Part I

Introduction

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Positive Identities and Organizations: An Introduction and Invitation

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When and how does applying a positive lens to the construct of identity generate new insights for organizational researchers? This is the broad question that unites the authors in this book as they attempt to jump-start an exciting new domain of scholarship in organizational studies that focuses on what we broadly call positive identity. Although the authors in this book use the term positive identity in different ways, they are all focused on illuminating and explaining identity content, identity processes, or outcomes that are beneficial, good, or generative in some way. This book forges a unique union among organizational scholars at the micro, meso, and macro levels interested in identity and positive organizational scholarship (Cameron, Dutton, & Quinn, 2003). This union opens

up new research territory, reveals new theoretical insights, and blazes a trail for others to follow. We hope that the chapters in this book and the ideas and questions they inspire will impact organizational scholarship and the world of practice.

WHY THE TIME IS RIGHT FOR THIS BOOK

This book is timely for several compelling reasons. First, the current conversation about identity and identity processes in organizational studies is one of the fastest growing, most fertile, and perhaps most contested (e.g., Albert, Ashforth, & Dutton, 2000; Albert & Whetten, 1985; Alvesson, 1990; Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Bartel, Blader, & Wrzesniewski, 2007; Corley et al., 2006; Haslam, 2001; Hatch & Schultz, 2004; Whetten & Godfrey, 1998). The burgeoning literature on identity in organizational studies has been linked with "nearly everything: from mergers, motivation and meaning-making to ethnicity, entrepreneurship and emotions to politics, participation and project teams" (Alvesson, Ashcraft, & Thomas, 2008, p. 5). Identity is also a construct that is multilevel, giving it utility as a bridging construct in organizational studies (Ravasi & van Rekom, 2003). As a result, the ongoing conversation about identity permeates across levels of analysis and into numerous research domains in organizational studies.

The identity literature is founded on the basic assumption that individuals, dyads, and collectives are motivated to construct identities that are infused with positive meaning (Ashforth & Kreiner, 1999; Cornelissen, Halsam, & Balmer, 2007; Snow & Anderson, 1987; Tajfel & Turner, 1986; Whetten, 2006). However, researchers in this domain have spent a significant portion of their time focusing on how individuals, dyads, and collectives respond to identity discrepancies, deficiencies, or threats (i.e., situations where current identities are negative or inadequate in some way). Thus, we see a major opportunity to expand and develop the domain of scholarship on identity and organizations by seriously focusing on "positive" identity content, process, or outcomes. This focus on positive identity will deepen current knowledge about how individuals, dyads, and collectives navigate identity challenges to progress from "bad" (i.e., a negative or destructive state) to "good" (i.e., a more favorable state). Further, a positive

identity lens can reveal exciting new insights into how entities reach beyond "good" to thrive, flourish, or become extraordinary in some way.

Second, individuals, dyads, and collectives face increasingly complex challenges in constructing and maintaining their identities (Blader, Wrzesniewski, & Bartel, 2007). Individuals are prone to work longer hours, in flexible arrangements, within several different organizations, and in multiple jobs or careers. In such a world of work, creating and maintaining a positive identity is consequential and yet more elusive. In a fast-paced, global society where organizational boundaries are becoming increasingly transparent, a deeper understanding of positive identity content and processes can reveal various ways organizations and their members can construct and maintain identities that are appropriately meaningful, legitimate, and stable yet also dynamic, flexible, and adaptable. A deeper understanding of positive identity processes can also uncover means that individuals, dyads, and collectives can deploy to sustain a sense of purpose, direction, and meaning in a world of flux.

Third, there is growing pressure on the field of organization studies and management to generate research with impact (e.g., Bennis & O'Toole, 2005; Hambrick, 2007). Impact means creating theories that stimulate thought, change understanding, generate actions, and/or produce valued outcomes. This book uncovers new theoretical insights that will inspire new questions about positive identity content and identity processes, deepen and change our understanding of theoretical mechanisms, motivate further exploration and research, and ultimately produce growth, authenticity, hope, well-being, trust, resilience, knowledge sharing, collaboration, and environmental sustainability for individuals, dyads, and collectives.

With these three motivations in mind, we designed this book to meet six goals.

