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Shifting Priorities over the Life Course

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Shifting Priorities over the Life Course:
The Changing Roles of Work, Family, and Leisure
in American Adult Self-Concept

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ABSTRACT. The shifting priorities of work, family, and leisure, in American adults' lives and their self-concepts were assessed. Secondary survey data from 3,617 American adults (aged 25 and older) in the Americans' Changing Lives survey were supplemented with qualitative insights from four professionals knowledgeable about work and community and with journalistic accounts about life transitions. Earlier in the life course (2002), work, followed by family and leisure, defined one's social identity (supporting Parson's social systems and Mead's self-concept). However, life priorities of Americans were redefined over a ten-year period (2011); family roles and leisure were the only factors that shaped their identity (supporting Elder's life course theory). These findings contributed to the literature on changing priorities over the life course. Future research is warranted on the place of health in shaping one's identity as well as differences in life course trajectories across social locations of race, class, and gender.

INTRODUCTION

It is axiomatic that what people consider important at any given phase in their lives, more often than not, shapes their social identities and that such priorities change over their lifetimes. For example, for many American children, simple pleasures like food, toys, and games might be their primary concerns. The priorities of young adolescents tend to shift towards socializing with friends, completing high school, and possibly obtaining a higher education. As they transition into young adulthood, finding a financially stable job and eventually a promising career become important goals. Eventually, there is the pressure to settle down, get married, and start a family. In late adulthood, depending on one's financial circumstances, retirement becomes the main priority. While these are ideal life transitions for many American adults, life priorities define peoples' social roles, their place in society, and their individual self-concepts.

A theoretical and empirical case can be made for a sociological exploration of how role priorities shape Americans' self-concept and the shifting nature of priorities in contemporary times. Such an analysis can offer an empirical test of the relevant social

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roles in defining one's social identity at different life stages. A focus on transitions in adult social identities is important not only for understanding significant social roles, it also can improve role performance for individual adults, their families, workplace, communities, and other social organizations in which Americans are engaged.

LITERATURE REVIEW

One's sense of self, and the factors that shape it, have been researched from various disciplinary perspectives. In the research reviewed below, four themes emerged: 1) work identity, 2) the role of family, 3) the importance of work-family balance, and 4) improving and redefining one's identity through volunteering and leisure activities.

Work Identity

A defining aspect of one's sense of self is, often, the person's work. In fact, Williams, Berdahl, and Vandello (2016), in their review of work-family research, found that the workplace had become an environment that overpowered other social roles in one's life and established identity and status. Americans' insistence on devotion to their work, or the assumption that one's occupational and personal identities are enmeshed, is epitomized by the question "What do you do?" (p.531). Commitment to work was of the highest priority for understanding individuals' sense of self and their position in society. The importance of work identity is not limited to American society. Using a sample of 529 German university alumni in diverse occupations, Hirschi (2012) confirmed the positive connection between one's occupational calling and an increased level of engagement and dedication within the workplace.

Scholars have also devoted attention to factors that shape an individual's work identity, satisfaction with their jobs, and overall definition of self. One's commitment to and satisfaction with their work have been found to be subject to change due to external forces, such as job insecurity. For instance, Reinardy (2012) studied the job satisfaction of 2,159 newspaper journalists who had survived a round of layoffs. Overall, strong coping mechanisms, job security, and deep commitment to their occupational organizations were important, positive indicators of job satisfaction (p.66). A key distinction was whether or not the respondents were planning on quitting their positions at the time of the survey; those who planned on quitting were significantly less satisfied with their jobs than employees who intended to stay.

Race, ethnicity, gender, and age variations in job satisfaction have been related themes in the research on work identity. Among a secondary survey sample from the 2010 National Survey of College Graduates, Hersch and Xiao (2016) confirmed differences in job satisfaction between highly educated white and nonwhite employees; not only were Asian men, Asian women, and black women dissatisfied with many aspects of their jobs, Asian and black workers had substantially lower overall job satisfaction, relative to

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their white counterparts (p.4). Given the implicit racial biases operational in the workplace and gendered inequities like the wage gap, such a finding was not surprising.

The role of work in defining one's identities has also been shown to change as people age. Based on a sample of 1,873 employed adults aged 17 to 81, Besen et al. (2013) studied how an employee's feeling of satisfaction with their occupational roles altered with age. Younger workers felt a higher level of enthusiasm and desire to learn more about their work. However, older workers who were closer to retirement were mainly concerned with their personal lives and relationships outside of the workplace (p.285).

Family Roles

Aside from one's occupation shaping his or her self-concept, life-cycle transitions from young adulthood to marriage and parenthood also play an important role in how people learn who they are. In their analyses of a random sample of 7,339 individuals between the ages of 15 (mid-adolescence) and 38 (young adulthood), Chen, Enright and Tung (2016) found that the development of individuals' self-esteem and sense of mastery over their lives were shaped by their marital unions and transitions to parenthood. Of the two transitions, being married was more impactful on one's sense of self than being a parent. To quote Chen and his colleagues, "whereas entering into marriage protects individuals' self-esteem and sense of mastery, becoming parents within marriages does not provide additional protections in their sense of self, compared with their single counterparts" (p.349).

One reason why becoming a parent was not as momentous as getting married was offered by Crocetti et al. (2016) using the conceptual tool of self-concept clarity; they defined self-concept clarity as the extent to which one's internal belief systems and values are defined and stable (p.581). In their study of 497 Dutch families, self-concept clarity was found to be unidirectionally transmitted from both fathers and mothers onto their children. It was their children, not the parents themselves, who were more likely to develop a stronger sense of self. Furthermore, adolescents looked to their parents' stable self-concepts to better understand who they were as individuals. Different parenting styles have various effects on how children conceptualized their own identities as they grew older.

That children were able to most directly establish their identities based on how their parents and families raised them was the focus of Yeung et al.'s (2016) research with Chinese families. In their study of 223 Chinese parent–child pairs, Yeung and his colleagues supported the notion that authoritative parenting contributed to strong identities and worldviews of children, regardless of varying cultural backgrounds (p.1987). When the child received less authoritative parenting than the parent claimed to provide, the child's ability to interpret others' perspectives worsened and self-esteem was reduced. But, children brought up by authoritative parents had developed a higher sense of trust in their actions and who they were as unique persons.

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Overall, family was a significant source in how people understood themselves as individuals in society. Not only does the transition from singlehood to marriage and parenthood impact a person's social position, parents are influential in molding their children's identity; and the cycle continues.

Work-Family Balance

While work and family roles are distinctly impactful on a person's sense of self, it is also important to achieve a balance between work and family responsibilities. In other words, the ways both work and family roles are interpreted and balanced help shape the stability of his or her sense of self.

Achieving Balance

To achieve work-life balance is not an easy feat for working adults who have familial duties to attend to when they return home. Matheson and Rosen (2012), who studied the work and personal life balance of 16 marriage and family therapy (MFT) faculty members, found that six respondents felt 'good' about their balance, six did not, and four were in 'the middle', or somewhat satisfied with their balance. In order to resolve their work-life balance difficulties, respondents reported taking the following actions: "temporarily reprioritizing their work and personal lives, scheduling full days away from the office, keeping a personal planner, and actively seeking support from others" (p.409). In a similar vein, Uusiautti and Määttä (2012) suggested "bend[ing] and adjust[ing] without forfeiting anything of primary value" (p.159) as an important method to achieving stability between work and family. Their case studies included two sets of working adults in Finland who had established a healthy compromise between their work and families. One set of married couples (n=342) concentrated on marital success while the other set of employees who had been selected as 'employees of the year' (n=8) described their solutions to combine work and family successfully.

Individuals' interpretations of their work-life balance and self-concept are also mediated by gendered social locations. Gaunt and Scott (2017) broadened the scope of self-concept research by focusing on role differences between working men and women with children. Among a convenience sample of 296 participants (148 married couples with children) in Cambridgeshire, United Kingdom, working men identified themselves as the 'family breadwinner', whereas stay-at-home mothers self-identified in accordance with their parental duties. However, if couples were dual earners, the disparity between occupational and parental identity was no longer apparent for fathers and mothers. In sum, while it is important to understand one's personal position, separately in relation to their occupations and families, there is still a scholarly need to consider gender variations in how people balance their work and family identities.

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Burnout and Agency in Resolving Work-Family Conflicts

The feeling of being 'burned out' as a result of not properly balancing work and familial responsibilities has been another important area in adult self-concept research. Difficulties in effectively resolving work and/or family conflicts can lead to negative health impacts on individuals, particularly an increase in stress. Jenull and Wiedermann (2015) utilized a latent profile approach to categorize a sample of 844 nurses who experienced stress due to negative interactions with hospital residents, family issues, and personal emotional distress; about 12% of the sample expressed high levels of stress within all of these spheres (p.827).

