use of advanced communication technologies, such as telephones, cell-phones, instant-messaging apparatus, or hand-held tape recorders. Attorney Jan provides an example when I ask her how often she uses her cell phone to call the office when she is doing something else:

A lot! I am one of those crazy people who you see walking the aisles of the food store, grabbing boxes of cereal and picking out the fruit, going through the check-out, stuffing it all in the car, and all the while I am talking away on my head set to my assistant about whether the client signed the document and why she needs to sign it NOW if we are going to make this deal happen. Yea, I spend a lot of time on my cell phone while I am doing other things.

In a similar vein, Maya lists the number of household tasks she can accomplish while talking on the phone to her employer:

Sometimes when I get on the phone to the office, I kind of get up and walk around the house. I pick up toys, I empty the dishwasher, I straighten up the clutter, fluff out the pillows on the couch, things like that. Things that don't really require too much of my attention, so I can still have a coherent conversation. It's actually a good way to get things done. I keep in touch with my boss and I keep the house from falling apart, all at the same time.

People like Maya and Jan who make frequent use of their cell phones while behaviorally engaging in a variety of other role-related tasks such as food-shopping or house-cleaning often reside in a state of cognitive overlap. Actors in the state of cognitive overlap retain cognitive focus on a single role-identity, but engage with the behavioral elements of other roles. It has become quite common to witness the technologically inspired version of this typology. Indeed, if you simply walk down the street of nearly any city or town in the United States on any given day, you will witness people deep in conversation with friends, co-workers, and family while behaviorally involved in other tasks. Through the use of advanced communication technologies - such as cell phones, blackberries, instant-messaging apparatus and the like - we talk to our friends while vacationing with our families, we telecommute to our offices from the comforts of our home, we relay messages to our colleagues while food shopping for our family, we call our spouse when playing in the park with the kids. Each of these examples describes a scenario wherein we may reside in a state of cognitive overlap, retaining deliberate cognitive engagement with one role while automatically performing behavioral elements associated with other role-identities. Steve, a writer who works from home and a married father of two school-aged children, provides a further example when he discusses his morning routine:

I like to get up at least an hour before anybody else here. That way I can get a start on my day, on my work, so I know that no matter what else happens, if somebody stays home sick or whatever, at least I had that hour. But this is what happens sometimes, a lot of times actually. I kind of keep on working while I get the kids ready and out of the house, you know, while I go about the morning routine. I have been known to dictate into a tape recorder while I clear the cereal bowls away, tie the kids' shoes, feed the dog. Even when it's not so blatant, I may be still thinking of my work in my mind.

As in the state of behavioral overlap, actors in the state of cognitive overlap release their rigid hold on the single focus role typology. In contrast to behavioral overlap, however, actors here retain an intense cognitive focus on a single role while simultaneously engaging with the behavioral elements of other role-identities. The woman shopping for the evening meal and putting the groceries in the car while talking on her cell phone to her office staff about an important document; the home-based employee who straightens the house while talking on the phone to her employer; the father who dictates a letter in his hand-held tape-recorder while straightening the kitchen, tying his son's shoes, and letting the dog out - each exemplify a role state consisting of deliberate cognitive focus coupled to automatic behavioral performances. As Jan, Maya, and Steve make clear, technological gadgets - such as cell-phones or tape recorders - increasingly provide the individual access to this role state. Cognitive overlap can certainly be achieved, however, through other, less technologically inspired, means. Alex provides an example:

I can be sitting at me desk in our church office, working on my sermon, when I just get up and do other stuff. I sweep the entrance hall, I straighten out the hymnals, a lot of stuff that I am really not even supposed to do, just to let my body get out of the chair a bit. But my mind, my mind keeps working. I keep at the sermon while I sweep.

As Alex makes clear, the state of cognitive overlap can be achieved without the aid of technology. Indeed, Alex finds access to this state through means of a good, old-fashioned broom. Because he resides in a state of cognitive overlap, Alex is able to clean the church while continuing to work on his Sunday sermon in his mind. In contrast to the state of behavioral overlap, where role players engage in cognitive wandering while deliberately engaged in a single role performance, the cognitive overlap typology

encourages the individual to retain deliberate cognitive involvement with a single role and engage in an automated form of *behavioral wandering*. While wandering behaviorally, individuals like Alex are free to engage in numerous actions (actions like cleaning and sweeping) that are unrelated to the cognitively engaged role (in Alex' case, the role of minister).

Behavioral wandering is an essential element to the cognitive overlap typology. Beth, a full-time graduate student working on a dissertation in geography as well as a single mother of two children (ages 8 and 12), provides the quintessential example of the behavioral wandering associated with the cognitive overlap role state when I ask her how she manages both her household and her research project:

People always ask me how I get anything done and I am never really sure what to say. I often feel like I go about my day and do a lot of stuff, household stuff like laundry or dishes or something, while I am still working. I haven't really put this into words before, but I do feel like I am still working when I am doing the dishes or something. I keep at it in my head, I keep thinking about it, so it doesn't feel like I wasted my time or wasn't working on the dissertation just because I did the chores. I don't know if that makes sense, but that's how I think I get it all done. If I couldn't do that, it would be a different story.

As in the state of behavioral overlap, cognitive overlap represents a way for role players to partially engage with two or more roles simultaneously. The difference is that in the cognitive overlap typology, role players can engage in the behavioral performance of a number of diverse roles, moving in and out of automatically activated role-based frames of action (what I call behavioral wandering). Because Beth often resides in the state of cognitive overlap, she is able to accomplish the numerous demands of her busy life. Indeed, as Beth describes it, the cognitive overlap typology effectively operates for role players as means of getting more than one thing done at a time.

Cognitive overlap is thus closely associated with the concept of “multitasking”. Multitasking, a rather recent addition to the modern lexicon, describes our ability to do more than one thing (and increasingly, more than one complicated thing) at a time. When role players multitask, they often do so from a state of cognitive overlap. Raj explains when I ask him whether or not he does household chores during what is ostensibly his work time:

Yes, oh yes, I do. I get up and wander around the house. I do straighten things up, like I told you. I like to vacuum, so that is one thing I do a lot. I like to see the beds made, so I do wash and dry the bedding and keep the beds clean and neat. I do these things but I also work while I do them. I mean, I think about work, conceptual problems that are plaguing me, color choices, establishing the most direct links, lots of things really, while I putter around the house and clean a bit. I am a multitasking modern male [laughs]. But my wife, you know, she is not here during the day. The children are not here. How else would everything get done?

How indeed? As modern individuals, we are held responsible for our membership in different social categories – such as employee, father, spouse, or homeowner – often at the same time. Each of our roles comes with a set of social expectations and normative prescriptions: employees, for example, are expected to accomplish work-related tasks for their employer; homeowners are responsible for the upkeep of their property. It is up to the individual how to attend to the diverse requirements of their various social roles. Multitasking is a means to this end. As modern individuals, we are all, like Beth and Raj, quite aware of the need for multitasking to make our busy lives run smoothly. Wendy, a married mother of 2 who runs an internet store out of her home, explains further when I ask her if multitasking is incorporated into her daily schedule:

I am a multitasking queen. I can think about the store and the inventory and e-mails I need to send and what-not while I make lunch for the kids and throw in a load of wash. I can carry on a detailed conversation with my husband while I make dinner, clean-out the frig, and write out the grocery list. I am not sure that I could even do all of this if I tried to do it all just one thing at a time. If I tried to only take care of the kids at one point, only the clean the house with no kids around, only talk to my husband when the kids were not here, and then only run the store when I didn't have to do anything else. For one thing, I'd have to run the store while I was sleeping. No, wait, that would still mean I am multitasking! [laughs]. See, there is no way around it.

As Wendy implies, multitasking has, indeed, become an important part of our modern lives. Our modern social world is *pluralistic*; that is, it encourages the individual to segment time and energy among a number of diverse roles affiliated with different people, groups, networks, and communities.¹⁹ In contrast to traditional, monocentric societies, our modern, pluralistic social world encourages us to increase our role repertoires, to interact with a variety of role partners, and to adjust our way of thinking and behaving so as to meet a variety of competing expectations (see, for instance, Simmel 1955). This inevitably results in an increase in the number of roles we play in the course of the average day, week, or hour. As Wendy makes clear, cognitive overlap represents a means of conserving our mental energy while meeting the behavioral components of these increased demands (Behavioral overlap, of course, is another method of multitasking, although the multiple tasks attended to are cognitive rather than behavioral). By residing in a state of cognitive overlap, we are able to stay on top of the physical demands of our daily lives. Working-mom Jan makes specific reference to this fact:

If I didn't use my cell-phone so much, didn't call the office when I was grocery shopping or picking up

the dry-cleaning or while I was at the gym, I would have to spend a lot more time at the office, and that wouldn't leave much time to do any of these other things. So it's a way to have a life, I think, you have to be able to do a few things at once. I don't think I would have time to do much else besides work if I didn't try to multitask.

For Jan, as for Wendy, the cognitive overlap typology operates as a means of saving time and energy while accomplishing numerous role-related tasks. Like many of my respondents, both Jan and Wendy feel that they could not keep up with the demands of their busy schedules without this form of role overlap. The ability to multitask and meet numerous role demands simultaneously is one of the perceived positive effects of the cognitive overlap typology. There are, of course, negative components as well. Respondents who frequently reside in this role state, for instance, often have difficulty with significant others if they are denied access to the cognitively engaged role. Linda, for example, finds that her husband can get upset by her inability to leave her work in the office:

When this happens for me, when I find myself kind of stuck thinking on a work issue when I am at home, it is not always so easy for other people to be around me. My husband especially, he sometimes finds this very frustrating. It's not that he is not a sensitive person, he is. He is also a busy person and when he takes the time to be with me, and it is just the two of us, well, there is, of course, the expectation that I will pay attention, not just be there physically. So that's the problem. I am there physically, but I am not always there mentally and he knows it.

As Linda describes it, her ability to remain cognitively tied to her work role while behaviorally engaged in her spousal role can be problematic when the social expectations of her significant other (her husband) conflict with her chosen role typology. In such cases, as Linda observes, feelings of stress and conflict can arise. Steve describes a similar scenario:

My kids are usually pretty good about the fact that I am kind of working while I am making them breakfast. They are quiet, as far as kids can be quiet, they get it. But sometimes, who knows why, they just aren't in the mood for it. And kids have ways of getting your attention, you know. They spill the orange juice, they drop jelly on the floor or on their homework, they fight over the stupidest things. These I see as ways of saying, OK Dad, enough of that writer crap, focus here now. And I get that. I do. Even so, sometimes it really stresses me out.

While Steve finds it personally productive to reside in a state of cognitive overlap while fixing his children breakfast, the children, for their part, can become frustrated with the fact that he is cognitively engaged with his role as a writer while behaviorally engaged as their father. This was a common situation among respondents who make frequent (perhaps too frequent) use of the cognitive overlap typology. Like Steve and Linda, many respondents report that other people react to them negatively when their attention is clearly *not* in the role they are performing behaviorally. Thus, while cognitive overlap can result in a positive and productive use of limited time, it can be perceived in negative terms by members of other role-sets, ultimately leading to feelings of stress and strain for the role player.

While cognitive overlap does have its drawbacks, for the most part it represents for respondents a release from the deliberate effort of the single focus typology. The release from deliberate action into automated behavior is, by and large, a means of conserving one's limited cognitive resources. Cognitive overlap is a means of partially overlapping two or more role simultaneously. As such, it represents a clever and adaptive response to the demands of the busy modern world. There are times, however, when the partial overlapping of roles is not enough to accommodate the multiple role demands placed on

the individual. At such times, it may be necessary for role players to completely overlap their role-identities.

The State of Complete Overlap

The final typology of the model points to a “multi-focus” role state, one that allows for a complete (as opposed to partial) overlap of two or more role-identities. It is defined by automatic cognition coupled with automatic behavior. Because both cognition and behavior are automatized, complete overlap is a role state that allows for diverse cognitive engagements to be coupled with diverse behavioral performances. The typology of complete overlap, by definition, fosters the simultaneous salience of various social roles. Mel, a married father of two, who works side-by-side with both his wife and his parents as the manager of a family-owned restaurant, provides an example when I ask him how he keeps his family-roles separate from his work-roles:

I don't! OK, maybe sometimes I do, but mostly I don't. I am very aware that I am the son of the owners, and the husband of the hostess, and also the floor manager, all at once. I know I make decisions based on all of these roles. Decisions about the menu – it has to have my mother's meatballs on it, about the staff uniforms – they really suit my wife as well as our budget, other finances, our work hours – I really try to cut my parents back, they are not as young as they use to be, so they get some down time, they would never cut back on their own. Anything really. Any decisions. In lots of everyday things I know I am thinking from more than once place, as more than just the floor manager or the son or the husband, but from all places to make all people happy and make the best decisions for our restaurant and our family. So I think most of the time I try to keep all these parts of myself in my head and I try to act from all of them, not just one.

In contrast to single focus role performances, role players, like Mel, who reside in a state of complete overlap keep numerous identities centralized at the same time,

balancing and combining two or more views of themselves. To do so successfully involves a balancing of behavior and cognition where neither takes precedence over the other. Oliver, a mid-level manager for a major corporation, as well as the married father of one preschool-child aged child, explains further when I ask him if he ever finds it necessary to play two or more roles at one time:

When I am in a meeting at work, I know that I represent two very different points of view. I am there as a representative of my department, of the people in my department, but I am also there as upper-level management. So I have to be very careful and think and act as both because I am responsible to both. So this is one time when I know I am playing two roles at once. Oh, I am sure there are other times though, but this is definitely one. I don't want to be seen as either this or that, it would not be seen as fair, so I try to be both roles at once.

Role players, like Oliver, who reside in a state of complete overlap, maintain both cognitive and behavioral engagement with two or more role-identities. Because it promotes the complete engagement of two or more role-identities, by definition, the complete overlap typology contains varied and possibly conflicting normative expectations. Oliver, for example, is quite aware that the two roles he must play during business meetings contain "two very different points of view." The challenge for people who reside in a state of complete overlap is in combining these different points of reference while simultaneously preserving each unique role-identity. Bridget explains when I ask her what role she plays when she gets home from work:

When I am at school, in front of the class, I am the teacher, I have responsibilities. I try to think and to act as that person who I am expected to be. At home, though, it is different. I have responsibilities to many people who need me to be many different things. I am the mother of twins, so there is that. But there is also my husband. And my mother who lives next door and helps me watch the kids. And the dog who I don't know who else would ever feed her if not me.

So I come home at the end of the day and it is not like I am just one person reacting to the needs of just one person or group, like I am in class. I am everything, mother, wife, daughter, dog-owner, and I must react as all of those things for all of those people, so they each get the person they need, so they know I am there. So that is what I do. I play all of these roles at once. This is me at home.

In a single focus typology, people judge their behavior according to whether it accords with traditional role expectations. In this way, teachers strive to instruct, students strive to learn, ministers look to lead their flock, and parents aim to nurture their children. Single focus role players have a reasonable idea of what they must do in any situation and a fairly clear sense of when they have fallen short of the mark. But in modern life, and especially among role players like Bridget, Oliver, or Mel, who consistently adopt a typology of complete overlap, there are less concrete or specific guidelines for behavior and more general and “philosophical” guidelines. The complete overlap of roles thus requires the construction and maintenance of a distinctly personal way of being - a way of enacting roles that is unique to the individual role player. Where a single focus role player is provided with a script to which details of the role performance must be adjusted, the overlapping role player must write a script, defining the plot as the action progresses and adjusting the appropriate parts and lines. John explains when I ask him if he knows other people who play all the same roles that he does:

I don't know anyone else just like me. Sure, other people have a lot of roles to play, some of the same roles that I have. I know other students who are parents. I know lots of parents who work. I know plenty of people who look after their own parents. I don't think I am unique in any of this. But my specific combination. And the way I combine things, playing the part of Dad, student, husband, counselor, chef, son, baseball coach, kind of almost all at the same time, maybe that is unique to me. I am the only student/father/husband/psychologist/baseball coach I know so I have

to figure out how to do this, be all of this at once.

John brings out an important point in reference to the construction of the complete overlap typology. The state of complete overlap fosters its own patterns of choice and attitudes as individuals confront the cognitive and behavioral dilemmas posed by multiple aspects of self. It is up to the individual to chart a path of internal resolution to the possibly conflicting normative preconceptions of each role performed. A role state of complete overlap thus represents a way of facing the dilemmas of choice fostered by American culture through the construction and maintenance of a unique personal identity, an identity constructed by completely overlapping and balancing two or more distinct roles. As Jan explains, flexibility is a key component in the maintenance of this unique role state:

I have found it necessary to sometimes work from home. I don't always get it all done at the office. So I do it at home. I have been known to read to "Lily" from court files, rock her and almost sing it her. I have a notepad and pen right by my bed. I can nurse her and coo to her and take notes too. Crazy, huh? I never planned to be a supermom, but now that I am one I don't think it is so bad. You just have to be flexible. You have to let both parts of yourself, the stay-at-home mom and the working-mom, talk to each other and work together. I do that, and it is OK. I'm both and I am happy about it too.

Role players like Jan who reside in a state of complete overlap construct a unique form of self through a combination of cognitions and behaviors. Thus, instead of an integral self that is held together by massive identification with a single community or single-minded identification with a single role, there is more of a compound, piecemeal self, constructed through the adaptation of numerous role-identifications into a larger whole. As Jan explains, mental flexibility is necessary to achieve this adaptation. Recall that individuals who reside in a single focus role state often utilize rigid-mindedness to

isolate the self both cognitively and behaviorally in the performance of the chosen role.

In contrast, role players like Jan who wish to reside in a state of cognitive overlap release their hold on rigidity while, at the same time, retaining both cognitive and behavioral ties to *each* chosen role. In this way, cognitive overlap mandates *flexible-mindedness* (Zerubavel 1997), a state of mind in which individuals reject the “either/or logic” and pigeonholing promoted by rigid thinking and embrace the “both/and” possibilities of their existence (p. 57). Maya explains further:

I rarely think of myself in terms of either a mom or a consultant. I am both and I often act as both. Like I said, my kids are here a lot when I am working so I often have to both work and supervise the kids at the same time. I have to think like a mom, and act like a mom, at the same time that I have to think like a businesswoman and act like a businesswoman. I know these are separate parts of me, my work self and my mom-self, but I also can let these parts of myself blend when I need to. And I often need to. I just have to put myself in the right way of thinking and it works.

Like Jan, Maya emphasizes the necessity of a certain “way of thinking” in order to achieve the state of cognitive overlap. When Maya can think about herself in terms of both her parenting and work role simultaneously, she can combine these roles into a unique overlapping typology. The actor in the state of complete overlap rejects the rigid compartmentalization of a single focus typology (a typology that allows one to play *either* the role of parent *or* the role of employee), and embraces that type of thinking that encourages one to loosen or enlarge role boundaries to allow for more compound or complex role-identities (such as working-mom).

Through flexible-mindedness and adaptation, individuals in the state of complete overlap can adjust the boundaries and positions of their social roles while still preserving their unique definitions and cultural reference points. In this way, individuals in a state of

complete overlap are able to retain a diverse portfolio of loosely coupled selves without being incapacitated by potential contradictions between role-identities. Wendy explains further when I ask her if she ever finds herself playing more than one role:

Everyday. When it's about 5:00 PM here, I can be found working, making dinner, and helping the kids with homework all at the same time. And I am very aware of it, that I am more than person. I have my recipes in front of me, and even if I have made the dish before I follow along with that. I help the kids with math problems and spelling lists and sign school papers and all of that. I have the laptop set-up on the counter and I check in on the auctions or see if anyone has sent an e-mail or has a question. I know that I have to act on each of these roles and respond from each of these places, maybe at the same time. My roles are different, but I can do them together. Cook and spell. Run the store, stir the soup. I've been doing it like this a long time, so it's not hard.

Individuals in the state of cognitive overlap actively experiment with combining the diverse cognitions and behaviors of diverse role-identities. In the process, role players like Wendy achieve a balancing act between their efforts to cohere to single role requirements (for instance, the role requirements of a cook, a mom, or an internet entrepreneur) and their need to consolidate diverse role performances. As Wendy indicates, this balancing act is facilitated by experience. Individuals who have experience combining roles find the art of combination comes easily. John explains further:

How do I play different roles at once? I don't know. I just let myself react from each, as a Dad, as a coach, as somebody's husband. You know, my kids aren't babies anymore. I am not new to this idea, to the fact that I have to be more than one person in the world. You know, when they were little, especially "Kyle", my oldest, it was different. It was harder to figure out how to react or who you were supposed to be. Not now. It's easy now. I just know how, even if I can't really say how. It's all in a day's work.

Experience is an important aspect of the complete overlap typology. Because complete overlap is defined by automatic cognition coupled with automatic behavior, it

represents an efficient, scripted form of action and response. Over time, automatic responses simply become easier and easier to access, despite the mind's being engaged in multiple tasks (Moskowitz 2005). Thus role players with experience combining diverse role-identities find this typology easy to perform, even if they can't explain why. The apparent simplicity of performance that experienced overlappers describe is one of the positive benefits of the complete overlap typology. Maya concurs:

I have been working at home long enough, doing all of these roles long enough, so that it is not hard anymore. I actually feel less stress sometimes and get more done when I let myself be everything I need to be at once instead of forcing myself to focus on only one role. There are times when it simply seems more productive to me.

Like Wendy and John, Maya has a good deal of experience overlapping and combining multiple roles. Maya's experience allows her overlapping performances to proceed almost effortlessly, so that she rarely feels the stress, strain, or conflict traditionally associated with combining diverse roles. This feeling of effortlessness is one of the positive rewards of utilizing the automated processing system. This feeling is markedly absent for role players – like new father and recently-ordained minister Adam – who lack the experience but nevertheless feel the need to overlap diverse role-identities:

I did not realize how hard it would be to work at home with the "Lea". I try to write with her on my lap, make phone calls while I rock her, read while she takes her bottle. I can do it, I just find it really tough and kind of stressful, like I can't do either role right.

The complete overlap typology is, more than any other typology, marked by experience. Role players, like Adam, who lack the experience overlapping roles are forced to rely on more deliberate, less automatic, modes of performance. Deliberation requires effort, the more so the less experience one has with the situation (Fiske & Taylor 1991). It is this need to put forth constant effort that results in strain for the

unexperienced overlapper. Therefore, although role performances in the state of cognitive overlap are characterized by both flexibility and individualization, experience is necessary to access automated modes of thought and action and reap these positive benefits. Without this experience, complete overlap becomes a difficult role state to sustain.

Summary

Recent research from the fields of cognitive science, cognitive psychology, and cognitive neuroscience demonstrate that each fully functioning individual is in the possession of two complimentary cognitive systems, referred to as the systems of automatic and deliberate processing. Automatic cognition (associated with the neocortical area of the brain) is characterized, in whole or in part, by unawareness, unintentionality, uncontrollability, and a lack of cognitive effort (Bargh 1994; 1997; Moskowitz 2005; Squire 2002). It relies heavily and unconditionally on culturally available schemata – knowledge structures that represent objects or events and provide default assumptions about their characteristics, relationships, and entailments under conditions of incomplete information (D’Andrade 1995; DiMaggio 1997).

Deliberate cognitive processing (associated with the area of the hippocampus), in contrast, is characterized by awareness, intentionality, controllability, and cognitive effort (Bargh 1994; Lakin 2006). It relies heavily on the acknowledged recognition that the stimulus is having on the response (Fiske & Neuberg 1990). As such, it is highly influenced by our goals, needs, intentions, and attention, as well as other individual and supra-individual motivational factors (D’Andrade 1995; Fiske & Taylor 1991). Through

the activation of the deliberate processing system, individuals can override programmed, schematic modes of thought to think critically and reflexively.

Our reactions to the social world thus ultimately reflect an interplay between what is out there and what we bring to it; that is to say, an interplay between automatic and deliberate processing. Cognitive researchers have long recognized the importance of considering both automatic and controlled processes in the evaluation of social behavior. Indeed, recent research into dual processing takes care to highlight the adaptive capabilities of our minds (Chartrand & Bargh 1999; Lakin 2006; Moskowitz 2005). It is only through the possession of these two cognitive systems (automatic and deliberate) that mental functioning is accorded the stability and plasticity it requires if actors are to proceed smoothly through the complex demands of modern social life (see also Johnston & Hawley 1994; McClelland et al 1995; Macrae 2000; Smith 1990).

While cognitive researchers have made great strides in understanding the form and function of our adaptive brains, this research has only just begun to spark the interest of sociologists. I argue that cognitive research is necessary for sociologists if we are to understand the *chameleon factor* – the way we adapt ourselves and our role performances to perceived circumstances. Having argued that traditional, behavioral-based definitions of role-enactment treat cognition as a mediating variable (rather than an absolute condition of a role performance), my aim in this chapter has been to demonstrate the utility of treating behavior and cognition as *equal* realms in role theoretic analyses. I specifically explore how the mind's ability to process information *both* deliberately *and* automatically can be utilized to stretch the concept of role enactment beyond traditional behavioral based definitions and account for our chameleon-like capabilities.

By crossing two continuums (behavioral and cognitive), each ranging from automatic on one end to deliberate on the other, I have created four role enactment typologies (or role states). The four role typologies that I have delineated (single focus, behavioral overlap, cognitive overlap, and complete overlap) represent a combination of cognitive and behavioral responses. In the single focus typology, one's cognitions and behaviors are deliberately focused on a single role. In behavioral overlap, individuals retain a deliberate behavioral reaction while engaging with diverse cognitive responses, thus engaging in *cognitive wandering*. In cognitive overlap, in contrast, the individual retains a deliberate cognitive focus while engaging in diverse behaviors, or *behavioral wandering*. Each of these states thus represent a partial overlap of social roles. In the state of complete overlap, both cognition and behavior proceed automatically, allowing for the simultaneous salience of two or more role-identities.

In contrast to traditional behavioral-based definitions of role enactment, sociocognitive role states are ideal-typical conceptual categories, differentially imposed by the varying activation of our dual processing system. Thus, rather than constituting the mere vehicle through which preexisting psychological, social, and cultural structures inexorably shape behavior, these four typologies assure that social, cultural, and psychological structures will be altered and changed through the shifting cognitive and behavioral engagement of individual role players. The operationalization of sociocognitive role typologies thus provides a theoretical framework that is both more in keeping with the day-to-day, moment-to-moment experiences of modern social actors and is more capable of addressing the question of individual efficacy in the face of social-structural demands than traditional, behaviorally-based definitions of self-in-role.

Given the pressures of our pluralistic society, role players are likely to find themselves engaged in *each* typology over the course of any given day. Modern individuals are constantly in a state of “becoming” (Coser 1974), exploring role typologies and their personal resonance with them even as their roles evolve in tandem with situational demands. As a result, role players are likely to be perpetually preparing, encountering, and adjusting role states as part of their daily experiences. While the quick, unconscious quality of these adjustments may make them appear habitual, they are nevertheless highly directed actions oriented to practical outcomes. They involve both *doing* and *thinking* and, as such, are systematically organized by the habitus – the “durably installed generative principles” that produce and reproduce classificatory schemes and values (Bourdieu 1977).

Because role states are not simply fixed or prescribed by society, but negotiated by individuals in the process of social interaction, as social actors we can decide which role state to reside in during any given social situation. To fully explicate this point, it is necessary to chart the processes by which individuals establish sociocognitive role typologies as part of their everyday life. My task in the next chapter, therefore, is to explore the social and supra-individual conditions that promote/inhibit the enactment of each typology.

CHAPTER 2 ENDNOTES

¹ This is not to exaggerate the fit between the disciplines. Most of what cognitive psychologists do is irrelevant to sociologists. Common ground has increased, but will remain of limited by the different subject matters of the disciplines (Zerubavel 1997), which will remain complements rather than substitutes.

² The link between neural processing and role theory is most explicitly developed in the conceptualization of "role as a resource" (Baker & Faulkner 1991; Callero 1994; Collier & Callero 2005), a research program that demonstrates how one's commitment to a role is associated with the development of specific cognitive structures that guide the processing of information, structures known as schemata (Markus 1977). These structures, which we acquire through our participation in various social situations, serve as templates for interpreting both external stimuli and affective experiences (D'Andrade 1995). Schemata simplify and give coherence to our perceptions, enable us to fill in the gaps of the information we get from the physical environment, and help us make sense of otherwise vague or confusing situations (DiMaggio 1997). It is through use of these structures that our actions emerge out of the selective interpretations of the stimuli we encounter (Fiske & Taylor 1991). A research program that uses role theory to compare schemas drawn from appropriate sets of roles presents a relatively straightforward opportunity for applying techniques from social cognition to sociological questions. However, schematic responses represent only one type of cognitive process and only a small portion of cognitive theory (see Fiske & Taylor 1991 or D'Andrade 1995).

³ In this way, I am revisiting the old Parsonian problem (1957) of multiple orientations to action, basing it on a more up-to-date psychology.

⁴ Other names for the neocortex include neopallum ("new mantle") and isocortex ("equal mind").

⁵ The six-layer cortex appears to be a distinguishing feature of mammals. It has been found in the brains of all mammals, but not in other animals. There is some debate, however, as to the cross-species nomenclature for *neocortex*. In avians, for instance, there are clear examples of cognitive processes that are thought to be neocortical in nature despite the lack of the six-layer neocortical structure. In a similar manner, reptiles, such as turtles, have primary sensory cortices. A consistent, alternative name has yet to be agreed upon.

⁶ While many trace the root of the concept of an automatic process to James, it is certain that these notions were lingering in the intellectual climate of the time. Darwin (1872 [1998], p. 45), for instance, presented the basics of the idea in describing how complex behavior is routinized: "It seems probable that some actions, which at first were performed consciously, have become, through habit and association, converted into reflex actions, and are now so firmly fixed and inherited that they are performed, even when not in the least use, as often as the same causes arise, which originally excited them in us through volition."

⁷ The classic experimental illustration of this fact comes from Stroop (1935). Research participants were shown either words that named a host of different colors (red, blue, green, etc) or patches of the colors. The words were always printed in colored ink, but the color of the ink never matched the word. For example, the word "red" might be printed in blue ink. The task was simple: name the ink color. Yet participants found this task extremely difficult, and tended to name the printed word rather than the color of the ink. Why? The task called for them to ignore word meaning and focus on ink color, but processing of word meaning occurred immediately upon their perceiving the letter string (the word). This phenomenon – the interference that is found in attempts to name the ink color of a word, where the word is the name of a different color – has come to be called the *Stroop effect*. The effect essentially shows us that detecting word meaning happens without intent, and once it happens, it interferes with other processes that are consciously intended if the tasks are incompatible.

⁸ The hippocampus is sometimes grouped with other nearby structures, including the dentate gyrus, and referred to as the "hippocampal formation."

⁹ For a complete review, see Squire 1992.

¹⁰ Indeed, the hippocampus is one of the first areas of the brain to suffer damage in Alzheimer's Disease. Short term memory loss and spatial disorientation often appear among the first symptoms. It is thus not uncommon for patients in the early phases of Alzheimer's to forget those details of daily life associated with short-term memory (such as the location of their keys, whether they had a visitor or not, or what they ate for breakfast), yet retain the ability to recall winners of past presidential elections, baseball statistics, the music that played at their wedding, or other information stored in long-term memory centers (see Squire 2002).

¹¹ DiMaggio (1997) suggests that such results parallel the insights of students of social movements, who have studied agenda-building and who have similarly noted the effectiveness as an organizing device of reframing issues in ways that called attention to problems salient to movement participants.

¹² Marx's theory of class consciousness – which contends that physically proximate workers facing immiseration will overcome false beliefs through interaction and reflection – is a classic sociological counterpart (see Bourdieu 1974 or DiMaggio 1997).

¹³ These results parallel Garfinkel's (1967) breaching experiments (which forcibly overrode automatic processing) as well as Swidler's (1986) contention that ideologies and other consistent cultural forms are more influential during unsettled times (see also Jepperson & Swidler 1994).

¹⁴ Interested readers should reference Carver & Scheier 1981, Heckhausen 1991, or Moskowitz 2005).

¹⁵ For a full description of these processes, see Uleman 1989.

¹⁶ Studies of thought suppression and rumination suggest a solution for people who are stuck on a particular issue: it may actually help to focus temporarily on the very thing that bothers them. In particular, it may be helpful to discuss the bothersome issue with another person (see Pennebaker et al 1988). This is, of course, a central function of psychotherapy, confession, and good friendships.

¹⁷ However, if the person has the capability of thinking either way, then both the hard and easy choices are intentional by the first criterion. From intent, it is a short step to responsibility, especially in legal terms. For example, completely unintentional discrimination is not illegal, and accidentally killing someone is viewed less negatively than killing someone on purpose. Regardless, people are not held responsible of their thoughts (intended or otherwise), only their actions. The intent problem matters most when one analyzes the thoughts that provoked a particular action.

¹⁸ While not cast in these terms, Murray Davis (1983) nonetheless provides an interesting take on the subject of the pleasure to be found in the single focus role state in his description of the difference between "erotic" and "everyday" realities.

¹⁹ We can contrast this way of being with the more traditional "monocentric" structure of a village or a clan. As the sociologist Georg Simmel tells us, traditional monocentric communities expected the individual to place the bulk of their social identity in a single role, such as baker, blacksmith, or parson. Surnames – such as Baker or Smith – reflected this way of being, describing the individual's identity for the community. Indeed, it is no accident that the term "role" did not emerge in the social psychological literature as something distinct from "self" or "identity" until the 20th century. Traditional communities encouraged a social world that did not account for any differences between these terms, resulting in categories of thought and self-definition that remained narrowly defined.

CHAPTER THREE

Establishing Role States through Cultural Practices

In chapter 2, I documented the adaptive power of the human mind. I presented research from the fields of cognitive science and cognitive psychology to demonstrate that our minds routinely operate in accordance with two complimentary cognitive systems: the automatic and the deliberate. I showed how these two systems work in tandem to lead people through the complexity of the social world. I then demonstrated the value of this knowledge for our sociological understanding of the modern role playing dynamic, a dynamic which increasingly makes it necessary for the individual to partially and/or completely overlap role performances. By treating behavior and cognition as two equally weighted continuums, each ranging from automatic to deliberate, I created a model that stretches the meaning of role enactment beyond the purely behavioral to include 4 role typologies (or role states), each constructed through the interplay of different cognitive and behavioral responses: single focus role play (where one is consumed both cognitively and behaviorally in a single role), behavioral overlap (where one's behavior remains deliberate to a single role while one's cognitions proceed automatically, leaving room for one to partially overlap roles by engaging in cognitive wandering to other role-identities), cognitive overlap (where one retains deliberate cognitive focus to a single role while automatically engaging in behavioral wandering), and complete overlap (where both cognition and behavior are automatically engaged, allowing for the simultaneous performance of two or more role-identities). I delineated each role state with numerous examples.

Having defined each role state as a matter of differential focusing, the task at hand is to explore how the individual establishes and maintains the necessary focus for each role state. Traditional approaches to the establishment of single role-identities have suggested that societies, institutions, and small group interaction cue certain modes of thought and forms of knowledge (Brekhus 2005; Nippert-Eng 1996; Silver 1997). Subjective, bodily experience is often assumed to be tangential to these interactions (Ignatow 2007), and is thus underemphasized (Leder 1990; Shilling 2001). Having adapted an analytical lens built from cognitive, neurological, and sociological studies, my approach, in contrast, is to consider how individuals engage culturally, sensorially, *and* emotionally with their social worlds. Given the complex demands of modern social life and the constant influx of *both* environmental *and* affective cues, how do people focus on the necessary components that establish each typology? My task in the remaining chapter is to detail how people draw from the available resources – both situated and intuitive - in developing specific lines of action.

To properly address this task it is necessary to consider both structural and experiential/agentic considerations simultaneously. Thus, while neural processing has formed the basis of my arguments so far, here I also discuss the importance of extra-neural elements – culture in particular. While it would be incorrect to say that culture *determines* how the brain operates, culture certainly plays an important part in *determining* what the brain thinks about (Cerulo 2006). Our cognitive structures and mental concepts are collective phenomena, reflecting group adaptations and adjustments to historical necessity (Zerubavel 1997). Thus what catches a person's eye or guides a person in any particular direction may be strongly related to one's prior experience or the

established cultural agenda of a situation or historical period (Cerulo 2006; Howard 1994; Swidler 2001; Zerubavel 1997).