1. To develop diverse perspectives on how individuals, dyads, and collectives can construct, sustain, and change positive identities
2. To provide individuals and collectives with ideas, concepts, and resources that will aid them as they strive to construct and to engage positive identities
3. To facilitate the integration of a positive identity perspective into new and established areas of organizational behavior and organizational theory

4. To establish positive identity as a multidisciplinary, multilevel field of inquiry and to facilitate and encourage cross-fertilization and interdisciplinary linkages
5. To offer a foundation for building a community of scholars in all stages of their careers and from various disciplines to pursue research that identifies antecedents, outcomes, processes, and mechanisms associated with positive identities
6. To bring positive identity to the forefront of organizational research by establishing, deepening, and broadening the link between the Positive Organizational Scholarship perspective and identity research

THREE KEY ASSUMPTIONS

As we enter this domain, we articulate three key assumptions that will provide some orienting ideas for the chapters that follow:

1. ***Identity is a core construct in organizational studies.***
The concept of identity has a rich heritage in the social sciences (Gleason, 1983) and in organizational studies (e.g., Albert & Whetten, 1985; Bartel et al., 2007; Corley et al., 2006; Hatch & Schultz, 2004; Hogg & Terry, 2001; Whetten & Godfrey, 1998). Identity is a core construct used by organizational researchers in the micro, meso, and macro traditions that focuses on the meanings created and applied to an entity (Gecas, 1982), whether that entity is an individual (e.g., employee, customer, stakeholder), a dyad, a group, an organization, a profession, or a community. Identity is one way to capture an entity's self-knowledge (Kihlstrom & Klein, 1994) and capture the attributes, characteristics, and narratives that are claimed by or attributed to an entity, helping to define what the entity is and what it is not.

2. ***Identity is influenced by social context and interaction.***
For organizational scholars, the idea of contextual embeddedness is key (Dacin, Ventresca, & Beal, 1999; Granovetter, 1985). When applied to the construct of identity, researchers must take into account the varying levels of the situation that enable, mold, shape, and alter the processes, structures, and contents of identities. The chapters in this book consider the influence of context in many different ways. For some chapters it is the local relational

context that matters. For others it is the team, organization, community, industry, or broader cultural context that influences how the researchers are thinking about positive identity processes, structures, or contents. These different considerations of context enrich our understanding of positive identities and illuminate new research domains and questions for future research.

3. ***Individuals, dyads, and collectives seek to construct positive identities.***

Research has shown that this drive to construct a positive identity is equivalent to and sometimes even exceeds our most basic physical needs. For example, Snow and Anderson (1987) found that people in homeless situations expend considerable work in constructing positive identities even though they are often deprived of the most basic human needs. In addition, Ashforth and Kreiner (1999) theorized about the tactics used by "dirty workers" to construct a positive work identity despite performing tasks that are "physically, socially, or morally tainted" (Hughes, 1958, p. 122). Elsbach and Kramer (1996) examined how members of top-20 business schools responded to the organizational identity threats of deflated *Business Week* rankings by justifying or excusing the ratings. This inherent drive to construct a positive identity is a basic tenet of many identity theories (Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Tajfel & Turner, 1986) and critical to organizational scholars seeking to understand how individuals, dyads, and collectives can construct identities that are positive in some way.

We assume that a focus on the positive in, of, and from identity unlocks new insights about identity and organizations. Although critiques of a positive perspective on organizational studies (e.g., Fineman, 2006; Hackman, 2008) remind scholars to be careful to define and place limits on the meaning of positive, we have tried to attend to this concern by having chapter authors be explicit about how they are defining and using the idea of positive identity. As we describe in the section below, the chapters address the idea of positive identity in several different ways.

APPROACHES TO POSITIVE IDENTITY

In designing this book we intentionally avoided specifying key criteria that authors should use to define "positive" as it relates to identity. Instead,

we hoped that our open invitation would spark a rich dialogue between authors regarding which criteria were best suited for examining different identity-related content, processes, and outcomes at the individual, dyadic, and collective levels of analysis. Engagement with the conceptual and empirical studies in this book reveals several useful ways of approaching the idea of positive identity in organizational studies. As Ashforth suggests in his commentary, the variety of takes on positive identity as discussed in the various chapters indicate its generative potential. At the same time, this diversity of uses of positive identity puts necessary pressure on researchers to be clear about the "domain, boundaries and nomological network" of this construct (Ashforth, Chapter 8, p. 7). At a very general level, the chapters in this book focus on identity content, identity process, or identity-related outcomes (or some combination of the three) as means for seeing and understanding what is positive, valued, or beneficial about an identity as entity or process.