Fortunately, there are solutions, located in an individual's agency, to the burnout challenges that individuals and couples may face. For example, Weinzimmer et al. (2017) found that a key psychological resource needed to maintain a positive sense of self was emotional intelligence (EI). Based on a sample of 233 respondents in a mid-size Midwestern university, who responded to an online survey, the researchers uncovered that having EI, or the capacity to control one's own self and to deal with others' temperaments, emotions, actions, helped people increase their work productivity and decrease family pressures within their households (p.324). Having a robust EI contributed to a stronger feeling of control over one's actions, and consequently over their lives. Similarly, Pagnan, Seidel, and MacDermid (2017), in their study of 811 parents from the 2008 National Study of the Changing Workforce, found that respondents who felt they had agency over their life schedules were more likely to engage in health-promoting behaviors and activities, despite having more family responsibilities like childcare and eldercare demands (p.1595). Another example of personal assets is available in Haines et al.'s (2013) random sample of 289 police officers and civilian staff; they were either married or in a common-law partnership. The respondents who had positive, more than negative, core-self evaluations were better able to develop strategies to overcome work-family conflicts and to reduce burnout.

Redefining Self-Concept over the Life Course: Volunteering and Leisure

As people go through their life course, interpretations of their well-being typically become associated, less with work and family, and more with losses, such as memory loss and lack of control over their motor functions. In late adulthood, well-being can be negatively impacted by physical and psychological illnesses. Based on a sample of 96 older Italian citizens, Fastame et al. (2013) confirmed that adults within "the 65–74 age range [experienced] an onset of illnesses, retirement, a less gratifying social status, and a more limited physical autonomy" (p.746); as a result, favorable perceptions of themselves and their position in their surrounding environments deteriorated over time.

Fortunately, the quality of life of older adults, who had retired from full-time work, has been found to improve through volunteering and leisure activities; by reconnecting and forming new connections with their communities, the negative impacts of aging can be

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reduced. As activities outside of work and their families take precedence over the latter part of their lives, older adults are able to better integrate themselves into their broader communities by participating in outside groups and institutions; such participation not only helps individuals strengthen their own values and beliefs by aligning with like-minded community members, it also improves their own degree of well-being, and heighten or redefine their self-concepts. For example, in a sample of 572 retired Dutch volunteers aged 50 and older, van Ingen and Wilson (2017) affirmed the benefits of older citizens having a volunteer identity. Older retirees felt that their volunteer work was important because of a need to compensate for the loss of productivity they once felt in their previous work roles (p.40).

The beneficial relationship between health, both psychological and physical, and doing volunteer work has been documented in Taiwan as well as in the United States. Hua-Chin Ho's (2015) Taiwanese citizens aged 65 or more, believed that, in spite of their advancing age, volunteering could improve their intellectual development and widen their social connections. Another health benefit of volunteering in one's community was demonstrated in Thomas's (2012) study of 1,667 adults aged 60 years or older from the Americans' Changing Lives Survey. Thomas concluded that the more socially integrated a person was, the longer their life span. In other words, people who continued to be actively involved, by maintaining or increasing their social engagement over their lifetime, had a lower risk for early mortality than those with low and decreasing social engagement.

Leisure engagement is another tool found to improve well-being as people age. Adams-Price et al. (2018) noted that participation in creative activities helped seniors balance the gains and losses they later experienced in their lives (p.260). In addition, leisure engagements addressed older adults' sense of generativity and their concerns for leaving behind a future legacy or contribution, and in turn, allowed them to redefine their identities. The favorable association between leisure involvement and subjective well-being (SWB) was also found by Kuykendall, Tay, and Ng (2015). In a review of four decades of empirical evidence and conducting a meta-analysis of cross-sectional and longitudinal studies, individuals who more frequently participated in a diverse set of leisure activities were more likely to experience contentment in their lives, thus strengthening their individual self-concepts.

Future Directions

The research reviewed above offered valuable insights into how adults understand themselves and what is important to them. Overall, two major insights have been offered by scholars of self-concept: 1) work and family are important markers of self-identity, and 2) being involved in social groups outside of work and family are both physically and mentally beneficial for one's well-being. Yet, what is lacking in the review presented above is a simultaneous assessment of the importance of work, family, and community, as well as an analysis of shifting priorities over one's lifetime. In the research presented in this paper, an attempt was made to address this lacuna.

RESEARCH QUESTION

In order to expand the existing scholarly conversations about adult social identity, the concurrent, and the extent of change in the, impacts of work, family, and leisure roles on self-concept were examined. The formal research question posed was "how have changes, between 2002 and 2011, in occupational commitments, family engagement, and leisure involvement affected American adults' self-concept?"

THEORY AND HYPOTHESES

The analyses, presented in this research, of shifting priorities in adults' social identities as they mature, were guided by an interrelated set of theoretical concepts. The following overarching theoretical argument was tested: adults' self-concept is shaped by their role identities (Mead's Self-Concept, 1934:164) in critical social systems (Parsons' Social Systems 1951:25), and these role priorities shift over the adults' life course (Elder's Life Course Theory, 1998:5). More specifically, two related sets of theoretical arguments followed. First, that adult self-concept is the product of being engaged in multiple social systems, such as work, family, and community. For instance, as theorized by George Herbert Mead, "the individual possesses a self only in relation to the selves of the other members of his social group" (Mead 1934:164). In other words, adults are connected with one another through the different roles that they have in their families, at work, and within their communities. Second, following Elder's life course perspective, role priorities do change as their identities mature.

In his social systems theory, Parsons posited how work, family, and leisure activities become part of how an adult establishes his or her social identity. The nature of any society can be viewed as a system of interrelated domains in which "each individual actor is involved in a plurality of such interactive relationships each with one or more partners in the complementary role" (Parsons 1951:25). Typically, adults work to support themselves and to provide for their families. Working helps individuals understand their social roles as spouses and parents, and allows them to contribute to the overall functioning of their communities. Even as work becomes a time-consuming role that fulfills their economic and professional needs, individuals may also engage in non-work related activities such as volunteering and leisure. Scholars have defined volunteering to include the production, performance, and/or consumption of a symbolic social good or service which " enables people to 'act out' their values " (Wilson and Musick 1997:696).While volunteering helps adults attain cultural capital by living out their self-identified characteristics and beliefs, it also enables them to create strong social connections and give back to their communities. Not only do volunteer activities offer venues for individuals to express themselves and to attain personal satisfaction and enjoyment, they can also become a coping mechanism for personal role strain and role conflicts. In short, it is important to understand how people comprehend their identities and view themselves as part of society.

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While Parsons' systems framework illustrated a static analysis of how individuals understand their place in their communities, Elder offered tools to explore how adults' social identities might be subject to change throughout their lifetimes. In Elder's theoretical thinking, individuals use their human agency " to construct their own life course through the choices and actions they take within the opportunities and constraints of history and social circumstances" (Elder 1998:5). In other words, most adults have the ability to decide how their lives will be lived, and what aspects of their lives will be prioritized. As adults grow older, their sense of self might be reshaped as different responsibilities and/or activities become more important to them.

Using an Elder-Parsons-Mead self-concept hybrid theoretical model, two sets of hypotheses were proposed. First, earlier in an adult's life, their work, family, and leisure role identities, in that order, would be the most salient for defining their social identities net of age and sex (Hypothesis #1). But, as American adults become older, their role priorities will shift in their net importance for their individual sense of selves (Hypothesis #2). For example, once adults become more established in their commitment to their jobs, it was expected that their family and leisure role identities will become more important for defining who they are as social entities.

METHODOLOGY

A sequential mixed methods design, of secondary quantitative survey data supplemented with primary qualitative data, was used to offer a comprehensive understanding of the research problem posed in this paper. While quantitative data were drawn from a secondary data source, supplemental qualitative information was collected from primary interviews with professionals, knowledgeable about work commitment and community involvement, as well as a content analysis of several journalistic accounts illustrating life transitions.

Secondary Survey Data Analyses

Survey data used in this research were drawn from the Americans' Changing Lives (ACL) survey series, an ongoing nationally representative longitudinal panel study conducted by principal investigator James S. House from University of Michigan's Institute for Social Research.[2] A national sample of 3,617 adults aged 25 and older in 1986, selected using a stratified sampling strategy, with oversampling of black Americans and those aged 60 and older, voluntarily participated in the ACL survey. The first 1986 wave was followed by a second (1989), third (1994), fourth (2002), and fifth (2011) wave and covered a wide range of sociological, psychological, mental, and physical health items (House 2014).