Consider, as a case in point, the history of the term “role”. Prior to the early 20th century, neither sociologists nor social psychologists used the term as something distinct from “self” or “identity” (Biddle & Thomas 1979; Zurcher 1983). Traditional monocentric communities encouraged a social world that did not account for any differences between these terms, resulting in categories of thought and self-definition that remained narrowly defined (see Simmel 1955). As traditional communities evolved into modern, pluralistic ones, however, the term “role” emerged in the social psychological literature as something distinct from “person” or “self”. Prior to this point in history, it would have been difficult, if not impossible, for the individual to think about themselves in terms of their multiple roles (or for a sociologist to explore the social implications of those thoughts).

We can see through this example that our cognitive structures are themselves structured because they have social and cultural origins. In order for cultural knowledge to exert such influence, however, individuals must internalize it; they must become accustomed to invoking and applying the elements of their knowledge base (Cerulo 2006; Swidler 2001). This is indeed the essence of what Bourdieu (1977) calls the “habitus” – socially acquired embodied systems of dispositions and/or predispositions.¹ The habitus is, at one and the same time, a “deep structural” open-ended capacity for generating actions (analogous to Chomsky’s generative grammar) and a durable system of dispositions acquired through experience (Bourdieu 1990). Those systems of dispositions, perceptions, and appreciations or tastes congeal, so to speak, in a social

milieu or social field. In this way, the habitus underlies such second nature human characteristics as outlooks and opinions as well as embodied phenomena such as deportment, posture, ways of walking, sitting, spitting, blowing the nose, and so forth, as well as their infinite possible variations in different historical and cultural settings.²

Social actors, via the organizing and classificatory principles of the habitus, come to see a world of common sense, a social world that seems self-evident. Thus the world does not appear as pure chaos capable of being constructed in any old way, according to individual prerogative and whim. Neither is the social world experienced on a common sense level as totally structured, imposing on the perceiving subject inescapable perceptions, outlooks, opinions, or rules of conduct (see Zerubavel 1997). Instead, the habitus enables an agent's collusion within the society of which he/she is a member. In this way, the individual ultimately calls the fit, or the sense of being "at home" in a familiar milieu.³ This "middle ground" on the structure/agency debate, then, entails social constraints on what is "thinkable/unthinkable" for a subject/agent endowed with a particular habitus.

The idea of the habitus further suggests that a particular culture will cultivate particular skills and habits in its users. It is in this sense that we can say people have an array of cultural resources upon which they can draw. This idea is broadly implied in Ann Swidler's (1986) conception of culture as a "tool kit." Swidler defines culture as "diverse, often conflicting symbols, rituals, stories, and guides to action....from which actors select differing pieces for constructing lines of action" (1986, p. 277). The basic idea is that culture works like a tool kit or repertoire, with many parts among which people can pick and choose (Bourdieu 1990; Sewell 1992; Swidler 1986, 2001).⁴ People make selections

from their toolkits based on problems of action (see Vaisey 2008). Through these selections, people develop different habits and strategies for dealing with daily life.

Particularly important here is the way different parts of people's life organization – what Swidler (2001) calls people's "core situations or problems" (p. 25) – provide contexts within which particular pieces of culture makes sense. People run through different parts of their repertoires, selecting those parts that correspond to the situation or exemplary problem (in Kuhn's [1970] sense of "exemplar") that currently holds their attention (Swidler 2001). (As I shall try to show below, people do use culture as a tool kit or repertoire, even when the cultural tools they pick up or put down determine the kind of person they will be or the kind of self they will inhabit).

While it is fair to say that cultural habits and strategic actions are taught and reinforced through the structure of everyday life problems, (Bourdieu 1977; Joas 1996), we must also keep in mind the fact that cultures are complex and contradictory (DiMaggio 1997; Swidler 1986), and that even a common culture can be used in different ways (Swidler 2001). Given this fact, many complex tasks lie in front of any sociologist interested in the link between culture and action: to look in great detail at the way people use culture to organize individual experience, to discover how culture actually works when people bring it bear on a central arena of their daily life, and to (especially) uncover how and when culture is (or is not) linked to specific forms of action (see Swidler 2001).

In this chapter, then, I begin to examine how people select among parts of a cultural tool kit or repertoire, picking up and putting aside various cultural themes or practices, in order to establish their position in a given role state. As such, I explore variations in the ways culture is appropriated, mobilized, and linked to the performance

of each role typology. (I leave the equally important question of how people switch from one part of their repertoire to another, in the process switching from one role state to another, for another chapter).

I've uncovered two comprehensive practice sets that people use to establish their position in each role state. The first set involves what I call "situated practices." Situated practices include those means by which individuals assess the external conditions and constraints of a social situation and adjust their role typology to fit. As such, situated practices result from *justificatory* motivations to action (see Vaisey 2007); that is, they are justified by the presence of external stimuli. The second set comprises "intuitive practices." These practices implicate the personal expectations, attributes, and affective dispositions of the social actor that lead him or her to establish a particular role typology.⁵ Intuitive practices result from *internal* or *operant* (Klinger 1978) motivations that are stimulus-independent (that is, *not* motivated by external factors located in the physical environment).

For ease and clarification, I will devote my efforts in this chapter to describing only situated practices, detailing how respondents use this practice set to establish position in each of the four role states. I leave the discussion of intuitive practices for the following chapter.

Situated Practices: Establishing Role States through Justificatory Motivations

Situations provide the raw materials out of which role typologies can be constructed and maintained. Through situated practices, social actors take the information they garner from situational factors (factors such as time, place, and the physical presence

of role-specific objects and/or significant others) and use it to justify their position in various role typologies. In this way, situated practices are visceral and respondent practices, based on stimulus-dependent thinking (see Fiske & Taylor 1991; Klinger 1978).

I further define situated practices as practices of *discovery*. These practices are based in the here-and-now of a situation. Actors using situated practices assess their environment for role specific cues and indicators. These cues link the person to a structured set of possible role-identities. Individuals assess their performance options and then choose a course of action. In this way, situated practices operate as a means through which individuals locate the nexus of their focusing range. Because the choice points are normatively structured – that is to say, *constituted* (in the Meadian sense) by situational factors - situated practices often appear inevitable or socially determined by the structure of the physical environment. It is thus important to note that while seemingly unconscious, habitual, or predetermined, these practices are nonetheless highly directed actions (see also Cerulo 2006). They are strategic choices oriented to practical outcomes.

In this section I highlight two common situated practices that aid in the establishment of each role typology: selective interaction and routinization.

Selective Interaction

Selective interaction is a situated practice based on the perception of role-specific cues in the physical environment. It has long been argued that the physical characteristics of our environments aid in role performances by prescribing normative conduct within a specific field of action (see Blumer 1969, 2004; Csikszentmihalyi & Rochberg –Halton

1981; Goffman 1959; Hewitt 1989; Marcoulatos 2003; Mead 1934; Nippert-Eng 1996; Silver 1996; of Suchman 2005). Environmental factors (factors such as the presence of absence of specific role-set members, the structures of buildings and spaces, or the placement of symbolic objects) similarly provide a basis for the establishment of particular role typologies. Through the situated practice of selective interaction, individuals discover the role-specific cues embedded in social situations and use them to establish a position in the desired role state. As a situated practice, however, selective interaction is about much more than just simple discovery, for the practice also implicates the selective attention given to uncovered meanings.

Through a practice of selective interaction, we establish and reinforce role states through our interactions with our physical, tangible surroundings – the people we talk to, the spaces we inhabit, the objects that we look at, touch, or wear. Social researchers have long noted the power of people, places, and things in relation to one's social identity (see, for instance, Bateson 1989; Dittmar 1992; Durkheim ([1912] 1965); Harre 2002; Latour 1999; Law 2002; Mead 1934; Moriarty 2005; Nippert-Eng 1996; or Rochberg-Halton 1984). A baseball cap, for example, can serve as a potent symbol for the role of "baseball fan" when we watch our favorite team (James [1890] 1950). Similarly, a cup of coffee, a tie, and a briefcase can push us toward our work selves, while a pair of jeans, a t-shirt, and a beer can symbolize our leisure roles (Nippert-Eng 1996). Surrounding ourselves with particular role-related objects (such as briefcases or beers) or role-set members (colleagues or family) can serve as a means of provoking particular role-identities and/or role states.

This is a fact that French teacher and married mother of two Bridget knows well.

Here she discusses why she wears certain types of clothing to work:

It is not only that I want my students and my colleagues to see me as a professional, I want to see myself that way too. So I don't wear the baggy elastic-waist mommy pants or the nursing tops to school. I wear neat, hopefully, professional looking clothing, nothing fancy but nothing too frumpy, blazers, slacks, a skirt This helps me, I think, get in to my role there, and away from being just the mom.

Bridget deliberately chooses to wear certain types of clothing – and to avoid other types such as “mommy pants” - when she is teaching. She indicates that her choice of clothes clearly affects her choice of role typologies. Wearing clothing that she only associates with work helps her establish a single focus role state centered on the desired role.

Sociologists tell us that our clothing communicates information on mood, status, and role through even through minor details. As Elizabeth Wilson (1985) put it: “Clothing is the outermost layer of the public self put on private display” (p. 2). For this reason, it sometimes has been termed the *second skin*. People deliberately choose what they wear – as Bridget does - for the meanings it will convey, both to others and to themselves. For this reason, clothing operates as a most immediate mental prop (Goffman, Nippert-Eng 1996; Stone 1962), leading to the formation of particular sense of self-in-role. To the extent that there is a difference or distinction between what is worn “on-duty” and what is worn “off duty,” the clothes we wear can thus reflect and reinforce differences in the role states we adopt (see also Davis 1992; Nippert-Eng 1996; Stone 1962). Through a situated practice of selective interaction, Bridget makes use of this distinction to establish a single focus sense of self-in-role when and where she desires.

In a similar vein to Bridget, married father and dentist Andy discusses the importance of his white lab coat to his typological position:

Working with my wife isn't a problem for me. We can change the nature of our relationship from husband/wife to dentist/receptionist. How? Well, hmmm. I know one thing that does the trick: my lab coat. I put on that lab coat as soon as we get in to work, and then I know I am somebody different from who I was at home.

Uniforms like Andy's white lab coat provide a more or less constant background source of self-awareness. Indeed, it is for this reason that police officers, nurses, and military personnel are required to wear a specific uniform when they are "on-duty." The wearing of a uniform both symbolizes and evokes role participation, and can thus function as an effective means of focusing the self, especially in a single focus role typology. To the extent that this typology is desired by the social institution, the wearing of a uniform may be mandated by workplace rules and regulations (as in the case of military personnel). What is particularly interesting about Andy's situation is the fact that wearing a lab coat is expected but not demanded of his profession. Andy chooses to interact with this item and then uses it as a means of establishing an overlapping typology that includes pieces of Andy-the-husband as well as Andy-the-dentist. This is the essence of selective interaction.

Andy also uses this practice as means of knowing what role typology to reside in when the work day is done:

We have a little frig here in the break room, for lunches and snacks and stuff. But we have been known to keep some beer in there too. Sometimes at the end of the day, especially if it was a rough one, we open up a beer and relax for a bit together before heading out to home and the chores that await us there. Then I think we are not so much professionals anymore, even if I am still wearing the coat, but just us relaxing.

Where Andy previously described himself residing in an overlapping typology, here he describes an instance in which he is still at work, still in the lab coat, but residing in a single focus role state centered on his role as a spouse. In this case, Andy uses selective interaction with a particular item – a beer – to help establish the desired focus.

But why should such seemingly trivial factors as the clothes we are wearing or the beverage we choose to drink have such a strong and clear impact on the establishment of who we are? What is it about objects like blazers, lab coats, or beers that make them so evocative and indicative of a particular way of being? Sociologists suggest that such factors act as a sort of *public code*, structuring the external environment of meanings that surround social actors (Martin, Sandstrom, & Fine 2003; Nippert-Eng 2006; Sewell 1999; Swidler 2001). By analogy with the deep structure of language, codes are often thought of as the “deep structure” of a culture: the general set of necessary but invisible rules that make it possible for people to generate and understand meaning (Leeds-Hurwitz 1996).

The power of codes to indicate certain role-identities resides in the cultural supports for particular lines of action. Codes influence action by ordering the profusion of cultural information into a few simple categories and defining the signs of membership in each category (Cerulo 1997; DiMaggio 1997; Sewell 1999; Swidler 2003). As public code, specific objects (such as baseball caps or beers) can push certain role-identities to the mental foreground, making these roles more available to the individual as guides to action. Consistent patterns appear in the culture of many individuals when they all confront similar cultural codes and organize their actions around these codes in similar ways (Swidler 2001).

Consider, for instance, that fact that certain spatial configurations and social domains can seem to call forth a particular sense of self-in-role. As public code, physical spaces such as those associated with our homes, our places of employment, our schools, and our religious institutions serve an important semiotic function; that is to say, each provides a symbolic template which encourages certain ways of being and discourages others. Thus a clerk entering an office building at the start of a workday, a hockey player stepping on to the ice, a blue-collar worker entering the factory gates, and a parent picking up her child from preschool are all subject to potent cultural cues about the proper role-stance to adopt. (Indeed, it has been argued that the distinctive settings associated with schools, sports arenas, factories, offices and the like may have as much to do with signaling distinctive role-identities as they do with functional necessity (Olins 1989).

Richard, a professor and divorced father of two, provides an example of how the inferences he draws from his physical surroundings can encourage him to adopt a single focus typology:

I found it hard to focus in the wake of the separation and the divorce. Especially at home. It was easier at work. As soon as I got out of the car and started walking through the campus I could feel the difference. The parking lot, the green, the buildings, the statues, the awful brick of my office. It all spoke to me and helped me focus so I could teach and not think about my own awful personal life.

The numerous cues associated with the university landscape help Richard focus his thoughts and actions to establish a position in a single focus role state. Through a practice of selective interaction, Richard transforms the perceived external stimuli (e.g., the building, the bricks, the statues) into an internal representation of who he is in this

physical space. Richard uses his discovery of the culturally indicated meanings associated with the physical space of his university as a means of justifying his role choice. As Richard, Andy, and Bridget make clear, there are a lot of codes in any situated environment that can be used to direct our typological positions.

Before any internal information management can occur, however, the stimuli outside the person have to be represented in the mind. (As artist Frank Stella put it, “what you see is what you see.”) The social psychological name for this general process of discovery is *encoding* (Bargh 1984; Greenwald 1989). Encoding transforms perceived external stimuli into an internal representation (Fiske & Taylor 1991). It allows us to have a constructive rather than a passive relationship to our environment. That is, we do not simply react to things that exist in the world around us. Nor do we see these things “in the raw”. Instead, we transform and interpret them through a symbolizing process known as social perception (Fiske & Taylor 1991).

Selective interaction is closely linked to this process. Through the situated practice of selective interaction, individuals sort and sift through contextual codes and encoded meanings to focus on those that are in line with the desired role state. The practice is thus two-fold in nature, implicating, as it does, both discovery and fit. As a situated practice, selective interaction necessarily operates as a means of *cognitive tuning*. Like an individual searching the radio dial for the song that strikes them, individuals who utilize the practice of selective interaction search their physical environment for encoded cues. Once detected, the individual must focus their cognitive attention on the situated meaning of these cues in order for the cues to aid in the establishment of the desired role state.

Thus it is not simply the fact that objects have encoded meaning(s) that aids in the establishment of a given typology, but that the fact that we, as social actors, give particular emphasis to particular variations. Selective interaction thus implicates the power of our brains to act like *symbolic transformers* (see also Langer 1948). It is through this practice that we take the stimuli that bombard us in the social world and use it to direct our role typological positions. This is indeed the essence of the situated practice that I call selective interaction. Mike, a home-based systems analyst, nicely explains the relationship between selective interaction with distinctive cultural meanings and the establishment of a role typology:

How do I know what role I am in when I work from home? Now there's an interesting question! I've actually thought about this one a bit. At first, I didn't know. I mean, I would often have trouble focusing myself in a particular role. My mind would wander and I would have a lot trouble getting down to work, getting serious. I had trouble just staying out of the frig when I should be working. Then I started wearing ties. They were here in my closet anyway. Why not use them? I would get up and get dressed, maybe more casually than I use to, but I would put on a tie, even if it was just a loose tie, and that seemed to do it. Then I knew who I had to be and I could get down to work. The tie told me.

In our culture, ties serve a certain semiotic function, associated, as they are, with certain types of professions. In this way ties are indicative of a certain social status and psychological outlook (Finkelstein 1991). Selective interaction operates as means of directing one's attention to these cultural specific meanings. Once discovered, these meanings can be used as guidelines for the focusing of self-in-role. As Mike describes it, once he focused in on the culturally established meaning associated with ties – and put one on – he was able to adjust his way of thinking to establish a single focus work

identity. This is indeed the essence of the situated practiced that I call selective interaction.

It is also clear from Mike's description of the practice that role specific objects and indicators serve more than a simple signaling or semiotic function. Specific objects, used in specific ways, can help insulate us from our other-realm selves.⁶ Home-based employee Mike uses the specific social meaning associated with the wearing of ties by business-people not only to establish a work identity, but to *avoid* thinking about himself in terms of his household or familial roles. By maximizing the relationship between ties and work, Mike avoids establishing relations to other objects in his environment (such as his refrigerator) that call to other role-identities. Selective interaction can thus further operate as a means of protecting the desired or hope-for-self from unwanted thoughts (what cognitive psychologists call "stimuli-independent intrusion"). An individual who relies on selective interaction, as Mike does, relies on external justifications to establish and sustain the desired role state. By giving a specific external cue his full attention, Mike effectively insulates himself from other role-identities and corresponding role states, achieving the single focus identity he desires.

Married minister Alex uses selective interaction in a similar vein as he discusses the difficulty of writing a sermon on his first wedding anniversary:

I have a good example about using an object to help focus in a role. I had to get a sermon done and the only day I could do it just happened to be our first wedding anniversary and we did have plans. Nice, huh? I could write it from home, but that turned out to be harder than I thought it would. I couldn't focus well, even in my home office. Now, I have a picture of me and "Sadie" on my desk. So what I did was I turned it over. I also have my seminary degree framed on the wall. So I put my attention there. I didn't really realize it at the time, but it really helped. In the end, I was able to

focus on the work and just the work and get it done right. So, yeah, there is something there about using specific objects for specific roles.

Individuals who rely on selective interaction to focus the self rely on external justifications to establish the desired role state. Like Mike, Alex depends heavily on the culturally prescribed meaning of a single object – his seminary degree – in order to establish a single focus role state. Through the practice of selective interaction, Alex places heavy emphasis on this one item. At the same time, Alex withdraws his attention from the photograph that calls him to roles other than the one he must occupy at the moment. In this way, Alex further uses the practice of selective interaction to insulate himself from other role typologies. When we discard certain objects and associated meanings from our consciousness, the way Alex did, we can give our best cognitive effort to *other* objects and meanings, as well as to the distinctive way of being they imply. Selective interaction is a practice that links particular environmental stimuli to this knowledge, allowing for both complex inferences and, if desired, self-isolation.

Newly ordained minister Adam describes the practice of selective interaction further when I ask him how he knows what role to play when he is at his church:

The church is nothing if not symbolic [laughs]. There are many things here that can help me fulfill my role as minister and attain my purpose as long as I pay attention to them. There is the pulpit, which is raised above the congregation, sort of like a stage. There are the stained glass panels. The pews. The image of Christ on the cross right above me. So even when there are no parishioners and this is just an empty room, I have a means of knowing when I step into this space who I am supposed to be and what my purpose is.

Through the situated practice selective interaction, Adam gives active cognitive attention to the encoded meaning of specific objects and cues associated with his church – the pulpit, the pews, the stained glass, and the image of Christ - in order to establish

himself in a single focus role state centered on his ministerial role. Like Mike and Alex, Adam uses the situated practice of selective interaction to direct attention to those codes and cues that will aid his focusing efforts. For both, the cues are proximate and available as dependent-stimuli. Both describe the necessity of paying attention in order for the cues to work. By giving emphatic attention to specific objects found in their environments, Adam, Alex, and Mike make use of the proximity and distinctive motivational attributes of these objects in order to establish the self in a single focus typology.

This is not to imply, however, that the distinctive meanings associated with particular objects or artifacts can be used only to focus the self in a single role. Mechanic and single dad Paul, for instance, uses the practice of selective interaction to *both* focus on a distinct meaning *and* establish an overlapping role state. By financial necessity, Paul often works on select clients' cars in his home garage. As a single parent, Paul's young son is often there with him during these times. I asked him how it was that he could situate himself in these two roles (mechanic and father) at once:

I have a certain pair of boots that I wear when I am working. Work boots. They have steel toes, thick soles. They are not what anyone would call attractive and not even that comfortable to wear for a long time. We are required to wear them for safety and, I think, to look the part. But I notice that I put these boots on when I am working at home, even if I don't have to. There is something about the boots that puts me in the zone. Sometimes I need the help when I am working from home, especially when "Gabriel" is there in the garage with me, talking to me and asking me silly questions, telling jokes, telling me about his day. I need the help to keep my mind on what I am supposed to be doing there. That's where I think the boots come in. They are, literally, work boots. That is how I use them. When I wear them, I work.

In this example, Paul focuses on a specific object - his boots - and its distinctive meaning – as *work* boots – to establish himself in a state of behavioral overlap, retaining

deliberate cognitive focus on his role as a mechanic while allowing himself to automatically engage with his parental role. Paul makes specific reference to the fact that he *knows* his boots carry a distinctive meaning and that he is *deliberately* using this meaning to aid his focusing efforts. This deliberate engagement allows him to achieve the desired role state.

While selective interaction can involve considerable cognitive work – a fact that Paul can attest to – the practice can nonetheless be accomplished with relatively little cognitive effort. This accounts for the seemingly automatic quality of this situated practice. Indeed, recall that Mike, Adam, and Paul *each* make reference to the fact that their focus changes as soon as they engage with the distinctive meaning of specific objects. The instant a stimulus registers on the senses (be it a tie, a church pew, or a pair of boots), the process of interpretation begins. Immediately some details are lost, others are altered, and still others can be misperceived. Because selective interaction implicates both memory and inference, the practice can quickly give shape to the desired role typology, be it single, partial, or completely overlapping role state.

Attorney and working mom Jan uses the practice of selective interaction to establish herself in an overlapping typology:

I breastfeed “Lilly,” like I told you. I thought it might be hard, you know, because I am working, to find the time or even a place to pump milk for her during the time I am away. I did not realize it before, but a lot of places are set to accommodate working mothers. The courthouse, I found out, has a small room set aside just for this purpose. So I have no problem there. I go into this room when I need it – I pump, I read files, I read cases, I go over my arguments. It’s actually very productive for me on a number of fronts [laughs]. I get my work done and I get to care for the baby the way I want to, and that makes me happy. I found that the working world is not so

unfriendly to new mothers as I thought it would be. I just had to pay attention. Once I did, it seemed I could work it out.

When Jan is able to focus her attention on the meaning of the nursing room at the courthouse, she is able to establish herself in a state of cognitive overlap, retaining cognitive focus on her role as an attorney while simultaneously engaging behaviorally with her maternal role – a combination that she finds both personally satisfying and productive. Through the practice of selective interaction, actors like Jan develop the experiential means of sorting and sifting through contextual cues to focus on those that are in line with the desired role state. When the distinctive meaning that is culturally associated with any environmental factor is selected and embraced - as the tie was for Mike, the boots for Paul, and the nursing room for Jan - individuals can use that specific meaning to help establish the desired role typology.

As a situated practice, however, selective interaction is about much more than just the simple discovery of an object's distinctiveness. Although discovery operates as an essential starting point in the process, selective interaction is ultimately about the interpretation the individual chooses to place on stimulus events. Here it is worth noting that the meaning of any object – even distinctive, culturally coded ones – is not inherent to the object itself, but, rather, socially designated; that is to say, given by the way the object is viewed, approached, or used by the social actor (see Blumer 1969, 2004; Latour 1999; or Mead 1934).

Take, for instance, the thing we call “paper”. A piece of paper will have a different meaning depending on whether we identify it as something to read, write on, buy things with, or fly across the room (Sandstrom, Martin, & Fine 2003, p. 9). Take a clean piece of paper and throw it on the floor, and the paper becomes “trash”. In each

instance, the paper is seen, referred to, considered, approached, and acted toward on the basis of the meaning it has for the social actor. Because the state of being of all objects (like the state of being of all role players!) is tenuous, objects are continuously subject to definition through the interplay of indications (Mead 1934), responses (Blumer 1969; Hewitt 1989), and associations (Latour 1999; Law 2002; Suchman 2005). Mike, our home-based systems analyst, provides a nice example of this point when I ask him to tell me more about his tie:

OK. Here's the thing, and you are going to like this, but I only own two ties. So I literally wear these same two ties to anything and everything I go to that might even remotely require a tie. That includes working at home, like I told you. But I wore the same exact tie I wear to work at home when we went out to dinner for our anniversary, and believe me, I wasn't thinking about work! That same old tie was featured again at my sister's wedding. If I'm not mistaken, it also made an appearance at my uncle's funeral. So, yea, its much more than just a work thing. Those ties of mine have to take me a lot of places. As far as I can tell, they do.

The cultural meanings associated with any object can remain both coded and fluid, waiting to be made "real" by the relationships they help to create.⁷ It is clear from Mike's example that while culturally specific semiotic codes, such as those embedded in ties, certainly have systemic qualities, people necessarily keep multiple ones on tap (Leeds-Hurwitz 1996). Since cultures are made up of many semiotic codes, and these vary both locally and by context, any given individual can, like Mike, read and communicate in several different codes both successively and simultaneously. This explains why Mike can wear the same coded object (a single tie) to different social occasions that call for a strikingly different sense of self-in-role (employee, romantic spouse, brother, grieving nephew). In this way, I argue, the cultural codes embodied in objects and indicators - even culturally distinctive ones - operate less as logical structures

that integrate ends and means, and more as tools and resources that cultivate skills that people integrate into larger strategies of action (see also Swidler 2001).

Given the amount of codes and cues in the external environment, and the number of possible meanings associated with each cue, the individual must possess some means of *empathic detection*, a means of establishing a desired or hoped-for sense of self. This is where selective interaction comes in to the picture. As a situated practice, selective interaction necessarily implies selective interpretation. Thus, through selective interaction, the individual can *maximize* the distinctive meaning of any object or code (recall that both Alex and Paul did so), *minimize* distinction (as Mike does with his refrigerator and Alex with the photograph of his wife), or *change distinctive meanings* as necessary (as Mike does with his tie). Displaying her chameleon-like ability in action, Maya, a home-based consultant and married mother of two preschool aged children, discusses how she does *each* of these things in order to work from home in the presence of her children, effectively establishing herself in an overlapping role typology:

How do I work at home with children around? People always ask me that. It's not as hard as it sounds. I just don't attend to them so much. That doesn't sound so nice, does it? But my mother is here with them, it's not like they are uncared for. And they are still on my radar. I chime in and deal with stuff all the time: I break up the big fights, tell them all where the new jar of peanut butter is hiding, how to get the DVD player working, whether they need hats on to go outside. I just don't have to pay complete attention to all of it, the kids, the dog, the house, any of it, when I am working. Then I pay more attention to my things: my papers, my work, my memos, my messages, my stuff. That's how I get things done. Kind of all at once but not really all at once, if that makes sense.

The selective interpretation associated with the situated practice of selective interaction allows Maya to focus her attention on those codes and cues that allow access to both her

work and home identities. In this way, we can see that to establish a particular typology, we have often have to embrace or maximize certain meanings while simultaneously discarding or minimizing other meanings as well as they selves they signify. Like Alex writing a sermon on his anniversary, Maya creatively selects which cues to emphasize as well as how much emphasize to give. Where Alex used this practice to reside in a single focus typology, Maya's parceling out of attention effectively establishes and maintains an overlapping role typology. In this way, selective interaction offers one answer to the question of how the swelter of competing cultural information is actually brought to bear on social action.

Through selective interaction, we construct, renovate, and navigate within the semiotic system of our cultural environment, picking and choosing what codes to emphasize, when and where we emphasize them, and how much emphasis to give. In this way, we can see that selective interaction is not simply an accounting of the physical presence of role-specific objects and underlying codes of meaning. Rather, it is an interpretive practice through which meanings are continually negotiated vis-à-vis desired role typologies. Through the situated practice of selective interaction, actors engage in different patterns of association with familiar objects and environments, using these patterns, in turn, as a basis for the establishment of particular role states. Thus, we can recognize selective interaction, not as determinative practice, but as a tool for fine-tuning action to establish particular role typologies.

It is, however, only one such tool in the actor's cultural toolkit. Another way we develop associations to environmental factors and establish role states is through the situated practice I call routinization.

Routinization

Like selective interaction, routinization is a way of taking agency over the associative function of any situation and its configuration of cultural cues. Through the practice of routinization, respondents use repetition, ingrained routines, and daily habits to align motivations, cultural meanings, and role typologies. A routinization practice is routine or habitual in that it will consistently occur at more or less the same time (whether measured by the hour or the day) and in more or less the same manner. Social psychologists have long argued that with routine practice effects, task completion becomes faster and easier (see Ross & Nisbett 1991). In a similar vein, I have found that respondents with firmly established experiential routines quickly and easily establish themselves in the desired role state, often reducing the possibility of role conflict in the process. This fact holds true whether respondents use routinization to establish a single, partial, or completely overlapping role typology.

As a focusing practice, routinization is above all characterized by consistency. Individuals who use routinization as a means of establishing position in a given role state habitually perform the same actions in the same, consistent manner. Through consistent interaction with specific cultural codes and cues, respondents establish associations to particular meanings. These meanings are, in turn, used to establish the desired role typology. Routinization is more than simple habit, however, for the practice also implicates the patterned and persistent ways that individuals organize situational elements (such as time, space, people, and things) to maintain the focus of the desired role state. In

this way, our routines act as “perceptual filters,” directing our attention and behavior to those meanings that will anchor our desired role typology.

Richard, a professor and divorced father of two, provides an example of routinization in action as he discusses how his daily commute to the university helped him establish a single focus role state centered on his work role:

I found it hard to focus in the wake of the separation and the divorce. I was very scattered, especially at home. It was easier at work. I could get in to the right state of mind and get things done, I guess because I am so used to being here and to working here. As soon as I would get out of the car and start walking through the campus I could feel the difference. Same old place, same old routine, as if nothing happened. By the time I got to my office and switched on the computer I really felt like a different person, a person who was here to think and teach and not wallow in the details of my own awful personal life.

It has long been established that personal routines, habits, and daily rituals convey meanings, and thus can carry a variety of cultural messages (Bourdieu 1977).

Respondents who use a focusing practice of routinization use these messages to help establish the desired role state. For Richard, the routine offered by his daily commute to the university, and specifically, to his office, allowed him a means of access to a single focus role state centered on his role as a professor – access that, as Richard implies, was denied in his home environment. Through a practice of routinization, Richard is able to separate himself from the roles of father and ex-husband that plague him and focus both his attention and behavior on his work-identity.

High school French teacher Bridget offers a further example of a routinization practice leading to a single focus role state as she explains how her daily routine helped her return to work after taking an extended maternity leave following the birth of her twins:

I thought it was going to be really hard to come back to work when the girls were not even 1 yet.

The hard part turned out to be getting out of the house on time [laughs]. Being at school turned out to be much easier than I thought it would be. I was easily able to focus on my work and not fret over the kids, which I didn't expect. But then I realized I had been doing this same thing, 5 days a week, 40 something weeks a year, for a good number of years before the girls were born. I have developed certain habits, certain ways of doing things. I come into the classroom, I put down my coffee on the desk, I hang my sweater on my chair, I get out my papers, I write lessons on the board. I think all these habits made it easier for me to just get back in to it again and do what I needed to do at work, be who I needed to be: the French teacher, not the doting mother.

As Bridget makes clear, it is through routines and daily rituals that she is able to separate herself from her parental role and establish a single focus role state based on her work identity after the birth of her daughters. It is important to note here that like Richard at his university, Bridget is perhaps aided in this endeavor by the physical location and spatial configuration of the high school where she teaches. Thus, when routinization is used to establish the self in a single focus role state, the results can appear conceptually similar to that which is described by the concept of a *situated identity* where the organized currents of social life seem to carry the person along (Hewitt 1989).

Situated identities, in a general sense, are the attributions that are made about participants in a particular setting as a consequence of their actions (Alexander & Lauderdale 1977). These attributions begin with the assumption that what Goffman (1959) calls "expressions given off" are pervasively communicated by ongoing activities. As such, situated identities are closely linked to traditional definitions of self-in-role. As I discussed in the first chapter, roles are traditionally defined in the sociological canon as the behavior expected of individuals who occupy particular social categories. The meaning and significance of role performances are further revealed by examining the

socialized human being acting within a single, defined social situation (Hewitt 1989). A situated identity (or situated role-identity) constitutes the social perspective on which such actions are based.

To speak of a role-identity as a perspective is thus to emphasize that a situation is a set of *linked perspectives*. Consider, for instance, a game of baseball. Within the game itself, there is a division of labor in which each player is given a perspective from which to act and contribute to the progress of the game. One player is the pitcher, one player is the catcher, one player is the batter, and so forth. Yet any given player must also take into account the “perspective” of the game itself – its rules and etiquette as well as the particular situation of play.⁸ In this way, a baseball game has an overall definition of the situation that conveys both the object of the game and how it is to be played. One’s role in a game, or in any situation, is thus the perspective from which one comes to view the situation and on the basis of which one constructs one’s own conduct (Hewitt 1989).

In this way, a fully engaged person, thoroughly absorbed in a situated activity, may become identical to the role he or she is playing.

It may seem, from such examples, that a situated identity, because it is so closely linked to both traditional definitions of self-in-role and to socially standard definitions of situations, would so thoroughly organize the person’s attention that there would be no room left for individual initiative or for any serious departure from the guidelines of situationally specified roles and situated identities. If social life is well organized and can account for every bit of the person’s energies, then there is really nothing except situated identities and the external social frameworks on which they are suspended and moved about.⁹ Ideas that people may have about being more or different from their situated roles

are, from this point of view, merely illusions. The self is merely a product of the situation, not in any sense a cause of it (Hewitt 1989).

There are several reasons why such a picture is inaccurate. For one thing, any system of communication – such as that implied by a role or a situation - necessarily generates multiple, overlapping, if locally systematic, meanings (Leeds-Hurwitz 1996). Thus while definitions of situations provide objects toward which conduct is oriented and roles provide perspectives from which to act, their guidance is approximate and not exact. For another thing, while situations can, and often do, guide role-identifications, I would argue that they do so both imperfectly and temporarily.

There is always an inherent tension between identification and differentiation, even in those situations where common goals are clear and all subscribe to them (Hewitt 1989), such as in a baseball game. As I detailed in my explanation of the single focus role state, the complete absorption and full identification with a role is an inherently difficult position to maintain. It is only through deliberate cognitive and behavioral effort that the individual can isolate the self in a single role and remain sequestered from other, perhaps competing, role-identities. As cognitive scientists tell us, this effort cannot be maintained indefinitely (Bargh 1997; Moskowitz 2006; Lakin 2006). Because deliberation is difficult to maintain and inherent tensions exist, even pitchers in the World Series – to stick with our baseball metaphor - may find their thoughts and/or behaviors drifting to other, less situationally appropriate, roles.

Finally, any organism that is conscious of self and that can say “no” to whatever impulse strikes it has the ability to conceive of self-interest as opposed to the interest of the group or as implied by the situation or social setting. Consciousness of self is what

enables human beings to inhibit one act and put another in its place (Fiske & Taylor 1991). This amounts to a generalized capacity for negation, for refusing to adopt to even those lines of conduct that are socially approved and expected (Lakin 2006). These points force us to ask how individuals manage to deal with the problematics of a situated identity. If there are multiple grounds for conceiving of role-identifications, even within defined situations, how is a balance struck between identification and differentiation?