Identity Content Can Be Positive

Several authors make explicit claims regarding positive identity content—or the core characteristics of an identity content that make it "positive." A focus on identity content zooms in on the substance of an identity that distinguishes it as valuable, good, or beneficial. For example, Kreiner and Sheep (Chapter 2) specify five characteristics of a positive identity for individuals: competence, resilience, authenticity, transcendence, and holistic integration. Maitlis (Chapter 3) sees a positive identity as one that includes content that implies an individual's understanding of his or her "strength and resourcefulness in the face of extreme difficulty." MacPhail, Roloff, and Edmondson (Chapter 14) cast expert identity as a positive identity because it incorporates strengths, talents, and skills derived from education, work experience, functional background, and social memberships.

At the relational level, Kopelman, Chen, and Shoshana (Chapter 12) assert a positive relational identity is one where both parties in a relationship see the relationship as one that can overcome challenges and remain effective despite threats. MacPhail, Roloff, and Edmondson (Chapter 14) define a positive team identity as one in which members have accurate knowledge about one another's expertise and shared affective attachment to the team and its goals. DeRue, Ashford, and Cotton (Chapter 10) suggest that an internalized leader identity is a positive identity because leaders

are often viewed favorably and that internalization is key for one to take on this positive identity. Ragins (Chapter 11) suggests that a mentor identity is a positive identity and explains how relationship experiences and social information can positively influence individuals' current and future conceptualization of themselves as a mentor and their desire to continue mentoring others.

At the more macro level, Hamilton and Gioia (Chapter 19) assert that an important form of a positive organizational identity is one that is focused on sustainability. They argue that it is critical to understand this type of positive organizational identity content because it allows us to better understand when and why organizations adopt and implement sustainability practices.

Another way of conceptualizing the content of a positive identity is by looking at its structure—the relationship among the various components of identity. In explaining how individuals and entities adopt multiple identities based on audience or stakeholder expectations and internal standards or goals, these chapters define a positive identity as one in which there are favorable or compatible relationships between an entity's different identities. Rothbard and Ramarajan (Chapter 6) propose that identity compatibility (i.e., synergy or complementarity among identities) is the means through which coactivation of work and nonwork identities benefits people at work. Caza and Wilson (Chapter 5) also specify that the compatibility among multiple identities is desirable for tapping into the cognitive, social, and instrumental resources of complex identity structures. Sanchez-Burks and Lee's (Chapter 15) commentary features several studies that show the positive impacts of identity compatibility for relationships and work teams.

Other chapters choose not to specify which identity content is indicative of positivity but instead claim that a positive identity equates to a favorable self-view. Roberts, Cha, Hewlin, and Settles (Chapter 7) adopt this perspective in their chapter, arguing that the process of becoming more authentic positively impacts identity by increasing feelings of self-regard. Milton also deploys this view of identity—she defines a positive relational identity as a relational identity that individuals view as desirable or positive descriptors of themselves. In their commentary, Glynn and Walsh (Chapter 21) remind us that "societies put expectations and pressures on organizations—to be authentic, to be socially responsible, to be meaningful—and, to the extent that organizations succeed in doing so,

their identities may be judged by internal and external audiences, to be more 'positive'."