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[2] The original collector of the data, or ICPSR, or the relevant funding agencies bear no responsibility for use of the data or the interpretations or inferences based on such uses.

Relevant to the analyses presented in this paper are the 1,787 surviving respondents (from Wave 1) who were re-interviewed in 2002 (Wave 4) and again 1,427 in 2011 (Wave 5); these were the two time periods covered in this paper. For the purpose of this research, only 1,293 respondents who had complete answers to self-concept-related questions (the main focus of this research) in 2011 were used. A majority of respondents were female (62.5%), were, on average, 62 years old in 2002, and about 66 by 2011 (Refer to Appendix A).

Primary Qualitative Data

In keeping with a sequential mixed methods design, the statistical analyses of the Americans' Changing Lives survey were followed with supplemental qualitative interviews (in person) with four professionals experientially knowledgeable about balancing work, family, and leisure. The four interviewees, who were at different stages in their professional careers, offered valuable insights related to the research findings. Interviewee #1 is a male vice president (VP) of a material handling company, who has worked there for twenty-eight years. Interviewee #2 is a female youth outreach coordinator (YOC) for a children's volunteer center; she has volunteered at this organization for five years and has been employed for twelve. Interviewee #3 is a female career development specialist (Career Specialist) at an accredited four year university's career center; she has worked at this institution for over a year. Interviewee #4 is a female Controller (Chief of Financial Operations or CFO), of a material handling company; she has twenty years of experience as a Controller, but has worked at this company for over a year. All participants were asked a series of open-ended questions about their thoughts on how their sense of self was impacted by their commitments to work, family, and leisure. The interview protocol and consent forms are available in Appendix B.

In addition to the in-person interviews, a content analysis of journalistic accounts of the life stories of a few well known and non-celebrity American adults was conducted to illustrate the statistical findings. Two public figures (Bill Gates and Oprah Winfrey) who have been profiled by journalists (in *The Telegraph* and *The Singju Post*) were selected. Gates and Winfrey were chosen because their stories reflect ideal life trajectories. Both had strong occupational identities during their working lives. However, Gates's life followed the transitions modelled in this analysis, from work to family and philanthropy. Winfrey's life story deviated from typical chronological life transitions. In addition, obituaries of two non-celebrity American adults (Ron Blick Blickensderfer and Thomas James O'Neil), found in *The East Bay Times* and *The Santa Barbara News-Press*, were utilized to diversify the sources of qualitative data. While Winfrey's current life course reflected the 2002 statistical findings, the story lines of Gates, Blickensderfer, and O'Neil offered support for the shifting priorities from 2002 to 2011.

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DATA ANALYSES: SURVEY AND QUALITATIVE INSIGHTS

Three levels of statistical data analysis were used to examine the question about shifting priorities in defining self-identity. A portrait of the survey research sample with regard to their multiple role identities, which was drawn using univariate analyses, was useful in setting the context for further explorations of the research question at hand. Bivariate analyses of relationships among role identities offered preliminary glimpses into the potential impacts of occupational commitment, family satisfaction, and leisure involvement on American adults' self-concept. The bivariate relationships were retested using multivariate regression analyses. It was in the multivariate analyses that the changing net impacts of occupational commitment, family satisfaction, and leisure involvement were identified.

Operationalization and Descriptive Analyses

In the following section, a descriptive profile of the ACL sample, in 2002 and 2011, on their self-concept, occupational commitment, family satisfaction, and leisure involvement was developed. During this ten-year period, respondents had a relatively strong self-concept, strong commitment to their work and families, and were moderately involved in leisure activities.

Self-Concept

American adults had strong, positive perceptions of themselves and of their lives in 2002 (Table 1.A.); the mean on the Index of Self-Concept was 24.69 (sd=3.22) on a range of 7-29. About ten years later in 2011, even though there was a slight difference in how they saw themselves, respondents still viewed themselves favorably; the mean on the Index of Self-Concept in 2011 was 24.19 (sd=3.35) on a range of 9-29. Some specifics: in 2002, a majority of participants strongly agreed (61.9%) that they had a positive attitude toward themselves. However, in 2011, 57.4% had a positive attitude, indicating that respondents' self-concept was still strong in 2011, but not as it once was in 2002.

Table 1.A. Self-Concept
Americans' Changing Lives (ACL) Survey – Wave IV (2002) and Wave V (2011)[1]

Concept	Indicators	Values and Responses	Statistics	
			2002 **(n=1658-1681)**	**2011** **(n=1308-1318)**
Self-Concept	V.12135 /[2] V.15301. Recoded_ Life Satisfaction	1 Not at all satisfied 2 Not very satisfied 3 Somewhat satisfied 4 Very satisfied 5 Completely satisfied	1.5% 4.2 31.9 41.6 20.8	2.1%*** 3.7 32.2 38.6 23.4
	V.12136/V.15302 Reversed_LOT1.Life Optimism1. Always Optimistic about Future	1 Disagree strongly 2 Disagree somewhat 3 Agree somewhat 4 Agree strongly	2.7% 10.3 45.5 41.5	3.5%*** 8.6 50.0 37.9
	V.12139/V.15305 SlfEst3.Self-Esteem3.Inclined to Feel I Am Failure.	1 Agree strongly 2 Agree somewhat 3 Disagree somewhat 4 Disagree strongly	1.1% 4.5 15.4 79.0	2.3%*** 4.6 14.9 78.1
	V.12140)/V.15306 Recoded_SlfEst6. Self-esteem6. Take positive attitude toward myself	1 Disagree strongly 2 Disagree somewhat 3 Agree somewhat 4 Agree strongly	2.8% 5.7 29.6 61.9	2.7%*** 5.5 34.4 57.4%
	V.12142/V.15307 SLFEST10.Self-Esteem10.I think I am no good at all	1 Agree strongly 2 Agree somewhat 3 Disagree somewhat 4 Disagree strongly	3.0% 9.0 14.6 73.5	3.3%*** 8.7 15.2 72.7
	V.12561 W4.P9b.Recoded_Meaning2.I have a sense of direction and purpose in life (R's life in general)	1 Disagree strongly 2 Disagree somewhat 3 Agree somewhat 4 Agree strongly	3.2% 6.5 27.5 62.8	N/A
	V16216: W5.HOPELES2. Future seem hopeless to me	1 Agree strongly 2 Agree somewhat 3 Disagree somewhat 4 Disagree strongly	N/A	6.9% 20.0 26.5 46.6
	V.12145/V.15309 Recoded_PrlnMst6. Mastery 6.I can do anything I set my mind to do	1 Disagree strongly 2 Disagree somewhat 3 Agree somewhat 4 Agree strongly	4.0% 10.0 35.3 50.7	4.0%*** 8.6 40.2 47.3
	Index of Self-Concept	$\bar{x}$ (s) Min-Max (n)	24.69 (3.2)[3] 7-29 (1632)	24.19 (3.4)[4] 9-29 (1293)

[1] Although indicators for 2002 and 2011 consist of slightly different indicators, difference in their means is the same;
[2] Left Variable Name = 2002 (Wave 4); Right Variable Name = 2011 (Wave 5);
[3] IndexofSelfConcept_2002 = Recoded_Life Satisfaction + Reverse_LOT + Recoded_SlfEst6 + Recoded_PrlnMst6 + W4_Recoded_Meaning2 + (V.12139) SlfEst3. + (V.12142) SLFEST10; Among these indicators, correlation values are between 0.17*** and 0.41***;(*** $p <= .001$);
[4] IndexofSelf-Concept_2011 = Reversed_LifeSatisfaction + W5_Recoded_LOT1 + W5_Reversed_SlfEst6 + W5_Recoded_PrlnMst6 + (V.15305) SlfEst3 + (V.15307) SlfEst10 + (V.16216) HOPELES2. Among these indicators, correlation values are between 0.19*** and 0.45***; (*** $p <= .001$).

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Occupational Commitments

Of the three role identities that were theorized to shape how individuals self-identified themselves, occupational commitment was the first to be explored (Table 1.B). Not only did American adults maintain strong self-concepts, but their work commitments remained strong as well. In 2002, most respondents felt very satisfied with their jobs (69.9%), whereas in 2011, more American adults were satisfied with their jobs (72.6%). Overall, a majority of American adults in 2002 had a strong commitment to their work; the mean (standard deviation) on the Index of Occupational Commitment in 2002 was 21.12 on a range of 11-25. Ten years later, in 2011, American adults had only a slightly weaker work commitment; on a range of 13-27, the mean (standard deviation) of the Index of Occupational Commitment in 2011 was 21.59.