I contend that while situations provides the guidelines and cultural materials to direct role-identification processes, that influence is facilitative rather than determinative, and it does not operate by imposing norms or valued outcomes on individuals. Rather, it makes some patterns of action *more enactable* than others and provides a rich vocabulary through which role typologies (rather than simple role- identities) can be negotiated. As both Richard and Bridget make clear, the practice of routinization is a means of negotiation. As we saw with selective interaction, constructing a routinization practice means appropriating those cultural elements that give specific shape to the desired role typology. Sometimes that shape is similar to that which seems to be dictated by the situation (a so-called situated identity). Sometimes, however – and this is quite important to stress - the shape differs considerably.

Here Raj makes use of a specific morning routine to establish a single focus work-identity when he works from home:

I can't seem to get to work if I don't shave. There's nobody here, so this is just for me. But it is part of my morning routine: shower, brush, shave. Something about the shaving though. I don't do it on the weekends. I shower then, I brush, but I don't shave. It's something I do to get to work. It puts me in the right frame of mind, so that I can come downstairs and not fool around. I can get myself right to work. So I do it everyday.

Like Mike with his ties, Raj uses a specific culturally prescribed phenomenon traditionally associated with a professional identity – the clean shaven face – to help push him towards his work role when he works from home. Unlike Mike, however, whose use of ties is random and haphazard, Raj uses the meaning of a close shave in a routine and habitual manner. Indeed, as he describes it, shaving is part of a daily ritual by which he designates the day as a work-day. Through a carefully constructed practice of routinization, Raj establishes the single focus role state he desires, in this way striking a balance between identification and differentiation.

Home-based writer and single father of two Steve offers a further example in which a single focus role state based on a work-identity is established in an environment that would seemingly imply roles associated only with home or leisure – his family kitchen:

Do I have a routine that helps me get to work? I do. It's going to sound dumb, but I have to wash the dishes and feed the dog before I can even think about sitting down to the table and getting to work. Then, once I sit down, I have a habit of organizing books, papers, files – you know, basically pushing some paper around for no real reason. Then I check my email. I don't respond to anything, mind you, I just check it. After that, I can open whatever file I am working on for the day and that's it. I'm good to go. I can just sit there for hours and not even really notice where I am anymore. But I have to go through the whole ritual first.

Like Bridget, Steve uses a consistent, patterned routine in order to establish a single focus role state centered on his work identity. Unlike Bridget, however, Steve works from home, in a physical space loaded with objects that can indicate other role-identities. By developing a specific daily routine, however, Steve is able to quickly and easily establish himself in the desired role typology. How does he do this? As cognitive psychologists tell us, a response that is routinely paired with a specific set of

environmental features will, with time and practice, eventually lead to the activation of the response in the presence of the stimulus (Bargh 1990). For Steve, as for all respondents who use routinization as a means of establishing a particular role state, the routine itself becomes the stimulus. Activation of the routine can thus lead to the desired response. In this way, Steve can establish a single focus work identity in an environment that would not, at first glance, seem to encourage it.

As I detailed in my definitions of the four role states, all human beings have the capacity to consider alternative courses of action and to select one in preference to another, leaving room for departure from situationally specified guidelines, even in those instances that may be designated as “strong situations” or in settings and locales that seem to direct selection. Thus we see that Steve’s response to his home environment is quite different from that which would be implied by the concept of a situated identity. Steve uses the situated practice of routinization as a means of negotiating the situation to affect the desired outcome – a single focus role typology centered on his work identity. For this reason routinization, as a practice of establishing particular role states, was quite common among the home-based employees in my sample, such as Steve and Raj.

While respondents who work outside of the home are often aided in their efforts to establish a single focus identity by particular social domains associated with their occupations - as was the case for both Richard and Bridget – home-based employees like Steve must continually manage their relationship to familiar objects and spaces in order to *both* get their work done *and* craft other role performances related to the home as a home. Indeed, to successfully work at home, the individual must constantly make choices, ignoring some meanings and focusing on others, to create, maintain, and move

(if necessary) the boundary between the role-identities associated with home and work.

The ever-increasing popularity of home-based employment (Caplow 1991) stands as evidence that most individuals are (at the least) capable of the mental gymnastics necessary to succeed in this endeavor (another example of the chameleon factor in action!) Routinization is an important means by which people accomplish this end.

Here Christopher, a writer and married father of three, describes how he is able to establish himself in a single focus work role, even though the space he works in is a large, enclosed back porch littered with children's coats, shoes, hats, umbrellas, and stray mittens. I asked him how he was able to focus on his work role in this family-oriented space:

I am very formal in that I get myself working by 9:00 AM everyday. It's funny, you know because at 8:30 I am out here in a rush to get the kids ready for the bus, dig through these hats, pack the backpacks, get the coats, tie the shoes. It's all about being a Dad. But at 9:00 it's all about being a writer. I guess I have been doing this long enough that these hats, these shoes, these meanings just change for me. I can pretend they belong to colleagues, not kids. They don't have to mean help-me Dad-I'm-late, they can mean I work in an informal office, just leave your coat at the door.

As Christopher describes it, the objects on his back porch take on different significance for him at different times of the day. Before 9:00 am, the coats, shoes, backpacks, hats, and children speak to Christopher's role as a father and help him focus on the demands of that particular role-identity. After the children are gone, however, Christopher changes his relationship to the remaining objects on his porch in order to align their meaning with his work identity. Because Christopher's morning routine is firmly established (indeed, he has been doing this for years), he has little trouble establishing the hoped-for association. The consistency and repetition imparted by

routinization affect the ease by which respondents like Christopher transform their relationship to familiar objects like coats and shoes in order to establish the desired role state. For this reason, routinized associations have a seemingly automatic quality, as if respondents simply “slipped in” to an alternate reality like Alice through the looking glass. These responses, however, are *both* thoughtfully configured *and* carefully learned. Jenna, an artist and single mom, summarizes this point:

It's all about practice, really, and routine. It may look easy, to work at home, but it's not, at least not at first. For me, well, I had to give up my studio after the divorce because the money just wasn't there to pay for it. That's when I started working at home. And I stunk at it, I can tell you. I mean, I couldn't make myself focus on working because I could still see the dirty breakfast dishes when I worked in the kitchen or the bike with the flat tire that I promised I would fix when I worked in the garage and these things just called out to me to be a good Mom. Now that I have been doing this a while, it is kind of second nature to me. I mean I still see these things but I see them as something else. Dirty dishes don't mean I am a bad Mom, they mean I am a good artist. They mean I am working.

Objects need symbolic framings, storylines, and human spokespersons in order to acquire social lives (Harre 2002); social identities and relationships, in turn, need to be materially grounded in order to gain temporal and spatial endurance (Pels, Hetherington, & Vandenberghe 2002). Jenna's account speaks to the necessity of experience in establishing the desired association among objects and identities, associations that lead to the desired role state. Through the conscious effort of establishing daily routines, respondents like Jenna and Christopher develop the ability to “see” the same objects through different eyes. The experience afforded by daily habits and routines provides an interpretive frame (Fiske & Taylor 1991), affecting both what is seen as noteworthy and how respondents make sense of it. It is in this way that a routinization practice can

operate as a contextual filter. Because our routines filter what we see and how we see it, dirty dishes do not have to be associated with the role of a bad housekeeper. Over time, respondents like Jenna simply get better at establishing the associations that allow them access to the desired role state; eventually these associations feel like “second nature”, even though they are carefully learned and practiced responses.

So far I have confined my examples about the practice of routinization to the establishment of single focus typology. Routinization, however, can be used to establish the self in *any* of the four role states. Routines, in the most general sense, establish narratives, that is to say, consistent patterns of role-related action. These patterns, in turn, can be used to establish position in different role states, be they single, partial, or completely overlapping. Family-man and restaurateur Mel, for instance, finds he routinely resides in a state of complete overlap when working at his restaurant:

Some people I know, they go to work and they just are all about work, like their whole identity is consumed by their job. Me, I go to work, everyday, 6:00 AM, 6-7 days a week, almost all year long, and it is just the opposite thing. I may be consumed by what I am doing, but it is not about this one identity – it is many pieces of me that is here: husband, son, brother, boss, owner, manager. I know people, like you, maybe want to know: how can you do it? But this is what I do. I do it everyday, so it is not so hard to do. I am used to it. It is part of my routine.

Where Richard, Bridget, Steve, Christopher, and Jenna use routinization to position the self in a single focus typology, Mel uses the same practice to establish himself in a state of complete overlap, wherein he engages both cognitively and behaviorally with a number of diverse roles. Because Mel’s daily routine is well established and ingrained, he has little trouble establishing himself in the desired role state. Family physician Joe reports a similar effect:

I guess you might expect a doctor to say that he resides in just that role and no other when at work,

but I don't think I always do. In fact, I know I don't. When I do my rounds in the hospital, especially with the pediatric ward but with other patients too, I make it a point to talk with them about my family, my daughter, things that happen in my home, and what have you. It is part of my bedside manner you could say, to kind of reference myself this way as a normal guy with a life and concerns like theirs. It is just part of what I do and how I do it. I am still their doctor, and I am focused on what I am doing, I don't mean it to sound otherwise. But part of the way I treat my patients and talk to them involves my other roles. So no, I am not just this one guy always at work. My other roles routinely come in to play.

Dr. Joe routinely resides in a state of behavioral overlap when doing rounds at the hospital. Thus he routinely engages behaviorally with his role as a doctor while allowing himself room to cognitively wander to other role-identities, such as those associated with his daughter and his family. In this way, he feels he comes across as a "normal guy," or, as I like to call him, your average "Joe". Routinization, as a practice or establishing role states, provides the desired access to this typology. Thus we can see from both Mel and Dr. Joe that routinization is about much more than the establishment of the single focus typology.

Nursing mom and attorney Jan provides another example of how routinization can be used to establish a position in an overlapping role state:

If anyone had told me a year ago that I would be nursing my baby at work and loving it I would have said they were crazy, I would have said people can't do this without losing their minds – or worse, their clients [laughs]. But here I am. I have the nanny with me, or my mom on her days off, and we just work it out. She nurses like every two hours. So it's a habit now, you know. They bring her in, leave us alone, I nurse her, I dictate correspondence to a client or respond to another attorney's request or email, I read letters, documents, briefs. I make quick phone calls. I actually get a lot done. And now that I have been doing this awhile, the whole working mother thing, its not so hard, its just par for the course.

Jan uses the practice of routinization to establish her position in a state of cognitive overlap, behaviorally engaging with her role as a nursing mother while cognitively engaging with her role as an attorney. As Jan's example makes clear, while social norms and expectations can specify what roles should be pursued in a given situation, individuals have the mediational means and cultural tools necessary to establish identifications with different roles simultaneously. (This is indeed, the very essence of the chameleon factor that I have been describing). Thus, rather than categorize the demands of work and motherhood as socially incompatible, Jan uses routinization as a means of reconciling what could easily be construed as competing expectations. In this way, Jan is able to reduce the possibility of experiencing the role conflict and/or stress that could result from the need to perform two unrelated roles simultaneously. The end result is that instead of describing a difficult or unpleasant situation, Jan describes her state of cognitive overlap as "par for the course". Routinization helps her achieve this result and establish herself in the desired role typology.

Single dad and mechanic Paul describes how routinization can be used to achieve a state of behavioral overlap:

I have "Gabriel" with me a lot when I work, like I told you. I've been working like this so long, with him around, that it has all become routine. We get our coats, our work boots, we go out to the garage. He has his stool to sit on, I get my tools. I slide under the car, he sits on the stool. He reads me jokes or tries out some he made up. My job then is to be the straight man. Sometimes we just talk while I work. Is it hard? No. I'm so used to it that when he is not here, that's when I feel out of focus and out of sorts. That's when I have a hard time getting things done.

Paul routinely works from home in the presence of his son, remaining behaviorally engaged with his role as a mechanic while cognitively wandering to other

role-identities, such as father or “straight man”. Because Paul’s routine is well established, it has become a part of how he defines his working self. Continuity of self depends upon the way people connect their experiences, actions, and purposes from day to day, from year to year, and throughout their lives (Rosenberg 1989). Gabriel’s absence disrupts this established narrative, breaking Paul’s sense of continuity and leaving him feeling disoriented and out of focus. Thus, in an interesting turn of events, Paul experiences role strain *not* when he is forced to perform two or more roles at once, but when he is prevented from doing so! The subjective experience imparted by routinization substantially contributes to this effect.

As we can see from the examples with Jan and Paul, routinization offers its own form of protection from the negative consequences traditionally associated with the performance of multiple roles. This is because routinization offers role players *predictability*; that is, a clear sense of what to expect and when to expect it. Indeed, respondents who use routinization to establish role states have little doubt in their mind as to what type of typology their specific routines will help establish. Recall that Jan fully expects to reside in a state of cognitive overlap every 2-3 hours throughout her work day as necessitated by her baby’s schedule. In a similar vein, Paul expects to reside in a state of behavioral overlap when working from home. As long as Jan and Paul stick to their respective routines, they have little trouble establishing the desired role state. This fact holds true for respondents across the board, whether the desired typology requires a single or overlapping focus.

Predictability is closely associated with temporality. Respondents utilize time (whether measured by the minute, the hour, or the day) as a point of reference in

determining *when* to establish particular role typologies. In this way, temporality operates as a situational priming effect: different meanings and different roles are routinely cued according to different temporal configurations. Exposure to the appropriate stimulus (i.e., time of day) causes the inference. When role states are established by specific, predictable, temporal routines, respondents report a strong sense of differentiation in who they are at any given moment.

Married dentist Andy provides an example:

I work with my wife, yes. She is the receptionist at my office 4 days a week, Monday-Thursday. At home, you know, we have a relationship just based on these two roles: husband and wife. At work, we have a relationship based on these four roles: not just husband and wife but also as professionals, a dentist and a receptionist. We get to the office everyday day at 8:00 AM. And that is when we know it is time to take on more roles. It is not a problem. We have been doing this for years.

Andy uses the temporal organization of his morning routine to help establish an overlapping role typology. Because this routine is well established, Andy has little trouble expanding his sense of self-in-role to include both his professional and private obligations. While it is undoubtedly true that the physical domain associated with the office as well as the cultural codes and cues embedded there aid the process, it is important to stress that Andy's interface with these codes is temporally regulated. Thus, any references that Andy draws from the physical space of his office, and that allow him to reside in a state of complete overlap, are temporally primed. Through the practice of routinization, Andy is prepared to draw specific references that will help establish the desired role state at a particular time day and time (Monday-Thursday, at 8:00 AM).

This point is furthered when Andy describes what happens at his office when his wife works on odd weekends:

“Sylvia” is not usually here on Saturdays. She is with the kids. But there are those weekends when maybe the part-time girl can’t come in or what have you, and then “Sylvia” has to come in on that day. Somehow, those days are always stressful. Instead of just working it all out, we seem to conflict. She is the boss on Saturdays at home, maybe everyday at home [laughs], but I am the boss here on Saturdays. I don’t know, I just know that Saturdays are not the same. Saturdays don’t work. We can’t seem to become the people who work here together. We both feel it.

In contrast to his previous description, here Andy describes a situation in which he feels a sense of stress and conflict when attempting to establish an overlapping role typology. I include this description to further my point that specific inferences drawn from objects, locations, or domains are temporally regulated. While Andy has little trouble establishing a state of complete overlap on Mondays-Thursdays, he finds he can not easily do so on those odd Saturdays. The physical space and objects associated with his office *have not changed*. The change lies in his temporally organized practice of routinization. Saturdays are *not* part of Andy’s temporally regulated routine. Thus, he has not established a narrative that allows access to the desired typology on “odd” days, leaving him (and his wife) struggling with (potentially) competing role-identities.

In this way, temporality operates as a very important component of any routinization practice. When respondents stick to their temporally organized routines, they have little trouble establishing the desired or hoped-for sense of self-in-role, whether that sense of self is centered on a single, partial, or completing overlapping typology. Listen to John, our married student/psychologist, father of two and soccer coach, as he discusses the importance of his morning routine to his overlapping sense of self:

Its not hard for me, I think, because I know what I have to do. I mean, I get in the car in the

morning, same time, almost every day, Monday-Friday, and I know I have to be the Dad, the chauffeur, the dutiful son, the breadwinner, the student. All of these pieces of me are going to come out in this time, in one way or another, maybe one after another, maybe at the same time. The point I am trying to make is, its not so hard to do that because it is part of my routine. I'll tell you what, I know that's true because on other days, other times, I might make the same drive and I won't feel the same. Like on Saturdays, to soccer practice. That's at the school too, but not at the same time. Everything feels different to me then and I don't so much do the multiple role thing. I'm just kind of the Dad and the coach and not all the other parts, because its not part of the routine then. So I know that my daily ritual, if that's what you want to call it, my Monday-Friday routine is helping me out there, because I am not always that multi-tasking person, even in that same situation at other times.

John, eloquent as ever, makes clear reference here to how the temporal organization associated with the practice of routinization helps him establish an overlapping sense of self. In a similar vein to Andy, John references the fact that on days like Saturday when he is outside of his routine, he feels like a different person, even though he is technically involved in the same situation (driving the kids to school) as he is on Mondays-Fridays. John's ability to effectively establish an overlapping typology is temporally regulated, directed, as it is, by the situated practice of routinization.

Maya reports a similar occurrence:

My girls come home from preschool at about 11:30, and then we have lunch together. But by noon, I like to get back to work. So, from I would say maybe 12:00-4:00, this is who I am: working- mother, daughter, home-maker, business owner, and well, let's throw dog-owner in there too. I do this everyday, 5 days a week. So I am use to it and it is easy to do. I think maybe if I were not so strict about the time, if I didn't insist on time, it would be harder. But since I know this, I insist. Lunch is over, Mommy goes to work. No fussing. I will be here to help, but I will not really be all here for them again until 4:00. They know this too, so it works out OK in the end. No fuss, no stress.

Because Maya's routine is firmly established and temporally regulated, she has little trouble establishing and maintaining an overlapping typology based on a series of diverse roles. Maya further connects her routinization practice to the avoidance of potential role conflicts. She clearly references the fact that strict adherence to the routine is necessary for her to smoothly establish herself in an overlapping typology. The subjective experience imparted by routinization substantially contributes to this effect.

This is not to imply, however, that routinization, as a situated practice, offers respondents full-proof protection against the stress of strain of possible role conflicts. The expectations imparted by routinization, especially temporally organized expectations, for example, can "force" respondents to establish a role state that they are not fully prepared to reside in. Listen to Jan as she discusses what happens when her baby does not wake to nurse at the time expected:

The funny part about being a new mom and a working mom is that if the baby sleeps late for some reason, or just isn't hungry, I can actually feel myself starting to lose focus on my work at the time that I would have expected to nurse her, even if she isn't there. So that's actually when I start to have problems. It's not the combining of motherhood and career, per se, but sometimes the details get me. And I have organized my day around these 3 hour intervals, so when the time comes and goes and the baby doesn't, that's a problem. I think I actually start to think in mommy-mode even when she isn't here because it's usually so routine. And if you have ever nursed a baby then you know, the breasts are working on that routine too. So, yea, that can all end up being stressful, just the break in the routine.

Disruptions in the temporal organization of a routinization practice can, as Jan knows, lead to disruptions in the establishment of the desired role state. When Jan's baby sleeps later than she expects, this causes a break in their tightly organized routine. When routines fail, conflict can arise. As Jan describes it, she begins to establish an overlapping

typology in a situation where that typology is unnecessary. It is important to note here that it is not the fact that she must overlap roles that cause her stress, but the disruption of the routinized establishment of her overlapping typology. (This is a much different way of conceptualizing role conflict than is typically described).

Steve suffers a similar fate as Jan when deadlines force him to work beyond his typical 3:35 PM limit:

This might sound crazy, but I can rarely work beyond 3:35 even when the kids aren't here. I mean, I can do it, but I actually find it very stressful. What happens is the time rolls around to when they should walk in the door and I feel like I am just seeing things differently, even though I don't have to. Does that make sense? This table doesn't look like my desk, it looks like the kitchen table for the family and I am in intruder working here. These pencils should be for them, not me. It is like these objects start to tell me that I am the wrong person in the wrong place at the wrong time. But I have to work. So that is when the stress comes.

Although procedural routines and temporal perceptions do generally automatize the associative process by operating as contextual filters, the relationship is not motivationally consistent. As Jan and Steve describe it, routine practice effects can occur in an almost *involuntary* manner. Thus, when Jan's nursing infant does not wake as expected, she begins to lose her hold on her single focus typology and feels herself slipping into an overlapping role state. In a similar vein, Steve has great difficulty maintaining a single focus identity as a writer when his temporally organized routine dictates that he should be residing in a different role-identity. The involuntary quality of these undesired associations causes respondents like Jan and Steve to feel stress and strain in their role configurations, even though these configurations stem from carefully configured routinization practices. Therefore, while the situated practice of routinization generally operates as an effective strategy of establishing the desired role typology, it is

not without its drawbacks. Luckily, there are other practices respondents can utilize that implicate factors beyond the situational and motivations beyond the justificatory.

Moving Beyond Justificatory Motivations

The practices for establishing role states that I have outlined in this chapter – selective interaction and routinization – are situated practices. Situated practices, as I have defined the category, are visceral and respondent practices, based on stimulus-dependent thinking (see Fiske & Taylor 1991; Klinger 1978). Situated practices thus include those means by which individuals assess the external conditions and constraints of a social situation and adjust their role typology to fit. Actors who utilize situated practices to establish a role state take the information they garner from situational factors (factors such as time, place, and the physical presence of role-specific objects and/or significant others) and use it to justify their position in the desired role typology. In this way, I argue, situated practices result from *justificatory* motivations to action (see Vaisey 2007); that is, they are justified by the presence of external stimuli and cultural codes.

In this way, situated practices operate as a type of cultural equipment. As Swidler (1986) argues, culture provides a “toolkit” of resources with which people can construct strategies of action. Constructing a strategy means appropriating those cultural elements that give shape to the strategy (Swidler 2001). In this way, as we have seen, actors often rely on selective interaction with specific cultural codes to justify their typological choices. Recall that Mike, for example, relies heavily on the culturally established meaning he associates with ties in order to center his sense of self in a single focus role state when he works from home. Habits, routines, and temporal patterns are also used to

give shape to typological positions. We have seen that Maya, for instance, routinely resides in a state of cognitive overlap while Mel draws heavily on firmly established habits and daily rituals in order to maintain a completely overlapping typology. In this way, actors make use of the available cultural resources – whether those resources are codes, habits, or temporal patterns - in order to establish the desired role state - be it single, partial, or completely overlapping. Showing their chameleon-like abilities in action, actors often find a way to cleverly avoid the pitfalls of role stress, strain, or conflict in the process.

Thus, it is clear that the situated practices that I have described necessarily depend on culture. As I have demonstrated, cultural resources affect action by providing the materials out of which role typologies can be established and maintained. Indeed, as we have seen, cultural experience shapes the sense of the environment, the styles and habits of acting, and the larger beliefs about the world that allow respondents to construct and enact particular role typologies in particular situations. Culture is causally significant here both because the cultured capacities individuals possess constrain the strategies of action they can construct, and because available cultural resources allow individuals to initiate and cement such strategies (see Swidler 2001).

While culture makes some patterns of action more enactable than others (Swidler 2001), and provides a rich vocabulary through which role typologies can be situationally justified, we must remember that this is not the whole story. We need to move beyond justificatory motivations to fully understand culture's influence on social action (Vaisey 2008). As we have seen, people do a lot of identity work in their social interactions, such that the construction of a role typology, while situated and responsive, is also intuitive as

well as mutable. My task in the next chapter is thus to explicate those instances in which intuitive motivations - rather than purely justificatory ones - guide the establishment of a role typology.

This is not a task typically assigned to a sociologist of culture, but neither is mine a project typical of most sociological undertakings. While sociology has been criticized in recent years for a failure to fully theorize human motivation (see Ignatow 2007 or Vaisey 2008), my goal in this project has been to consistently argue and demonstrate that a deeper connection with the mind's dual processing system can significantly improve our understanding of everyday social life. While many have argued that theories of cognition can "fill in the gaps" where sociological work is misleading or incomplete (DiMaggio 1997), we need empirical research that goes beyond being "open to" or "compatible with" intuitive processes, but instead integrates them at its very core (see also Vaisey 2008, p. 612).

Thus, in order to more adequately specify the dynamic relationship between the person and the environment, and, in keeping with the cognitive research on the dual processing systems of the mind on which I have based my theoretical underpinnings, I move beyond the exploration of justificatory motivations to further examine intuitive and/or dispositional frameworks and their influence on typological positioning. As I will show at the end of the next chapter, this type of exploration can significantly improve our understanding of how culture matters in everyday social life.

CHAPTER 3 ENDNOTES

¹ The Latin, *habitus*, means condition (of the body); character, quality: style of dress, attire, disposition, state of feeling; habit. Bourdieu's concept of human habitus matches somewhat the original Latin meaning,

except perhaps for “character.” The ancient Greeks used the term *habitus* to refer to permanent dispositions and their mediating effects on behavior and persona. Asked why he picked up on the notion of *habitus*, Bourdieu replied, “The notion of *habitus* has been used innumerable times in the past, by authors as different as Hegel, Husserl, Weber, Durkheim, and (Marcel) Mauss, all of whom used it in a more or less methodical way. However, it seems to me that, in all cases, those who used the notion did so with the same theoretical intention in mind.... I wanted to insist on the *generative capacities* of dispositions, it being understood that these are acquired, socially constituted dispositions.... I wanted to emphasize that this “creative,” active, inventive capacity was not that of a transcendental subject in the idealist tradition, but that of an active agent.... I wanted to insist on the “primacy of practical reason” that Fichte spoke of, and to clarify the specific categories of this reason....” (Bourdieu, 1990, 12-13).

² While *habitus* derives from cultural conditioning, Bourdieu does not equate *habitus* with its manifestations; nor does he think of *habitus* as a fixed essence operating like a computer program determining mental or behavioral outcomes. Bourdieu rejects crude determinist notions of human action as passive reflexive responses to conditioning stimuli. He also rejects structuralist notions of behavior as execution of imperceptible yet determinate rules of action. Bourdieu has developed a middle ground on theoretical issues of structure and agency, i.e., material or structural influences shaping human action, as opposed to voluntarist, self-directed individual action having the potential to alter social structures. His middle ground rejects both existentialist subjectivism (Sartre) and structuralist objectivism (Levi-Strauss).

³ There is thus an “ontological complicity” between embodied history in the *habitus* and objectified history in institutional roles.

⁴ We can find reference to the “toolkit theory” in a number of sociological sub-fields. In cultural sociology, the “toolkit” concept is mostly associated with Ann Swidler’s (1986) pathbreaking article “Culture in Action.” In comparative historical sociology, it has been popularized primarily by the writings of Charles Tilly on “repertoires of contention” (e.g., 1993). Both fields have also witnessed the emergence of theoretical tools that share a “family resemblance” with the notions of a toolkit or a repertoire. For instance, following the work of David Snow and his collaborators (see Benford & Snow 2000), sociologists are extending the application of frame analysis to capture the differently structured frameworks used across a range of issues in a variety of national and historical contexts. Similarly, in a more phenomenological vein, neo-institutionalists have focused on widely available accounts used to capture the construction of personhood and rationality across settings. Somers & Gibson (1994), among others, have made the concept of “narrative” – with its supra-individual connotation – more salient in ongoing scholarship on identity. Lamont (2000) has focused on the cultural tools that workers and professionals draw on to generate boundaries toward various social groups, including blacks, immigrants, the poor, and the “upper-half.”

⁵ Readers may notice that the categorization of these practices reflects a long-standing debate in social psychology concerning the relative impact of the person and the situation on social behavior. Those favoring the former argue that the individual’s disposition leads him or her to behave in a more or less predictable and reliable ways in a given situation or across many situations. Those favoring the latter counter that external pressures curtail the individual’s latitude. Not surprisingly, the person v. situation issue constitutes a strong subtext in many theories of human behavior. I stake a mid-way position in this paradigm divide in order to address the impact of *both* external and internal motivations to action.

⁶ In *Home and Work* (1996), Christena Nippert-Eng describes in detail how social actors interact with objects to either segment (separate) or integrate (blend) the role identities associated with different realms. While I engage in a similar discussion here, my focus is not on segmentation or integration as a lifestyle, but on the fact that actors can use the same practice (specification) and, indeed, the same object if necessary, to *both* separate *and* overlap role-identities – even in the course of the same day, hour, or minute!

⁷ This is, indeed, the essence of actor-network theory (ANT), in which coded cultural objects and artifacts are treated as enactments of strategic logics (Law 2002). In ANT both actors *and* actants share the scene in the construction and reconstruction of the networks of interactions leading to the stabilization of the system (the crucial difference being that only actors can put actants into the system) (Callon 1986). However, because ANT positions object meanings as an effect of stable arrays (or networks of relations), objects *actively* participate in the making and holding together of those relations (Callon 1986). Because there is a

delicate dialogue – a meaningful exchange – taking place between actors and objects that is lived rather than textual (Marcoulatos 2003), this positioning does not center on a sharply defined principle of generation of meaning, but brings forward the diffuse and fluid process of emergence of patterns of lived significance and orientation (Law & Hassard 1999).

⁸ A common term used to capture the grasping of the situation from a perspective other than one's own is "role taking" – so called because to "take" the perspective of another is to view matters from the vantage point afforded by that person's role (Turner 1978).

⁹ This is the view of the person that is often conveyed in the work of Erving Goffman, who tells us that the person is nothing apart from situated identities and the social framework on which they are hung.

CHAPTER FOUR

Intuitive Practices, Situated Practices, and the Organization of Culture

In the last chapter I looked at situated practices and explored in detail how interaction with situational factors leads to the establishment of different role typologies. We saw how selective interaction with specific cultural codes, routines, habits, rituals, and temporal patterns can lead to different typological positions. Having argued, however, that these types of justificatory motivations to action represent but a portion of the individual's cognitive capacity for response, my task in this chapter is to outline how intuitive or operant motivations to action also give shape to particular role typologies. In this chapter then, I present two intuitive practices – goal targeting and emotional alignment - and demonstrate how respondents use these practices to establish each of the four role states.

Having outlined each practice set – situated and intuitive - separately, however, I conclude the chapter by noting that, for the individual, these practices are, of course, experienced jointly. Respondents find themselves frequently engaged in *each* practice during the course of any given day. Thus respondents often use these associative practices concurrently or in tandem to affect the desired outcome. While this observation allows me to address the question of what gives practices their pervasive, organizational influence, I take up this thread further in the chapter that follows. In the end analysis, the reader will come to see *both* how culture is organized *and* how it is that human beings can function in multiple modalities.

Intuitive Practices: Establishing Role States through Operant Motivations

While situations provide the raw materials out of which role typologies may be constructed and maintained, self-regulation is guided by more than situated practices. The establishment of a role typology is also guided by personal expectations, goals, attributes, and dispositions. These types of intuitive or operant (Klinger 1978) motivations to action are less dependent on external environmental indicators than on internal characteristics or attributes. Through intuitive practices, social actors take the information they garner from operant motivations (such as their need for self-verification or social comparison, or their emotional state), and use it to justify position in various role typologies. In this way, intuitive practices create a ground for self-identification that may transcend the raw facts of the situation.

Where situated practices were defined as practices of external discovery, intuitive practices can be defined as practices of *self-discovery*. Actors using intuitive practices to establish role states assess their internal (rather than external) environments for the role-specific indicators that will aid their focusing efforts. Thus, as with situated practices, intuitive practices operate as a means through which individuals locate the nexus of their focusing range. The choice points are still normatively structured – in so far as one's goals or needs are supported by normative cultural values and beliefs - but moderated by operant motivations rather than in response to specific codes and indicators embedded in the physical structure of the situation. Intuitive practices link macro level concepts like ideology, value, norm, and institutional production to the micro level processes through which individuals produce actions and establish role typologies. In this way, intuitive

practices necessarily implicate the individual's sense or feeling of integration, continuity, identification, or differentiation in relation to community and culture.

In this section I highlight two common intuitive practices that aid in the establishment of each role typology: goal targeting and emotional alignment.

Goal Targeting

As social psychologists tell us, goals create a bridge of self-representations between one's situated self and one's hope-for sense of self or identity (Nurius 1991). In this way, our goals can operate as an extremely effective form of intuitive motivation, pushing us towards the establishment of the desired role state. As an intuitive practice, goal targeting involves an almost constant process of relating one's goals and ambitions to self-identifications and adjusting meanings as necessary. In this way, a role typology is established based on the goals respondents wish to achieve. Because goal targeting encourages on-going negotiation between the individual and the larger cultural milieu, it is characterized as a deliberative (rather than automatic) practice.

When a role state is goal-dependent, it often allows respondents leeway to override role-identifications established through temporal or experiential routines. As a schema-driven (i.e., internal or operant) rather than a data-driven (i.e., situated) process, goal targeting can operate as an effective means of resolving potential role conflicts and maintaining desired role states in the face of competing contextual factors or situational demands. However, because goal targeting is deliberative, involving intentional choice, the practice demands a controlled cognitive effort from its practitioners, as the pursuit of any goal involves an element of self-control (Moskowitz 2005). To the extent that

respondents put forth this effort, they successfully utilize this strategy to establish the desired role state, but it a single, partial, or completely overlapping typology.¹

The first step in utilizing goal targeting as a means of establishing a role typology is to identify one's goals. This may not be as easy as it sounds, as our goals are often numerous and multi-layered, a fact that Christopher makes clear:

What are my goals? Well, I have many. I want to finish this book, for one thing, that is very important to me. I want to be productive, I want to attain a certain status in the artistic community, I want to be accomplished at what I do. So I have clear goals related to that. But, I also want to be a good father to my children, that is an important goal of mine. I want to be a good husband and have a loving and lasting relationship with my wife. So that is another goal. I want to provide for my family, make sure we have a house to live in, food to eat, that my children are healthy and educated. See these are important goals of mine too. There are also certain things I want for myself: I want to travel to China, I want live in France before I die. I'd like to go parachuting, at least once. Those are the biggies, I guess. But I also want to get this house painted before the winter and to fix the dishwasher. Those are goals. I want to lose 10 pounds and get in shape, so I would call that a goal. I'd like to actually see a movie with my wife sometime that didn't involve cartoon characters or any references to Star Wars. That's a goal of mine. Wow, is that enough?

Christopher, I suspect, ran out of breath before he ran out of goals, and I don't think that he is unique. A person's motives and needs often produce more wishes and desires than can possibly be realized (Moskowitz 2005). Thus most social actors are like Christopher, in possession of numerous immediate and long-term goals. Immediate goals are those which can be achieved in a relatively short period of time or those that are specifically relevant to a given situation (Moskowitz 2005) – for example, a goal of fixing the dishwasher or painting the house before winter sets in. Long term goals, in contrast, can not be so quickly achieved. Our goals of achieving financial security, for

instance, raising happy children, and residing in lasting relationships require long term commitment. To successfully utilize goal targeting as a strategy of action, the individual must make a choice between the varieties of goals they could pursue at any given moment, focusing on the goal (or goals) that will lead to the establishment of the desired role state.

The choice of which goal to pursue involves deliberating over the *feasibility* (i.e., thoughts about whether and how the goal can be realized) and *desirability* (i.e., value of the goal) to one's desires (Gollwitzer 1994, 1999). The motive the individual is seeking to satisfy will alter the nature of the goal that is selected and pursued. In this way, goal targeting encourages an on-going negotiation between the individual and the larger cultural milieu and is characterized as a deliberative practice. Here John uses the practice of goal targeting to establish a typology of behavioral overlap based on the feasibility and desirability of the goals he wishes to achieve:

Well, I have a lot of things I want to achieve on any given day and, you know how it is, time can just slip away from you if you are not careful. So I make my mental list of what I want to accomplish. Then I have to kind of figure out how to go about it and how to partition my time. I know, for example, that I can kind of get a lot done when I am driving in the car. That's a good time for me. As I told you, I do a lot of mental tasks when driving. I think it makes sense and it is certainly productive. I also know that I can get certain things done when making dinner for the kids or helping with homework. Because those things don't take all my mental energy either, you know, their math homework is pretty easy and I am not making them gourmet meals here, its your basic boil water and add the pasta, well, I know I can think about other things and make notes for clients or papers and what have you, other things I need to think on when I am doing that. Simple things too, like what my wife might like for dinner, I might start working that out too. So that is part of how it works for me. I make these kind of short term goals and then I figure out what is

reasonable to accomplish and when and that is how I work it all out. I kind of combine my roles when I need to so I can keep on top of all the things I want to get done.