Identity Processes Can Be Positive

The chapters introduce several perspectives that articulate how identity-related processes can be positive, where positivity in the process is defined in varied ways. For example, LeBaron, Glenn, and Thompson (Chapter 9) use conversation analysis to illustrate how knowing and affiliating during boundary moments in interactions can be key practices for positive organizational identity work. Their analysis shows how the positivity of an identity may be accomplished through the processes and practices that create the identity, not merely through the contents or outcomes associated with the identity. Kopelman, Chen, and Shoshana (Chapter 12) also detail the positive processes in self-narration that affect relational identities when individuals are confronted with negative interpersonal encounters at work. Milton (Chapter 13) implies in her chapter that identity confirmation processes that affirm someone's worth are positive. Her approach extends to a focus on positive outcomes as she argues that identity affirmations create the desirable outcome of greater cooperative capacity in groups. Corley and Harrison (Chapter 16) focus on authenticity seeking as a positive (or in their words, generative) organizational change process. In their account of identity change at ACS (an employee-owned outdoor sports company specializing in the manufacture and distribution of climbing and skiing equipment), an authenticity-seeking process is positive in and of itself but also produces positive results that include in their terms "net positive returns in regards to emotional energy." Pratt and Kraatz (Chapter 17) direct us to the positivity in the process by which an organizational self is accomplished. In their view, an organizational self that can integrate in a true sense—making a whole while retaining the individual identities—is most likely to be generative for the organization. They also suggest that this accomplishment is likely transitory—needing to be reaccomplished over time. Carlsen and Pitsis (Chapter 4) map out a different form of positive identity process through their focus on hope. They help us to see the intertwinement of different kinds of hope with the identity construction process in ways that allow us to see how individuals construct a life of progress inside or outside of an organizational context.

Identity Outcomes Can Be Positive

A third approach to positive identity focuses on the positive outcomes associated with or produced by identity construction. A number of chapters address the idea that identity construction processes create outcomes that are valuable or beneficial in some way. For example, several chapters talk about identity content and identity processes that cultivate resilience. Maitlis' (Chapter 3) study of injured musicians illustrates how social sensemaking processes foster a resilient self-narrative that enables individuals to forge a new, positive identity and transcend pain in times of deep disappointment. Caza and Wilson's (Chapter 5) discussion of identity complexity explains how multiple identities can generate resources that enable resilience in the face of workplace challenges. By focusing on resilience as an outcome of identity construction, these chapters explain how experiences that may be construed initially as negative, traumatic, or painful can also generate opportunities for personal growth, relationship building, and workplace contributions.

Other chapters unearth beneficial outcomes that make an identity positive. DeRue, Ashford, and Cotton (Chapter 10) argue the internalization of a leader identity is associated with desirable individual-level (e.g., increased self-esteem), group-level (e.g., increased shared leadership), and organizational-level outcomes (e.g., greater capacity for change). At the more macro level, Marquis and Davis (Chapter 20) show through argument and example how a community's identity and image is shaped by local corporations' actions, and how this leads to positive outcomes such as the support and well-being of local nonprofits. Brickson and Lemmon's (Chapter 18) approach focuses on how different organizational identity types (individualistic, relational, and collectivist) produce different types of socially beneficial resources through what they call an identity-resourcing process. Their approach blends a focus on the process and a focus on the outcomes as positive or valuable in some way.

ROADMAP FOR THE BOOK

The book is divided into three major sections, each corresponding roughly to a different level of analysis. In the first section we begin with a focus

on positive identity at the individual level and move progressively to more "macro" perspectives in the other sections. The second section of the book includes chapters that examine positive identity at the relational and group level. The third section includes chapters that focus on positive identity at the organizational and community level. Each of the three sections concludes with a commentary chapter authored by well-known identity scholars (Blake Ashforth—Individual Level; Jeffrey Sanchez-Burks and Fiona Lee—Relational/Group Level; Mary Ann Glynn and Ian Walsh—Organizational/Community Level). The commentary chapters illuminate emerging themes within each section and create additional insights about positive identity at a particular level of analysis. Our book concludes with a summary chapter that looks across the 21 chapters to identify core insights and map directions for future research.

CHAPTER SUMMARIES

Positive Identities and Individuals in Organizations

How can individuals transform identity challenges into opportunities for identity growth? Glen Kreiner and Matthew Sheep (Chapter 2) introduce five identity work tactics that promote the development of identities that are more competent, resilient, authentic, transcendent, and holistic. Each cognitive, affective, and behavioral tactic enhances one's sense of agency, self-awareness, and growth as discrepancies between real and ideal selves are reduced. Kreiner and Sheep spark future research by pointing to ways that individuals can conscientiously pursue identity growth rather than becoming passive targets of identity challenges.

Think for a moment about something that you love to do ... something that really defines you as a person. What would you do if a traumatic experience severely interrupted this activity? Sally Maitlis (Chapter 3) invokes the transformational power of identity in providing a pathway toward growth following work-related trauma. She writes of how musicians with career-altering injuries engage in a social sensemaking process that helps them to renarrate themselves in expanded and empowering ways that promote professional and personal growth. This chapter offers an inspiring view of how even the most traumatic experiences can open up new possibilities for enjoyment and contribution.