Table 1.B. Occupational Commitments
Americans' Changing Lives (ACL) Survey – Wave IV (2002) and Wave V (2011)

Concept	Dimensions	Indicators	Values & Responses	Statistics	
				2002 (n=819-858)	**2011 (n=566-598)**
Occupational Commitment	Tenure	V.12377/V.16114 How Long Has R Worked at present Job- Unit = Wks/Mos/Yrs	1 Weeks 2 Months 3 Years	2.1% 8.1 89.8	2.3% 5.9 91.8
	Satisfaction	V.12384/V.16125 Reversed_EnjoyWrk. How much does R enjoy doing that kind of work	1 Not at all 2 A little 3 Some 4 Quite a bit 5 A great deal	1.0% 1.9 13.8 29.7 53.6	0.8%[***] 1.2 11.2 34.1 52.7
		V.12386/V.16127 Reversed_SatisWrk. How satisfied are you with your job	1 Not at all satisfied 2 Not very satisfied 3 Somewhat satisfied 4 Very satisfied 5 Completely satisfied	1.6% 2.1 26.4 44.7 25.2	0.8%[***] 2.2 24.4 49.2 23.4
	Strain	V.12393 W4. EmpStrn1.My job leaves me feeling too tired and stressed after work to participate in activities with friends/family	1 Agree strongly 2 Agree somewhat 3 Disagree somewhat 4 Disagree strongly	7.0% 25.3 29.1 38.7	N/A
		V.16140 W5.EMPSTRN1.Job leaves R too tired for family activities	1 Agree strongly 2 Agree somewhat 3 Disagree somewhat 4 Disagree strongly	N/A	4.9% 20.1 32.5 42.4
		V.16141 W5.EMPSTRN2.Job leaves R too tired for community activities	1 Agree strongly 2 Agree somewhat 3 Disagree somewhat 4 Disagree strongly	N/A	4.8% 18.4 32.0 44.9
		Index of Occupational Commitment	$\bar{x}$ (s) Min-Max (n)	21.12[1] (2.6) 11-25 (536)	21.59[2] (2.6) 13-27 (343)

[1] IndexofOccupationalCommitment_2002 = (V.12377) How Long Has R + Recoded_EnjoyWrk + Recoded_SatisWrk + (V.12393) EmpStrn1;
[2] IndexofOccupationalCommitment_2011 = (V.16114) How Long Has R + W5_Reversed_EnjoyWrk + W5_Reversed_SatisWrk + W5_Reversed_EMPSTRN1 + W5_Reversed_EMPSTRN2.

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Family Satisfaction

The second institution that influences adult identity is family. Not only did American adults have strong self-concepts and work commitments, they also felt very satisfied with their family dynamics and their roles as spouses and parents (Table 1.C). In 2002, the mean (standard deviation) on the Index of Family Satisfaction was 21.78 (2.81) on a range of 12-27. In 2011, American adults had a mean score of 21.94 (2.98) on a range of 9-27 on the Index of Family Satisfaction. For example, in 2002, respondents were at least very satisfied with their marriages (81.9%) and with being parents (81.4%). After ten years, marital satisfaction (81.3%) and parental satisfaction (84.2%) within their families persisted in 2011. In other words, American adults experienced a slight increase in how satisfied they were with their familial identities during the ten-year period. Along this same sentiment, Interviewee #2 (Youth Outreach Coordinator) concurred that as opposed to ten years ago, she believes now that "the family that I have and hope to create" is the most important priority in her life; moreover, she asserted that "without family, you cannot have a functional life."

Table 1.C. Family Satisfaction
Americans' Changing Lives (ACL) Survey – Wave IV (2002) and Wave V (2011)

Concept	Dimensions	Indicators	Values and Responses	Statistics	
				2002 (n=991-1833)	2011 (n=756-1427)
Family Satisfaction	Marital	V.12147/V.15401 Reversed_MarStat.Marital Status	1 Never married	7.2%	8.6%***
			2 Widowed	22.0	22.0
			3 Divorced[1]	13.6	16.5
			4 Separated	2.6	1.9
			5 Married	54.6	51.0
		V.12152/V.15409 Reversed_MARSATIS.Marital Satisfaction	1 Not at all satisfied	0.4%	1.5%***
			2 Not very satisfied	2.1	1.8
			3 Somewhat satisfied	15.6	15.5
			4 Very satisfied	41.5	33.6
			5 Completely satisfied	40.4	47.7
		V.12155/V.15414 MARCONFL.How Often R & Spouse Have Unpleasant Disagreements/ Conflicts	1 Daily or almost daily	2.9%	3.3%***
			2 2 or 3 times a week	7.0	8.6
			3 About once a week	12.3	11.2
			4 2 or 3 times a month	14.9	11.0
			5 About once a month	23.5	25.3
			6 LT[2] once a month	30.6	30.4
			7 Never	8.8	10.2
	Parental	V.12169/V.15507 Reversed_ParSatis.Parental Satisfaction.How Satisfied Is R with Being Parent	1 Not at all satisfied	1.0%	1.5%***
			2 Not very satisfied	2.2	1.5
			3 Somewhat satisfied	15.4	12.8
			4 Very satisfied	37.1	27.5
			5 Completely satisfied	44.3	56.7
		V.12170/V.15508 ParUpset.How Oft R bothered, Upset as Parent	1 Almost always	1.5%	1.9%***
			2 Often	5.8	6.3
			3 Sometimes	36.9	33.5
			4 Rarely	36.3	38.9
			5 Never	19.5	19.4

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			Index of Family	$\bar{x}$ (s)	21.78 (2.8)[3]	21.9 (2.9)[4]
			Satisfaction	Min-Max	12-27	9-27
				(n)	(888)	(663)

[1] Includes marriage annulled;
[2] LT is an abbreviation for "less than";
[3] IndexofFamilySatisfaction_2002 = Recoded_MarSatis + W4_ReversedMarStat + (V.12155) MARCONFL.+
   Recoded_ParSatis + (V.12170) ParUpset;
[4] IndexofFamilySatisfaction_2011 = W5_Reversed_MAto TAT + W5_Reversed_MARSATIS + (V.15414)
   MARCONFL + (V.15508) ParUpset. + W5_Reversed_PARSATIS.

Leisure Involvement

Thirdly, leisure involvement was theorized to play a significant role in how American adults viewed themselves. While work commitment and family satisfaction were strong for American adults, they were also able to participate in personal activities outside of their work and family obligations (Table 1.D).

Table 1.D. Leisure Involvement
Americans' Changing Lives (ACL) Survey – Wave IV (2002) and Wave V (2011)

Concepts	Dimension	Indicators	Values and Response	Statistics	
				2002 (n=1293)	**2011 (n=1293)**
Leisure Involvement	Recreation	V.12130/V.15195 Reversed_SeeFr Rel.How Often Get Together with Friends, Neighbors or Relatives	1 Never	1.8%	5.1%***
			2 LT once a month	8.1	10.8
			3 About once a month	15.5	17.4
			4 2 or 3 times a month	23.6	22.1
			5 Once a week	27.9	21.5
			6 More than once/week	23.2	23.1
		V.12131/V.15196 Reversed_AttMtg s.How Often Attend Meetings or Programs of Groups, Clubs, Organization	1 Never/not belong	27.5%	30.2%***
			2 LT once a month	11.9	12.1
			3 About once a month	16.0	17.1
			4 2 or 3 times a month	14.5	12.4
			5 Once a week	14.2	14.0
			6 More than once/week	16.0	14.2
		V.12132/V.15197 Reversed_WorkY ard.How Often Typically Work in Garden or Yard	1 Never	17.2%	24.1%***
			2 Rarely	14.7	16.2
			3 Sometimes	23.9	22.1
			4 Often	44.2	37.5
		V.12133/V.15198 Reversed_Take Walk.How Often Do You Take Walks	1 Never	11.9%	11.1%***
			2 Rarely	18.0	17.3
			3 Sometimes	26.8	27.1
			4 Often	43.3	44.5
		V.12134/V.15199 Reversed_ActvS prt.How Often Do You Engage in Active Sports or	1 Never	17.8%	17.9%***
			2 Rarely	22.3	21.8
			3 Sometimes	26.8	28.2
			4 Often	33.1	32.1

	Exercise			
Index of Leisure Involvement	$\bar{x}$ (s)		16.34(3.42)[1]	15.76(3.80)[2]
	Min-Max		6-24	5-24
	(n)		(1076)	(1290)

[1] IndexofLeisureInvolvement_2002 = W4_SeeFrRel + W4_Reversed_AttMtgs + W4_Reversed_WorkYard + W4_Reversed_TakeWalk + W4_Reversed_ActvSprt;

[2] IndexofLeisureInvolvement_2011 = W5_Reversed_SEEFRREL + W5_Reversed_ATTMTGS + W5_Reversed_WORKYARD + W5_Reversed_TAKEWALK + W5_Reversed_ACTVSPRT.