John's practice of goal targeting allows him to establish an overlapping typology based on the behavioral engagement of a pivotal role (his role as a father) coupled with cognitive wandering to other role-identities (such as psychologist, student, or spouse). John establishes this position based on the feasibility and desirability of the goals he wishes to pursue in light of his situation. When he is driving the car, for instance, he finds it both feasible and desirable to reside in this typology. Similarly, making dinner for the children is an activity that allows the mental space to pursue other goals related to other roles. In this way, John's assessment of his situation vis-à-vis his goals operates as a means of establishing the desired typology. Our carpenter Will explains further when I ask him how his goals affect his day:

I like to use short-term goals to get things done. Big projects, especially, can just go on forever if you don't have smaller goals in mind to accomplish by a set time. So I might tell myself, for instance, that I have to get the windows framed by the end of the day, or finish laying the bathroom tiles, you know, whatever it is I am working on, I'll make it a goal that it has to get done by a certain time. If it starts to get toward that time, like toward the end of the day, then I know I have to really buckle down and get it down. No more bull---ing with the guys, turn off the radio talk show, and focus on the job. I might not be able to get there if I didn't make the goal before I started. That's how it works for me.

Like John, Will makes a mental list of the short term goals he wishes to accomplish in a given day. Will's practice of goal targeting is different than John's however. Where John used his goals as a means of establishing an overlapping typology, Will's goals often push him *out* of an overlapping typology and *in* to a single focus role

state. Both, however, adjust their typology based on the feasibility and desirability of achieving their short term goals.

While John and Will use short terms goals to engage in the practice of goal targeting, it is important to note that *both* immediate and long-term goals can be used to focus the self in the desired role state. Beth, for instance, a PhD student in geography and married mother of two, explains how her long term goals affect the establishment of her single focus work identity:

We don't have the space here for me to have my own private office. I have to be able to adjust to work. Mentally, I have to take control. So I do. Mostly, I try to remember that ultimately no-work-means-no-pay and that helps me focus on who I have to be. When I do that, I can work. I can see the couch as a really great place to spread out maps instead of as a really great place to watch TV with the kids. Obviously, that makes things more productive.

Just as human beings strive to affect the external environment in order to establish a desired role state, so do they strive to produce intentional goal-directed effects upon the self. In the above example, Beth identifies a specific goal (making money) and uses it to establish a single focus role state based on her work identity. The identification of well-specified, achievable, self-referent goals is critical for the effective establishment of the desired role typology, particularly when external cues are lacking or ambiguous, as they often are for home-based employees like Beth. Because Beth has few external cues in her home that can be used to guide her work identity, she relies heavily on internal or operant motivations. Indeed, it is only upon identifying her long-term goal of making money that she is able to achieve her desired focus.

Raj, a home-based web page developer and married father of two, uses a short-term goal to achieve a similar focus, accompanying his specific targeted goal with a plan for how to implement it:

Working at home can be hard so what I do is try to focus on my immediate needs. For instance, I now that if I can just get past all the kids' computer games lying around in this office and past the mail from friends and the need to pay the bills online and just open my own programs on the computer, I can slip into work-mode. So that is the goal: get the right program running. What I have to do to achieve this goal is focus on this computer as just for work: not for kids to play games on, not for us to pay bills on, not to chat with friends, no auction sites. I have to pretend, almost, that this is all it can do. That is my goal. I do that, I get to work.

As social psychologists tell us, our goals can help us focus the acquisition of knowledge as well as help us manage time and important resources (Nurius 1991). Like routines and habits, I find that goals can operate like contextual filters, effecting what we see and how we see it. As Raj indicates in the above example, goal-directed perception can operate as a means of aligning object meanings with short-term needs. It is only when Raj is able to focus on his goal of getting the right computer program running that he is able to see his home-computer as a place for work instead of a child's toy, a place of leisure, or a reference to home-ownership. Raj uses the alignment of goals to meaning to establish himself in a single focus role state, in this way implementing a goal-directed plan of action.

Paul, a mechanic and divorced father of one child, describes the process further, making specific reference to his financial goals, when he tells me about working from his home garage on his days off:

My goal here is to make money. When there is work to be done, I have to be able to see everything through that goal or my focus in going to be off. I mean, if I let myself, I can see lots of

other things in this garage that I could do – I mean, there is an old tire could be a good swing and I did promise I would make one. But I can't focus on that when I have to focus on work. If I don't work, I don't get paid. So I have to try to see things through that goal and keep myself in line. It's not always easy.

Like Beth, Paul and Raj utilize goal targeting to gain control over what could be a potentially conflicting home/work configuration. When Raj focuses on his goal of getting the right program running, he can see his home computer as place of work rather than as a place for family, friends, or financial finagling. In a similar vein, Paul uses his goal of making money to help him maintain focus on his work identity. Goal-targeting, as an intuitive practice, helps respondents like Raj and Paul maintain focus on those meanings that will be both role-salient and productive to the desired role-state. The challenge for the individual, as Paul makes clear, is to maintain the necessary focus that aligns selected goals to the desired role typology. In this way, goal targeting requires both mental effort and self-control.

While any individual has in mind numerous goals, both immediate and long-term, certain goals rise to the forefront as especially relevant in establishing role states. Paul and Beth have already made reference to one of the most prevalent goals among respondents: the goal of making money. The implicit cultural connection between working and making money provides respondents a clear goal by which to establish the role typology that they believe will directly lead to goal attainment. Beth and Paul, as we have seen, use this goal to achieve a single focus role state centered on a work identity. This is not to imply, however, that there exists a one-to-one correspondence between the goal of making money and the establishment of the single focus role state. Rather, this goal can be used to achieve any of the four role states. Mid-level manager Oliver makes

specific reference to this fact when I ask him about what motivates his ability to focus himself in more than one role at a time:

My job, by definition, requires me to be almost two different people. I am a manager, and so I am, by definition, part of that group of people here who make the decisions and call the shots. But I am also the link to the larger group of people here who comprise the general pool of employees. I need this job and this paycheck and so I can't let myself be just one or the other. I can't ignore half of my responsibilities and expect to keep this job and keep this paycheck. That's a big motivating factor for me.

Restaurateur Mel is even more direct:

What motivates me to balance so many roles? What motivates anybody? Money.

Mel's answer, while short and sweet, is convincingly clear. Money is certainly a huge motivating factor in our current American culture. Indeed, I have found that the subjective experience imparted by financial needs substantially contributes to the social actor's structuring of their multiple role identities, be it in a single, partial, or completely overlapping configuration. If we think back to Christopher's list however – or to one of our own making – it is also clear that not all goals and needs are financial.

I have found that among respondents, long-term goals related to parenting and childcare are among some of the most prevalent. Indeed, the overwhelming majority of respondents make reference to their desire for happy, healthy, well-adjusted and well-cared for children with bright futures ahead of them. The goal of raising happy and healthy children is largely influential in the establishment of a role typology, whether that typology requires single or overlapping focus. Nursing-Mom Jan, for example, evokes the needs of her growing infant when I ask her why she so often chooses to overlap (instead of segment) her various roles:

I do this because it is the best thing to do. I strongly believe that nursing provides the best nourishment possible for an infant. There is, really, no substitute. Study after study has shown that. And it is one of my goals, to provide “Ellie” with the best possible start in life. So that is my motivation in a nut-shell as to why I do this. This is why I nurse the baby while I am working. Why my life is organized right now the way it is.

In a similar vein, Wendy, a married mother of two who runs a home-based internet store, explains how her goals as a working parent help her establish an overlapping typology:

My ultimate goal in running this store is to stay home with my kids. I could easily make more money doing something else or working outside of the home. And I use to do that. But that is not what it is about for me anymore. I want to be here for them. And I am, it just isn’t always easy. I mean, I have to stay focused to make this work. If I don’t answer the e-mail from my customers in a timely manner and things like that then the store won’t be successful and I might have to find work elsewhere. So that is something I have to do. I have to almost constantly go online and check on things. We only have one computer, and it is in the kitchen, so I am almost always checking it while I help the kids with homework or cook dinner or something like that. Obviously, that kind of situation has the potential to be difficult. So I do have to keep my goal in mind: I want to be here, not in some office or out on the road – but here when they come home. If I keep that in mind, rather than focusing on how much I am doing at once, things are a heck of a lot easier.

Wendy uses her goal of “being there” to establish a state of complete overlap in which she engages with the cognitive and behavioral elements of two or more role simultaneously. Jan uses a similar goal – that of providing care – in order to establish the state of cognitive overlap that she desires when nursing her daughter at work. These motivations, in general, are highly dependent on internal or operant factors (such as long-term goals and ambitions or immediate needs) rather than strictly environmental

conditions. In this sense, I find that goal targeting, as a strategy of establishing a role typology, is more a “schema-driven” than a “data-driven” practice.

Data-driven, or “bottom-up”, practices (such as routinization or specification) demonstrate respondents’ sensitivity to the specific qualities of the situation (such as the time of day). Schema-driven practices (such as goal-targeting), in contrast, are more “top-down”, or theory-driven, in that these practices are organized through abstract, generic knowledge that holds across many particular instances or environmental configurations (see Fiske & Taylor 1991 or DiMaggio 1997). Goal targeting, as a schema-driven process, is thus less dependent on specific environmental factors than on the subjective knowledge of the individual role player *actively* applied to the situation. In this way, goal targeting is not simply a learned response to frequently encountered stimuli (the way routinized expectations are), but a product of *intentional* processing. Given this fact, respondents generally display more control over their role typologies when they utilize goal targeting as their practice of choice. Bridget concurs as she tells me more about how her goals affect her choice of roles:

Its not easy to have twins, and I mean that in the most basic sense. The human body does not look the same after producing two babies. I definitely have a goal of losing weight and getting back in shape. I mean, it’s already been over a year and I don’t want to look like this forever. So that is a big motivating factor for me to ignore other things I need to do or be or what have you and get my butt moving. And, well, since there just isn’t a lot of babysitting options out there for me or a lot of time, I mostly try to exercise at home. That means I have to really try to ignore the million other things that need my attention or that call me to other roles – kids, work, papers to grade, messes to clean, the couch to sit on. So,yeah, I would say I use that goal to motivate me to focus on myself for once, myself getting fit, and nothing else, where otherwise I might not do that. Because there

are just so many things that could divert my attention to other roles, I have to really zone in on this goal to put myself in that position at all.

As a working mother of twins, Bridget finds that she has very little time to focus on her own needs and wishes, such as her goal of losing weight and getting back in to shape. She references the fact that there are many roles that she could play in her home as well as many objects and tasks that could call her to these other roles. As such, data-driven practices are less effective in providing her the desired access. Instead, Bridget uses a practice of goal targeting to focus her identity in a single role state that allows her access to her stated goal. It is in this way that I define goal targeting as a product of intentional processing.

While Bridget uses goal targeting to establish a single focus role state centered on her fitness goals when she finds herself at home amongst her work and her children, Maya, who works at home in the presence of her two pre-school aged children, uses the same practice to maintain an overlapping typology. She explains further when I ask her how she relates her goals to her sense of self-in-role when she is working from home:

I have a lot of goals. On any day, I need to get my work so I can get paid and help pay the mortgage and buy food and all of that. You know, have a life. But that is not all it is about for me. I also want to be here and not just leave the raising of my kids 100% to somebody else. I use both of those goals, everyday, to do what I do. This is what I want, so I find a way to make it work. One way I make it work it to remind myself all the time that this is what I want, these are my goals and so this is what is important for me to achieve. You know, it's like keep-your-eye-on-the-prize, not on the day-to-day chaos of the situation. When I do that, then it's all OK. I can easily deal with a lot of roles at once.

Social psychologists tell us that the greater the number of goals that can be focused on at any one time, the stronger one's sense of meaningful and guided existence

(Nurius 1991: Moskowitz 2005). Maya, I believe, will concur. Through an intuitive practice of goal targeting, Maya uses multiple goals as a means of establishing and maintaining the overlapping typology that she desires. She makes clear reference to the fact that her goals are not necessarily cued by the external conditions of her environment. Rather, Maya relies on intentional, schema-driven motivations to establish and maintain her typological choice. By keeping numerous goals in mind, Maya establishes a firm position in her desired role state.

Although he focuses on a single goal to achieve a different typology, divorced Dad and Professor Richard uses goal targeting in a manner somewhat similar to Maya. Like Maya, Richard makes clear reference to the fact that it is necessary to keep one's "eyes on the prize" to establish the desired typological position:

When it was hard to focus, especially in those times when I was feeling down, it helped a lot if I thought about the larger picture. When I couldn't get myself motivated to write my lecture or pay attention when correcting student papers, I would very intentionally keep the idea in my mind of the larger academic community. A community with certain standards and ideals that I want to uphold and that I want to be a part of. I could keep my eye on those ideals and use them as a way to motivate myself when there seemed like there was just very little other motivation coming. That is one way I got myself to work and got myself to focus in that role.

Like Maya, Richard knows the benefit to be had when one uses goal targeting as a means of establishing typological positions. Goal targeting, as an intentional and deliberative practice, can help the social actor focus the self in the desired role state when other practices seem to fail. All that is necessary, as both Richard and Maya make clear, is that one keeps one's "eyes on the prize", that is, on the alignment of goals to typological choice. As we have begun to see, there are many goals out there to choose from and many ways that these goals can be used.

Christopher often relies on a similar goal to Maya, Wendy, and Jan: the goal of being a good parent and “being there” for his children. Unlike these three respondents, however, Christopher more often uses this goal as a means of establishing a single focus role state, centered on his parental role. Here he explains both how and why he does so:

Working from home, for me, is a funky deal. The work is always here. It never leaves and neither do I. So I have found that I have to be deliberate about it. I have to have a way to stop being a writer and let myself be other things. You would think that the kids just being here would be enough. They do make a lot of noise and have a lot of needs. But it isn't always enough. My mind can keep going and pulling me back to those unfinished pages. I just can't always let myself do that. I don't want to. So what I do is focus on a larger goal: I want happy children. I want them not just to be cared for, but to know they are loved. Its part of why I am here in the first place. I really keep that in mind and try to put myself in the right state of mind to be that person, their parent, and not just always think about the work that I do because that can take over if I let it. So yea, I intentionally think about something else to be someone else. I focus on that goal so I can be just their parent in the here-and-now and not their parent who is here but always thinking about something else.

Christopher, like Maya, Wendy, and Jan, chooses to focus on a particular goal to establish a desired sense of self. For Christopher, however, the selected goal of “being there” for his children leads to a single focus role state rather than an overlapping typology. Through the intuitive practice of goal targeting, Christopher uses his selected goal as a means of segmenting his role identities, not simply in relation to his environmental locale, but also in his mind. Remember that it is a hallmark of the single focus typology that each role-identity can appear to the social actor as a self-contained gestalt, complete with specific goals, norms, and values. Christopher's deliberate separation of goals and roles allows him to establish a single focus role state centered on

his parental identity when he so desires it. Maya, Wendy, and Jan, in contrast, desire an overlapping typology, and so focus on the goal (or goals) that allow this configuration to exist. We see culture's effect in both strategies, not by providing the ends that actors *must* pursue, but by *shaping the patterns* to which action is organized. In this way, both strategies operate as an effective means of establishing a hoped-for sense of self vis-à-vis the intuitive practice of goal targeting.

Whether goal targeting is used as a means of separating or a means of overlapping role-identities, it is clear that regulating the pursuit of a goal to one's hoped-for sense of self takes both mental effort and mental flexibility. Indeed, I have found that persistent effort is one of the features that mark the practice of goal targeting. Mike concurs, as he discusses how his goal of "being there" for his daughter helps him achieve a single focus typology centered on his work identity when he fears he might be losing the necessary focus:

I'll say it again. Working from home is hard. Goals are definitely a help. One of the big reasons why I work from home is that we didn't want to have both of us working in the city. Then we would both be at least an hour or more away from "Lea" if something were to happen or if the daycare was to call us. It is really important for one of us to be here for her, and, logistically, that person just happened to be me. I have the job that can make that work. So when I feel myself fading away, like I am going to hit the couch any minute or start blogging or something, I try to really focus on that goal: that we need me to work from home. I need to make this work for my family. It's not like I can just think that once and its all OK for the day or the week. I have to tell myself all the time, over and over: get to it Mike, this is important, she needs you.

As Mike makes clear, persistent effort is often necessary for goal targeting to be successful. When obstacles are placed in the way of goal attainment, or when failure is encountered, people do not simply quit. Rather, as Mike describes, they often step up

their efforts to pursue the goal and remain in the desired role state. When these efforts are applied successfully, respondents can use their goals to override situational factors or emotional states (as Richard did) and reduce their feelings of role conflict and/or strain. Steve provides a further example of this point as he describes how his writing goals help him maintain his work focus amongst the chaos and noise of his children:

I often keep working even though my time is up and my kids are home from school and there is all the stuff that is associated with that: homework, snacks, mess, noise. Lots of noise. At these times I have to focus on my ultimate goal – finishing the page, the thought, the project, whatever it is for the moment. I can't leave them or fully ignore them so at these times I have to rely on my mental efforts. When I can do that, when I can focus on my goals and not necessarily on the bare facts of my surroundings, then it works. If I can be flexible like that, then I can still stay in that role and keep that focus and say I had a productive day. That makes me feel good.

We would not expect someone to describe working amongst the chaos and noise of children as a productive experience that leaves them feeling good. Yet, this is exactly how Steve describes it! In this instance, Steve's practice of goal targeting operates as a safeguard, protecting his desired role identification from unwanted change in the face of environmental data (e.g., the time of day, the presence of children, the noise, the mess) that seem to suggest change is necessary. Steve's positive reaction is a direct result of a persistent effort that allows him to maintain the established role state and achieve his selected goal. Yet, as Steve indicates, respondents must be *both* persistent *and* flexible in order to apply their schematically-organized goals over the "bare facts" of their surroundings. To the extent that respondents are successful in this endeavor, they can utilize goal targeting (as Steve did) to override role states established through other associative practices (such as temporal or experiential routines). This is an important

means through which respondents avoid the negative feelings of role conflict and/or stress which can easily arise when one must perform a number of diverse social roles. Artist and single Mom Jenna explains further when I ask how she wears so many “hats” in one realm:

I don't have the luxury of assigning a space to my work. It happens wherever I can make it happen on any given day. That means I have to be flexible. All of the things here have to serve multiple functions. Given the way things are for me, the financial constraints, there is no other way. To succeed here I have to match the functions to what I need when I need it and that can take a lot of effort on my part. I mean, its hard not to see the mess or get pulled in other directions when I am working in the kitchen or the garage. I have to try to focus on what I want to accomplish at the moment, and not let other things, other roles I guess, creep in. When that doesn't happen, when I can't make that happen, I have problems. I feel real stress then. Sometimes it feels like I just let it happen, and that is frustrating too.

Jenna's comment that her stress increases when her mental efforts decrease is a common response among respondents who utilize goal targeting as a practice of establishing role typologies. Sometimes people are, like Jenna describes in the above scenario, just not motivated to exert the necessary effort. Those respondents who cannot summon the mental effort to match goals to desired role-states often experience negative consequences such as stress and conflict due to the resulting dissonance, a fact that Mike can attest to. Here he explains the problems he faces when he cannot maintain the efforts necessary to remain in a single focus typology:

I have a lot of goals in working at home. I want to make money, sure, that's part of it, but probably more importantly I want to be here, as I told you. And these are both serious goals. But here's the rub: sometimes I still find myself sitting with a snack in front of the TV. I mean, my goals are strong, don't get me wrong, and I am not a lazy guy, it's just hard to keep it going, to keep that

focus that keeps me in work-mode, even when I want to. I think I take more breaks than I should, than I would if I were at the office, and that is frustrating to me. Why can't I just keep up the efforts and achieve what I know are very important goals to the success of this family?

When goals are not evenly matched to efforts, role identification suffers. Nowhere is this clearer than in respondent's efforts to maintain a single focus typology in the face of environmental factors that call to other roles. By definition, the single focus role state is an extreme state, one that takes persistent mental effort to sustain. Goal targeting, as a practice of establishing a role typology, also takes persistent mental effort. People who put forth the necessary effort can use their goals to suspend role typologies suggested by situated practices such as routinization and specification and establish the desired sense-of-self. Indeed, we have seen both Steve and Wendy do so.

To the extent that these efforts cannot be maintained, however, dissonance occurs – as it did for both Jenna and Mike. When respondents have trouble maintaining the efforts that will establish the desired role state, the way Mike describes, the problem is typically one of affect. (Indeed, as we shall see, somatic and emotional states, such as mood or anxiety, are among the most potent factors inhibiting or aiding the establishment of a given role typology).

Therefore, while goal targeting can operate as an effective means of establishing a desired sense of self, often overriding other data-driven typological positions, it is not for the “feint of heart”. Goal targeting, as an intuitive practice, takes mental effort, persistence, and control. It also demands respondents maintain cognitive flexibility in order to utilize their goals over the bare facts of their surroundings or their emotional state. To succumb to situational markers or somatic factors is to utilize a different

practice as a means of establishing one's desired role position. In the following section, I describe the last of the intuitive practices: emotional alignment.

Emotional Alignment

The practice of emotional alignment typically develops out of the respondent's emotional "feel" of the situation. The potency of the emotions aroused conveys the importance of the role identity, whereas the positiveness or negativeness of the emotions conveys the evaluation of the role state. In this respect, the affective component of role identification processes serves a signaling function (Thoits 1989), drawing one's attention to specific role typologies that are congruent with the emotion. Indeed, the role-identification/affect link is so strong that if the proper mood cannot be mustered, respondents may negotiate a different role typology that better matches their emotional state. In this way, respondents seek to both avoid negative consequences and maintain access to the desired role typology.

The emotions are an important feature of human experience, represent a major source of human motivation, and have a significant effect on human behavior (Rosenberg 1991). Psychologist Linda provides an example of how our emotions can be used to help us establish our desired role state and project it to others:

I know that my patients have expectations for my behavior. To be successful, I need to present a calm and reassuring demeanor. I cannot show anger, or frustration or even undue amounts of excitement or happiness. I need to be stable in my emotions and maintain the focus of my role as their psychologist. I think, for me, to let other emotions in to the doctor/patient equation is to open the door to let in other relationships. So I really do try to portray those emotions that correspond to that one role and in that way keep my focus, even if I have to take a few minutes before my patient comes in to center myself.

Linda feels that only specific emotions – those associated with a cool and calm demeanor - correspond to her role as a psychologist. Because Linda wishes to establish a single focus role state centered on this role when she is with patients, she takes deliberate steps to push other emotions - such as anger, frustration, and even happiness - out of her mind. It is significant in this example that Linda's practice of emotional alignment is linked to an adherence to perceived "emotional norms".

Sociologists and anthropologists have provided abundant evidence showing that every society is characterized by a distinctive system of emotional norms. In our society, a familiar example of such role-related "feeling rules" is the system of gender-based emotional prescriptions (Thoits 1985). Early in life, for example, males are taught that "big boys don't cry," whereas such behavior is tolerated among girls. Among adults, men may condemn themselves (and be condemned by others) for emotional experiences that would be perfectly acceptable in a woman. Fear is another familiar example. Though a man may be quaking in his boots, it is normatively prescribed that he not experience or express such feelings, whereas for a woman the expression of such emotions may be perfectly acceptable.

Emotion norms may also be prescribed for various situations, such as for the doctor/patient scenario described above by Linda. These norms are learned through the process of socialization. Through instruction or example, society teaches children that different situations call for different emotions. At a funeral, for example, one is expected to be sad; at a party, happy; at an athletic contest, excited; and so on (Hochschild 1983). Social actors internalize these emotional expectations and draw on them as guides to action, as Bridget does in the following example:

A think that a French teacher has to have a certain level of animation to her. You have to be very

engaging, very positive, more so maybe than even for other teachers. It is hard to learn a language, so I think there is a certain model that you must portray. Enthusiastic, encouraging, positive. I have to feel these things to really be that person for my class. If I am feeling tired or frustrated, and really, I often am with two little girls at home and very little sleep under my belt, well, I must snap out of it so I can be effective in the classroom. If I don't feel right, I may even take the time to stop and psyche myself up for a moment. Tell myself what I need to do and who I need to be. Only then can I enter and fulfill my role.

To establish herself in a single focus typology centered on her role as a French teacher, Bridget adheres to a culturally prescribed emotional norm that relates a positive and encouraging outlook to a specific role performance. Because she believes that teachers, specifically language teachers, need to portray a certain level of animation in order to be effective, Bridget takes care to align her own emotions with those that are culturally prescribed for the role she wishes to perform. When she is successful at monitoring her emotions, then she feels that she has successfully established the desired typology.

While the identification and adherence to emotional norms is an important component to the practice of emotional alignment, there is more involved in the practice than the concept of normative adherence suggests. It is well established, for example, both by psychologists and sociologists, that one's mood affects one's social outlook (see Durkheim 1912 [1965]; Fiske & Taylor 1991; Hochschild 1983; Rosenberg 1991; Ross & Nisbett 1991; Thoits 1989; or Turner & Stets 2005). Indeed, numerous studies show that sensory processes such as emotions influence what we remember, how positively we evaluate our world, and the manner in which we perceive (Ashforth 2001; Damasio 1994; Fiske & Taylor 1991; Ross & Nisbett 1991). Psychologists studying social judgment have further found that emotion often precedes reflexive thought (see Glenberg et al.

2005 or Haidt 2001), marking sensory experience as a fundamental component of knowledge (Ignatow 2007). In a similar vein, contemporary sociologists identify emotion as central to both culture and social action (Ignatow 2007; Rosenberg 1991; Shilling 2005; Turner & Stets 2005), arguing that social meanings are often constructed from deep emotional impulses (Alexander 2005). In this way, role typologies can result not simply from the unfolding of a situation or an adherence to prescribed emotional norms, but from the intensity of the actor's response.

Here Will, a craftsman and married father of three, describes how his emotional state determines what he “sees” and who he becomes:

I don't have a specific time set aside for work. I work mostly when I feel like working. I don't mean that to sound obnoxious or anything. What I mean is that my feelings are a large part of what I do. If I am not in the mood to see that pile of wood as an armoire or a table, then it won't work, I won't work. It doesn't matter so much that I want to see it, I have to feel it. If I don't, then all I will see is a pile of boards and all I will be is a random guy with a workshop full of wood. But when my mood is right, then I will see the potential that is there and get to work. That's when I am a craftsman.

Through the practice of emotional alignment, respondents like Will evaluate situations and establish role typologies according to their emotional state rather than through goal-oriented schemas, data-driven experiential routines, or normative prescriptions. Will uses his emotions as a means of positioning himself in a single focus role state as a craftsman. Responses like Will's, which include the fusion of emotion, perception, sensation, and subjective experience in the establishment of a role typology, highlight the fact that our culture is penetrated by our emotional impulses (see Alexander 2005). Indeed, it is significant to note that it is only when Will “feels” the right mood that

he is able to “see” the wood in his garage as more than just a pile of boards. In this way, our emotions play a vital role in our framing of social situations and social experience (Haidt 2001). Beth provides an example that speaks further to the potency of emotional alignment as a practice of establishing a sense of self when I ask her about the logistics of working from home:

When I am in the mood to work, I work. It doesn't matter if it is midnight or 6:00 AM or whatever. It doesn't matter if I am surrounded by the breakfast dishes that need cleaning, the kids' toys that should be put away, the bills on the kitchen counter that need to be paid or anything else. I can ignore all of that if my mood is right. No problem. If I feel right, I can put myself in the right frame of mind and get to work.

While people think and act through a habitus made up of a large number of embodied operations (Lizardo 2004), Beth, like Will, establishes a single focus typology according to the intensity of her emotional state. As Beth describes it, this typology is established through a specific emotional pathway. Significantly, it is Beth's *positive* mood that provides her access to those meanings that signify her work identity and allow access to a single focus role state. It is significant that this access is achieved regardless of the time of day or the knowledge that those same objects (the dirty dishes, the kids' toys, the unpaid bills) can also call her to other roles - or role configurations - with other goals. Through a practice of emotional alignment, Beth is able to self-regulate her typological choices.

In this way, our emotions can serve an instrumental function - that is, they can operate as a means for the attainment of one's ends. The regulation of intensity has instrumental relevance. Indeed, I have found that strong, positive emotions, such as Beth's, often lead to the desired association between objects and role-identities (and thus

typologies) as respondents seek to establish correspondence between their emotional state and their physical environment. Further, affective components are often so strong that these elements alone can determine a respondent's ability to establish typological positions, as was the case for both Beth and Will. In this way, emotional alignment can provide respondents with a means of overriding meanings established through other associative practices (such as routinization or goal-targeting), a fact that Mike can attest to:

OK, so usually I do the dress-for-success kind of thing. The ties and all. But like I said, my work is not so 9-5. Inspiration strikes me at odd times and I just go with it. I get excited when I have an idea for cleaning up the system. I might get up in my pajamas and run to my computer and start working it out. I can do that, I can ignore the pajamas, the dark, the sleeping wife, the goal of getting 8 hours of sleep and just go right into work-mode, I am so excited about the idea. I just feel it, you know, so I have to work. Does it stress me out? No! It makes me happy.

Strong positive emotions encourage respondents like Beth and Mike to embrace specific role states and specific meanings more fully, often overriding routine-based or goal-relevant associations in the process. In this way, emotional alignment can help reduce the potential for role conflict or strain that may arise through the failure of other associative practices. Numerous studies have noted that information processing is biased toward positive material (see e.g. Cerulo 2006; Fiske & Taylor 1991), a finding social psychologists term the "Pollyanna effect" (Matlin & Stang 1978). As the above examples make clear, respondents with strong, positive emotions quickly and easily establish role typologies to be in-line with the mood those emotions convey. When this emotional congruence is established, respondents report a decrease in experiences of role conflict, stress, or strain, regardless of the time or day, the clothing they are wearing, the presence

or absence of other role-set members, or the knowledge of other meanings or other goals. Newly ordained minister Adam makes this fact clear as he describes how the strong, positive emotions he felt after the birth of his son allowed him to establish himself in the overlapping role typology he long desired:

I struggled at first trying to keep myself focused purely in my role as a minister. That probably does not sound right [laughs]. I should mention that I married after I received my commission, so my parishioners came to know me as a single man, not a married father. If they had certain expectations for me, than this is perhaps justified because that is what they came to know. After “Jane” and I married, I did begin to feel a sense of conflict, of wanting to be two people at once in my church, but also I was feeling a strong sense that this was not always desirable by others. To deal with this I made it a goal of mine to keep my focus and try to satisfy others needs as much as possible, and not be a gushing newlywed, especially on Sunday mornings. And I did, I kept my roles separate, although it was sometimes a struggle, like I say. But after “James” was born, I could not control the “gush”. I feel so constantly amazed and blessed by this child, I always feel like his father. I don’t know yet how *not* to be that person. I hope I never do. I can tell you that my sermons, my preaching, have taken on a different tone. I think it is because I have finally incorporated these other parts of myself into my theology, rather than try to keep them out. I think, in the end, it is a good thing for me, and for my church, that I am more than I was before.

Before his son was born, Adam had great difficulty combining work and family roles when in the presence of his parishioners or situated within his church. He felt strong expectations from his parishioners that part of his ministerial duties involved his keeping his family and church roles separate. He made a determined effort, especially on Sunday mornings, to comply with these expectations and reside in a single focus role state centered on his role as minister. After the birth of his only child, however, it was Adam’s emotions – rather than the routinized expectations of others or his own stated goals – that guided his typological position. The strength of Adam’s positive emotions in the wake of

this life-changing event paved the way for the establishment of an overlapping role typology.

While our parental roles can be “ever-available,” (Zerubavel 1991), and thus useful as guides to action, it is important to note that it is not simply the socially established role of parent or an adherence to emotional norms that guides the establishment of Adam’s overlapping role state. Rather, it is the specific strong, positive emotions he attaches to his parental role that provides this access. As a new father, Adam feels an intense sense of both pride and pleasure in thoughts of his child. Rather than self-regulating these thoughts to the “back burner”, Adam keeps them in the forefront of his brain to be used as guides to action.

Clearly, Adam is speaking to more than the simple moment-to-moment identity constructions that Beth and Mike have referenced. Indeed, for Adam, the establishment of an overlapping typology represents more of a philosophical change in his approach to his own lifestyle than a response to his immediate circumstances. Nevertheless, this change is based on Adam’s desire to reside in an overlapping typology and is overwhelmingly guided by his positive emotional state, thus representing the very essence of the intuitive practice I call emotional alignment.

As we have seen, the individual’s ability to experience the desired emotions – particularly strong, positive emotions - can have a monumental effect on the establishment of a role typology. Of particular importance to people are emotions that affect their interpersonal relationships (Rosenberg 1991), and so these types of emotions have proven to be largely influential in the establishment of the desired role state. Social psychologists tell us that much of what we want out of life depends on the goodwill of

others, and that this goodwill is significantly affected by emotions (Turner & Stets 2005). For example, to express one's anger is to risk the danger of being fired, disliked, divorced, or subjected to physical attack, rejected socially, evaluated negatively, and much more. In general, the person who exhibits loves, warmth, respect, admiration, and so on is more likely to elicit the desired response from others. This is especially true of role-related interpersonal emotions (Rosenberg 1991). Thus, I have found that these types of emotions are especially prevalent in the establishment of a role typology.

Andy explains further as he describes how he uses the practice of emotional alignment to avoid slipping in to a single focus role state that could potentially result in feelings of conflict with his spouse, who, as we may recall, is also his receptionist:

Even with the routines and the lab coat and the office space and all of the things I have told you about, it can still sometimes be hard to work with my wife. Sometimes maybe I just want to be the boss and not so much the husband. Sometimes I think this would be less complicated. One thing I do when I have these thoughts is remind myself that I love this woman. I let that emotion be my guide and I remember why we are here together. Then it seems right to be the husband too, not just the guy in the lab coat who is in charge. Obviously when I am working just with the patient I don't have to so much worry about this, but at other times in the office I do, and those times are plentiful. I think I avoid a lot of problems this way and we have a more peaceful existence and this is important to me.

Andy makes a conscious decision to focus his attention on a specific emotion – his love for his wife – in order to sustain the overlapping typology he prefers to reside in at the dental office where they both work. As Andy describes it, he uses his emotions as a means of maintaining his desired typology at those times when other practices (such as specification, routinization, and goal-targeting) might seem to fail. In an interesting departure from what we might expect - given the traditional slant of much of the

literature on role conflict – Andy actually feels he can best *avoid* the stress associated with conflicting roles by residing in an overlapping – rather than a single focus - typology. By keeping *both* his role as the head of the dental practice *and* his role as a loving spouse in his mind as guides to action, Andy feels he is better equipped to avoid the potential pitfalls associated with choosing either one over the other. It is his emotional attachment to his wife that allows him continued access to his desired typology. By utilizing a specific interpersonal role-related emotion – love – as his guide, Andy keeps the peace.

So far I have described how strong positive emotions such as love, pride, and excitement can lead to the establishment of particular role states and the avoidance of role conflict. It should be noted, however, that strong emotions can also become all consuming, and can thus lead to problematic identifications. Respondents who become emotionally consumed by a role identity, for example, have difficulty switching their focus to allow for other – often more situationally appropriate – typological configurations. This refusal to switch interpretations and relinquish role access can polarize the individual and lead to complications with members of other role -sets. Psychologist Linda provides an example when I ask if her emotional attachment to her job ever presents a problem for her or her husband:

Sometimes I get carried away in my work and I can't give it up so easily. Especially if I have a difficult patient, a patient in crisis. You know, my heart goes out to them. So then my focus just stays there and I don't really relinquish my role as a psychologist. What happens then is that my husband can get mad at me. We may be sitting down to dinner in our house, there could be candles lit, wine poured, the setting is all very romantic. But I can't see any of that the way he wants me to. I'm not all in the moment, because I am somewhere else too. Obviously, this is not good for a

romantic dinner. There are times when we fight over this problem: my inability to let my work go and be in the moment with him.