How does hope intersect with identity construction to propel people and organizations forward? Arne Carlsen and Tyrone Pitsis (Chapter 4) invite researchers to explore the interplay between identity and hope—a future-oriented quality of experiencing that infuses one's current existence with positive expectancies. They write of how hope emerges from identity narratives of discovery, transformation, and expectations of becoming stronger in some way. They encourage scholars to pursue identity research that highlights various dimensions of hope (e.g., hoping to achieve goals, hoping to expand possibilities, or hoping to move away from hardship) and that potentially benefits individuals and collectives in various ways (e.g., personal growth, legacy building, organizational vitality).

How does the complexity of one's identity as a professional foster resilience and other desirable outcomes? Brianna Barker Caza and Marie Gee Wilson (Chapter 5) explain how the possession of multiple social and role identities can generate cognitive, social, and behavioral resources that foster resilience to work stress, responsiveness to others' needs, and citizenship behaviors in routine and challenging work environments. Specifically, they show how identity complexity enables people to draw on their identity-based knowledge, relationships, and routines to promote well-being and performance. They also show how complex social and role identities are linked with high levels of novel, beneficial, and discretionary behavior among professionals that can generate positive outcomes for individuals and their organizations.

Can work and family identities really align in ways that create beneficial outcomes? How do individuals and organizations affect this process? Nancy Rothbard and Lakshmi Ramarajan (Chapter 6) invite researchers to consider how individuals form and maintain positive relationships between their work and nonwork identities. They challenge the assumption that multiple identities lead to negative tension and competing demands. Using a positive identity lens, they explain how two identities that are coactivated (i.e., salient at the same time, in the same domain) can be compatible (i.e., positively related) when people have control over coactivation or experience coactivation frequently. This chapter points to the process by which "bringing one's whole self to work" can positively impact interrelationships between one's identities.

What does it take to be authentic at work, and how does this process contribute to positive identity? In their chapter, Laura Morgan Roberts, Sandra Cha, Patricia Hewlin, and Isis Settles (Chapter 7) feature the process of

being authentic at work as an important contributor to the construction of a positive identity. The chapter offers a description of two major ways through which authenticity affects levels of self-regard. They also describe three critical pathways through which individuals can become more authentic in work organizations: (a) deepening self-awareness; (b) peeling off masks that conceal who one really is; and (c) authentication (having others see oneself as authentic). The chapter suggests a variety of new research opportunities opened by focusing on what enables authenticity as opposed to what prohibits it.

The *Positive Identities and Individuals in Organizations* section concludes with a commentary by Blake Ashforth (Chapter 8). Ashforth draws out several themes that emerge from the discussions of positive identity: the dynamic, contextualized, socially constructed, and narrative characterizations of identity; the role of agency in developing and enacting positive identities; and the ways that singular and multiple identities form a resource pool that is valuable in and of itself, and that also promotes positive action. He then raises important questions and encourages rigorous scientific inquiry into relationships among facets of positivity, relationships between positivity and negativity, and relationships between conceptions of identity at multiple levels of analysis.

Positive Identities and Relationships and Groups in Organizations

How and why do boundary moments in conversation matter in constructing positive identities? Curtis LeBaron, Phillip Glenn, and Michael Thompson (Chapter 9) examine audio and video recordings of what they call "identity in the wild." Their analysis reveals moment-by-moment moves in interaction through which individuals constitute positive identities. They show through empirical examples how positive identities emerge together as "mutually constitutive, reflexive, actions" through micromoves in interaction. Their chapter opens up substantive possibilities for enriching understanding of identity work in organizations through careful and detailed analyses of the talk and visible behaviors that are part of the ordinary interactions that compose life in organizations.

What are the interpersonal dynamics that enable you to begin to view yourself as a leader? What does it mean to internalize the idea of leader into your personal identity? Scott DeRue, Sue Ashford, and Natalie Cotton (Chapter 10) invite researchers to consider the process by which leaders

incorporate the quality of "leader" as part of their personal identity given the ambiguity of what it means to be a leader. Their process model of leader identity internalization includes self and other comparison processes that prompt and motivate self-inquiry into whether one is a leader. At the heart of their model is the identity work involving one person's claiming the identity of leader and others' granting this quality, which can lead to a positive or negative spiral of identity development. Their chapter opens up new domains of inquiry about leadership development and positive identity construction that take place through claiming and granting actions.