As seen in Table 1.D, the average American adult, in 2002, was moderately involved in leisure activities, as evidenced by the mean score of 15.76 (3.76) on a range of 5-24 on the Index of Leisure Involvement. In 2011, American adults maintained a slightly less moderate engagement in leisure; the mean (sd) on the Index of Leisure Involvement was 15.74 (3.83) on a 5-24 range. For instance, in 2002, a majority of American adults (58.1%) were able to attend group and club meetings at least once a month; ten years later, attendance slightly decreased (57.4%) in 2011.

Bivariate Analyses

In a second analytical step, bivariate correlational analyses were conducted to assess the preliminary impacts of work, family, and leisure roles on American adults' self-concepts. As seen in Table 2, in 2002 (refer to bottom half of Appendix C), respondents who had strong work (r=0.45[**]), family (r=0.33[**]), and leisure (r=0.21[**]) commitments were the ones who had a more positive understanding of themselves. Ten years later, the role priorities that shaped one's sense of self shifted. In order of significance, only family and leisure remained relevant. In fact, by 2011 (refer to top half of Appendix C), family roles (r=0.42[**]) became the most important to a person's positive self-concept, followed by leisure involvement (r= 0.28[**]). In the ten year span from 2002 to 2011, commitment to one's work role was surprisingly no longer relevant to how adults viewed themselves (r not significant). The robustness of these correlations was tested using multivariate analyses and the results are presented below.

Linear Regression Analyses and Qualitative Insights

To assess American adults' shifting role priorities as they grew ten years older, two sets of multiple regression analyses were performed. In the first set (Table 3), self-concept was separately regressed in 2002, and then in 2011, on the salience of work, family, and leisure roles. In the second set (Table 4), the extent of change in self-concept from 2002 to 2011 was regressed on change in role commitments to work, family, and leisure.

A definite net shift in life priorities was evident between 2002 and 2011 in Table 3. In 2002, when the average respondent was 62 years old, work, family, and leisure, in that respective order, had positive net impacts on one's sense of self. People's commitment to their work (β=0.35[***]) was most important to their identities. Of second importance,

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was their satisfaction with their family lives (β=0.27***). Leisure activities of American adults (β=0.15***) was also an affirming element of how they viewed themselves, despite leisure being behind family commitments in its impact on identity. On balance, in 2002 when the sample of American adults in this analysis were about 62 years old, work, family, and leisure roles, in that order, were the most pertinent to their identities.

However, ten years later in 2011 (in Table 3), family roles (β=0.44***) and leisure (β=0.25***) became the only significant forces impacting how American adults viewed themselves; work commitments were no longer salient. That is, as American adults matured in age, they usually aligned their identities more with their family roles and leisure activities rather than with their occupational roles.

Table 3. Regression Analysis of the Impacts of Occupational Commitment, Family Satisfaction, and Leisure Involvement on American Adults' Self-Concept [a, b]
Americans' Changing Lives (ACL) Survey – Wave IV (2002) to Wave V (2011)

	Beta Coefficients	
	2002	**2011**
A. Work, Family, and Leisure		
1. **Occupational Commitment**	0.35***	0.015
2. **Family Satisfaction**	0.27***	0.44***
3. **Leisure Involvement**	0.15***	0.25***
B. Demographics		
1. **Sex**	-0.04	0.025
2. **Age**	-0.08	-0.128
Model Statistics:		
Constant	13.70***	15.42***
Adjusted R^2	0.29***	0.25***
DF 1 & 2	5 & 417	5 & 327

*** p≤.001; ** p≤.01; * p≤.05;

a. IndexofSelfConcept_2002 = Recoded_Life Satisfaction + Reverse_LOT + Recoded_SlfEst6 + Recoded_PrlnMst6+W4_Recoded_Meaning2 + (V.12139) SlfEst3. + (V.12142) SLFEST10 (Range: 7-29);
IndexofOccupationalCommitment_2002 = (V.12377) How Long Has R + Recoded_EnjoyWrk + Recoded_SatisWrk + (V.12393) EmpStrn1 (Range: 11-25);
IndexofFamilySatisfaction_2002 = Recoded_MarSatis + W4_ReversedMarStat + (V.12155) MARCONFL.+Recoded_ParSatis + (V.12170) ParUpset. (Range: 12-27);
IndexofLeisureInvolvement_2002 = W4_SeeFrRel + W4_Reversed_AttMtgs + W4_Reversed_WorkYard + W4_Reversed_TakeWalk + W4_Reversed_ActvSprt. (Range: 5-24);
AgeatW4: V.12005. W4.Year of ACL4 Interview – V.2001. RR12(YR):YEAR OF BIRTH (Range: 40-100);
Female: Female = 1; Male = 0.

b. IndexofSelf-Concept_2011 = Reversed_LifeSatisfaction + W5_Recoded_LOT1 + W5_Reversed_SlfEst6 + W5_Recoded_PrlnMst6 + (V.15305) SlfEst3 + (V.15307) SlfEst10 + (V.16216) HOPELES2. (Range: 9-29);
IndexofOccupationalCommitment_2011 = (V.16114) How Long Has R + W5_Reversed_EnjoyWrk + W5_Reversed_SatisWrk + W5_Reversed_EMPSTRN1 + W5_Reversed_EMPSTRN2. (Range: 13-27);
IndexofFamilySatisfaction_2011 = W5_Reversed_MARSTAT + W5_Reversed_MARSATIS + (V.15414) MARCONFL + (V.15508) ParUpset. + W5_Reversed_PARSATIS. (Range: 9-27);
IndexofLeisureInvolvement_2011 = W5_Reversed_SEEFRREL + W5_Reversed_ATTMTGS + W5_Reversed_WORKYARD + W5_Reversed_TAKEWALK + W5_Reversed_ACTVSPRT. (Range: 5-24);
W5Age: W5InterviewYear – (V2001) RR12(YR):YEAR OF BIRTH (Range: 50-103)
Female: Female = 1; Male = 0.

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The VP of a material handling company (Interviewee #1) elaborated on why work might be such a significant factor for one's identity when respondents are younger. He opined that "working is more important than volunteering since it does not provide a paycheck; no one can live only by doing volunteer work." In fact, he continued; if employees are married and have children, they were expected to "leave family business at home because bringing family problems to work interferes with their work productivity." Compared to the workplace, which is where individuals spend a very large amount of their time on a regular basis, family, leisure, and volunteer activities were not given the same degree of priority. For example, speaking of commitments outside of work and family, the YOC (Interviewee #2) admitted that "it is harder to find people to volunteer for free as opposed to being committed to a full-time, paying job." One of the biggest issues with some volunteers, she noted, was that even if they "may be emotionally invested [in the program they choose to commit to], some tend to cancel too often." Such cancellations often are due to work conflicts, children falling ill, or not finding reliable childcare. Therefore, even though individuals may feel the need to volunteer or do anything non-work related, their family, and more so their occupational obligations, usually came first.

The professional interviewees' comments also helped illustrate why, as Americans grew older, work became less important than family in identifying oneself. In the words of the VP (Interviewee #1), "family is life and everything else is secondary to that; my loyalty and passion are for my family." Similarly, in the lived experiences of the YOC (Interviewee #2), when she was ten years younger, she believed that working and "getting money was the equivalent to happiness." However, she now believes that "[neither] money [nor working] mean as much happiness as family does." Interviewee #4, the CFO (of the material handling company), corroborated the strong influence of family on a person's identity; "parents raise you and instill core values, which tends to grow with people as they mature."

On balance, three out of the four professional interviewees concurred that family is more important than work. Leisure is a luxury constrained by one's work and family responsibilities (Interviewees #2 and #4). Leisure was deemed to be an activity that could be engaged in during the weekends (Interviewees #1 and #3).

Interestingly, the life stories of Ms. Oprah Winfrey (interview by TSP Staff 2014) and Career Specialist (Interviewee #3) added a dissenting note to the 2011 family-leisure-work model of self-concept. Interviewee #3 agreed that family is important. However, she personally prioritized her "service-based work and empowering [her] clients with the tools and resources to take action for themselves" as currently being the most significant role in her life. Not only does she have a strong work commitment, it is guided by a personal desire to serve others rather than to make money. Similarly, Oprah Winfrey, when asked by TSP staff about her life and success, affirmed that work is the most important role. Ms. Winfrey proclaimed that "my real contribution, the reason why I'm here, is to help connect people to themselves. And [to their] higher ideas of consciousness." The fact that Ms. Winfrey is a sixty-four year old American businesswoman, talk show host, actress, producer, and philanthropist added an

<div style="text-align:center">22</div>

important variation on the aforementioned finding that work loses its salience to a person later in life. It is also important to note that both women, Ms. Winfrey and Interviewee #3, are not married nor have children. Therefore, their current social locations make their prioritization of work over other life priorities reasonably expected.