Just as the strong, positive emotions that Mike and Beth describe ease the establishment of a single focus role state, the strong emotions that psychologist Linda feels for her patients *prevent* her from establishing a single focus typology centered on the role of romantic spouse. Her inability to match her emotional state to her physical environment and significant other is a source of stress for both Linda and her husband. While the inability to emotionally leave the workplace behind is problematic for emotional care-workers such as Linda, it is not a phenomena limited to those who do emotion-based work. Writer Steve often has the same problem:

I can get very excited about what I am doing and this excitement can carry over long after my work time has ended. What happens then is that I find myself kind of playing two roles at once, which might be OK, but sometimes its not. I mean, it's OK when I am running through ideas and plot-lines in my mind and jotting notes when I am making dinner for the kids and stuff. But when I am alone with my wife, and I have to take a minute to write down some thoughts that have just occurred to me because I am too excited not to, well, then, no, that is not OK, and she will let me know that, let me tell you.

As both Steve and Linda make clear, strong emotions can lead to the establishment of role states that may be deemed inappropriate by situated others, and can thus operate as a source of stress. Linda's husband would prefer she reside in a single focus role state while they share a romantic meal; her emotional connection to her work, however, prevents her from relinquishing this role and ensures her position in an overlapping typology. In a similar vein, Steve finds that his emotional state often pulls him to his role as a writer, even at times when his wife would prefer he remain singly focused in his role as a spouse. The inability of respondents like Steve and Linda to

match their mood to the situated role typology expected by others operates as a significant source of strain.

Although excessively intense emotions, such as those experienced by Steve or Linda, may interfere with the establishment of a desired typology, flat affect, ennui, and lack of interest can be just as problematic, and can seriously impair role performances. Physics professor Richard speaks to this point when I ask him if he has ever felt prevented from performing a role:

I wasn't so much that I was depressed in the months after the divorce was final, as it was that I just didn't care. I had a hard time generating any interest in my activities, and that includes my teaching. It is really hard to be in front of a classroom full of expectant undergraduates and feel like you have so little emotional connection to the role you are supposed to play. But I just didn't have it. It was a good while before I felt like I was really in that role again and in that moment. That didn't make things any better for me, I can tell you that. But that is how it was. I had very little emotional connection to my teaching at that time. I think that lack of connection really prevented me, more than anything else, from fully performing that role. I just wasn't there.

Where the strong, positive emotions felt by Beth, Mike, Adam, and Andy helped these respondents to establish the self in the desired role typology, Richard's flat emotional state has the opposite effect. The emotional disconnect Richards feels toward the role he is supposed to play leaves him unable to fully establish himself in a single focus typology as a professor. This is the down-side to the practice of emotional alignment, wherein insufficiently intense emotions can effectively sap one's creativity. While it appears to be part of the conventional wisdom that intellectual challenges (such as those implied in the application of physics) are best mastered by the application of cold, dispassionate reason, shorn of emotional charge, I believe this is a gross misconception. In the absence of emotion, as Richard makes clear, there is no drive, no

spirit, no inspiration to one's performance. Thus, I contend, one cannot fully engage in a role when one is dispassionate or, in Richard's words, disconnected. In this way, lack of engagement affects the establishment of typological positions.

Intense, negative emotions have a similar affect. Here Paul describes how the strong negative emotions he experienced directly after his wife left him affected his ability to reside in his desired role typology:

Those first few weeks, I walked around this house and I swear everything I saw just reminded me of her. It was very hard to work, to do be here alone with "Ben", to do anything really, because I couldn't really snap out of it. It was like I was stuck in first gear or something. I'll give you an example. I would be in the garage where I work and I would just stand there, tools in hand, for the longest time and not work. I would just look at the garage and everything there and think this was our house, the home we bought together, the life we built, this was our dream, and I couldn't really see it as anything else. I couldn't be anything else but this sad and deserted man. These were bad days. I barely worked at all. I barely functioned as a father. I wanted to, but I couldn't even figure out how, other than to leave this place. And I couldn't do that, this is where I work. This is where we live. Where would I go?

The all-consuming nature of the negative emotions Paul felt in the wake of his separation prevented him from seeing other meanings and accessing other roles (such as mechanic or father) that would elaborate his desired role state (behavioral overlap). Paul implies that the necessity of working from home compounded these issues for him, as he was unable to escape the association between the objects that surrounded him and his (former) role as husband and spouse. Obviously, this was a very difficult situation for Paul, who could not figure out, in the face of these overwhelming emotions, how to establish an association to other meanings and access other role configurations. Thus, he was "stuck in first gear," heavily focused as he was on his role as a newly separated man.

Respondents, in general, report great difficulty controlling the association process when faced with strong negative emotions such as extreme sadness, depression. Not surprisingly, respondents who experience strong negative emotional responses like these also experience the most intense instances of stress and strain in relation to their multiple role configurations.

This is not to imply, however, that emotional states are inescapable or that typologies established through emotional alignment cannot be changed. Although roles states that are affectively established can be demandingly present (as Paul can testify), respondents do have the ability to change their mood and, by extension, their typological position. Social psychologists refer to the basic process through which we attempt to control our emotions as the process of *self-regulation*. Self-regulation generally refers to the many processes by which the human psyche exercises control over its functions, states, and inner processes (Baumeister & Vos 2004). ²

Given that we cannot *fully* control what we feel and when we feel it (Smith-Lovin 1987), we often attempt self-regulation through attempts to control our thoughts, the causes of our emotions (Rosenberg 1991). Researchers contend that we act directly on emotion-evoking thoughts through such methods as selective attention and interpretation, thought displacement, distraction, selectivity of focus, rationalization, selective ignoring, or selective comparison (Howard & Callero 1991; Rosenberg 1991). Similarly, I have found that respondents use such methods to maintain or establish access to the desired role typology. This ability is a key factor in the intuitive practice of emotional alignment, one that helps respondents avoid the pitfalls of role conflict. Jenna elaborates this point when I ask her how she can get to work when she feels like she doesn't want to:

There are days when I wake up and for whatever reason I just don't feel in the mood to work. I don't have a lot of pressure on me, it's not like I have a set structure for my day or any of that. So here I sit, in the kitchen with my canvas and all I can think about is boy, that stove is filthy. I know I've got to do something to snap out of it or it's not going to be a productive day. I drink a cup of coffee, I walk the dog, I perk up. When I come back to the kitchen, I don't so much see the dirty stove anymore. It's changed. I see my work space and I see possibilities and I get to work. It's like a trick a do, I guess, to help me focus on who I need to be when maybe my first impulse is to put my focus somewhere else, somewhere less productive.

Instead of depending on the mediation of stimulus events, people may attempt to control their emotions by acting on mental events directly (Burke 1991; Fazio & Zanna 1978; Smith-Lovin 1987). We see this with Jenna as she attempts to distract her herself from ruminating on her dirty kitchen (and the roles that it implies) by turning her thoughts, at least temporarily, to other subjects, such as her dog or her thirst. It is only after Jenna takes measures to control her mood by drinking coffee and/or walking the dog that she is finally able to mentally renegotiate her physical environment and access the single focus role states that she desires. Respondents who are able to regulate or control their mood, as Jenna does, are better able to control their role identification processes. The upshot of these tendencies is that the affective facets of role identification can give rise to transformations in meaning that affirm the desired role state and thus lead to positive, productive outcomes.

Like Jenna, most respondents seem to have an implicit understanding of the link between typological positions and emotional regulation. Respondents frequently use this understanding to avoid the problems that can arise when our emotions do not match our typological choices. Mike provides a further example of how respondents use self-

regulation to both avoid role conflict and establish role states through a practice of emotional alignment:

Sometimes I just can't seem to get in the mood to work. I do everything I can to focus, you know, even changing my clothes to work clothes. You know, I like to dress the part. I turn off the phone and the radio, I set up my autographed photo of Bill Gates [laughs] – and I still can't get there. I've got nothing. I'm just not in the mood. So what do I do, I pack it in and let the home take over, maybe go clean the garage or wash the dog, and just call it a day. I've been doing this long enough to know that if I can't switch it over, I can't fight it. I'll just sit there and get stressed out if I do. So I go with how I feel and just have to know that I will feel differently later and I'll be productive at work then. That's how I get things done, for the home and the office. It's part of how I keep my sanity.

Mike's response to the mismatch between his emotional state and his desired role state differs from Jenna's: where Jenna takes steps to "snap out of it", Mike chooses to "go with" his mood in order to establish congruence between his emotional state and his typological position. Each represents a common response. Respondents, like Mike, who "can't fight it" and change their mood often find they have to change their role position to avoid feelings of stress or conflict. On the flip side, respondents like Jenna, who are able to regulate their affective focus, use this regulation as a means of aligning emotions to typological positions. I have found that respondents are, in general, quite creative in their attempts to align emotions and typological choices, pushing some thoughts out of the mind, encouraging other thoughts to enter, and limiting exposure to stimuli that may impinge their efforts. Each demonstrates respondents' chameleon-like ability to match typological positions to both physical and mental states so as to avoid negative outcomes. When emotions and role typologies cannot be aligned, however, stress and conflict- as we have seen with both Linda and Steve- may be the result.

Even so, I have found that respondents are, in general, quite adept at avoiding negative outcomes, often picking and choosing among associative practices as necessary so as to avoid the feelings of role conflict and/or stress that could result from a mismatch of typologies to motivations. Indeed, as we have seen, when one route to the desired typology is blocked, another route is often taken. When routinization fails, for instance, goal targeting can be used in its stead. Indeed, we have witnessed home-based writer Christopher switch from a strategy of routinization to a practice of goal targeting in order to maintain a single focus work identity amongst the chaos and noise of his children. We have seen attorney and new mom Jan use both of these practices – routinization and goal targeting – simultaneously to establish a state of cognitive overlap. Recall, however, that the targeting of specific goals takes both mental effort and control. When these efforts wane, selective interaction may be used to redirect one's intentions or role-specific focus, a fact that home-based systems analyst Mike can attest to. Recall that Mike often chooses to wear a tie, even though he works from home and no dress-code is required, in order to utilize this object's culturally specified meaning to help direct his attention to his work identity when he feels his goals are not enough to sustain the focus. We even have seen how selective interaction with specific cultural codes can operate as a means of overriding emotional responses, as our married minister Alex focused his attention to his seminary degree (and away from a photograph of his wife) in order to write an important sermon on the date of his wedding anniversary.

These observations raise an important point: although the associative practices that I have discussed (selective interaction, routinization, goal targeting, and emotional alignment) have been defined separately, they are, of course, experienced by the

individual jointly. Given the modern dynamics of multiple roles, and the different possible motivational responses to these dynamics, respondents may find themselves frequently engaged in *each* practice from *each* practice set during the course of any given day. Given these facts, I suggest that the practices I have described – both situated and intuitive – *evolve interactantly*. The implication is that respondents may use situated and intuitive practices concurrently or in tandem to affect the desired outcome. Just what structures such interactive processes, and how people keep multiple practices on hold, seem central questions for cultural analysis.

Cultural Practices and Culture-in-Action

In this and the previous chapter, I have demonstrated how people use culture to establish positions in the various role states. As we have seen, people draw from a multiform repertoire of practices (both situated and intuitive) to frame and reframe a sense of self-in-role in an open-ended way. I have further found that the 60 respondents that I have spoken to use *each* of the practices I have outlined to establish their desired role positions, switching from one practice to another and/or overlapping practices as they dim fit. What I want to argue here is that the frequent use of multiple cultural practices is not some anomalous slight of hand, but the normal way in which ordinary people organize their daily lives. By attending to people's capacity to establish themselves in alternative, sometimes competing, typological positions, we can thus gain further insight into the relationship among culture and action.

Cultural sociologists have long been concerned with the capacity of individuals to participate in multiple cultural traditions. From the classic works of Durkheim, Simmel, Parsons, Merton, or Goffman to contemporary discussions incited by Cerulo, DiMaggio, Swidler, or Vaisey, we see the question arise: how is that people choose among diverse cultural resources and put them to use in different ways? There are not simply different cultures, the argument goes, but different ways of mobilizing and using culture, different ways of linking culture to action.

In order to address these “different ways”, sociologists have come to favor the concept of culture as a “toolkit” (Swidler 1986) or “repertoire” (Tilly 1992): a collection of stuff that is heterogeneous in content and function (DiMaggio 1997). People choose among cultural tools, the theory goes, to cope with and make sense of institutional and/or network pressures on action that arise in various social locations (Jepperson & Swidler 1994). By asserting that different tools can be used in different locations, “toolkit theory” takes seriously both the idea of cultural pluralism and the possibility of contradiction in cultural meanings (DiMaggio 1997).

What I have done here is to examine what it is that people do with the different cultural tools that they have available. I explore, in essence, how it is that people choose from among the many practices they have in their cultural repertoire and what they do once they make these choices. While most people who explore such issues deemphasize individual subjectivity and motivation (Campbell 1996) in favor of an institutional-network focused explanation of action (Vaisey 2006), my approach has been to address

both justificatory and intuitive motivations to choice simultaneously. By attending to *both* forms of motivation, my description of the cultural practices that establish role states allows us to witness a more complete view of culture-in-action than is typically addressed - one that fully theorizes human motivation from both external and internal sources and one that accepts the fact that structure and agency exist in complex, but not immutable, states of interdependence.

I want to emphasize, however, that while the situated and intuitive practices that I describe are drawn from different forms of motivation, these practices operate together to form the “cultured capacity” (Swidler 2001) of individuals, a capacity that allows respondents, as we have seen, to organize various role typologies, to make choices, to resonate with the expectations of others, or to insulate role performances from the surrounding environment. While the data suggest that individuals maintain cultured capacities for varied strategies of action, which they mobilize differently in different situations, it also suggests that the cultural influences that individuals carry into new situations are those that form their capacities for action. Because people have a number of practices to choose from, they can draw on multiple, often competing cultural traditions, and they can find ways to justify quite varied responses.

What I find particularly fascinating in this regard is how quickly and easily people adopt the practice necessary to pursue the desired ends, even in structures and contexts that might suggest such adaptation would be difficult. Consider, for instance, that while the data do suggest that certain types of work (be it artistic or systematic, white collar or blue collar), certain contexts (such as churches and schools), and certain social factors (such as the presence or absence of various role set-members or other distinctively coded

objects) will influence the type of practice people use, as well as when and where they use it, there is much less correspondence here than one might expect.

For instance, those who work set hours in heavily institutionalized and coded contexts (such as a high school, a church, or a private medical practice) would seemingly be highly dependent on situated practices like selective interaction or routinization to establish typological positions. Similarly, we might expect that those who work in less structured cultural settings (such as the home) - where objects and spaces call more to roles related to leisure than roles related to work - would rely more heavily on intuitive practices such as goal targeting or emotional alignment in order to affect their typological choices. Yet this was simply not the case.

While I have no doubt that certain jobs pose certain constraints on the individual, I find that occupational contexts and role typological choices are differentiated *more* by the meanings the actor assign than by objective characteristics. Indeed, social actors are quite capable of assigning meanings and establishing role states in unexpected ways. Many of the home-based employees in my sample, for instance – people like Mike, Christopher, and Steve - are highly dependent on situated practices like routinization (rather than intuitive practices) as a means of establishing the desired role state. At the same time, many of the respondents who reside in very structured occupational settings – such as Dr. Joe, our dentist Andy, mid-level manager Oliver, and attorney Jan – rely heavily on goals, needs, and emotions rather than situated factors or established routines.

I thus contend that while people cannot always make their social worlds, they are often quite able to choose and regulate the worlds that enter their awareness, as well as their typological response. We have witnessed, for instance, as people ignore their

surroundings in order to focus on their goals, ignore their goals in order to focus on their surroundings, turn their emotions on and off, override the structural obstacles of schools, churches, homes, and work-places, and even ignore important role-set members (such as children and spouses) in order to establish and maintain a chosen sense of self-in-role(s). We have also seen respondents switch from one practice to another – from specification to goal targeting, from routinization to emotional alignment – in order to maintain a position in the desired role state. While these types of responses are yet another testament to the chameleon-factor in action and the adaptivity of the human mind, they also tell us something important about cultural organization.

If people selectively appropriate and use the various cultural practices they have at their disposal at different times and in different ways, then this fact leads us to question how and why people sometimes invest certain symbols, rituals, goals, or emotions with meaning, while at other times they do not. It also leads us to question how it is that in some situations cultural symbols and meanings lose their force, while in others they remain vibrant and persuasive. Such questions about how cultural practices are adopted or abandoned are crucial to an effective analysis of culture's effects on social action and social organization (Swidler 2001, p. 22). And yet cultural sociologists have struggled in recent years with just these types of questions: how is it that some cultural elements are able to organize others? What gives culture its pervasive influence to determine action?

Sewell (1992) has been perhaps most influential in answering these questions by suggesting that influential structures be categorized according to their "depth" and "power" (p. 22). Depth refers to a cultural element's broad capacity to *organize* other domains of social life, such as language organizes society. In this way deep structures are

pervasive ones. Power, on the other hand, refers to an element's ability to *mobilize* human action, such as the way state and political structures are fought and argued about. These metaphors have been largely influential in rethinking the relationship about culture and social structure as well as theorizing the relationship between culture and action.

But are the metaphors of depth and power the *right* metaphors for addressing the day-to-day, moment-to-moment changes in cultural practices and organizational patterns that we have witnessed here? I am going to suggest that they are not. For one thing, cultural concepts that are neither deep nor powerful may nevertheless function in a highly influential manner. In *Talk of Love*, for example, Swidler (2001), discusses the practice of giving gifts on Mother's Day as a highly superficial but nonetheless highly constraining cultural action, one that is neither deep nor powerful but nonetheless highly influential (p. 208) (the ever increasing sales of Mother's Day cards, flowers, and candy in the month of May stand as testament to this assertion). In a similar vein, Beinacki's *Fabrication of Labor* (1995) describes how the "silent practices" for negotiating labor arrangements – such as the negotiation of piece-rate wage scales - organize and define important characteristics of the physical and conceptual universe; again, these practices did not seem to be anchored by either power or depth. They are, nonetheless, highly influential.

For another thing, we sometimes see large changes in organizational patterns that result from the introduction or alteration of a seemingly small and inconsequential event. We saw this fact in action over and over again in the last two chapters, as respondents made drastic changes in both their presentation and experience of self-in-role(s) after making small changes in their engagements with various motivating factors. We have witnessed, for instance, as our married minister Alex completely altered his sense of his

social world by simply turning over a photograph. Similarly, we have seen our writer Christopher completely change his role typological position as the clock changed from 8:59 to 9:00 AM. The concepts of depth and power do little to explain why such apparently small manipulations have such big effects on the organization and experience of culture. The data at hand, however, suggest that it is just these types of changes that facilitate how people experience the social world.

Finally – and this point is crucial to my analysis – if people in some sense choose among diverse cultural resources and put them to use in different ways (and I have demonstrated that they do), culture's effects are mediated by such variability. In the last two chapters, we have seen the effects of shifting influences and changing meanings on typological positions as people use the various cultural practices (both successively and simultaneously) to establish themselves in the desired role state. We have also seen people use the *same* motivating factor to establish a *different* typological position. If we were to assume that the various cultural indicators and motivating factors that people respond to have a single meaning attached, or that culture lies in central tendencies or some other form of pre-ordained structures arranged by depth and/or power, then we would necessarily compromise our ability to understand what skilled interactors do. Simply said, we run the risk of ignoring the affects of the chameleon factor on social action.

Points such as these force me to question whether the metaphors of depth and power might mislead us about what kinds of cultural elements have influential or organizing effects. Are these metaphors capable of accounting for variability in the system? What do we make of factors that seem neither deep nor powerful yet remain

highly influential on the organization of culture? Social researchers who want to understand more fully what mediates between cultural practices and logics of action, or indeed, what variations in cultural meanings signify, may need a different way of theorizing culture's pervasive influence.

Since I find the metaphors of depth and power to be inexact for the context I explore, I suggest here a new way of thinking about cultural organization, one that may shed some light on the underexplored issue of cultural variability. I suggest that it is the *weight* assigned to particular pieces of culture in particular situations - rather than some form of cultural depth or power - that accounts for their pervasive influence.³ Through a process of *mental weighing*, social actors develop the experiential means of sorting and sifting through contextual cues and internal indicators to focus on (i.e., give weight to) those cues and indicators that are in line with the desired role state. Heavily weighted factors lead actors to role states (either single or overlapping) that seem an inevitable result of the assigned weight. When these same factors are less heavily weighed, however, different role typologies can be accessed.

Through a process of mental weighing, we are able to constantly modify our understanding of environmental and internal triggers so as to establish differential positions in the various role typologies. Elements that are assigned a heavy weight by social actors – such as Christopher's morning routine, Jan's parenting goals, or Jenna's emotions – encode constitutive rules about how best to establish a sense of self. Because these rules become the ground for the repeated establishment of a role typology, they have particularly wide and lasting influence, even as they may have very little cultural depth or power.

In this way, I suggest, seemingly superficial cultural practices – such as wearing a certain piece of clothing or responding to a particular temporal pattern of your own design – can, in fact, be used as anchors if the practice is assigned enough weight. By using a metaphor of weight, we can thus better comprehend why apparently big situational manipulations sometimes have very small effects on our role typological choices and why apparently small manipulations sometimes have big effects. At the same time, it is important to remember that the amount of weight assigned to any particular practice can be changed and modified. In this way, the metaphor accounts for cultural variability. By examining mental weighing in action, we can thus get a clearer understanding of day-to-day patterns of cultural organization.

My task in the next chapter is to further explore this assertion. I address this task by exploring how respondents *switch* from one typological position to another. When actors switch, for example, from a single focus typology to a state of cognitive overlap, they necessarily make adjustments in the way they perceive their cultural surroundings and the weight they assign to particular cultural practices. That actors routinely make these shifts, as I have previously argued, is one of the hallmarks of the modern role playing dynamic. I suggest in the next chapter that actors switch typological positions by shifting the weight assigned to the cultural cues found in their physical and mental environments.

While this analysis takes us to the old Parsonian (1937) problem of multiple orientations to action- basing it on an up-to-date psychology- it also allows us to reevaluate what it is that gives cultural elements their organizational influence. By further exploring the implication of mental weighing on typological positions, I am thus able to

make a substantive contribution to cultural sociology. Indeed, in the end, the reader will come to see not only how culture constrains and enables social action (DiMaggio 1997; Swidler 2001), but how it is that people transcend the biasing effects of culture on thought. Once again, then, we will see the chameleon-factor in action and the adaptivity of the human mind.

CHAPTER 4 ENDNOTES

¹ Those familiar with traditional social psychological perspectives on self-attribution may question whether the individual consciously possesses the capacity for drawing such inferences. Epstein (1983), for instance, has suggested that generally we are not aware of the self-knowledge that guides our thoughts and behaviors. It appears to operate, the argument goes, at a preconscious level, although situations can lead us to focus on ourselves and our self-knowledge, making at least some of it explicit and conscious (Fiske & Taylor 1991). Bem's (1972) self-perception theory – in which people infer their attitudes from the observation of their behavior – reaches a similar conclusion: that people's access to the factors that influence their opinions, attitudes, and reactions is incomplete.

Recent research, however, has taken a different stance (see Moskowitz 2005).

Cognitive psychologists have demonstrated, for instance, that characteristically people seem to infer their personal attributes *more* from their thoughts and feelings than they do from their situated behavior (Anderson 1984, 1987; Anderson & Ross 1984; Fiske & Taylor 1991; Greenwald 1988; Moskowitz 2005). It has further been demonstrated that people have distinct personal goals, of which they are acutely aware, and that these goals direct self-identifications (Gollwitzer 1993, 1999; Little 1983; Moskowitz 2005). Following this line of research, Cantor & Kihlstrom (1985) developed the idea of *life tasks*: the problems that a person is working on at a particular time in his or her life. Life tasks are conceived of as broad ways of thinking about one's activities that both integrate and provide a context for understanding how the individual conceives of the self (Cantor & Kihlstrom 1985). Life tasks are generated by knowledge of the self, including one's abilities, values, and preferences. Thus, in addition to the preconscious aspects of the self that may guide processing, there is deliberate intentional regulation in terms of well-articulated and fully conscious goals and plans (Moskowitz 2005).

² Self-regulation and self-control are often used in different ways by different authors. It is generally agreed, however, that "regulation" carries the meaning of "control" such that self-regulation refers to the exercise of control over oneself; especially with regards to bringing the self in line with preferred standards interested readers should reference Baumesiter & Vos (2004) for further explanation of these terms. For our purposes here, self-regulation encompasses any efforts by the human self to alter any of its own inner states and responses. This includes both deliberate and automatic, conscious and nonconscious processes.

³ Here I am indebted to Jamie Mullaney's (1999) article on identity attribution in which she suggests that individuals who make attributions engage in a process of mental weighing as a way to determine which acts "count" toward identity and to what extent. I extend Mullaney's metaphor to an analysis of cultural organization more generally, suggesting that weight operates as a cultural anchor, and that shifting weight is a means of switching logics of action.

CHAPTER FIVE

Shifting Weight, Changing States

Throughout the last two chapters, I have tried to document how it is that social actors can establish position in each of the four role typologies. Toward this end I have outlined two practice sets – situated and intuitive – that implicate two different motivations to action – justificatory and operant. I have demonstrated how respondents use these practices, successively and simultaneously, to both establish the desired role state (be it single, partial, or completely overlapping) and avoid the pitfalls traditionally associated with role conflict. In this way we can recognize the significance of situated and intuitive practices, not as determiners of ends, but as tools for fine-tuning action to establish the desired typological position.

While it is the adaptive ability of the human mind which makes such complex orchestration possible, to examine how people establish role states is also to explore how people relate and respond to their cultural environment. It is to consider what it is that people do with culture and what different kinds of culture are used for. As we have seen, in any given situation respondents are able to maneuver quite well in relation to the cultural codes that currently apply to them. Recall, for instance, that Jenna sees the stack of dirty dishes in her kitchen sink not as an indication that she is a bad mother or inept housekeeper, but as a testament to the singularity of her focus in her role as an artist. In a similar vein, we have seen Raj negotiate the many meanings his home computer conveys in order to navigate his way to a single focus work identity. This ability, in turn, allows us to glimpse important nuances in the day-to-day patterns of cultural organization. It allows

us to ask what is it about certain cultural elements that allow them to control or anchor others in specific contexts.

This is where I suggest that what “it is” is weight. As I asserted at the end of the last chapter, the way we focus on, embrace, maximize, or otherwise give weight to distinctive cultural practices is the way we situate ourselves in different role typologies. The process of mental weighing involves the assignment of social weight to practices as well as the evaluation and negotiation of these weighings to arrive at typological positions. Simply said, we treat heavily weighted constructs as more influential in determining our typological positions than those elements that carry less weight. This fact holds true whether the weighted elements consist of coded environmental cues, experiential or temporal routines, personal goals, or our inner-most emotions. In this way, I assert, it is not simply the *type* of motivating factor that influences our choice of role states, but the *weight* assigned to particular factors in particular situations that can account for their pervasive influence. It is in this way that social weighing plays a critical role in determining patterns of cultural organization.

The problem of cultural organization cannot be completely addressed, however, without some way of understanding how people *shift* and *switch* from one cultural code to another. A cultural repertoire allows people to move among situations, finding terms in which to orient action within each situation (Swidler 2001), but exactly *how* this is accomplished remains an open question (DiMaggio 1997, 2003). If people can function in multiple modalities - and I have demonstrated that they can - then questions necessarily arise about how they navigate from one modality to another. How, for

example, do social actors go from a single focus role state to a state of cognitive overlap?

How and why do people switch among cultural frames, logics, or domains?

This is where the metaphor of weight becomes invaluable, for I suggest that people switch among logics or domains as a result of shifting weight among various cultural practices. As we have seen, giving weight to particular cultural practices (e.g., routines rather than goals, or emotions rather than situated factors) is a way of solidifying the practice and establishing the desired role state. But it would be wrong to believe that, once determined, the respective weight of motivational cues remain fixed (see also Mullaney 1999). When necessary, to avoid conflict or to add or subtract role-identities, people often *adjust* the amount of weight given to various motivating factors. We have seen, for instance, respondents like Jenna who chooses to lighten the load of situational factors and give more weight to emotions in order to maintain access to the desired role state. We have also seen respondents like Linda whose emotions outweigh their situation, causing an involuntary establishment of an overlapping typological position.

My task in this chapter then, is to further examine how the weight assigned to different cultural practices allows them to interconnect or disconnect and thus lead to different typological outcomes. As we have seen, the subset of self-schemata that constitute a role typology at any given time are those either invoked by the individual or elicited through some association (e.g., sensory experience, emotion, or social cue). I contend that, whether consciously or not, individuals learn to use these cueing functions strategically to *both* establish and maintain a desired role state *as well as to* switch typological positions. In this way, switches among role states can be invoked by the same practices and motivations as establishments. The difference, as we shall see, is in when,

where, how, and why weight is moved from one motivating factor to another. Simply said, when we adjust the weight we assign to a motivating practice, we necessarily adjust our typological positions.

Thus, rather than look at different sets of practices, in this chapter I will explore two different types of weighing activities that lead to people to switch role states: *pushes* and *pulls*. To push weight, as I describe it, is a voluntary action. It is conscious choice made by a social actor to reassign the weight given to a role specific cue or motivational indicator, a choice that leads to switches in role-based positions. A home-based employee, for instance, who wants to move out of a leisure role and in to a work role, must voluntarily push weight on to the specific motivational factor - be it a goal, a situational element, a temporal routine, or an emotional state - that makes the desired movement possible. Voluntarily shifting the assignment of weight from one motivating factor to another is thus one means of switching role states.

This is not to imply, however, that all reassignments are made by choice. Social actors may also be *pulled* by the weight of various cultural elements – for example, by unexpected telephone calls, knocks on the door, the sudden needs of children, or unexpected changes in mood. In such cases, the switching of typological positions follows from an unintended, involuntary shifting of weight from one motivating factor to another. As we move in the direction indicated by the newly weighted factor, so too do our typological positions shift and follow the force that pulls us. We may find ourselves slowly drifting from one role state to another, or we may find that we are quickly and forcibly relocated from one position to another (as we often are when we experience unexpected interruptions).

In the sections to follow I will provide in-depth definitions and numerous examples of both *pushes* and *pulls*, noting the way mental weighing is implicated in each type of switching activity. After presenting these definitions, I will further discuss how each type of movement is tied to specific resource conditions - such as one's socioeconomic position, gender, level of experience with the role configuration in question, or level of validation from significant others. In this way, we will come to see that social actors with the necessary resources can move among typological positions and avoid role conflicts with greater ease than their resource-poor counterparts. Thus, in the end analysis, we will see not only how the process of mental weighing is linked to the organization of culture, but how it is that social actors are able to respond to the force of weight.

Pushing Your Weight Around: Voluntarily Switching Role States

To switch role states in a voluntary manner is to make a conscious choice as to where to focus one's mental and physical efforts and where to move social weight. A voluntary movement occurs when an individual is able to exercise real choice in whether or not he or she exits one role state and in selecting or agreeing to accept a new one. Although voluntariness may appear to be a categorical attribute – one either has a choice or not – it is actually continuous (Ebaugh 1988).¹ Indeed, there are many choices, as we shall see, that are essentially voluntary but nevertheless constrained. The larger point to keep in mind when considering voluntary switches is that – whether constrained or not – there is a positive deliberation that sets the individual on a purposeful new course. As I

have alluded to earlier, this type of deliberation involves the reassignment of social weight to role-specific cues and indicators.

To voluntarily reassign weight is to change the emphasis one gives to various social cues and motivations to action (such as goals, emotions, routines, or cultural objects). One can add weight to any cue or motivation, for instance, by maximizing its social presence. Conversely, the weight of any indicator can be lightened through a process of cognitive minimization. Recall that we saw evidence in the last chapters of respondents maximizing and minimizing cues in order to establish role positions. Alex, for instance, turned over a photograph of his wife (thus minimizing the object's impact) in order to push himself toward a state of single focus immersion centered on his ministerial role. Christopher, on the other hand, chose to maximize the effects of temporal patterns and routines in order to establish a single focus work role in a physical space adorned with objects related to his children.

By voluntarily adjusting the mental weight assigned to specific cues and motivating factors, actors like Alex and Christopher are not only able to establish role states, they are able to move among role typologies. Indeed, when we voluntarily change the weight of a social cue – for instance, giving more weight to one and less to another - we can voluntarily change the shape of our typological positions. These changes can take many forms: we may move from one single focus role state to another; from single focus to partially overlapping role states; from a single focus typology to a typology of complete overlap; from one partially overlapping configuration to another; from one completely overlapping configuration to another; or any of the reverse of these options (e.g., from completely overlapping to single, or partially overlapping to completely

overlapping, etc). The selective adjustment of the mental weight assigned to different motivating factors makes each of these movements possible.

In this way, I find voluntary push movements are linked to the cognitive processes of *selective attention* and *perspectival selectivity* (Fiske & Taylor 1991). Selective attention is a means of controlling the content of one's own thoughts (Rosenberg 1991). Simply said, the mind decided what it does or does not wish to think about and attempts to implant the desired content or eliminate the unwanted thoughts. It may do so indirectly by controlling the stimulus events (the way Alex did) or directly by controlling the thoughts themselves (as did Christopher).

Whereas selective attention refers to *what* one elects to think about, perspectival selectivity refers to the *angle of vision* that one brings to bear upon events (Fiske & Taylor 1991). In this way, the mind not only tells itself *what* to think about, but *how* to think about it. As my respondents will make clear, there are many ways in which one can alter the angle of vision: one can, for instance, comply with the demands of a different routine or an alternate temporality, switch to another goal, focus on another reference group, follow an emotional lead, react to a different cultural code or meaning (maximizing its affects), or minimize previously encoded stimuli. The larger point is that by controlling what aspect of the situation they focus on, what angle or perspective they bring to bear on it, or what construction they place on it, people act to produce the typological positions they desire. In so doing, they are often able to avoid the negative consequences of role conflict, stress, or strain traditionally associated with the necessity of performing multiple social roles.

In this way, I find that voluntary push movements are linked to both self-awareness and self-control. Indeed, what ultimately makes voluntary push movements possible is the phenomenon of reflexivity – the human being’s ability to stand outside the self, to observe and reflect on it, and to produce intentional effects upon internal processes. To the extent that respondents are able to maintain the necessary levels of awareness and control, they are able to switch role states by voluntarily shifting mental weight from one cue to another. Here graduate student Beth describes how she voluntarily shifts weight on to a specific role indicator in order to push herself in to the single focus role state that she wishes to reside in while in meetings:

We have group meetings, I don't know, once a month at least, to talk about department business and all of that. I make it a point to sit next to somebody important. Some faculty member that I know has got stuff to say because then I know I need to pay attention. I use them, you could say, to focus my attention. If I am sitting by them, especially right next to them, it helps me stay focused in my student role and not daydream. And you know, I've got a lot going on and yes, my mind does tend to wander. So I do this trick to myself to stop it. It's the old difference between sitting in the front of the class and paying attention or goofing off in the back. So I sit in the front, near a big talker, and use that as a way to be all business. I call it a "trick of the trade," well practiced, I think, by us long-time students.

In this example, Beth shifts her attention to a specific cue – in this case, an important member of her department faculty – in order to gain access to a single focus role state centered on her professional identity. Beth makes specific reference to the fact that if she did not shift weight in this manner, she might find it difficult to access this typology in this situation. Indeed, she voluntarily pushes her attention to a specific cue to keep her mind from wandering to other role-identities or establishing other, less situationally appropriate, role configurations. By voluntarily shifting the focus of her attention (her

angle of vision) and adjusting the weight assigned to the various motivating factors at her disposal, Beth is able to switch in to the desired role state when and where she wants.