How do you take on the identity of mentor in a way that is generative for yourself and for others? Belle Rose Ragins (Chapter 11) describes a process of positive identity development that involves developing clear and positive mentoring self-schemas, drawing on schemas to form positive visions of oneself as a mentor, entering into a mentoring relationship, and leveraging experiences in mentoring relationships to refine one's mentoring identity. Her model shows how positive experiences in relationships spark positive identity cycles that reinforce mentors' capability and commitment to mentoring. This chapter points to new research avenues for examining how the full range of self-structures and relationship experiences influence the development of positive relational identities at work for both parties in a relationship, even after the relationship has terminated.

How can individuals at work respond to relational threats in ways that allow them to construct themselves together as a relationship that is able to overcome challenges and remain effective? Shirli Kopelman, Lydia L. Chen, and Joseph Shoshana (Chapter 12) import ideas from cognitive-behavioral therapy and narrative identity literature to build the argument that individuals can respond to relational threats in resilient ways, helping to foster a more positive relational identity. Their chapter outlines how counterproductive emotions in the workforce can be met with self-narration as a form of strategic responding that mitigates threats and restores or affirms a positive relational identity. This self-narration process engages a person in mindful observation, mindful description, and mindful participation, all of which allow a person to authentically manage his or her emotions in a way that preserves or increases a positive relational identity.

How do positive identity processes become embedded in the norms, routines, and social networks of work groups and enhance their cooperative capacities? Laurie Milton (Chapter 13) elucidates how cooperation in work

groups is fostered by confirmation of positive relational identities among group members. She presents a self-regenerating cycle of positive relational identities and cooperation, in which identity confirmation (a subjective state that exists when an individual's social environment is aligned with his or her identities) is a critical mechanism for enhancing relationships within groups, developing the cooperative capacity of groups, promoting cooperation, and fostering optimal achievement of work groups and their members. Groups confirm members' identities by validating and valuing these within the group. At the core of this process lies members' experience of the work group context as a social environment that supports the existence and expression of their authentic selves. Her research uses the positive identity lens to bridge two prominent theories of self in relation, self-enhancement theory and self-verification theory, and opens up new avenues of research.

In a world of diverse teams, how can team members contribute to the construction of a positive team identity, as well as foster collaboration and learning? Lucy MacPhail, Kathryn Roloff, and Amy Edmondson (Chapter 14) explore how diverse teams benefit from the shared recognition of and appreciation for members' expert identities (i.e., strengths and contributions). They introduce the construct "reciprocal expertise affirmation" to capture the shared experience of verification and affirmation of members' expertise. MacPhail, Roloff, and Edmondson explain how reciprocal expertise affirmation fosters psychological safety and, by consequence, promotes knowledge sharing, collaboration, and the formation of a positive team identity. This chapter illuminates how an individual's experience of being understood and affirmed benefits the identity of his or her team, thus bridging the individual and group levels of analysis.

The *Positive Identities and Relationships and Groups in Organizations* concludes with a commentary by Jeffrey Sanchez-Burks and Fiona Lee (Chapter 15), who undertake the "elusive search for a positive identity." They explore four core questions that are raised in these chapters on relational and group identities: Who am I in relation to others? How do my identities affect the groups to which I belong? How do my relationships affect my behavior? How do my individual identities relate to my relational and team identities? They draw on several empirical studies that highlight positive aspects of identity that have elsewhere been construed as negative. They explain how having multiple, conflicting identities does not necessarily lead to fragmentation, but instead can promote psychological and relational well-being. They also question whether inauthenticity

is indicative of a negative identity by discussing situations in which inauthentic facework can preserve interpersonal relationships, whereas authenticity may damage these relationships. To conclude, they invite readers to consider whether positive identities are best construed in relation with or in isolation from others.