In order to confirm the decade long shifts in life priorities captured in Table 3, a second multivariate analysis was conducted to understand how changes in American adults' commitments to their work, family, and leisure roles shaped shifts in their self-concept from 2002 to 2011[3]. As seen in Table 4, an individual's growth in satisfaction with their families (β=0.27***) and participation in leisure activities (β=0.15***) were the only two factors that positively contributed to the strengthening of their self-concept. As was observed in Table 3, despite one's occupation being the defining feature of self-concept when American adults were ten years younger in 2002, occupational role commitment was no longer relevant to who they were as they grew ten years older.

**Table 4. Regression Analysis of the Impacts of Changes in Occupational Commitment, Family Satisfaction, and Leisure Involvement on Strengthening Self-Concept[a.]
Americans' Changing Lives (ACL) Survey: Wave IV – Wave V (2002 – 2011)**

	Beta (β)
A. Family, Leisure, and Work	
1. Family Satisfaction	0.29***
2. Leisure Involvement	0.14***
3. Occupational Commitment	0.06
B. Demographics	
4. Sex	0.05
5. Age	-0.01
Model Statistics:	
Constant	0.164
Adjusted R^2	0.087***
DF 1 & 2	5 & 224

***p≤.001; **p≤.01; *p≤.05
[a.] RateofChangeinSelfConcept2002_2011=ChangeinSelfConceptIndex2002-2011/IndexofSelfConcept_2002W4;
RateofChangeinLeisureInvolvement2002_2011=ChangeinLeisureInvolvement/IndexofLeisureInvolvement_2002;
RateofChangeinFamilySatisfaction2002_2011=ChangeinFamilySatisfaction/IndexofFa milySatisfaction_2002
RateofChangeinOccupationalCommitment2002_2011=ChangeinOccupational Commitment/IndexofOccupationalCommitment_2002
AgeDifferenceW5ToW4: W5InterviewYear - AgeatW4;
Female: Female = 1; Male = 0

An excellent illustration of these shifts in life priorities away from work as one ages is available in Bill Gates's life story (Tweedie 2013). According to Mr. Gates, as he grew

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[3] Rate of change in self-concept, occupational, family, and leisure commitments indicates the extent to which these dimensions have changed from their 2002 base line.

older, his work with Microsoft lost its relevance to his sense of identity. He stated that "When I was in my 40s Microsoft was my primary activity. The big switch for me was when I decided to make the [Gates] foundation my primary purpose." His efforts to help eradicate Polio and invest in other global humanitarian efforts have overshadowed his previous role as Microsoft's CEO.

Other personal narratives from non-celebrities also supported the growing shift in focus from work to family and even leisure. For example, Ron Blick Blickensderfer's (Obituary #1) life story reflected the life course priorities identified in the 2011 sample of American adults. As a former president of Lonestar Industries, located in San Francisco, Mr. Blickensderfer had a successful career in the building materials industry, which spanned from 1958 until his retirement in 1999. Meanwhile, he got married in 1955 and had two sons. Once he retired, family and leisure became the most important aspects of his life until his death in February 2018; Mr. Blickensderfer and his family spent many years in retirement traveling overseas, taking their grandchildren on trips, and going on golf trips with his sons, twin brother, and wife. Thomas James O'Neil (Obituary #2) had a similar life trajectory. Mr. O'Neil had spent twenty-eight years (1978-2006) running his Santa Barbara quality tax and accounting services firm. Upon retirement, O'Neil and his wife and children were able to travel, go on road trips to visit relatives in Ireland; he was also able to focus on his woodworking hobby. Overall, Mr. Gates, Mr. Blickensderfer, and Mr. O'Neil had what many may consider an ideal life course: education, successful occupational identities, stable family roles, and opportunities to retire and engage in family and leisure until they passed away. Later in life, their lives centered around their families and leisure activities, or volunteering, meant for personal fulfillment.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

In the concluding sections, a synthesis of the study's findings with theoretical premises and several real-world applications were explored. Some suggestions for future research on understanding other sources of one's self-identity were also outlined.

Empirical Summary and Potential Applications

Between 2002 and 2011, the 1,293 American adults from the ACL survey offered answers to the research question posed in this paper. On average, American adults had relatively strong self-concepts, strong commitments to their work and families, and were somewhat involved in leisure activities. As for how they defined themselves, work was the most important in 2002. But, ten years later, commitment to one's family and, to a lesser extent, involvement in leisure activities overshadowed work. While all professional interviewees concurred that adult priorities change as they grew older, only three of the four interviewees concurred with shifting priorities from work to family and leisure. Likewise, the life stories of three (of the four) Americans, whose lives were

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chronicled in the journalistic accounts, offered corroboration of the family-leisure-work model of self-concept as indicated in the 2011 ACL sample.

These research findings, about how their employees prioritize their obligations over their life courses, are potentially useful to human resource departments in both corporate businesses as well as community-based organizations. In addition, professional interviewees pointed to employee health conditions, particularly as they get older, as an important dimension of identity. For example, Interviewees #1 and #2 asserted that being healthy was important to all; "[your] health is the engine behind any work that you do" (Interviewee #1). If companies have not done so already, perhaps they should revisit and improve personnel policies by extending maternity/paternity leave and creating more opportunities to improve employee health and wellness; some possibilities might be designated times and spaces for exercise, various leisure activities, and volunteer involvement or community outreach.

Theoretical Implications

Theoretically speaking, the Elder-Parsons-Mead self-concept hybrid framework was useful in understanding how work commitment, family satisfaction, and leisure involvement shaped American adults' self-concept over a ten-year period (see Figure 1). Based on the aforementioned regression analyses, both hypotheses were supported. Earlier in their lives, work, family, and then leisure were the most important for defining their identities (Hypothesis #1). However, as American adults grew ten years older, work was no longer salient to their understanding of their identities. Family and leisure role identities became the only significant factors to shape their self-concepts (Hypothesis #2).

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Figure 1. Empirical and Theoretical Model of American Adults' Self-Concept: Impacts of Occupational Commitment, Family Satisfaction, Leisure Involvement, Age, and Sex Americans' Changing Lives (ACL) Survey – Wave IV (2002) and Wave V (2011)[1]
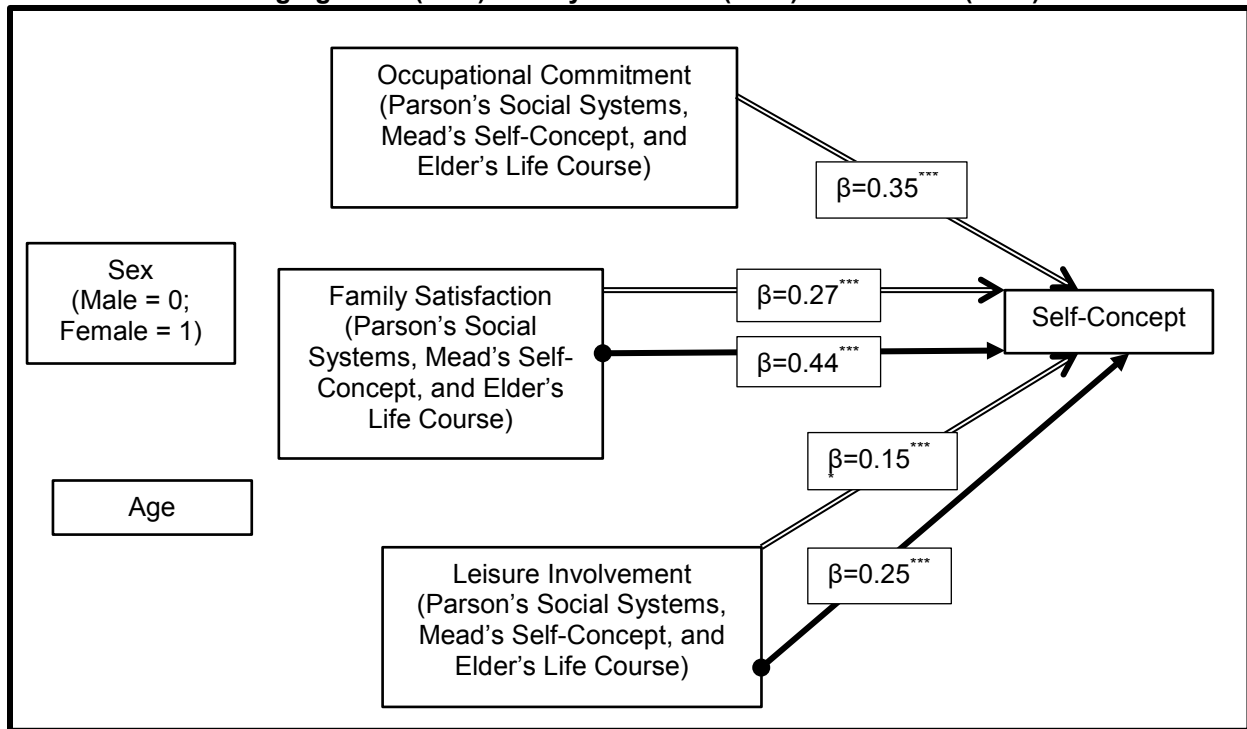
[1] Refer to Table 3 for Index Coding
[2] ⟹ : 2002 data
[3] ●—▸ : 2011 data

Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research

As with most research studies, while many valuable lessons were learned about American adults' self-concept, there is much more to be explored. In the analyses presented in this paper, work, family, and leisure identities, net of age and sex, captured only between 29% (in 2002, adjusted R^2 = 0.286) and 25% (in 2011, adjusted R^2 = 0.254) of variability in self-concept; and only 9% of the ten year shift was accounted for. Methodological and conceptual challenges offer explanations that would be useful for the future of life course research. For example, self-concept, as defined in this study, covered only life satisfaction and how respondents' viewed themselves. Likewise, occupational commitment relied on the perspectives of employees' satisfaction with their work. And family satisfaction consisted of questions about respondents' marital and parental satisfaction and how often they experienced conflict in their marital and parental statuses. Leisure simply measured how often participants' engaged in a limited number of non-work related activities.

Future studies on life trajectories should find ways to improve the explanatory power of the self-concept model. As some of the professional interviewees suggested, including other sources of self-identity, like health and volunteering, will be fruitful. According to

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Interviewees #1 and #2, being healthy is also important for all individuals; "healthiness leads to wellness, which leads to happiness and being with your family longer" (Interviewee #2). Investigating how health conditions and wellness may contribute to how a person's life priorities shift as they grow older will be an important contribution. The field of self-concept in the life course would also benefit from using a more holistic and expansive set of measurements that reflect the following: 1) respondents' understanding of their values and beliefs, 2) specific indicators of occupational trajectories of respondents and how that influences work commitment level, and 3) more insights about the types of and time commitment to leisure activities.

Another challenge in the analysis presented in this paper was that the ACL sample's life course was suggestive of a middle class socioeconomic background. Testing the work-family-leisure model of identity across a variety of social locations, such as lower classes, gender, religious background, etc. can provide more generalizable insights into how American adults from different walks of life understand their own identities.

APPENDICES

Appendix A
Control Variables: Age, and Sex
Americans' Changing Lives (ACL) Survey – Wave IV (2002) and Wave V (2011)

Concepts	Dimensions	Indicators	Values and Responses	Statistics
Demographics	Age	Age at W4 (2002)[1]	$\bar{x}$ (s) Min-Max (n)	62.81 (14.93) 40-100 (1785)
		Age at W5 (2011)[2]	$\bar{x}$ (s) Min-Max (n)	66.89 (12.25) 50-103 (1427)
		Age Difference between W5&W4[3]	$\bar{x}$ (s) Min-Max (n)	1953.8 (12.32) 1919-1972 (1181)
	Sex	Dummy_SEX AOB1(1):SEX OF R-1ST	0 Male 1 Female (n)	37.5% 62.5 (3617)

[1] AgeatW4: V.12005) W4.Year of ACL4 Interview – (V.2001) RR12(YR):YEAR OF BIRTH;
[2] Age at W5 (2011): W5InterviewYear – (V.2001) RR12(YR):YEAR OF BIRTH;
[3] Age Difference between W5&W4:W5InterviewYear – AgeatW4

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Appendix B (Consent Letters and Interview Protocol)
Consent Letter (Work Identity)

Dear Interviewee,

I am a Sociology Senior working on my thesis under the direction of Professor Marilyn Fernandez in the Department of Sociology at Santa Clara University. I am conducting my research on the shifting influence of work, family, and leisure on how American adults understand their identities.

You were selected for this interview because of your knowledge of and experience working in the area of human resources and employee support.

I am requesting your participation, which will involve responding to questions about a series of open-ended questions about what factors may impact an individual's understanding of self-concept and will last about 20 minutes. Your participation in this study is voluntary. You have the right to choose to not participate or to withdraw from the interview at any time. The results of the research study may be presented at SCU's Annual Anthropology/Sociology Undergraduate Research Conference and published (in a Sociology department publication). Pseudonyms will be used in lieu of your name and the name of your organization in the written paper. You will also not be asked (nor recorded) questions about your specific characteristics, such as age, race, sex, religion.
If you have any questions concerning the research study, please call/email me at ___ or Dr. Fernandez at mfernandez@scu.edu.
Sincerely,
Christian Abraham

By signing below you are giving consent to participate in the above study.

_____   _____   _____

Signature: Printed Name: Date:

If you have any questions about your rights as a subject/participant in this research, or if you feel you have been placed at risk, you can contact the Chair of the Human Subjects Committee, through Office of Research Compliance and Integrity at (408) 554-5591.

Consent Letter (Community Identity)

Dear Interviewee,

I am a Sociology Senior working on my thesis under the direction of Professor Marilyn Fernandez in the Department of Sociology at Santa Clara University. I am conducting my research on the shifting influence of work, family, and leisure on how American adults understand their identities.

You were selected for this interview because of your knowledge of and experience in community-based work.

I am requesting your participation, which will involve responding to questions about a series of open-ended questions about what factors may impact an individual's understanding of self-concept and will last about 20 minutes. Your participation in this study is voluntary. You have the right to choose to not participate or to withdraw from the interview at any time. The results of the research study may be presented at SCU's Annual Anthropology/Sociology Undergraduate Research Conference and published (in a Sociology department publication). Pseudonyms will be used in lieu of your name and the name of your organization in the written paper. You will also not be asked (nor recorded) questions about your specific characteristics, such as age, race, sex, religion.

If you have any questions concerning the research study, please call/email me at ___ or Dr. Fernandez at mfernandez@scu.edu.

Sincerely,
Christian Abraham
By signing below you are giving consent to participate in the above study.

_____   _____ _____
Signature: Printed Name: Date:

If you have any questions about your rights as a subject/participant in this research, or if you feel you have been placed at risk, you can contact the Chair of the Human Subjects Committee, through Office of Research Compliance and Integrity at (408) 554-5591.

Interview Questions

Interview #1 Schedule for Supplemental Qualitative Interviews for Thesis Sociology 195, Winter 2018
Interview Date and Time: 03/02/18; 9:30 PM
Respondent ID#: 1
1. What is the TYPE Agency/Organization/Association/Institution (**NO NAME**, please) where you learned about (and/or worked) with this issue:
2. What is your position in this organization?
3. How long have you been in this position and in this organization?
4. How would you describe the work that your company does and/or the services it provides?
5. Based on what you know of work commitment related issues that employees face, how important is this issue for employees? Why? How do you think employees deal with work commitment issues? May you please provide some examples?
6. For employees that are married and have families, how important is it that they balance work and family? Please explain with examples.
7. How about volunteering and being engaged in the community? In your professional opinion, do employees have enough time outside of their work to volunteer or engage in leisurely activities? How important are such actions to the employee's sense of self? Please explain.
8. Reflecting on your own life and experience, what did you consider important when you were about ten years younger? What would you say is the most important role, position, or responsibility for you today? Please explain.
9. Do you believe that as adults grow older, their priorities change? If yes, what do you think becomes the most important priority? Why?
10. Is there anything else that you have found to be important regarding one's sense of self as people grow older?

Thank you very much for your time. If you wish to see a copy of my final paper, I would be glad to share it with you at the end of the winter quarter. If you have any further questions or comments for me, I can be contacted at ___. Or if you wish to speak to my faculty advisor, Dr. Marilyn Fernandez, she can be reached at mfernandez@scu.edu.