John undergoes a similar process. Unlike Beth, who moves among role states by pushing weight on to a specific cue at a specific time, John moves among different performance typologies by pushing weight to different cues at different times:

I'm a modern man. I do a lot of stuff in my car [laughs]. Drive, listen to news, stock reports, make phone calls, check messages from clients, talk to the kids, check in with my Mom, dictate notes to myself in the tape recorder. That means there are a lot of roles implied here in this car, and, yes, certain things make me think of certain roles. The radio reminds me of my portfolio, sad as it is. The headset reminds me to call my Mom or check my messages. The mess reminds me of my kids. But maybe I don't want to be reminded. You know, sometimes I just let it all be and know this is who I am and I deal with it all at once. But sometimes I try to focus on one role or another. How? Well, sometimes I put the headset away so I can dictate better. Sometimes I turn off the radio to make phone calls. Sometimes I push their empty juice boxes and cereal bar wrappers under the seat so I don't have to think about it. Sounds silly, I know, but it can be a way for me to get a lot of things done on a lot of different fronts.

John is acutely aware that there are different cues in his car that indicate his different roles, roles such as father, son, investor, student, or therapist. John shifts his attention and pushes weight to specific cues in order to access the role the cue indicates. Thus, he might focus his attention on his headset when he wants to move in to a single focus typology centered on his role as a son. At other times, he might minimize the weight of this object, and maximize the weight he gives to his tape recorder, switching from one single focus role to another. He pushes the children's mess under the seats so as to minimize its effect on his typological positioning (thus avoiding his parental role). At other times, however, he does not do so, choosing, instead, to spread the weight among

role indicators and reside in an overlapping typology. In any case, what John describes is a voluntary reassignment of weight, a reassignment that allows him to make voluntary adjustments in the way he configures and experiences his multiple roles. It is John's reflexive self-regulation that makes such adjustments possible.

In a similar vein, Jan describes how she switches from a single focus role state centered on her role as an attorney to an overlapping configuration based on both this role and her role as a nursing mother:

People always ask me if it is hard to switch from working to nursing, but I don't think it is. It's all a matter of what you put your mind to do. At one moment, I can be completely focused in this office and all about work. When the time comes, my nanny will bring her in and I will just change my focus. I usually turn off the phone, turn down the lights, get out the nursing pillow and the lumbar support, and I am good to go. I can read files or drafts or even return phone calls when I am nursing if I want to. Sometimes I do, sometimes I don't. The point is I can if I choose to. I guess that's why I think it is easy, because it is up to me and where I choose to put my attention.

Like John, Jan often finds that she resides in a single space that calls to multiple roles. Instead of a car, however, Jan's roles are performed in her office. When she wants to move among role configurations, Jan simply pushes weight to those cues and motivating factors that allow for the movement process. Thus, when she wishes to change from a single focus performance centered on her role as an attorney to an overlapping performance centered on both her work role and parenting role, she shifts her focus and adds weight to the objects (including her infant daughter) that will help induce this change. Because Jan often prefers to reside in an overlapping typology, it is not necessary for her to completely subtract all the weight from those cues and indicators that provide access to her other role-identities. Thus she does not need to completely restrict her angle of vision in order to access the desired typology. Yet Jan makes clear reference to the fact

that she can do this however, if she so chooses. She can add or subtract the weight she gives to these motivating factors, in the process changing both her perspective and her role configuration. I find that it is precisely this aspect of choice and control that lies at the heart of any switch based on the voluntary pushing of weight.

Christopher speaks further about the necessity of choice when I ask him if it is difficult to move among his roles when he works from home:

I don't think it's hard to switch roles. I just make the choice to do it. I go from taking care of the kids and all with my wife in the morning to working on my novel, right in the same space. I can be there at 8:30 sorting through backpacks, sneakers, hats, gloves, lunches, papers that go, papers that stay, kiss goodbye, hugs, and last minute stuff. But at 9:00, that's done. They're gone. Then I am there to work, so I ignore all of it that's left and focus on what I need to do to get to work.

Overdue deadlines, mostly [laughs].

In this example, Christopher uses the concept of an alternate temporality to alter his angle of vision, and, ultimately, his sense of self-in-role. At 8:30 AM Christopher places heavy emphasis on his familial roles, giving weight to those objects and indicators which call that forth those roles. At 9:00 AM, however, Christopher switches his attention from these cues (minimizing the attached weight) to other cues related to his role as a writer (maximizing these effects). In this way Christopher voluntarily switches role configurations based on the routinization of alternate temporalities. As the time changes, so too does Christopher's angle of vision. He further changes his perspective by adjusting the mental weight assigned to the motivating factors at his disposal, giving more weight to those that call forth the desired role configuration (such as goals and deadlines), and less to those that don't (such as hats, shoes, and backpacks).

Respondents like Christopher and Jan are further aided in their movement efforts by the fact that the timing of the move is predictable. Jan has the expectation of switching role states so as to accommodate her nursing her baby every few hours. Similarly, Christopher has the expectation of switching role states around the time his family members depart the scene. As we have seen with the establishment of role typologies, the expectations imparted by predictable events serves to ease the movement process. Thus, respondents with firmly established routines are able to make more voluntary push movements than respondents who lack the expectations that experiential routines offer.

This is not to imply, however, the voluntary movements can only be made in response to a predictable event, such as precipitated by the changing of the clock or the necessity of a nursing schedule. While such events may ease the movement process, voluntary push moves are regulated more by attention, control, and angle of vision than simple predictability. Whenever we take control our situation and voluntarily adjust the weight of motivating factors to be in line with our angle of vision, we voluntarily move among role configurations, whether we expected to make such a move or not. Our home-based writer Steve provides an example:

There are times, you know, when the kids just don't want me working when they are home. Not always, but sometimes. Who know why. I just know that if I try to keep up the balancing act then I'll probably just lose it, snap at the kids or something like that. That happens, believe me, that happens. But most if the time, I just go with it. I go with the flow. I've learned this works better than fighting it, so I give it up. No more thinking about me, no more computer, no more books, no more writing. It's time to think about them. It's that simple. I switch. And that makes it work. That keeps the peace, then we're all happy.

In this example, Steve chooses to switch from an overlapping typology that includes his role as a writer and his role as a father to a single focus role state centered

firmly on his parental role. While this switch is somewhat unpredictable for Steve in that it does not occur in a routine time or manner, it is nevertheless made voluntarily. Rather than possibly experience increases in role conflict or “snap” at his kids, Steve chooses instead to realign the weight he gives to role indicators and motivations and thus reestablish his role configuration. As Steve indicates, it takes both self-knowledge and self-control to “go with the flow” and switch configurations in this way.

Even so, I have found that “going with the flow” is a popular strategy among respondents, one that allows for a choice to be made even in a situation in which that choice may be constrained. Indeed, this form of self-monitoring is one way that respondents conform their role states to situational cues. By voluntarily shifting weight and switching role configurations so as accommodate changing circumstances, respondents like Steve often avoid negative feelings and/or negative consequences that could result from a misalignment. As Steve puts it, it is a way to “keep the peace”.

In this way Steve’s example demonstrates respondents’ preference for controllability to predictability. Like most respondents, Steve prefers to maintain control over the switching process, even when “forced” to make switches in an unpredictable manner. To accommodate this preference, I have found, in general, that respondents are quite adept at reorganizing their goals, needs, and temporal patterns in order to maintain a sense of control over their role configurations. It is this sense of having made a choice – even when that choice is constrained - that reduces the feeling of role conflict. Respondents who can regulate the demands of both their inner needs and their outer environment are often the most successful at this tactic, a fact that Maya makes clear:

You know, I work at home a lot, and if I totally went into full-blown Mommy-mode everytime they needed me I would never get anything done. I would make myself nuts. I try to avoid that. So

what I have to do is determine: how great is their need. They can be very demanding and always want your full attention, but that doesn't mean they always need it. Injuries, blood, crying, you know, those are biggies and they are going to force my hand. But those are rare. Mostly its your usual run-of-the-mill "Can I do this", "Will you get me that", "I'm hungry", kind of need, and that can be dealt with by the "working Mom. Its just a matter of moving among roles, keeping one foot in the door but also taking care of what needs to be done for them. I've been doing this a long time, so I've got it down. I can take care of them and me at the same time. This may sound counterintuitive, but that helps me keep my sanity.

As a parent who works from home with two demanding children present, Maya is often forced to switch role configurations with little advance notice. She is quite adept, however, at making voluntary switches, pushing weight where necessary in order to retain her foothold in her work-identity while simultaneously taking care of her children's needs. Maya uses her experience as a home-based working mother to retain control over what could easily be a conflicting and difficult situation, one that could force her to relinquish her desired role completely. Because Maya maintains control of the situation by regulating the force of the motivating factors around her, she is able to voluntarily move from one role configuration to another and thus cleverly avoid the negative effects associated with role conflict.

It is in this way that choice and control are linked to the shifting of mental weight and the voluntary switching of role configurations. John nicely summarizes this relationship when I ask him how he manages the needs of his work, home, school, children, wife, and aging mother:

I am the "protean man". Do you know Lifton? You must. I change shape at will.

In this example, John summarizes the essence of voluntary push movements ("changing shape at will") while making reference to social psychologist Robert Lifton.

Lifton (1993) is famous for drawing a parallel between modern, multitasking individuals and the Greek god Proteus who was able to change shapes at will, from lion to fire to flood. In the midst of changing circumstances, Lifton argues, modern individuals adopt a “protean mentality”. This mentality allows us to shift our attention as circumstances warrant, changing form, as it were, from father to soccer coach to husband in the process. While many social psychologists and sociologists have suggested that our propensity to perform multiple roles and to multitask prevents us from establishing deep and meaningful connections with other people, Lifton defends our ability to recreate ourselves as situations demand, arguing that in a world of perpetual change, multitasking and role multiplicity are both a mirror of social reality and a standard for a reasonable life.

My data supports this line of thinking. To voluntarily move among role states is to push social weight to those cues and indicators that allow for the movement process. Shifting weight is thus a means of “changing shape”. As my respondents’ make clear, voluntarily making such adjustments is an effective means of moving among role configurations and of reducing one’s experience of role conflict or strain. While individuals may use temporal patterning or predictability to ease the adjustment process, individuals who can simply “go with the flow” – like Steve and Maya – are just as capable of adjusting their angle of vision and their sense of self-in-role. The overall implication is that individuals with a “protean mentality” are more likely to be both proactive and receptive to adjustments in the mental weighing of motivational factors. This receptivity allows for voluntary movements to be made among role states.

While this fact holds true, it is also true that any individual - even those who effectively establish a protean mentality and are capable of voluntary movements - are subject to unexpected pulls that involuntarily change their typological positions. This aspect of the movement process is explored further in the section to follow.

Pulled by Weight: Involuntary Switches

In contrast to voluntary movements, in which people choose to push weight from one motivating factor to another in order to switch role states, involuntary movements are defined by a lack of choice. Respondents who make involuntary movements among typological positions often report feeling “pulled” from one role state to another. Such movements are often unpredictable, unwanted, unintentional, or otherwise unexpected. As such, involuntary movements often lead to increased feelings of role conflict, stress, or strain.

To involuntarily move among role states is to find that the emphasis (or weight) one assigned to various social cues or motivations to action have changed. As I have previously indicated, when assigned weights change, so too do typological positions. The weight of cues and motivating factors can involuntarily change for a number of reasons. Situational factors beyond our control, for instance, can effectively pull our attention from one role indicator to another. Indeed, respondents most commonly report feeling forced to abandon one role typology for another by the necessity of responding to an unexpected interruption, such as a telephone call, an accident, or a sudden change in plans. Events like these can “pull” us from one typology to another by forcing us to

change the nexus of our focusing efforts. In the process, we must reevaluate our social positions vis-à-vis the newly weighted motivating factor.

This is not to imply, however, that all involuntary switches are externally cued. Unexpected internal reactions can be just as forceful as unexpected external events. Our emotions, for instance, often pull us in directions that we did not immediately intend to go. Recall, for instance, that in the last chapter Mike abandoned his work role and switched in to his role as a “homeowner” when he could no longer muster the proper mood to sustain a single focus typology centered on his work-related identity. In a poignant reference to the effects of involuntary mental weighing, Mike further reported feeling “bogged down” by his negative emotional state. In this case, the environmental reevaluation set in motion by Mike’s emotions effectively “pulled” him off of his charted course, forcing him to occupy a different typological position.

The larger point is that, whether externally or internally activated, involuntary movements include an unexpected reassignment of mental weight to role-specific cues and motivations. Once reassigned, the weight pulls you in its direction, much as a magnet pulls a paper clip to its grasp or gravity pulls you to the ground. Role players who involuntarily switch typological positions report a similar fate: that of being pulled by a motivating force or heavy weight. Like encountering a detour or a delay, a pull force is that which disrupts your travels and moves you in an unintended direction. It is thus not surprising that this type of disruption is often experienced as a stressful event, as we often experience stress and frustration when we are prevented from moving to places where we want to go (think of being stranded in an airport when you would rather be home or, better yet, sitting on a tropical beach).

While there are many ways in which actors can be involuntarily pulled from one role state to another, my efforts here will be devoted to examining the two most commonly reported types of involuntary movements: drifts and relocations. Respondents who tend to drift from one role state to another report a feeling of being slowly pulled by forces seemingly out of their control. Like a boat at sea without a sail, they may drift from a single focus to an overlapping typology, or back again. In this way, drifting is often experienced as a slow, almost imperceptible process of movement. Respondents who experience relocations, by contrast, report a feeling of being quickly and forcibly moved from one typological position to another. They feel themselves dramatically pulled from one role state – perhaps an overlapping typology – to another – perhaps a single focus state of being. It is important to point out, however, that in both types of involuntary switches, the movement results from a shifting in the weight assigned to various motivational factors.

Here Christopher describes how he can drift from a single focus typology centered on his work role to a single focus typology centered on his role as Christopher-the-housekeeper:

Sometimes I lose my focus and I don't even know it until after it has happened. I could be working away when maybe I need to get something out of my files or find a book with a specific reference that I need. So I get up to do that and the next thing I know I am sorting shoes, picking up stray mittens, and reaching for the dust-pan. I'm cleaning the back porch, and I don't even know why, but now that my attention is there, I have to do it. I guess you can say I switched roles.

Christopher describes a movement from one single focus role state to another, from his role as a writer to his role as the family housekeeper. The type of movement he makes is involuntary and unintentional to his conscious mind. Rather than a movement

made by choice, it is a movement caused by a drift in his cognitive and behavioral engagement. Indeed, Christopher switches roles when his engagement shifts from his work materials to the mess and clutter on his back porch. As the mittens and mess take on greater weighted significance for Christopher, his sense of self-in-role is pulled in the direction of this weight. This is indeed the very essence of *drifting*, wherein role players are pulled by the tides of their changing engagements.

Raj describes a similar scenario in which he switches from a single focus work role to a single focus leisure role while working on his computer:

What happens is this: I'll minimize my program and go to goggle something or other, only to find myself fifteen minutes later reading some trashy magazine article about Jennifer Aniston or Brad Pitt or something like that. Then I have to ask myself "How did I get here?" I'm sure as hell not working anymore, I don't know what I am doing. I just know I have to switch my attention and get my focus back. But its funny, you know, how easily you can find yourself in a different place!

Indeed it is! Like Christopher, Raj switches role states when his attention is called to a more heavily weighted motivating factor (in this case, an article in a "trashy" magazine). Although the movement is involuntary - in the sense that it was not made by a conscious choice or determined, goal-oriented decision - it is nevertheless made quickly and easily. Like Christopher, Raj experiences some confusion and dismay over the switch, but he does not experience undue amounts of role conflict or strain. Indeed, what he experiences is more akin to surprise than stress. This finding is in keeping with the findings of social psychologists and cognitive scientists, who have determined that high-level mental processing can occur outside of one's immediate sense of self-awareness (see Bem 1967, 1972; Nisbett & Wilson 1977; or Ross & Nisbett 1991).

These examples bring out an important point: drifting can be a calm, if confusing, experience (as it is for Christopher and Raj) or it can be a forceful and turbulent event, depending on the strength of the situation and the amount of weight given to the new motivational factor. Those respondents who drift calmly from one role state to another (as both Raj and Christopher did) rarely experience dramatic increases in stress or conflict due to the necessity of involuntarily switching positions. Those respondents who find themselves pulled by a more forceful tide, in contrast, experience greater instances of role-related stress and strain. Mid-level manager Oliver is one such respondent. Here he describes how he drifted from an overlapping to a single focus typology during a meeting at his place of work:

My role here is to play two roles, to respond to both management and employees, to be an advocate for both. So I try not to let my emotions get the better of me, or to take sides, any or that. I try to be an impartial mediator in discussions and disputes. I try to see both sides at once. It has happened though, and more than once, when I suddenly become aware of myself talking in a meeting and I no longer sound impartial. Especially I think when the discussion gets heated or personal, like when we are talking about somebody's health insurance or their need for emergency leave. In times like these I have found myself pulled to a place where I wasn't supposed to go. Does that make sense? I mean, the union has its own advocate, that's not my role. But I have become aware that I am suddenly playing that part instead of the parts I am supposed to be playing in the discussion. It can be really disconcerting.

Unlike Christopher and Raj, who calmly drifted in to different role configurations than the ones they were previously playing, Oliver describes a more forceful type of drifting movement. In Oliver's case, the tide that pulls him is more emotionally charged and turbulent. When Oliver gives more weight to the needs of the employees rather than the needs of management, he finds himself pulled by this tide out of his overlapping

typology and in to a single focus role state in which he does not wish to reside. Oliver further experiences the resulting change in role states as a confusing and conflicting change.

Because involuntary switches, such as drifts, are socially unexpected, the potential for confusion and strain is high. Even so, I have found that these types of switches are often made more frequently than those that require greater psychological or physical effort (such as voluntary movements among typological positions). The reason for this frequency is twofold: first, these types of switches are often triggered by situations outside of our immediate control; second, these types of switches are often triggered by a *lack* of personal control. Indeed, I have found that when respondents lose their sense of focus and determination, the result is often an involuntary, unpredictable drift from one role configuration to another. Mike explains:

I have no willpower. What does this mean? This means one minute I am working and the next my head is in the frig. If we happen to have cake, or, God-help-me doughnuts, then it is almost a lost cause. I can sit at my desk and work, but those doughnuts will call to me. Louder and louder until that's it, I go to the kitchen and get one. To make up for this deficit in my character, I try to keep working in my head while I chew.

What Mike describes is an instance in which he involuntarily switches from a single focus to an overlapping typology. Mike drifts out of his single focus work role - pulled by the increasing weight he gives to a box of doughnuts in the kitchen - and in to an overlapping role state, which includes pieces of Mike-the-systems-analyst and Mike-the-snack-fiend. Mike candidly describes this movement as resulting from of a lack of personal control – in this case, the control related to willpower. Just as it takes a determined effort to align one's goals to one's desired typological position, it takes a

determined effort to ward off an involuntary drifting movement. Mike is not successful in this effort. Thus his focus gradually drifts from his work to a box of doughnuts; his sense of self-in-role follows this drift.

Respondents also report feeling forcibly *relocated* from one typological position to another. Relocation is a sudden movement from a place of origin to a new location. Role players who are relocated do not have the luxury of a gradual movement period between role-states in the way that “drifters” do; to switch positions here, social actors abruptly readjust their role typologies, adding or subtracting roles as necessary, possibly against their will, in response to a heavily weighted motivating factor that demands their immediate attention.

External factors such as a phone call at work from a sick child, a knock on the door, or a crying baby are among those instances that may activate a relocation, forcing the social actor to “drop” one role-state (for example, multi-focus) and quickly move to another (for example, single focus). Consider also the role switching dynamics of deadlines, where time and space may mark the abrupt end to one single focus role state and the sudden beginning of another, whether or not we are prepared to make the switch. Similarly, unwelcome thoughts from one role may invade the cognitive pattern or behavioral performance of a separate role and activate an involuntary relocation movement. Respondents also report feeling pushed from one typological position to another by spontaneous and/or involuntary emotional reactions to stimulus events.

By far, the most common forms of relocation are moves from an overlapping to a single focus typology or from one single focus typology to another, although moves from single focus to overlapping also occur. Relocation movements are highly irregular - in the

sense that they do not occur at predictable times (whether measured by the hour or day) or manner – and are experienced as immediate (rather than gradual) changes in typological positions. Here Raj describes an instance in which he was relocated from an overlapping typology to a single focus state centered on his parenting role:

It happens often to me on the weekends, when I am trying to work and care for the children too. I can be focused on the computer, but it might happen that the little one demands my attention. Maybe she falls down in her playpen or has a diaper issue or something that demands I take action. That's when I have to let go of whatever I am doing. I just have to let it go and just switch into "Daddy mode". It can be hard because I can't control when and where it will happen and I can't ignore it either. I don't have a lot of choice. If she is crying or something, I have to go to her right then and there, even if I don't want to or am not ready to. And that is when I feel stress.

In this example, Raj was forced to shift his attention from his work to his infant daughter, in the process shifting weight from one motivational factor (his computer and his work) to another (his crying child). Raj perceived his relocation movement into "Daddy mode" as both involuntary and unavoidable and, thus, out of his control. Given the threat that an involuntary relocation presents to an individual's motive for control, involuntariness may strongly bias how an individual interprets and experiences the subsequent movement process. Thus it is not surprising that Raj feels an increase in role stress when he makes involuntary switches among typological positions. Indeed, the often unpredictable and involuntary nature of relocations marks them as the form of role movement that produces the most conflict and strain for role players. Listen to divorced dad Richard, as he describes an involuntary relocation from romantic partner to teacher:

One bad thing about living so near to campus is that I run into my students when I don't want to.

One time, I took a woman I really liked out to dinner. You know, it was supposed to be romantic.

I was trying to be romantic. We went somewhere nice, but not too expensive. We were all dressed up though, you know, we looked nice, special. Anyway, we are sitting at this table and a group of my graduate students walk in to this restaurant and gets seated in the table right next to us. They were all Hey “Dr. Mitchell” - is this your wife? What’s up? This is so cool” and all of that crap and I had no choice but to introduce “Lily” and then they wanted to know what was with the suit, what’s the occasion. As if that wasn’t enough, the next thing I know one of them is asking about a paper that is due in the coming week. After that, they kind of left us alone, but, you know, I was looking right at them and they could basically hear ever word I was saying to my date. So that was it. I couldn’t do it anymore. Richard the romantic was gone for good. He never stood a chance.

Like Raj’s situation with his crying daughter, Richard perceived the relocation movement he experienced from date to teacher as out of his immediate control. Control is often regarded as a basic psychological need (Alloy, Clements, & Koenig 1993). Indeed, I have found that a sense of control over the enactment of a role typology enables the role player to personalize and “own” the identity, to more fully internalize it as an authentic expression of the “self” (see also Gecas 1986). When Richard shifted his attention from his date to his students, he felt the shift in weight was unavoidable and out of his control. Because Richard experienced a lack of control in the switching process, he also experienced great difficulty moving back in to the position he was forced to evacuate. Indeed, the weight of the new motivating seems too heavy for him to move. In this way, the forced relocation movement between two single focus typologies caused Richard a good deal of distress, as he ultimately felt forced to abandon the role-identity associated with “Romantic Richard” against his will.

As both Richard and Raj make clear, relocations most often happen in response to unexpected interruptions. Interruptions force role players to immediately shift their attention from one motivating factor to another, as Richard shifted his attention from his

date to his students and Raj shifted his attention from his computer to his crying child. In the process, role players are often forced to quickly move among typological positions so as to better accommodate the newly weighted motivating factor. Here internet entrepreneur Wendy provides a further example of how interruptions can force us to relocate from one typological position to another:

I work mainly in the kitchen and I can see the end of our driveway from there, so I can see the kids get off the bus. I am looking for them at that time of day, I am working, but I am waiting too. My son came home last week, stepped off the bus, and just tripped and fell. He stood up with a bloody nose and tears running down his face. It was awful. I immediately snapped into Mommy-mode full speed. I dropped everything I was doing, and I was in the middle of sending an email to a customer. I ran out of the house and right to him and picked him up. I hugged him close. I took him in the house to clean him up. The poor thing. I was afraid he broke his nose. It was OK, but it took a lot of time and effort for him to feel better. And all that time, I really needed to be just his Mom, that's what I felt, so that's what I was, nothing else.

As was the case for both Richard and Raj, Wendy was forcibly relocated from one role configuration to another by an unexpected event. In this example, Wendy abandons an overlapping typology that includes pieces of her work and mothering roles and is dramatically relocated to a single focus role state fully centered on her parental role. Wendy's focus is pulled from one role state to another by the increased weight she gives to two motivating factors: her injured son and her emotional reaction to his injury. When Wendy's son took an unexpected fall that resulted in tears and injury, Wendy reacted both immediately and emotionally, quickly adopting a new perspective on her situation and her role performances within it. The pull of the situation forces Wendy to assign heavy weight to these new and unexpected motivational factors. In this way, Wendy

alters her experience of self-in-role. As is often the case when problematic situations arise, Wendy is conscious of having made this shift.

Wendy's example - like Raj's before her - brings out the significance of a specific motivating factor often associated with interruptions and relocation movements: children. Because my respondents are all working parents, each must continually negotiate the demands of (at least) two role-identities (one associated with work and one associated with home). Thus each of my 60 respondents reported being interrupted in their role performances by their children. These interruptions can take different forms – from in-person demands on one's attention, to telephone calls and other technologically enhanced forms of interruption (such as emails, text messages, and instant messages), to emotionally charged inferences brought about by thoughts or objects. Whatever the form, the frequency of these types of interruptions increases when one self-identifies as a primary, rather than a secondary, parent (that is, the parent who takes on the lion's share of childcare-related chores and responsibilities). As a single mother, Beth is one such respondent. Here she describes an involuntary relocation movement that took her from a single focus typology centered on her work, to an overlapping typology that includes pieces of her work and parental roles, to a single focus typology centered solely on her role as a mother - all brought about by a telephone call from her young son:

It happens sometimes when I am working in my office at the university. I pick up the phone and its one of my kids. I am still kind of just typing along or reading, whatever. But then, they come out with it, the reason why they called and it's usually something dramatic, at least to them. You know, "MOM! He said I can't watch "Star Wars" ever again!" or "MOM! "Jason" hit me!" Typical boy problems. But they are so insistent that I fix them that I get totally switched over to "Mom". They invoke her and it's like I don't have that choice anymore. They have that power.

The type of involuntary relocation that Beth describes is less immediate or dramatic, but in the end just as forceful, as the relocation movement experienced by Wendy. In the above example, Beth is ultimately forced to shift the weight she assigns to motivating factors from her computer and her work to her child and her child's demands. Her shifting role configurations follow this shift in weight. Because Beth is the primary – and indeed, only – parent to two children, she often cannot avoid these types of interruptions. It is important to note here that Beth also lacks the finances to pay another individual to take on some of her parenting responsibilities. Lacking both in control and financial resources, Beth feels her children have “power” over her role typological positions.

Primary parent John feels the same way:

Have you ever had a kid home sick and there you are making phone calls and trying to work and get things done, but this feeling of guilt just starts to sweep over you? You can hear them coughing and sneezing from the other room. You can see their sad lonely face in your mind even when they are on the couch watching a movie and you are in the kitchen. What can you do? You are there to take care of them. You can hold on to the other roles, you can keep working. But it's going to be tough and stressful and you are going to start to feel bad. Eventually you switch, you go be daddy and play monopoly and read Narnia for the 100th time and know you are going to have some serious work to do later to make up for it all, but that's how it is when you have kids. Their needs call the shots, really, not yours.

As the primary caregiver to his children, John, like Beth, feels that his children's needs at any given moment have the power to determine his typological choices. In this example, John eventually reassigns weight to the motivating factor that is his sick child as he relocates from a single focus, to an overlapping, to another single focus role typology. John's is an interesting (but not uncommon) example of a relocation movement

precipitated by the slowly increasing weight of a particular situation. In John's case, many cues remind him that his child is home and feeling unwell - cues such as the sounds of coughing and sneezing and the imagined image of a child's sad face. John is also aware of a shift in his emotional state. Rather than feeling content in his work, John begins to feel guilt over his child. The weight that John assigns to these cues simply piles up on him, until it becomes too heavy to bear. At that moment, John is relocated from one typology to another. It is thus important to note that it is not simply the weight of a single cue that can force a relocation movement, but also the cumulative weight of numerous cues, overdetermined by the actor.² Home-based employee Maya provides another example of this "overdetermination":

Oh, there are times, sure, when I get pulled in one direction or another. Sometimes it's not just one thing, you know, like the girls wanting my attention, but lots of things, that just happen one after the other until that's it, I'm done. Like a few days ago, I was working and the girls were watching TV before dinner. Well, they got tired of that and started to fuss a little, nothing I couldn't deal with. Then the phone rang and it was another mom from the school with some questions about a fundraiser they are doing. Still not too bad, I could get back to work. Then my husband came home early, and brought pizza. I told him just go ahead and eat with the girls in the kitchen and I would finish up and grab a slice later. But it was just all too much. The noise, I am used to that mostly, but the smell of the food and the fact that it was just like one thing after another, and well, the kids are in there asking where I am, where's mommy, aren't I going to eat with them. Eventually it just all caught up to me. I gave up. I didn't really want to; I didn't even really think it was my idea. But I left my work unfinished and let myself get drawn in.

In a similar vein to John, Maya experiences a relocation movement not in response to the weight of a single motivating factor, but to the cumulative weight of numerous interruptions which challenged and eventually overwhelmed her typological

choice and forced her to a new position. I found this type of response quite common, especially (although not exclusively) among the home-based employees in my sample. These respondents, in general, had to deal more often with unexpected telephone calls, deliveries, drop-in neighbors, barking dogs, crying or sick children, and home emergencies than those respondents who are employed outside of the home. The cumulative weight of such interruptions often forced a relocation movement, as it did for Maya, as the weight of the factors motivating the change increased. When the weight of these factors hits a certain threshold, the change in typological configurations simply becomes unavoidable.

We must always keep in mind, however, the fact that weight is variable. Indeed, even weight that is involuntarily moved - and that forces us to be pulled in a direction not of our choosing - can be changed. In this way, role players have the option of redirecting their role configurations by acting on the forces that pulled them off course. Beth provides an example:

I was at one of those awful faculty/student mixers. You know, when they pretend like they want to know we have lives outside the department. So, I'm an idiot, I brought my kids. People don't have kids in my department. So here's "Kyle", he's doing his thing, wandering around, eating the chips, being cute and precocious and I am talking up this professor. I really want to be on his team, so I am making like I am just so brilliant, you know, so capable. And here comes "Kyle" right at us, in his typical kid-gait: too fast and too inattentive. BOOM, he knocks right into this professor and spills his soda on him. I was horrified. The look on this guy's face was like I wanted to slink away and die. You could just see it, he thought I was an idiot of huge proportions. The worst thing of all: a bad mother! My stock fell dramatically. It was painful. So what did I do, I made a lame joke about children as "forces in motion that remain in motion until they meet an immovable object", such as a professor, and spill on them. He laughed and I swear I pulled it off. I think in those few

minutes I went from “promising graduate student” to “idiot mother” to “promising-idiot-mother-graduate student-with-a-sense-of-humor” and maybe saved my skin. He’s one of my advisors now.

Here Beth demonstrates that role players *can* retain primary control of a situation even after they experience an unpredictable or involuntary relocation. In the above example, Beth is unexpectedly cast out of her chosen typology by the weight she (and others) assign to her son’s unfortunate accident with his soda. Although the initial relocation produces strain for Beth, she is ultimately able to retain control of the situation and make a subsequent move to another typological configuration that works to her advantage.

Beth’s example demonstrates the fact that while relocations are typically involuntary and unpredictable movements, they do not exclusively *prevent* the individual from taking control and voluntarily switching typological positions. In this way, the unwanted disruption of one’s identity narrative may induce one to cast about for new plotlines, rather than simply abandon old ones. To the extent that role players are successful in “recasting” themselves into different typological positions, they can successfully regain control over the situation, the way Beth does. In this way, individuals can regain control of a difficult situation and decrease their experience of role conflict or role strain.

In this way we can see that the movement from one typological position to another is neither a permanent nor even a semi-permanent process. Indeed, rather than commuting in a sequential or stable fashion from one single role performance to another, I find that role players are perpetually adapting and discarding role-identities in a never-ending series of overlapping trajectories. Because people experience role states as a result

of *constantly* changing circumstances, any given individual on any given day may find themselves making any number of movements, both voluntary and involuntary, among any of the four role states. Further, they may make these movements – as Beth does – all in the space of a few minutes time!

While I find that all individuals are at least capable of the mental gymnastics that Beth displays, I also find that some individuals are better equipped than others to handle the necessity of change. Indeed, as we shall see in the next sections, those who move among role states with the greatest dexterity are often those who are in possession of high levels of certain social resources.

Switching, Shifting, and the Necessity of Social Resources

As we have seen, individuals move among role states by shifting the mental weight assigned to various motivating factors. These shifts can be made either voluntarily (and experienced as “pushes”) or involuntarily (and experienced as “pulls”). Movements among role states are further linked to a number of social resources. Because it takes resources to “push” your weight around, respondents who have the necessary resources tend to make more voluntary switches than their resource-poor counterparts, and thus experience less role conflict or stress with the movement process. Conversely, those who feel “pulled” in one direction or another often lack the necessary resources to assign weight when and where they choose, and often experience more conflict and more strain when switching role states.

In general, the greater the relative resources of the individual, the more control he or she can exercise over the movement process. To the extent that the following attributes effect our role typological choices, they can be defined as social resources.

Socioeconomic status

Socioeconomic status (SES) is a measure of an individual or family's relative economic and social ranking based on income, education, and occupation. (A fourth variable, wealth, may also be examined when determining socioeconomic status. Income, age, marital status, family size, religion, occupation, and education are all predictors for wealth attainment). I have found that an individual's SES is linked to the individual's ability to move among role states. Respondents with relatively high levels of economic and/or social ranking typically have access to a wide range of resources (both financial and other) that promote and support their typological choices. Given this access, these individuals are often able to make more voluntary shifts in their weighing activities, pushing weight to motivating factors as they deem fit. These respondents thus report less instances of stress and strain in the movement process than their resource-poor counterparts.

While most of my respondents fall within the ranks of the middle and upper-middle class in terms of income levels, occupations, and educational attainment, I refer to certain respondents as "heavyweights" for their ability to "push weight around" in a voluntary manner. (This phrase is commonly used in the vernacular to indicate that an individual holds the necessary social resources to make things happen, or "push their

weight around". In this way, a higher-up in a corporation, a particularly influential academic, or a highly successful trial attorney may be referred to as a "heavyweight"). I

The "heavyweights" in my sample are those individuals with secure finances and steady incomes who use the option of paying others to take over some of their role-related responsibilities.³ Many of my respondents, for example, make use of lawn services, household help (such as cleaning services, pet walkers, laundry delivery, or after-school caregivers), and office help to ease their role-related burdens. By essentially "farming out" role-related tasks to others who are paid for the service, these respondents can relieve themselves of the necessity of switching in to certain roles at certain times to perform needed tasks. In this way, respondents with the necessary means can increase the voluntariness of their role-related movements, thus decreasing the possibility of experiencing role conflict or role strain.

Our attorney Jan is one such respondent. Recall that earlier Jan stated that she did not think it was difficult to switch from a single focus work role to an overlapping role configuration based on her work and parenting roles. She simply changed her focus at the necessary time to encompass the demands of both role-identities. The ease by which Jan makes this voluntary movement is effected by two important facts related to her socioeconomic status: first, she runs her own office, and second, she employs a full-time nanny. Most working mothers do not have these luxuries at their disposal. her nanny would bring her daughter to her at the necessary time. Because Jan runs her own office, she can make the decisions as to when she takes a break, when she sees clients, when she answers the phone, and when she doesn't. Because the nanny brings her infant daughter

to her in predictable intervals, Jan is able to switch role configurations in a routinized manner.

I mention these facts because they undoubtedly affects the voluntariness of Jan's switching style. Without the option of organizing her work time according to her nursing schedule, Jan would likely be forced in to more involuntary role movements. Without the presence of the nanny to care for her daughter, Jan would be forced to focus her attention on her maternal role at times that do not run in such neatly organized or predictable intervals. In such circumstances, she may find that the weight of certain motivating factors (such as a ringing phone or a crying child) is *pulled* (rather than pushed) on to her plate, forcing her to adopt a configuration that she is unprepared for or unwilling to perform. In this way, Jan's socioeconomic status as a high paid attorney affects her ability to voluntarily push for one role typology or another as she sees fit.