Positive Identities and Organizations and Communities

How does an organization accomplish identity change through the process of seeking authenticity? Kevin Corley and Spencer Harrison (Chapter 16) introduce us to ACS, an employee-owned outdoor sports company specializing in the manufacture and distribution of climbing and skiing equipment, as a venue for understanding a generative identity change process. Corley and Harrison describe how ACS engages in a process of authenticity seeking as a means of continuous identity change. They argue that ACS is in constant pursuit of answering the question of "What does it mean to be who we are?" This process of authenticity searching is enabled through action and reflection practices that keep the organization and its members in a state of impermanence that is generative. This organizational process of searching for its authentic self creates a new way of theorizing about organizational identity change processes that locates positivity in the process of searching for authenticity as an ongoing organizational accomplishment.

What if we think about an organizational self as a way to conceptualize how organizations function with multiple identities? Mike Pratt and Matt Kraatz (Chapter 17) invite us to use the metaphor of organizational self to address three core questions in organizational identity theory that have, at their heart, the coexistence of contradictory ideas about organizational identities as: (a) unique and internally developed versus categorical and externally ascribed; (b) fonts of purposive action versus sources of social constraint; and (c) shared and integrative versus pluralistic and fragmented. Their chapter elaborates the theoretical possibilities generated by integrating ideas from symbolic interaction theory (Mead, 1934) into models of organization identity that allow researchers to consider multiple organizational identities and a whole organizational self at the same time. They conclude that "considerations of an organizational self infuses identity conversations with notions about how organizations can be more agentic, more distinctive, and more unified while at the same time recognizing their fundamentally pluralistic and institutionally constrained nature."

How does an organization's relationship with its stakeholders unlock a process that creates social goods? Shelley Brickson and Grace Lemmon (Chapter 18) set out to answer this question by proposing a process model of what they call stakeholder resourcing. The core idea in their model is that an organization's identity, and particularly its identity orientation (i.e., how members see the organization in relation to its stakeholders), elicits different organizational goals and actions, which generate different positive resources for both internal and external stakeholders. Their chapter provides a new way of seeing how organizations can contribute to society through this resourcing process that is enabled by an organization's identity.

How can an organization cultivate an identity of sustainability and what difference would it make? Aimee Hamilton and Dennis Gioia (Chapter 19) focus on how sustainability is integrated into an organization's identity. They argue that sustainability-focused identities are positive because of the identity content and the beneficial outcomes this kind of identity produces (e.g., "contributing to sustainability of the global social, economic, and natural environment"). Their chapter identifies a range of internal organizational enablers and external pressures that contribute to sustainability-focused identity change. Their chapter outlines four exciting areas in which new research could be done that opens up organizational identity theory and connects it to the important conversation about sustainability.

What difference do corporations make in the construction of a positive identity for a community? Chris Marquis and Jerry Davis (Chapter 20) open up the black box of positive community identity, asking how and why local corporations and nonprofits make a difference in creating and sustaining a positive community identity and reputation. They are interested in explaining why geographically bounded places like Minneapolis-St. Paul become known as places that are defined by positive social features such as social cohesion, generalized trust, and reciprocity. They point to the role of "hardware" (the networks, norms, or social infrastructure) and "software" (roles as instruments for community involvement) in organizations for creating and maintaining a positive community identity. Their chapter raises new possibilities for linking organizational action and community identities in ways that are generative for both.

The Positive Identities and Organizations and Communities section concludes with a Commentary by Mary Ann Glynn and Ian Walsh (Chapter 21). Glynn and Walsh help us find the positive in positive

organizational identities. Their commentary points to positive identity attributes revealed through the chapters (e.g., identities as inspirational, generative, authentic, and adaptive). Their chapter also opens up consideration of positive collective identity processes, focusing on the three process themes of resourcing, relationship building, and meaning making. They summarize the positive identity outcomes revealed in the chapter, including tangible and intangible beneficial organizational, community, and societal outcomes. Finally, they add their own provocative propositions about the power of a positive collective identity lens and invite future research to take seriously the organization-in-society lens when considering positive identity attributes, processes, and outcomes.

THE INVITATION

As the chapter overviews suggest, the chapters provide a rich foundation for building a vibrant research domain on positive identities. The multidisciplinary roots and multilevel coverage of this topic provides fertile soil for cultivating new research streams. Our hope is that new and more seasoned organizational scholars alike will join in the tilling of this new ground with the hope of high-impact research yield.

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