Interview #2 Schedule for Supplemental Qualitative Interviews for Thesis Sociology 195, Winter 2018
Interview Date and Time: 02/25/18; 8:00 PM
Respondent ID#: 2
1. What is the TYPE Agency/Organization/Association/Institution (**NO NAME**, please) where you learned about (and/or worked) with this issue:
2. What is your position in this organization?
3. How long have you been in this position and in this organization?
4. How many volunteers does your organization have? How often do they actively volunteer? What are their responsibilities?
5. Based on what you know of work commitment related issues that face employees, how important is this issue for employees? Why? How do you think employees deal with work commitment issues? Can you give me some examples.
6. For employees that are married and have families, how important is that they balance their work and their families? Please explain with examples.

7. How about volunteering and being engaged in the community? In your professional opinion, do employees have enough time outside of their work to volunteer or engage in leisurely activities? How important are such actions to the employee's sense of self? Please explain.
8. Reflecting on your own life and experience, what did you consider important when you were about ten years younger? What would you say is the most important role, position, or responsibility for you today? Please explain.
9. Do you believe that as adults grow older, their priorities change? If yes, what do you think becomes the most important priority? Why?
10. Is there anything else that you have found to be important regarding one's sense of self as people grow older?

Thank you very much for your time. If you wish to see a copy of my final paper, I would be glad to share it with you at the end of the winter quarter. If you have any further questions or comments for me, I can be contacted at ___. Or if you wish to speak to my faculty advisor, Dr. Marilyn Fernandez, she can be reached at mfernandez@scu.edu.

Interview #3 Schedule for Supplemental Qualitative Interviews for Thesis Sociology 195, Winter 2018
Interview Date and Time: 02/26/18; 1:30 PM
Respondent ID#: 3
1. What is the TYPE Agency/Organization/Association/Institution (**NO NAME**, please) where you learned about (and/or worked) with this issue:
2. What is your position in this organization?
3. How long have you been in this position and in this organization?
4. How many volunteers does your organization have? How often do they actively volunteer? What are their responsibilities?
5. Based on what you know of work commitment related issues that face employees, how important is this issue for employees? Why? How do you think employees deal with work commitment issues? Can you give me some examples.
6. For employees that are married and have families, how important is that they balance their work and their families? Please explain with examples.
7. How about volunteering and being engaged in the community? In your professional opinion, do employees have enough time outside of their work to volunteer or engage in leisurely activities? How important are such actions to the employee's sense of self? Please explain.
8. Reflecting on your own life and experience, what did you consider important when you were about ten years younger? What would you say is the most important role, position, or responsibility for you today? Please explain.
9. Do you believe that as adults grow older, their priorities change? If yes, what do you think becomes the most important priority? Why?
10. Is there anything else that you have found to be important regarding one's sense of self as people grow older?

Thank you very much for your time. If you wish to see a copy of my final paper, I would be glad to share it with you at the end of the winter quarter. If you have any further questions or comments for me, I can be contacted at ___. Or if you wish to speak to my faculty advisor, Dr. Marilyn Fernandez, she can be reached at mfernandez@scu.edu.

Interview #4 Schedule for Supplemental Qualitative Interviews for Thesis Sociology 195, Winter 2018
Interview Date and Time: 03/02/18; 3:00 PM
Respondent ID#: 4
1. What is the TYPE Agency/Organization/Association/Institution (**NO NAME**, please) where you learned about (and/or worked) with this issue:
2. What is your position in this organization?
3. How long have you been in this position and in this organization?
4. How many volunteers does your organization have? How often do they actively volunteer? What are their responsibilities?

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5. Based on what you know of work commitment related issues that face employees, how important is this issue for employees? Why? How do you think employees deal with work commitment issues? Can you give me some examples.

6. For employees that are married and have families, how important is that they balance their work and their families? Please explain with examples.

7. How about volunteering and being engaged in the community? In your professional opinion, do employees have enough time outside of their work to volunteer or engage in leisurely activities? How important are such actions to the employee's sense of self? Please explain.

8. Reflecting on your own life and experience, what did you consider important when you were about ten years younger? What would you say is the most important role, position, or responsibility for you today? Please explain.

9. Do you believe that as adults grow older, their priorities change? If yes, what do you think becomes the most important priority? Why?

10. Is there anything else that you have found to be important regarding one's sense of self as people grow older?

Thank you very much for your time. If you wish to see a copy of my final paper, I would be glad to share it with you at the end of the winter quarter. If you have any further questions or comments for me, I can be contacted at ___. Or if you wish to speak to my faculty advisor, Dr. Marilyn Fernandez, she can be reached at mfernandez@scu.edu.

Appendix C.
Table 2. Correlation (r) Matrix[1]
Americans' Changing Lives (ACL) Survey – Wave IV (2002) and Wave V (2011)
(The top half (from left to right) represents 2011 whereas the bottom half (from right to left) represents 2002)

	Index of Self-Concept	Index of Occupational Commitments	Index of Family Satisfaction	Index of Leisure Involvement	Age	Female (1) vs. Male (0)
Index of Self-Concept	1.0	-0.012 (n=560)	0.42** (n=654)	0.28** (n=1290)	-0.133** (n=1293)	-0.054 (n=1293)
Index of Occupational Commitments	0.45** (n=676)	1.0	0.07 (n=333)	-0.05 (n=565)	0.04 (n=566)	0.02 (n=566)
Index of Family Satisfaction	0.33** (n=657)	0.26** (n=504)	1.0	0.069 (n=661)	0.092* (n=663)	-0.097* (n=663)
Index of Leisure Involvement	0.21** (n=1072)	0.14** (n=816)	-0.005 (n=887)	1.0	-0.14** (n=1316)	-0.05 (n=1316)
Age	-0.028 (n=1073)	0.14** (n=817)	0.15** (n=888)	-0.12** (n=1683)	1.0	0.12** (n=1427)
Female (1) vs. Male (0)	-0.045 (n=1074)	-0.002 (n=817)	-0.041 (n=888)	-0.056* (n=1683)	0.156** (n=1785)	1.0

*** p <= .001; ** p<=.01; * p <= .05

[1] IndexofSelfConcept_2002 = Recoded_Life Satisfaction + Reverse_LOT + Recoded_SlfEst6 + Recoded_PrlnMst6 + W4_Recoded_Meaning2 + (V.12139) SlfEst3. + (V.12142) SLFEST10 (Range: 7-29)
IndexofOccupationalCommitment_2002 = (V.12377) How Long Has R + Recoded_EnjoyWrk + Recoded_SatisWrk + (V.12393) EmpStrn1 (Range: 11-25);
IndexofFamilySatisfaction_2002 = Recoded_MarSatis + W4_ReversedMarStat + (V.12155) MARCONFL.+Recoded_ParSatis + (V.12170) ParUpset. (Range: 12-27);
IndexofLeisureInvolvement_2002 = W4_SeeFrRel + W4_Reversed_AttMtgs + W4_Reversed_WorkYard +W4_Reversed_TakeWalk + W4_Reversed_ActvSprt. (Range: 5-24)
IndexofSelf-Concept_2011 = Reversed_LifeSatisfaction + W5_Recoded_LOT1 + W5_Reversed_SlfEst6 + W5_Recoded_PrlnMst6 + (V.15305) SlfEst3 + (V.15307) SlfEst10 + (V.16216) HOPELES2. (Range: 9-29);
IndexofOccupationalCommitment_2011 = (V.16114) How Long Has R + W5_Reversed_EnjoyWrk + W5_Reversed_SatisWrk + W5_Reversed_EMPSTRN1 + W5_Reversed_EMPSTRN2. (Range: 13-27);
IndexofFamilySatisfaction_2011 = W5_Reversed_MARSTAT + W5_Reversed_MARSATIS + (V.15414) MARCONFL + (V.15508) ParUpset. + W5_Reversed_PARSATIS. (Range: 9-27);
IndexofLeisureInvolvement_2011 = W5_Reversed_SEEFRREL + W5_Reversed_ATTMTGS + W5_Reversed_WORKYARD + W5_Reversed_TAKEWALK + W5_Reversed_ACTVSPRT. (Range: 5-24)
AgeatW4: V.12005. W4.Year of ACL4 Interview – V.2001. RR12(YR):YEAR OF BIRTH (Range: 40-100);
W5Age: W5InterviewYear – (V2001) RR12(YR):YEAR OF BIRTH (Range: 50-103)
Female: Female = 1; Male = 0.

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Interviewee #1. March 2, 2018. Vice President (VP) of a Material Handling Company.

Interviewee #2. February 25, 2018. Youth Outreach Coordinator of a Children's Volunteer Organization.

Interviewee #3. February 26, 2018. Career Development Specialist at Local University.

Interviewee #4. March 2, 2018. Chief of Financial Operations (CFO) of a Material Handling Company.

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