In a similar vein, mid-level manager Oliver recounts for us why he thinks he makes more voluntary movements among role configurations at home:

I think I have a lot of options in terms of what roles to play when I am at home because I have a lot of help around the house, so there are things that I don't have to do if I don't want to. I don't take care of the lawn, we have a guy for that. And we have a cleaning lady who comes twice a week. So I would say that on average I can focus more on the kids and "Lynn" when I am home from work than I might be able to do without this help. That's not to say that I don't do stuff around the house, I do. If you own a house you know, the work can be endless, there is always something. What I am talking about is just options, you know. I don't have to immediately come in and go to the garage and get the mower out. Like that. I can come in and play with the kids, or better yet, my wife. I can do what I choose rather than having the choice always made for me, and this is nice.

Like Jan, Oliver's economic status allows him to increase the amount of voluntary role movements he makes as well as the types of role typologies he configures. Because he pays others to take on a number of responsibilities related to his role as a home-owner, Oliver is free to access other roles (such as father or spouse) that he finds more enjoyable. Oliver's financial status gives him this option, which would not be available if he could not pay for it. Without household help, Oliver, like Jan, might find himself more often pulled in directions that are not of his choosing. In this way, Oliver's socioeconomic status operates as an important resource which allows him to make more voluntary (and less involuntary) switches among role configurations, reducing the possibility of role conflict and strain and increasing his level of satisfaction with the movement process.

We can see this fact clearly when we compare the movement experiences of Linda and Beth. Both women have two children and both women have the option of working from home. Our married psychologist Linda, however, employs a cleaning service to care for her household. Single mother and graduate student Beth cannot afford such a luxury. The two women thus have starkly different reactions when I ask them about the necessity of switching in to roles related to household chores. Linda states:

I like to clean. I use it as a means of clearing my own head sometimes. But I should mention that I do have a cleaning service, so the kind of cleaning that I do is less demanding. I mean, I don't come home to a filthy sink full of dishes or a pile of laundry on the floor. So there isn't that kind of insistence that I switch in to that kind of role and immediately tackle those tasks. That way, I can do what I like – which is mostly dusting and arranging the shelves and things – and I can do it at my leisure. That's why I like it.

Beth has a different take on cleaning:

If I don't do it mostly nobody will. I get the boys to help, sure, but they are simply no good at it. What they think is a clean bathroom is not what I think is a clean bathroom. So, yea, I would say

that it is something that I just have to do, even though I don't always want to. I mean, there are times when I would rather be writing, or just enjoying my time home with the kids, but I am not doing that. I am scrubbing or vacuuming or doing the laundry. So yea, I would say I have to perform those kinds of roles – I call it the slave role – when I don't want to. What can you do?

Linda's description of how and why she switches in to a role related to household chores is strikingly dissimilar from Beth's description. The difference lies in the voluntary nature of the switching process. Linda, who relies on paid help to take care of the majority of household chores, finds that she can switch in to this role at her leisure. The switch is thus experienced as a smooth and desirable transition from one role configuration to another. Beth, on the other hand, has very little help, save her two boys, when it comes to household tasks. It is thus not surprising that she finds she must involuntarily switch in to her role as the housekeeper at times when she would rather reside in a different role typology (one that does not include this particular role-identity).

The link between socioeconomic status and role switching is not limited to roles performed in the home. As Andy makes clear, his economic position is an important factor in his ability to make voluntary push movements within his office:

Well, when I just started out, no, of course I could not do this so well. I worked for another dentist, whom I eventually bought the practice from. "Sylvia" worked here then too, it is where we met. But because I was not the boss, I could not so much choose how to manage that. The difference now is that I can choose, I can kiss my wife in the office if I want, I can flirt with her, argue with her, basically all of that. I can also be just a professional if I put all my attention to that. So, yes, it is a choice, I think, that I can make now that I couldn't always make before in how to manage the roles I play here.

In this example Andy makes clear reference to the fact that his change in economic and occupational status affects the way he performs multiple roles in his

workplace. Before he owned the practice, Andy felt constrained in his typological positioning. Now that he is the proprietor, however, he feels that the choice of when, where, and how to manage the mixing of his professional and personal identities is his own. If he chooses to push weight on to those cues and motivating factors that call to his spousal role, then that is his prerogative. If he chooses to place all of his mental efforts in his professional identity, then he can do that as well. Andy's status as an owner, rather than an employee, has increased his propensity to make these voluntary movements. It is in this way that Andy's socioeconomic status is directly relatable to his ability to voluntarily switch typological positions.

This is not to imply, however, that those respondents whom I have deemed "heavyweights" do not make involuntary switches among role typologies. They certainly do. Noone is exempt from the ringing phone, the knock on the door, or the many small events and mishaps that can occur throughout any given day and pull our attention from one place to another. Further, when these mishaps and unpredictable events occur, heavyweights are often unprepared to deal with the resulting effects on their role configuration, a fact that Oliver can attest to:

I know I have become spoiled because when I do have to come home and just immediately go take care of something that was not on my agenda, I can get really stressed out. This happened just recently, because we were having a party on a Saturday but it had rained all week and the lawn just grew like crazy, even though it had been cut. So I came home on a Friday at 6:00 and my wife insisted I mow the lawn. I did it, but I didn't want to, and I can tell you, I was not happy about it. I probably cursed under my breath the whole time I was mowing. And I have to admit that part of why I was so annoyed is because I don't think of this as my role anymore.

In this example, Oliver is forced (by his wife) to make an involuntary movement in to a role configuration that he does not wish to occupy. Oliver's socioeconomic status

as a heavyweight can do nothing to prevent this movement, any more than it could prevent the rain from falling and causing his grass to grow. What I find striking about the example is the fact that Oliver is so ill-prepared for the switch. Because he feels distant from the role in question, he is greatly annoyed at being made to occupy it in this highly unpredictable and involuntary manner. We can contrast Oliver's reaction with that of Beth, who also made an involuntary switch in to what she refers to as a "slave" role. Because Beth is less distant from the role she must occupy (indeed, she knows there is no one else to fill this role), she experiences much less stress with the switching process than Oliver.

I have found that heavyweights, in general, are subject to greater feelings of stress and strain in relation to certain involuntary movements than other respondents. Indeed, when the roles they "farmed out" (such as mowing the lawn or cleaning the house) suddenly come back to their plate and force a switch, heavyweights by and large experience high levels of stress and strain. I asked Jan, for example, what would happen if she found that her nanny was suddenly unavailable after she had started her work day. Her response was short and direct:

Oh God! Let's not talk about that.

Thus, I contend, that while socioeconomic status certainly plays an important part in the determination of role movements, the relationship is not as simple and straightforward as one might think. Those with high enough levels of this important social resource do have the ability to make more voluntary switches among role configurations. It also so happens, however, that these same individuals often find they feel highly stressed by the necessity of making involuntary and unpredictable movements. Indeed, they are often unprepared for the involuntary movements that

inevitably come their way. Because heavyweights simply have less experience with certain role configurations, they can experience greater feelings of conflict when things don't go their way. This is one reason, as we shall see, that experience is such a valuable social resource for any role player.

Experience

Experience, in the most general terms, is the process or fact of learning by personally observing, encountering, testing, or undergoing something, or the knowledge or skill that is gained by this process. How does experience relate to one's ability to move among role states? I have found that respondents who are experienced with the role movement and/or role configuration in question display the highest amounts of dexterity in the movement process, pushing weight to motivational factors when, where, and how they choose. Our experience helps us to know when and where we should alter the focus of our attention and the angle of our vision. In this way, experienced role players tend to make more voluntary movements than their inexperienced counterparts. Further, as we have seen, the more voluntary movements we make, the less constrained we feel and the more in control of the movement process. In this way, experienced role players report less instances of role conflict, confusion, or strain.

Family man and restaurateur Mel makes clear reference to the value of experience when I ask him how it is that he can move so easily among work and familial roles:

I almost can't remember not working here, with my parents, my brother, my wife. I am just so used to doing this that it just seems natural, and easy, to move among my roles. At one moment, I can be totally involved in a personal conversation with my wife, maybe even an argument – we argue about our kids all the time – and in the very next moment I can be dealing with the delivery

service about our meat order, or negotiating work hours with the staff, or talking to my Mom about Dad's arthritis or what have you, all while I am setting the tables up for dinner or checking the supplies in the back room. You just do what you have to do and change your focus when you need to. That's what I do. It's that quick, that easy, I think, because I am just that used to doing it, of dealing with everything at once. This is what I know how to do and how I know how to live. To do it any other way would seem strange to me.

While Mel routinely resides an overlapping typology at the restaurant he owns and operates with his family, he is perhaps one of the most proficient role switchers among the respondents I interviewed. In the above example, Mel clearly indicates that it is his extensive experience performing so many roles in one place that effects the ease and voluntariness of his role movements. Indeed, what Mel describes are common, everyday situations in which he moves from single focus to single focus or from single focus to overlapping role typologies. Because this type of movement is what he does on an everyday basis, Mel finds the necessity of realigning weight to realign his focus comes easily and naturally. In this way, Mel highlights the necessity of experience as a resource in the movement process.

While the context of Mel's employment is such that it freely allows him to make voluntary switching movements among various role typologies, I have found that those respondents with the most experience with the role configurations in question display a similar form of dexterity, regardless of socioeconomic status or employment context. In this way, I contend that even those respondents who are employed in highly structured or highly constraining occupations – such as high school teachers, ministers, and mechanics - are capable of making the same types of voluntary switches as respondents

like Andy, Oliver, and Jan (the heavyweights), *given enough experience*. In this way, one's experience can make up for one's deficiencies in other areas (such as in finances).

Bridget is one such respondent. Although Bridget works long hours outside of the home teaching in her local high school for what she contends is very low pay, she is, nevertheless, quite proficient at voluntarily switching typologies in what would appear to be a highly constraining situation:

Sometimes I feel like I spend more time in school than I do at home. Especially during the beginning of the year, all those parent/teacher meetings and back-to-school nights, or during exams. And its not like I get paid extra for the extra time, don't get me started on that. But that doesn't mean I am just stuck there in that role or that I can't do anything else just because I am at work. I mean, I've got so that I am just as good as the kids at texting under my desk! I text my husband, my Mom who is with the girls, my sister – also a teacher by the way. I have internet access on my phone too, so I have done some window shopping during exams, especially around Christmas. I can do a lot of things, which I guess are related to a lot of other roles, while I am technically at work. It's practical, really, especially when you have kids and your time is so limited. Its one way I have learned to cope.

As an untenured high school teacher, Bridget holds neither power nor status in her workplace. Unlike respondents such as Jan, Andy, or Mel, Bridget holds no ownership rights and can determine neither her daily schedule nor the behavior expected of her. Nevertheless, she describes a situation in which she makes a number of voluntary switches to other roles and other role configurations beside the one which is implied by her employment status, her occupation, her setting, and the presence of other role-set members (such as her students). When Bridget sends texts under her desk or uses her phone for internet access, she voluntarily shifts her typological position from a single focus to an overlapping typology. Much like Jan, Andy, or Mel, Bridget makes a choice

to change her role state, and then reassigns weight to the cues and indicators that will allow this change to happen. Indeed, she does it easily and often.

Bridget is hardly alone in this regard. Here Maya, who works at home in the presence of her two children and her mother (in what one might call a constrained situation), describes her ability to move among role states at will:

I do think it's easy, but I am really used to what I do. I'm on the phone with my boss while I am letting the dog out and changing the wash. I am proof-reading a document while I argue with the girls over why they can't watch "Cinderella" again, or finish off that bag of cookies, or whatever it is they want at the moment. I take breaks, I cuddle on the couch, I read them books, and I get back to work. Then the UPS truck comes and the dog goes crazy barking and I have to stop and deal with that. So, you know, the things I do on any day are both unexpected and not unexpected. I guess I am just used to dealing with anything. So I can do it without missing a beat.

Experience provides Maya with the ability to cope with change and adjust her role typologies to fit changing circumstances. That she adjusts so well under what would appear to be difficult circumstances appears at first to be quite amazing. But Maya is hardly unique. Experience provides interpretive schemas for perceiving and deciphering cues and motivations. The more diverse one's experiences with a number of role configurations, the more diverse and possibly complex the schemas for making sense of role movements. Thus Maya, who has years of experience juggling a number of diverse roles in a single setting, is capable of making a number of voluntary movements among a number of different typologies. Maya's experience with the movement process allows her to adjust weight among cues and motivations smoothly and proficiently. In this way, she moves among role typologies, hardly "missing a beat".

To fully appreciate the benefits of experience as a resource, we can contrast Maya's account with one made earlier by Jan. Recall that Jan easily and voluntarily

switches between a single focus role state centered on her role as an attorney and an overlapping typology which includes pieces of this role as well as her role as a nursing mother. In this way, Jan may appear similar to Maya, who also moves in and out of single focus and overlapping typologies in order to care for her children. Jan, however, is aided in the movement process by the fact that her movements are predictable (in as much as the baby nurses at regular intervals), by the fact that she works in a context in which she calls the shots, and by the presence of a full-time nanny. Maya, on the other hand, holds none of these resources. Yet Maya makes more voluntary movements with greater dexterity than does Jan, and, ultimately experiences less strain and conflict.

It is for this reason that I have determined experience to be among the most important resources a social actor can possess, more important, in my view, than even socioeconomic status. Socioeconomic status can relieve you of the necessity of performing some role-related tasks; experience, on the other hand, teaches you how to cope with all of your role-related responsibilities – as Maya can attest. Indeed, recall that while the heavyweights in my sample make more voluntary movements than other respondents, they also report high instances of conflict and stress when forced to move involuntarily. Experienced role players, on the other hand, often feel less constrain and more control in the movement process (as Maya does). In this way, individuals with greater levels of experience shifting weight and switching roles come across overall as highly effective role players.

Here psychologist and mother of two Linda makes reference to how her experience helps her control her emotions, and, ultimately, the movement process:

My teenage son often calls me at work, or sends me texts, even though he is in school and supposed to be working himself. A lot of the time it is to ask me for this or that, or can I go here

with that person, typical teenage requests that can't wait another minute, at least in their eyes. On more than one occasion, though, he has called me just prior to my client entering, and we have argued about whatever it is he wants at the moment. Heated arguments. Then, what I have to do, is really work at refocusing myself so that I am not in an argumentative, over-excited state when my client arrives. I need to show a calm and accepting demeanor, this is very important for my work. So I have to take control of my emotions and put that demeanor forward, even when my son is driving me crazy. I couldn't do that as easily if I were new to this game.

As both an experienced psychologist and an experienced mother, Linda knows how to take control of her emotions so as to voluntarily push herself to a single focus role state centered on her professional (rather than personal) identity. By putting forth the effort to align her emotions to her desired role typology, Linda takes steps to retain control over what could amount to a volatile situation. She does this by pushing weight on to the desired emotion, while minimizing her emotional reaction to her teenage son. Linda's experience with her children, her profession, and her own emotions makes this movement possible, highlighting for us once again the important relationship that exists among experience, control, and switching practices.

Before leaving our discussion of experience as a social resource, we need to touch on one more subject: gender. In general, I expected to find that the working mothers in my sample (women such as Linda, Beth, Maya, or Wendy) would experience more involuntary pull movements as a result of their gendered status as working mothers than did the working fathers in my sample (such as John, Raj, Steve, or Christopher). Because our current American culture has given rise to an "ideology of intensive mothering"--the belief that mothers (not fathers) should spend an enormous amount of time, physical and emotional energy, and money raising children (Hays 1996) – I expected to find that many of the working women in my sample would feel pulled in the direction of this ideology.

While some of my respondents did mention or otherwise refer to gender as a force or ideology operating outside of their immediate control, these respondents were the exception, and not the rule. By and large the majority of people simply did not mention gender as a motivating factor (one way or the other) in the movement process.⁴

At first, this finding surprised me. Why didn't a respondent's gender have a greater effect on their ability to establish and/or switch role states? Doesn't most of the literature on multiple roles clearly indicate a gendered difference in the role-playing experiences of men and women? What I have come to realize, however, is that, in my sample, gender is subsumed under the rubric of experience. Thus those respondents with greater experience in managing the demands of their multiple roles (including their gender-specific parenting roles), felt less constraint across the board than did those respondents with less experience managing their role configurations.

Most of the working mothers in my sample have many years of experience negotiating the demands of home, work, and children. As a result of this experience, the constant interruptions and shifting of role states that can be brought about by the necessity of "intensive mothering" is often experienced by my respondents as a "natural" or "inevitable" part of their daily routines. Because these shifts feel natural – or, as Maya once put it, "part and parcel of being a mom" – respondents are less likely to specifically focus on their gender as a reason for their role movements or to experience the fact of their gender as an involuntary pull.

In contrast, those respondents with *less* experience in their parenting roles were often more acutely aware of their gendered status *as parents*. These individuals (such as Jan, Bridget, and Adam) more often mention gender as a force that could influence them

to involuntarily reassign weight to certain motivating factors in certain situations. It is important to note that these types of effects are in no means limited to women. New father (and newly ordained minister) Adam explains:

This is how it goes: the service is over and it's the "meet and greet" hour. Now, keep in mind that at these times both "Laura" and "Tommy" are also there. I'd like to kind of be not just the minister then but the family guy too. Problem is, my parishioners don't always let me. I have had parishioners physically step between me and my wife so I can no longer see her, almost push her out of the way. Or they take the baby out of my arms, find "Laura" and give him to her. These are their not-so-subtle clues as to what they want from me, who they expect me to be, and how much of me they want in that role at that time. I usually don't have any choice but to comply, but it often upsets me. Especially when it comes to the baby. And I have to say that yes, it has occurred to me, that if I was a woman, the mother of this child, that wouldn't happen. People would not take a child away from his mother's arms so easily. But they will from a father. I'm new to this game, parenting, you know, so I have to say it took me by surprise. The difference in the way people will treat you based on this simple fact. I don't know quite how to deal with that yet.

Adam, in one of the most poignant references to gender made by any of my respondents, describes here a situation in which he feels that the public expectations attached to his gender were a strong factor forcing him to relocate from an overlapping to a single focus typology. The focused attention Adam receives from his parishioners pulls him out of his overlapping role state and quite literally forces him to relocate into a single focus role state centered on his identity as a minister. As a new and inexperienced father, Adam was not prepared to handle this type of forceful relocation movement. Thus the reaction of his parishioners both took him by surprise and greatly upset him.

Respondents with more experience managing the gendered expectations or gendered division of labor in our society simply experienced less stress, surprise, or

emotional turbulence as a result of these pressures than did their less experienced counterparts. Unlike Adam, these respondents have simply learned how, when, and where they are expected to overlap and how, when, and where they are expected to separate their role performances based on the criteria of gender. Those respondents who have come to expect gendered pull movements to occur for one reason or another (respondents such as Maya or even nursing Mom Jan), report less stress and strain than their inexperienced counterparts, as they have learned how to accommodate the “pull”.

In this way, I find that that experience operates as one of the most important resources a role player can have. While role players who are higher up on the socioeconomic ladder may sustain less interruptions in the continuity of their typological choices – they may, as we have seen, employ support staff who mow their lawns or care for their children – they also tend to have less experience dealing with the interruptions that do occur and with the movement process in general. Lack of experience, as we have seen, can lead to higher levels of stress and strain for role players. Experienced role players, in contrast, have the resources at hand to precipitate movements to their advantage, no matter what the source of the movement process.

Validation

Socioeconomic status and experience are not the only resources which aid role players in the quest to make voluntarily (rather than involuntary) changes to role configurations and avoid role conflict. To push weight to other role cues and indicators it helps if the push is seen as *socially desirable* or is otherwise *socially validated* by significant role-related others. No man or woman is an island, thus the views of others in

the local context often strongly affect the individual's ability to voluntarily move among role typologies. In a general sense, social validation refers to the way people regard themselves in relation to the social world (Hewitt 1989). Mead (1934) termed this inner voice the *generalized other*. By imaginatively "taking the roles" of others in social situations, we adopt their attitudes toward ourselves and thus experience ourselves (Mead 1934).

Beyond the immediate context of interaction, social validation allows us to gain a platform from which to view the self by constructing a sense of social order – a vision of society and its constituent groups, organizations, and institutions (Hewitt 1989). Social validation by key role set members of one's role behaviors, identity markers (e.g., use of jargon, attire, etc), and performance outcomes can thus encourage one to feel like a bona fide exemplar of a role-identity (Ashforth 2001). When role players rely on social validation as a resource affecting the choice of role states, particular role configurations become expressions of more general community purposes. In general terms: the stronger the sense of validation for different role configurations, the easier the movement among typological positions. Thus social validation emerges as another key resource in the voluntary pushing of social weight to switch role-related positions.

Here Dr. Joe makes clear reference to the fact that social validation helps him switch from a single focus to an overlapping typology with his patients:

As I walk through rounds at the hospital, I am aware that I am also moving through a number of social roles. I know my patients, and different ones like to see different parts of me. There are some who like to hear about my daughter, my family, there are some who like to hear about my RV and my travel plans for vacation, some – but not many – like to hear me talk about my penchant for word origins. I know who is who and I know who they want me to be. So when I go

in to their rooms I go not just as their doctor to talk only of their health, their progress, or their procedures, but also as a human being who can share these other experiences, and, hopefully, put them at ease. It seems to work very well. So, yes, I think I move among all these parts of myself when I am there by just being attuned to the people around me and their needs – kind of who they need me to be as both their doctor and their connection to the world outside the hospital walls, the world outside their illness.

As an experienced Family Practitioner, Dr. Joe is highly attuned to both the physical and the emotional needs of his patients. Here he states his belief that different patients find comfort from his different role configurations. All need him as their doctor, while some like to see him in the role of father, others like to see him as an RV owner, and still others prefer “Joe the etymologist.” Dr. Joe takes this preference and uses it as a means of switching typological positions. Because different patients validate different roles, he switches role configurations to suit their needs, voluntarily pushing social weight on to those motivating factors that allow for the desired movement process. In this way, social validation emerges as a necessary resource for voluntary push movements. Indeed, listen to what happens when Dr. Joe switches in to a role position that is *not* validated by his role audience (his patient):

Well, no, I don’t always get it right. I have gone in to a room and started talking to the patient about my own child while I examine them, only to find them scowling at me. There are, of course, people who just don’t want to hear anything about you, they only want to see you as their doctor. I have to admit, I sometimes find that hard. But I have to take that stance if that is what they want. I have to really work at just being all business with that kind of person because it doesn’t come as easily to me. It is not my typical bedside manner, so it takes some more effort.

In this example, Dr. Joe switches in to a role configuration that includes pieces of “Joe the doctor” and “Joe the parent,” only to find that the switch is undesirable to his

patient. Because he lacks validation for this particular movement in this particular circumstance, Dr. Joe must take steps to move in to another, more desirable, typological position. In this case, he must make an effort to switch to a single focus role state centered on his role as a doctor. Because his original switch lacked validation from his intended audience, he had to correct the movement process in a voluntary, yet effortful and constrained, manner. It is in this way that social validation strongly affects the voluntary movement process.

I have found further that the less experience one has with the role configuration in question, the greater the reliance for instrumental and expressive social support, or validation, a fact that Adam can attest to:

I would like to say that I can just keep all of these pieces of myself in mind when I want to, but I do find it hard. I know older ministers, more experienced, that do not have this trouble. I know I look to my parishioners more than I should. I mean, I take cues from them as to who they want me to be and when they want to see me in my other roles. When I feel that it is acceptable, then I express myself in terms of my marital status and my parental role, which are both very important to me, along with my duties to my church. But I have to say I am careful of when I include those parts and when I don't, and I do look to others to see if the inclusion would be acceptable, even when I feel it would be OK for me. I guess I feel it is just not always up to me.

Adam often desires to switch to an overlapping configuration of roles that includes pieces of his role as a minister, his role as a newlywed, and his role as a father. Because Adam is fairly new to all of the roles he seeks to perform, however, he relies heavily on validation as a resource to determine when and how he makes the desired switch. Indeed, I have found that social influence is particularly apparent to voluntary push movements when social actors are less experienced with the role configuration they hope to establish, as is the case with Adam. In a general sense, the less experienced the

role player and the more unique the role configuration, the greater the reliance on social validation to make the switch. Further, as Adam makes clear, when people don't invest in you, it becomes difficult to for you to establish your desired position.

What is interesting, however, is the fact that that social validation can come from a number of sources, and not simply from one's immediate audience (as in Adam's parishioners or Dr. Joe's patients). Indeed, I have found that my respondents are quite adept at constructing validation when the source may not be obvious to the situation. Mike is one such respondent:

You probably already think I am crazy, the way I manage my life, but I am going to tell you this anyway. I put a framed photo of Bill Gates in my home office. I don't have any office mates or co-workers here to talk the talk with or to motivate me to focus on what I need to do. And, you know, sometimes you need somebody watching you. So I have Bill Gates. And let me tell you, it's hard to spend your time in chat rooms or on auction sites when Bill is looking at you. He doesn't want you to do that. He wants you to get to work on fixing that program. So I do.

Because Mike works from home, he does not have direct access to a community of like-minded role set members or significant others who can validate a single focus role state centered on his work-identity. Yet Mike feels he often needs this source of validation in order to switch out of his leisure roles and in to his work identity. Because the source is not readily available in this context, Mike creates it. By placing a framed photograph of Microsoft owner Bill Gates on his office desk, Mike is able to construct for himself both a watchful eye and a source of social validation for his switching efforts. Mike makes use of this created source of validation to help him minimize the weight he gives to online leisure activities and place it instead on his work load, shifting his sense of self-in-role in the process.

Beth undergoes a similar process as she makes use of the validation she receives from an abstract academic community to voluntarily push herself out of her parental and housekeeping roles and in to a single focus student identity:

I don't know a lot of people who are working on their PhD and raising two kids alone, so I can't say I get a lot of support for combining these roles. Not from my parents, my sister, certainly not from my department, a little from my friends, but they mostly don't get it either. It's especially hard at home, if that makes any sense. I think it is because there is so little here that speaks to that other part of me and so much here that demands I be a Mom or cook or a housekeeper or something else. But, a lot of time I don't have anywhere else to work. Especially if it is a school vacation day or one of the kids is sick. I have to be here, there's really no one else. I have found it helps me switch in to work mode if I can keep an idea in mind of all the women who have come before me and really pushed to make their lives their own, even when it wasn't a popular thing for them to do. These are my people, because I don't have any people. If I think that these women want me to succeed, then it makes it easier to push myself in the direction I need to go, rather than just let myself be pulled in to some other roles.

Like Dr. Joe, Adam, and Mike, Beth makes use of social validation as a resource to voluntarily push social weight and switch typological positions. Unlike these respondents, however, Beth does not respond to the support of a particular generalized other. Rather, Beth is able to switch in to her student role in her home environment because she sees the role as belonging to a greater whole - in her case, an imagined community of like-minded women of which she is a part. Beth finds validation not in her immediate environment, but from this larger, yet abstract, academic community. Because this community is abstract, the generalized other that Beth keeps in mind as a means of focusing the self require both more prodigious feats of imagination and more explicit confirmation that a true organic community, where individual perspectives are integrated

in actuality (see also Hewitt 1989). When Beth matches her attention and behavior to the perceived goals of this imagined community (goals such as intellectual progress or integrity), her student role becomes a facet of a self whose value is recognized and validated by this imagined group. I have found that as long as the individual can sustain a sense of personal continuity to a generalized other or “quasi-organic” community - as Beth does here - he or she can keep this image in mind and use it as means of pushing the self to the desired role state.

Wendy reacts in a similar manner to the virtual community which supports her entrepreneurial enterprise. Here she combines this “virtual support” with validation from her children in order to voluntarily switch between work and parental responsibilities:

Who supports me in this role? It's a hard role for people to see. I don't have any actual store, I don't drive anywhere, I don't work set hours. I run the business from a laptop, basically, wherever I happen to be. So it is hard for people to look at me and know that I am working, even my family. Although they support me, they definitely do. Especially my kids. They love that I am home and they know this work keeps me here. So they are supportive of that. But I would say the most support comes from the online community, which is kind of crazy when I think about it. I mean, most of these people I have certainly never met and probably never will. Not my customers, not the folks who run the site, nobody. But this is where I get a lot of support for the work I do on the store and for my role as a business owner. Without the emails and rewards and stuff it would be a lot harder to feel like I had a place there and then a lot harder for me to deal with things. As it is, I am happy with the whole set up so I find it easy to manage my store and my family together. I go back and forth between dealing with the store and dealing with the kids, I just keep switching my attention around, and, for the most part, it's all good.

Wendy finds validation in her switching efforts from both her family and the online community of which she is a part. While her family represent particular generalized others, the internet community represents more of an abstraction - it is none

other than society itself made into an imagined community. Wendy fosters the evaluation of role configuration and movement processes not only by the standards of her children, but also by the standards of this very abstract generalized other. Because Wendy feels highly validated by *both* communities, she finds it easy to voluntarily switch among multiple roles by switching her attention to different social cues and indicators – that is to say, by moving the social weight she assigns to these factors.

A large number of respondents draw validation from abstract or quasi-organic communities, communities that do not necessarily include contact with particular people or settings, but, rather, represent an abstract group or idea in the mind. Jenna, for instance, draws support from the idea of an “artistic community” of which she considers herself a member. In a similar vein, both Christopher and Steve rely on the support of a literary community that exists not in actuality in their day-to-day lives, but in a larger philosophical sense. Editors and publishers make demands on their time and offer support (especially financial support) for their efforts, but it is more often the larger sense of belonging to something outside of the self that helps respondents like Christopher and Steve push weight around to reside in the desired typology. Christopher makes this fact clear:

I can do it easily, switch from Dad to writer because I know it is a valuable role, not just for me but for the world outside of me. Even when there is no money coming in, and no kudos coming my way, which, I have to say, is probably most of the time, there is a sense of something larger. I don't want to sound pretentious, but I do sound pretentious, don't I? But there is this thing we call literature and that is what drives me to perform as much as anything else. So, yea, I do it easily most of the time, because I know it is valued in this larger sense, even if I don't always see it day-to-day.

In a similar vein, ordained minister and family man Alex finds validation for his switching efforts from a higher power:

I am God's vehicle for my parishioners, my community, my wife, my kids, my family, myself. I am here to do His work and spread His love. So when someone needs me, I need to make an effort to be there for them. That can mean switching out of my role as a husband and in to my role as a minister at awkward times. Or just rearranging things at a moment's notice: taking a member of the church along on a fishing trip with the kids, taking calls from parishioners or others who need me when I am on vacation. Things like that happen all the time. But I know in my heart that this work is important, so I don't really find it stressful. I try to always see the bigger picture and not get caught in the details of, oh, but we were just sitting down to dinner, or what have you. I often have to let the details go and focus on the need. I can do it because I believe that is what He wants me to do.

As Alex describes it, he receives validation for his switching efforts not from a generalized or specific other or from an abstract community, but from a higher power. Because Alex feels validated in a deeply spiritual and meaningful way, he easily makes movements among different typological configurations, even if these movements come at "awkward" times or unexpected moments. He voluntarily realigns his focus (pushing weight as necessary) to reconfigure his role-identities to suit the needs of others. Alex sees these movements as validated, not only from his own point of view or the point of view of significant role-set members, but from the point of view of something much larger that exists outside of worldly concerns.

Clearly, validation can come from a number of different arenas. We have witnessed as respondents draw support from particular role-set members, organic communities, quasi-organic communities, abstract groups or ideas, and religious beliefs. The important point for us to keep in mind in terms of role switching is not necessarily

where the validation comes from, but that it does occur. As long as actors feel validated, they are able to use this sense of validation as a resource in order to make voluntary movements among typological positions, pushing weight, as necessary, to the cues and motivations that allow these movements to occur. Ultimately, then, it does not matter where the validation stems from – it can come from your children, your spouse, your colleagues, your friends, your parents, Bill Gates, a quasi-organic community, the virtual world, human history, or the man on the moon. The point is, as long as you have it, you can move with ease and avoid role conflict.

Adaptation and Cultural Organization

Having begun this chapter by arguing that our theories of understanding cultural organization need to be as dynamic as real behavior in order to more closely capture the intricate interconnections and contingencies that occur, my task in this chapter has been to demonstrate how it is that social actors organize role typologies through a process of *mental weighing*. Mental weighing, as I have defined it, is a means by which social actors sort and sift through contextual cues and internal indicators to focus on (i.e., give weight to) those cues and indicators that are in line with the desired role state. Heavily weighted factors, as we have seen, lead actors to role states (either single or overlapping) that seem an inevitable result of the assigned weight. When these same factors are less heavily weighed, however, different role typologies can be accessed.

To further examine this process in action, I have presented two different types of weighing activities: voluntary pushes and involuntary pulls. Each activity results in the switching of typological positions as actors shift weight from one motivating factor to

another. In this way, we have seen people attempt to minimize or maximize the presence of a single motivating factor in order to voluntarily push themselves in to the desired role typology (as when John pushes his children's finished snacks and empty juice boxes under the seat of his car so as to better focus on other role-identities unrelated to the role of parent). We have also witnessed as factors that previously held no sway over an individual suddenly change in status to a heavily weighted factor that holds strong and significant influence (as when Raj changes his focus to respond to his crying child).

The difference between these two weighing activities lies in the fact that voluntary movements allow role players to feel a sense of control over the movement process, where involuntary movements often indicate a lack of the same. Those respondents who are able to gain control and make more voluntary (and less involuntary) movements tend to experience less instances of role conflict, stress, or strain. How then do respondents gain control of weighing activities so as to reside in role typologies of their choosing? As we have seen, choice is indelibly linked to social resources.

Social resources allow respondents to make more choices in terms of when, where, and how they assign weight to the motivating factors that establish various typological positions. In this way, those respondents with the necessary social resources – resources such as socioeconomic status, experience, or social validation – are often able to make more voluntary movements than their resource-poor counterparts, and thus avoid role conflict. Lacking resources means that you can be easily pulled off your stead by heavily weighted motivational factors, and in to another typological position (perhaps one you did not wish to occupy). I have found that given high enough levels of important social resources, individuals are highly capable of making voluntary push movements and

avoiding role conflicts, even in situations and settings that would seem to indicate that conflict is inevitable (as we saw with Maya, who both works and cares for her children in a single setting). This finding is yet another testament to the chameleon-like capabilities of the average social actor.

Our ability to switch typological positions by shifting weight and changing our sense of self-in-role also tells us something important about the organization of culture. When individuals make movements among typological positions (either voluntarily or involuntarily) they necessarily transition from a state of mind oriented toward weighing certain expectancies, motivating factors, or incentives to a qualitatively different state of mind oriented toward differently weighted factors. In this way, I contend that it is neither the *depth* (an element's broad capacity to organize other domains of social life) nor the *power* (an element's ability to mobilize human action) of a piece of culture that ultimately denotes its influence over our thoughts and actions. Rather, it is the *weight* assigned to the cultural object by a social actor (or actors) under a given set of circumstances that determines culture's organizational influence.

I find weight a more effective metaphor for addressing the question of cultural organization for three simple reasons: for one, it encompasses the fact that cultural elements that are neither deep nor powerful can nonetheless function in a highly influential manner. Few would count, for instance, a box of doughnuts or a growing lawn among those elements that hold a deep or powerful cultural sway. And yet we have witnessed as elements just such as these hold strong and pervasive influence over what is arguably an individual's most important way of knowing and responding to their social world: that is, through their sense of self-in-role. Indeed, we have seen it happen over and

over again in the last two chapters: as respondents assign a heavy weight to a motivational indicator (such as a box of doughnuts), that indicator takes on a pervasive, organizational influence over role typological positions. In this way, the weight assigned to any motivational factor can thoroughly and dramatically change an individual's sense of self and purpose, even if the factor cannot be said to be (in and of itself) a deep or powerful cultural product.

Further, as we have seen, nearly any cultural element can be assigned a heavy weight. This fact leads to my second point concerning the value of weight as a metaphor for cultural organization: the fact that large changes in organizational patterns can result from the introduction or alteration of a seemingly small or inconsequential event. We have witnessed, for instance, as events such as the ringing of a doorbell, the barking of a dog, the crying of a child, or the reading of a text message completely alter an individual's role typological position. When seemingly small events such as these are assigned enough mental weight, the events can induce us to make large changes in the way we perceive and/or experience our social world, even if the events at first glance appeared to be inconsequential. This is yet another way that weight operates as an effective metaphor for accounting for cultural organization

Finally, because the metaphor of weight encompass the decision-making and motivational procedures of social actors (so often neglected in sociological inquiries), it has the capacity to address the idea of cultural variability or fluctuation. As I have argued, it is the nature of semiotic systems themselves, precisely as communicative systems, to generate multiple, overlapping, if locally systematic meanings. Further, because social life is multi-vocal, people necessarily keep multiple cultural meanings on

tap. Given these facts, the question of cultural organization cannot be fully addressed without some way of understanding how people switch from one meaning to another. The metaphors of depth and power, however, do little to address this important dynamic.

A metaphor of weight, on other hand, is precisely situated to encompass cultural variability. As we have seen in this chapter and, indeed, throughout this project, people are able to construct, renovate, navigate, move, and maneuver quite well in relation to the cultural codes and meanings that currently apply to them, changing meanings as necessary to reside in the desired role typology. Through a process of mental weighing, respondents not only choose among various cultural cues or motivations to action, they put these cues to use in various ways. We have seen, for instance, as Mike wears the same tie to different social events, assigning this object a different meaning as he goes, in order to reside in different typological structures (e.g., work-Mike, Romantic-Mike, and networking-Mike-at-a-family-wedding). We have seen as Maya gets down to work in a space that is her dining room, treating her dining room table as a desk until 6:00 PM, when she uses it serve the family meal. In these ways and others, we have witnessed as respondents use mental weighing to assign different meanings to the same factors and practices in order to occupy different typological positions.

I have argued throughout this project that it is precisely our ability to “think on our feet” in this way and assume a shape that matches the situation in which we find ourselves, whether we find ourselves there by choice or not, that is a hallmark of the modern role-playing dynamic. The metaphor of weight not only brings out important (and overlooked) nuances in this daily dynamic, it helps us, as cultural sociologists, to comprehend how it is that people can move in and among different logics of action and

assume different points of view. In this way, the concept of mental weighing help us to address not only the question of cultural organization, but the question of how social actors switch from one action orientation to another. It allows us to glimpse important nuances in the relationship between structure and agency, between our inner-most thoughts and the larger social world. Most importantly for my purposes here, it allows us to witness the cognitive adaptivity of the human mind in action.

CHAPTER 5 ENDNOTES:

¹ As evidenced by numerous experiments rooted in cognitive dissonance theory (Festinger 1957), individuals can be induced to make choices they ordinarily would not make – from eating worms to publicly advocating positions they abhor (Ashforth 2001). Such experiments are carefully designed to minimize the possibility of refusal, thereby creating the illusion of choice. The perception of voluntariness changes the perceived valence of the activity.

² I borrow the term “overdetermination” from Ross & Nisbett (1991), who use it to refer to situations in which the roles people play, the situational forces that are imposed upon any who choose such roles, the expectations that observers communicate to actors, and the commitments that actors make to others all serve to reinforce each other, contributing to the consistency and predictability of role behavior.

³ Of the 60 respondents in my sample, a full 1/3 (n=20) use this option and are thus referred to as “heavyweights”.

⁴ Interestingly, most of my home-based employees were men, who also took over the lion’s share of the burden of house and child care. I also found that many of the men in my sample who were employed outside of the home considered themselves primary parents. These facts possibly skewed my interpretation of how gender operates as a social fact in role-switching dynamics. Even if that is the case, the gender/role switching link deserves to be more fully explored in light of my findings.

CHAPTER SIX

Conclusions

I began this project with a goal of understanding how it is that social actors can accommodate multiple social roles without becoming incapacitated by a sense of confusion or a feeling of role conflict. I took as a starting point the fact that our modern social world is pluralistic. As such, it encourages us, as social actors, to segment our time and energy among *various* roles affiliated with *different* people, groups, networks, and/or thought communities. Thus it is that we may find ourselves, on any given day or in any given moment, faced with the challenge of performing a number of diverse social roles. One simple observation – that people can be mentally flexible in these performances – has driven much of this project.

While it is a simple observation that drives my work, this observation is deeply connected to the neurological functioning of the human brain. While it is perhaps rare for sociologists to look to cognitive neuroscience in order to substantiate their claims or theories, this is the route I have taken. Indeed, I have spent a good deal of time and effort demonstrating how and why cognitive researchers believe that we are capable of two very different forms of cognition (one automatic and one deliberate) located in two different regions of the brain (the neocortical and the hippocampal). Because our brains can process information either automatically or deliberately, cognitive scientists argue that rather than “cognitive misers” – unable or unwilling to cope with change - we humans are actually cognitively flexible, efficient, and adaptive beings. My job

throughout this project has been to link the findings of cognitive science to the observations of a sociologist.

I began this quest when I noticed just how well our neurological capacity for flexibility was suited to the structure of our modern social world. Most social researchers will agree that modern social life is one of movement and flux, and, as such, it demands flexibility from the individual. In premodern, “monocentric” communities – think of a village or a clan – an individual might place the bulk of their social identity in a single role or a small grouping of linked roles (such as implied by familial ties). The modern individual, in contrast, has choices as to his or her life path that simply did not exist for ordinary persons under pre-modern conditions. In contrast to traditional, monocentric societies, our modern, pluralistic social world encourages us to interact with a variety of role partners and to adjust our way of thinking and behaving so as to meet a variety of competing expectations.

The roots of this change are partly structural. Greater social mobility (as manifested, for example, in greater rates of immigration, intermarriage, or remarriage) inevitably produces modern affiliation patterns that, in contrast to traditional patterns, involve membership in more than just a single social community. As a result, we think, respond, and react to our social world not simply as bakers or smiths or members of specific clans, but as multi-national citizens, step-parents, or global employees.

Our multiple roles are also a byproduct of the fact that once private realms of life have become increasingly colonized by public organizations. For example, in the 21st century, health clubs, nursing homes, summer camps, day-care centers, dating services, food preparation centers, and so on have formalized tasks that were once performed

informally in the home or neighborhood, thereby creating roles such as “health club member” or “nursing home patient”. As the once private realms of life are defined for us by public institutions, our everyday existence becomes increasingly mediated through roles vested in organizational settings. This inevitably results in an increase in the number of roles we play in the course of the average day or week, and increase in the amount of shifting we do among our many role options.

Indeed, if we stop and think about how many roles we perform on any given day, perhaps the first thing to come to mind is how often we switch and shift among diverse role performances. We are partners to our spouses and significant others, we are parents to our children, children to our parents, friends, neighbors, employees, citizens. We are pet owners and wine connoisseurs; we are amateur astronomers, mystery writers, and budding artists. We can, if we so choose, perform any number of our roles simultaneously (consider, for example, the roles you might find yourself playing at a large family gathering, such as occurs at Thanksgiving or a family wedding). But we can also, if we so desire, perform each role in succession (playing, for instance, the role of employee *only* at the office, or the role of artist *only* when we are alone). Or we might choose to perform our roles in partially overlapping combinations (spouse/parent for instance, or neighbor/wine connoisseur). It is our mental flexibility that allows us to experience our roles (and indeed, ourselves) in these various contexts.

I do not find it a coincidence that our social world demands flexibility, and that we possess the neurological capability to respond to this demand. While a number of social theorists have asserted that the complexity of the social life space in which our roles are contained enables us considerable intellectual flexibility, my specific linking of role

theory and cognitive research is somewhat unique. I utilize the work of cognitive scientists not only to support the *concept* of intellectual flexibility (what I have referred to as the *chameleon factor*), but to stretch the very definition of a role performance so as to *account* for the impact of this concept on our everyday role performances.

In this way, I have taken role theory in a whole new direction. While traditional role theory – as associated with such figures as Robert Merton or Talcott Parsons - has tended to emphasize the ways in which our roles function externally to constrain and channel our behavior, my emphasis has been not simply on the behavioral level of response but on the intersection of behavior and cognition. Because traditional approaches to the study of social role tend to downplay an individual's cognitive ability in favor of behavioral expectations or social consensus, these approaches have great difficulty accounting for the variability and flexibility of modern role performances as well as the cognitive capacity of social actors.

Not so in this project. By treating behavior and cognition as *equally* weighted realms in determining performance outcomes, I have been able to stretch the meaning of a role performance to include 4 ideal-typical role states (single focus, behavioral overlap, cognitive overlap, and complete overlap). By exploring how people establish themselves in each of these typological positions, I have been able to attend to nuances of role performances that have long gone unaddressed. I have been able to explore, for instance, the unanswered question of how and why people switch among frames, logics, or schematic responses, as well as how people overlap these responses to experience multiple social roles simultaneously. Along the way, I have been able to demonstrate the creativity and cognitive capacity of social actors in response to socio-structural demands.

Simply said, I have been able to demonstrate the affects of the chameleon factor in action.

This unique way of conceptualizing and looking at role performances tell us something new, not only about individual level creativity in daily role playing experiences but also about the relationship between culture and thought. What we see when we examine the chameleon factor in action are not only the conditions under which culture both constrains and enables social action, but the fact that people can (and quite often do) use culture strategically, to pursue valued ends. Indeed, as we have seen, social actors can keep numerous scripts and schemas on tap simultaneously, can draw selectively from available cultural resources in developing lines of action, and, can, when necessary, mobilize contradictory repertoires across contexts. In this way we have witnessed not only the processes by which culture is organized, but how it is that people – through their mental flexibility - can transcend the biasing effects of culture on thought.

While this type of mental flexibility is often attributed to creative types such as artists, inventors, or innovators in various fields, I argue that the average person possesses this trait in fair abundance and can utilize it to manage multiple roles. Thus it is important to note that while I have focused my attention on a specific group of individuals – working parents – it is my position that *all* social actors possess chameleon-like abilities. Consider, for instance, that as modern social actors each of us potentially has as many social roles as there are organized systems in which we participate. One is a colleague, business associate, ally, or enemy in the world of the organization or the profession. One is a wife, mother, daughter, sister, husband, father, son, or brother within the realm of the family. One is a student, teacher, friend, or peer within the world of the school or college.

Establishing ourselves in these different positions is a basic sociobehavioral response to everyday life situations

While some individuals may choose to segment their roles into different performance realms – performing the role of employee *only* at the office or the role of pet owner *only* in the home - we must consider the fact that all individuals – regardless of their desire to segment or integrate their roles - can potentially find themselves thrust into situations where they are required to quickly choose among alternative roles in a specified system, or where multiple role obligations impinge simultaneously. This fact holds true as much for the average individual as it does for the working parents in my sample. We are *all of us* subject to external interruptions (such as a ringing phone) that disrupt our role performances, as well as internal thoughts and emotions that affect our focusing efforts. These facts hold true regardless of our socioeconomic status, gender, age, race, class, or geographical location. (Indeed, remember that even Superman in the Fortress of Solitude felt his thoughts shift to Louis Lane).

When we experience interruptions or changes in our focusing efforts, we often adapt our role typological positions (either voluntarily or not) so as to accommodate the change. We might experience these shifts and switches as large scale changes in our sense of self-in-role (as we do when we commute from work to home and shift from one way of experiencing the social world to another). At other times, however, we might experience these shifts as slight changes in our behavioral and/or cognitive response to a situation (as when we answer the phone while making dinner). In such cases, we might partially or completely overlap our sense of what roles we play in the particular situation. Whether the change in performance outcomes that we experience is large or small,

involves a large number of roles or only two, the fact remains the same: moving among role configurations is a *basic* way that we, as modern social actors, experience our social world and define who we are.

Indeed, the need to both perform and move among multiple social roles is such a basic part of modern social life that we have altered many of the physical structures in our environments to accommodate this need. Consider, for instance, the fact that most convenience stores and shopping malls include ATM machines, most supermarkets sell stamps, and that most gas stations sell milk, bread, diapers, and lottery tickets in addition to petrol and oil. While these structural accommodations certainly offer convenience to the modern social actor, they also offer a way for us to think and respond from multiple social roles simultaneously. We can also consider the facts that many new homes include built-in office spaces, new cars come with the option of built-in child seats (and, in Japan, built-in karaoke), and that on-site doggie daycare is gaining in popularity in both large and small corporations, as is the idea of having treadmills at work. In these ways, and in so many others that I simply haven't the space to mention, we have come to alter our structural environment so as to accommodate our multiple roles.

We need a sociological theory of role that can accommodate what these facts suggest: that multiple role performances are a basic part of everyday social life, and that modern social actors have the capability of performing a number of diverse roles, both successively and simultaneously. That is exactly what this project provides. As I have argued, cognition is the underlying mechanism that links culture, contexts, mindsets, and social structures. By directly incorporating cognitive research with sociological theory, I offer not only a new way of defining role performances, but a systematic means of

addressing the cultural practices associated with multitasking, movement, and fluctuation - practices that have long gone under-addressed by sociologists.

At the same time, I have offered a new way of conceptualizing cultural organization. While I have taken as a starting point the fact that modern social actors perform a diverse variety of social roles, I have also demonstrated that the corresponding variety of cultural repertoires available to role players are neither unorganized nor unlimited. While cultural sociologists have stressed that such repertoires may be organized according to such concepts as depth or power, I have argued that these resources may be brought together in diverse and variable arrays and organized under a rubric of *weight*.

Mental weighing, as I have defined it, is a means by which social actors sort and sift through contextual cues and internal indicators to focus on (i.e., give weight to) those cues and indicators that are in line with the desired role state. Heavily weighted factors, as we have seen, lead actors to role states (either single or overlapping) that seem an inevitable result of the assigned weight. When these same factors are less heavily weighed, however, different role typologies can be accessed. It is in this way, as we have seen, that the weight assigned to different cultural factors under different sets of circumstances allows them to interconnect or disconnect and thus lead to different typological outcomes. What we see in this interactant application is the fact that some cultural elements *can* be used to control, anchor, or organize others in a variable or fluctuating pattern. In this way, I have developed a metaphor for cultural organization that is as dynamic as everyday social life.

My overall project thus holds multiple benefits for social researchers. First, by stretching the concept of a role performance to include 4 ideal-typical options, I provide a

new way of defining social roles and addressing the concept of role conflict. Second, by defining the practices through which people establish and/or switch role typological positions, I provide a systematic way of addressing the conditions under which culture both constrains and enables the social actor. Third, by demonstrating how it is that people use culture to negotiate their typological options, I have provided a new metaphor for addressing the problem of cultural organization, one that directly addresses the concept of cultural variability.

Many sociologists believe, following Gramsci (1991) that culture embedded in everyday practices such as the ones that I describe actually *constrains* people's capacity to imagine alternatives. The project at hand, however, clearly demonstrates that people use culture both strategically and variably in their everyday experiences to pursue valued ends. As such, it demonstrates how truly flexible people are. Overall, then, I provide a rich vocabulary for sociologists to describe the processes and practices through which social actors negotiate their performance options. Along the way, I have described what may appear as cultural incoherence as *adaptation-in-action*. As I have demonstrated throughout, this adaptation is as much a cognitive as a relational reality. In this way, I have presented a true social cognitive theory, one which specifies cognitive and social processes and structures and their interrelationship, and which therefore encourages further dialogue among researchers operating at different levels of explanation. Indeed, the rapid development of this integration is one of the rationales for this project.

While I have focused my research efforts to date on a specific case and site (the mental management of multiple roles as performed by a group of middle-class working parents), the sociocognitive lens developed in this project can be used to illuminate many

different areas of social life. I am particularly intrigued, for instance, with the idea of exploring the relationship between technology and multiple role performances. While I have considered the relationship that exists among people and objects and how it is that people use objects to establish and/or switch role typological positions, I also believe that technology presents us with a specific type of object, and that this class of objects deserves exploration in its own right.

Technologically derived objects – particularly those in the field of communication, such as cell phones, computers, blackberries and the like – include a strong social component that affects change in the construction of social identities. Through the use of such devices, we increasingly find ourselves wirelessly transported to other social spaces which implicate roles other than the one we might be performing in our physical reality. In this way, we become increasingly immune to the boundaries and realities of physical space and more cognizant of our need to mentally negotiate our multiple roles. Therefore, while a number of researchers have questioned whether rapidly developing technologies *erode* our sense of who we are, I contend that our relationships to this class of objects can actually help *strengthen* our chameleon-like abilities. Future research would explore this assertion in more detail while also exploring the essence of the human/technology relationship.

One particular site of interest for such an exploration lies within the case of adolescent identity construction. As a social group, adolescents are particularly enmeshed in the use of new communication technologies, especially in relation to the fields of communication and entertainment. As such, adolescents, perhaps more so than almost any other social group, have become adept at using technology as a means of inventing

and reinventing the protean self. Consider, for example, that while the cell phone of a 40 year old sociologist may sit silent in her bag or unused upon her desk, the cell phone of the average 15 year old may hardly ever be out of hand's reach. In this way, adolescents have made certain technological objects their constant companions. Add to this the fact that adolescents frequently visit online chat rooms and internet web-sites (such as FaceBook or YouTube) which are devoted to the very concept of identity construction, and we have at our hands a social group that is very high in digital literacy.

I would also expect to find that adolescents have a high degree of mental flexibility, as the constant use of media and communication technology implies a constant shifting and overlapping in one's sense of self-in-role. Recent article in the *New York Times* and *Time* magazine highlighting adolescent homework habits support this conclusion. These articles described the average high school student as a multitasking individual when it comes to homework. Thus, rather than focus on one subject at a time in a quiet environment (such as a library), the average adolescent often chooses to listen to music on an MP3 player, text message friends on their cell phones, send and receive instant messages on their computers, run their web-cams, update their FaceBook accounts, argue with their parents, and eat a sandwich – all while doing their math homework in their bedroom! In this way, I contend, adolescents are true chameleons in action. Future research would do well to focus the sociocognitive lens developed in this project on this up-and-coming generation.

I am also intrigued by the possibility of using the Sociocognitive Performance Table and the delineation of the four ideal-typical role states that I have developed here as a heuristic which can be applied to other, more macro, levels of identity construction. I am particularly interested in processes of identity construction among social groups. Traditional approaches to group identity tend to “thematize culture as something that varies reliably among groups” (DiMaggio 2003, p. 279). By looking only for central tendencies, however, these approaches tend to obscure the independence of action domains and the interaction of traits and situations (demonstrated here to be vital components in the construction of social identity). By exploring the chameleon factor – the ability to adapt identity to shifting circumstances – in instances of macro-level identity construction, we are better equipped to explore the conditions under which social groups switch from one action orientation to another.

What types of macro level identities could one explore? Social movements present one such possibility. Social movements are defined as a collectivity acting with some continuity to promote a change or resist a change in society (Turner & Killian 1972). Social movements are further distinguished from collective action in their considerable degree of organization, emergence of rules and traditions, and stability over time. Social movements originate within a complex web, a web that weaves together structural and individual level variables and, importantly, social networks that connect the social and the individual. In discussing social movements, however, sociologists have more often considered the impact of social systems on individuals than the impact of individuals on social systems (Howard 1991). Yet I would argue that self change is an essential component of sustained social change. Thus integration of knowledge of

macrosocial structures and processes, microsocial interactions, and cognitive psychology can be beneficial in understanding how social movements emerge and grow.

Consider, for example, a movement such as the Green Movement – a movement of social change oriented toward ecological and environmental goals, such as clean energy, ethical consumerism, social ecology, and conservation. While the Green Movement can trace its roots to Enlightenment thinkers such as Rousseau in France or naturalist Thoreau in the United States, it is only in recent years that the movement has gained popular momentum. In the not too distant past, activities such as buying organic foods and clothing, recycling, and living a life aimed at reducing one's carbon footprint were practiced mainly by a small subset of ideologically bound individuals. In recent years, however, "going green" has become something of a mainstream cultural catchphrase. Thus we have seen the sudden appearance of such items as green cuisine, green homes, green clothing, green cleaning products, and green, fuel-efficient cars, as well as a plethora of magazines, web-sites, and news reports devoted to green practices. In this way, we have witnessed a large shift in the thoughts and practices of a social collective to a way of thinking and behaving that would have appeared culturally foreign only a short time before.

I would argue that a phenomenon such as this can only be fully understood by directing explicit attention to the experienced selves of individual social actors. Social movements such as the Green Movement seldom achieve substantial and lasting successes without strong components of personal transformation (Turner 1983). And yet, we know far too little about how people affect social systems through their individual decisions to engage in various social practices (Howard 1991). How, for instance, are

collective orientations to action related to individual schemata? How is it that different segments of a population acquire schemata at varying rates? What types of cues lead to the activation or deactivation of previously acquired, collective schemata?

To effectively answer such questions, sociologists are faced with the challenge of creating models that can conceptualize the cognitive underpinnings of collective action (DiMaggio 1997). The sociocognitive lens developed here is directly applicable to this endeavor. The sociocognitive model of establishment and change that I have developed identifies those forces that impel the individual to the redefinitions required to overcome the tendency toward self-definitional (and hence) social stability. As we have seen, such a lens directs our sociological attention to factors leading to change in the distribution and level of activation of cultural representations or schemata. By applying this lens to the practices that sustain a social movement, we can effectively model the relationship that exists between self change and social change, between micro and macro levels of identity construction.

It is also possible to use the sociocognitive perspective developed here to understand macro level changes in the identity work of nations. Like individual role-identities, national identities are highly constructed both through explicit messages and more subtle elements (such as anthems and flags). While we might have a tendency to conceptualize a nation's identity as a semi-permanent construction resulting from a state of stability, nations, like individuals, have the capacity to adapt to constantly changing circumstances such as implied in changing political regimes, economic conditions, or shifting levels of autonomy. At the same time, nations may hold diverse and/or conflicting conceptions of themselves, emphasizing one or another under different sets of

conditions or in different political circumstances. We can consider the emergence of capitalism after the fall of the Soviet Union, the emergence of the European Union as a supranational entity made up of individual nation-states, or the changing economic status of China as exemplary cases of this kind.

How are we to come to terms with the fact that a nation may hold both one identity and many, or the fact that nations, like individuals, can change their social persona? The delineation of the four ideal-typical role states that I have developed here can be fruitfully applied to the question of how nations switch from one politically framed ideological stance to another. The nations of the European Union (EU), for example, are by choice *both* separate entities *and* part of a larger conglomerate. As such, these nations can be said to reside in both single focus and overlapping “role” typologies. In a similar vein, China can be cast as a communist state which, given the right set of circumstances, takes on a capitalist persona. Given the possibility of nations such as China or the member nations of the EU residing in different typological positions, questions naturally emerge over how it is that nations can switch from one action orientation to another.

By expanding the concept of a role-identity to include the identities of nations, we can more precisely enumerate how a country can reside in more than one “economic state” and how it can move among and/or overlap these states according to a number of social, situational, and political criteria. By exploring the chameleon factor – the ability to adapt identity to shifting circumstances – in instances of macro-level identity construction, we are better equipped to explore the conditions under which such switches are possible. Such inquiries would allow us, as sociologists, to further itemize the

relationship between culture and social structure on a macro scale. Given this possibility, this project has a unique appeal that extends beyond the boundaries of a specific case study.

It is important to emphasize, however, that this project is not simply an exercise in social theory or academic concept building. At its most fundamental level, this project is about understanding how real people cope with the demands and pressures of everyday life situations. As I have stressed throughout, the necessity of performing multiple social roles is a common facet of the modern social world. The central working assumption of this project is that people can be mentally flexible in these performances. They can, as we have seen, both switch among and overlap various role typologies. In this way, people experience their social world not simply as parents, employees, citizens, or countrymen (each in turn), but, importantly, as *working parents* and *multinational citizens*.

At the same time, I believe our society has made it difficult for people to establish such overlapping role configurations. The perceived incompatibility of domesticity and careers, especially for women, is one such example (and one reason why I choose to interview working parents). Consider, for instance, that women have long been blocked from certain avenues of professional advancement on the ground that no one could simultaneously sustain a full commitment to occupational organization and to family management. At the same time, men have felt distanced from the domestic realm by corporate policies that maintain traditional assumptions about gender and childcare. My findings suggest that these roadblocks are not only unnecessary, they run counter to people's cognitive capabilities.

As we have seen, people are capable of moving among, overlapping, and managing even the most diverse roles in the most unlikely of situations. Those respondents who are most successful in these endeavors – and who report the least amounts of role conflict and strain – are those who are both *experienced* with the movement process and *socially validated* for their typological choices. Yet corporations do not typically treat employees like chameleons, but, rather, as pegs for a slot. A corporate culture that restricts people's movement among roles thus offers little space for individuals to gain the necessary experience, and precious little validation for the movement process.

I find this especially problematic for, as my research shows, movement is the norm of modern social life. As we have seen over and over again, it is stressful for people to isolate the self in a single role and maintain that isolated focus for long periods of time. Indeed, this is why I have conceptualized the single focus role typology as an extreme state – one that is difficult to sustain. Further, given the pressures and demands of a pluralistic society, it is simply more likely that people will move among role options rather than reside in a semi-permanent or stable role configuration. This project thus suggests a need for corporate America to rethink its approach to the issue of role multiplicity, for not only is it unlikely that people could reside in a single role for a sustained duration of time without experiencing stress and strain, people are simply good at moving among and managing diversity.

In recent years we have seen a slow change in corporate policy that both accepts and accommodates role multiplicity as an empirical phenomenon. We have seen, for instance, increases in on-site daycare, options for elder care and pet care, increases in

offerings of flex-time, and increases in telecommuting. I predict that we will see more changes of this sort as we come to culturally acknowledge both the necessity of performing multiple roles and people's mental capacity to manage these performances. If we fail to approach changes in corporate and cultural policy with respect to role multiplicity, however, then individual and social problems spawned by this neglect will certainly grow more severe.

By taking an in-depth look at the multiple role performances of the average social actor, we see how important mental flexibility is in our daily lives. By incorporating cognitive research with sociological exploration, we see how our brains are hard-wired to adapt to constantly changing circumstances. What we see is nothing less than our human ability to respond to an ever-changing social environment – the chameleon factor in action. By identifying this factor and by illuminating the points at which it comes in to play for the average individual, this project ultimately offers a new take on the way people really think and act.

Overall, I hope this project will be useful, not only as an illustration of the benefits of an integrated sociocognitive approach to basic sociological questions, but as an analytical tool. I know I found myself better understanding my own role playing capacities while working on this project. Rather than feel burdened by the necessity of performing multiple roles, I came to understand that I have the cognitive capacity to navigate multiple paths simultaneously. This understanding, in my view, eases the process of daily living. I hope my efforts serve a similar purpose for others who are similarly engaged in the performance of multiple roles.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Introduction to Respondents and Consent to be Interviewed Form:

Thank you again for agreeing to do this interview with me. Your cooperation is very much appreciated.

You are being asked to participate in a research study for my Ph.D. dissertation. Your participation is voluntary. You will not incur any cost to participate in this study, not will there be any payment involved. The questions I am going to ask you today are about your multiple roles of student, teacher, and parent. The purpose of this study is to explore the ways in which people manage their different roles and identities, both practically and mentally. Overall, there will be a total of 45 respondents involved in this project.

As you already know, your part in this study will involve an interview and the keeping of a logbook. The length of the interview varies tremendously, although pretests have shown that interviews generally last between 1 and 3 hours in length. In the event that we cannot finish the interview in today's session, I will ask you if we may continue it at another time, at your convenience. If it is better for you, we could even finish portions of the interview in the evening or over the phone.

In order to give you my undivided attention during the interview, I will be recording our conversation. Let me assure you that all of your responses are absolutely confidential; I will be the only person to know what you have said during the interview. The tapes of our discussion will be kept locked-up, with only an identification number on

them. Likewise, any paperwork for this interview will be identified only by an interview number. The master sheet matching interview numbers and respondent's names will be kept in a locked filing cabinet.

When the results of the research are made public, none of the actual names of any individuals will appear in it. For the most part, your answers will be combined with others' and appear as aggregated data. An especially insightful comment of yours may be quoted, however, attributed to you only through a pseudonym or descriptive phrase. For instance, the dissertation will read "Lucy, a research assistant and mother of two, stated the following..." "Lucy", of course, will not be the individual's real name. With this in mind, I hope that you will try to be as honest with me as possible throughout the course of this interview. Your actual thoughts, experiences, and feelings are the responses I am looking for.

All of these steps are designed to carefully ensure the confidentiality of your remarks. For this reason, I do not anticipate any risks to you associated with this research. Nor do I expect that there will be much cause for you to feel uncomfortable during the interview. However, if any of the issues we discuss is particularly problematic for you, this is a possibility. You do, of course, have the right to refuse to answer a question if you find it too troubling to discuss at this time. In my experience, however, that most people find discussions about their various roles and enjoyable event, sometimes even therapeutic in nature.

In a more general sense, your responses will help me gain insight into how people "switch" between various social roles, even when those roles are inconsistent for our

culture (as our many parenting and work roles). It will be my job to convey this understanding to others.

At this time, I am going to ask you to sign two copies of this document which I am required to obtain by the Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects in Research (IRB), an ethics panel overseeing all pertinent research projects at Rutgers University. Once you have done that, stating that you have consented to be interviewed by me, we can start with the interview.

Please note, according to IRB guidelines:

You do not have to be in this study if you do not want to be.

You have the right to leave the study at any time without giving any reason and without penalty.

If you have any questions about the study, you may contact me at my home telephone # 609-430-9311 or email address<karendlyn@aol.com>.

If you have any questions about your rights as a research subject, you may contact Laszlo Szabo at:

Rutgers University Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human
Subjects

Office of Research and Sponsored Programs

3 Rutgers Plaza

New Brunswick, NJ 08901-8559

E-mail: humansubjects@orsp.rutgers.edu

Any new information that may make you change your mind about being in this study will be given to you. You will get a copy of this consent to keep. If you sign

below, it means that you have read and understood all of the information in this consent form, and you would like to be a volunteer in this study.

I consent to be interviewed by Karen Danna Lynch for her Ph.D. dissertation research, as outline above:

Subject's Signature_____ **Date**_____

Principal Investigator's Signature_____ **Date**_____

This informed consent form was approved by the Rutgers Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects on January 8, 2003.

Approval of this form expires on September 6, 2009.

APPENDIX B

Interview Schedule

I. Background Information

1. How many roles do you play?
2. How often do you perform these roles?
3. What are the most important roles you play?
4. How long have you been playing these important roles?
5. What are the least important roles you play?
6. How long have you been playing these least important roles?
7. How do you introduce yourself to others?
8. How do people introduce you to others?
9. What roles are most important to your identity, or sense-of-self?
10. Why are these particular roles important to you?
11. Can you perform more than one role at a time?
12. Are you ever aware of thinking as if you are in one role and acting as if you are in another? Explain.
13. Do you ever have to suppress your thoughts about one role when you are performing or acting in another? Explain.
14. Do you ever find yourself thinking and/or acting from more than one role at a time? How do you feel about these moments?
15. Do you prefer to play one role at a time or to combine role performances?
16. Do you think others prefer you to play one role at a time, or to combine role performances?

17. How often do you play just one role?
18. How often do you combine roles?
19. How do you feel about keeping your roles separate? Combining roles?
20. Is it easy to combine your roles or difficult?
21. Are you aware of switching roles? (That is, of changing from one role to another?)
22. How do you become aware of a “switch”?
23. How often do you think you switch roles?
24. Is it easy or difficult to make these switches?
25. Are there times when one of your roles seems to dominate the others? Which roles dominate most often? Why do you think this is?
26. How do you switch out of a dominant role? How do you switch in?
27. Do you have any roles that you feel you are simply in all of the time? Or that only rarely switch on or off? Explain.

II. Practices

28. What role are you playing when you first wake up in the morning?
29. What role are you in when you go to bed?
30. What is a typical morning like for you? Afternoon? Evening?
31. Do you have any ways of keeping your roles separate? What do you do to try to keep your roles separate?
32. Do you have any easy of encouraging your roles to overlap? What do you do to let your roles overlap?

33. Do any particular objects or items lead your thoughts to any particular roles?

Explain.

34. What happens when certain objects or people cause you to think about one role when you are supposed to be performing another?

35. Do you ever work from home? How often? Where in your home do you work?

Do you have a separate space in your home set aside for work? Who is around you? What is around you?

36. How easy or difficult do you find it work from home?

37. Do you have any techniques or strategies that help you to work at home?

38. How do your family members, friends, or neighbors react to your working from home?

39. Do you ever perform tasks related to other roles when you are at work (for instance, making personal appointments, writing grocery lists, calling children's schools, etc)? How often do you do this? Who is around you? What is around you?

40. How easy or difficult is it to perform non-work related tasks while at your work?

Do you have any techniques or strategies that help you perform non-work related roles at your place of employment?

41. How do your colleagues react to your engaging in other role-related activities when you are at work?

42. Do you display pictures or other mementos of your children at work?

43. What do you think about when you look at these items?

44. Do you display pictures or other mementos of other family members or friends at work?
45. What do you think about when you look at these items?
46. Do you have any work related pictures or mementoes displayed in your home?
47. What do you think about when you look at these items?
48. What do you usually wear to work?
49. What do you usually wear at home?
50. Do you ever wear the “home” clothes to work? Why or why not?
51. Do you ever wear the “work” clothes at home? Why or why not?
52. Would you say that most of your work role requires your undivided attention, or can you be acting in that role while thinking of other roles/people things? How often does this happen?
53. Would you say that most of your parenting or family roles require your undivided attention, or can you be acting in that role while thinking of other roles/people/things? Explain.
54. Do you have a cell phone? How often do you use it? Who is programmed on your speed dial settings?
55. Do you ever use your cell phone at work for personal calls? Do you ever use your cell phone while driving? Do you ever call your work or colleagues from your home? While shopping? While out with the children? Explain.
56. Have you developed any particular techniques, ways of scheduling your workload or time, or sets of rules about family contacting you at work? What about for

work colleagues contacting you at home? Do these techniques or strategies work?

Explain.

57. Do you know different people associated with each of your different roles?

58. How often (if ever) do these people interact? How do you feel when they interact?

Explain.

III. Conflict and Resolution

59. Do you ever feel one of your roles is stealing time from another? If so, what do you do about it?

60. Does this affect the way you structure your time or the way you enact your multiple roles?

61. Do you ever have any problems with your family contacting you at work or your work associates contacting you at home? If so, how do you handle these problems?

62. Do you think in different ways for different roles? Explain.

63. Do you act in different ways for different roles? Explain.

64. Do you ever feel as if you have a different self for different roles? Or do you feel mostly unified as one self who play many parts?

65. Are you happy with the way you combine/separate your roles? What about your way of organizing your roles makes you happy? What makes you unhappy in your role performances?

66. If you could organize your days, your time, your life, in any way at all in order to accommodate your multiple roles, how would you do it?

67. Do you ever want to keep your roles separate, but feel you are prevented from

doing so?

68. Do you ever want to overlap your roles, but feel you are prevented from doing so?
69. Do you ever feel you have to suppress thoughts of one role to continue acting in another? Explain.
70. How do you feel about suppressing your thoughts or actions to accommodate the expectations of a particular role?
71. Is there ever a conflict between your role-related thoughts and your role-related actions?
72. How do you resolve these types of conflicts?
73. How do you think other people want you to resolve them?

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF PREVIOUS PUBLICATIONS

Some of the material appearing in this dissertation has been previously published, in whole or in part, in other locations.

The modeling of multiple roles and the Sociocognitive Performance Table have appeared in the following article:

Danna Lynch, K. 2007. "Modeling Role Enactment: Linking Role Theory and Social Cognition." *The Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour*, Vol. 37, No. 4: 379-400.

A partial description of the practices that lead to variations in role-identifications (drawn from a sub-sample of the respondents represented here) appeared in the following article:

Danna Lynch, K. 2009. "Objects, Meanings, and Role Identities: The Practices that Establish Association in the Case of Home-Based Employees." *Sociological Forum*. Vol. 24, 1: 76-103.

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