FLOURISHING IN EMERGING ADULTHOOD

Positive Development During the Third Decade of Life

EDITED BY

Laura M. Padilla-Walker and Larry J. Nelson

OXFORD

FLOURISHING IN EMERGING ADULTHOOD

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Flourishing in Emerging Adulthood ⚡

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CONTENTS ⚠

Section 1: Positive Development During Emerging Adulthood

Series Foreword ⚡

The *Emerging Adulthood Series* examines the period of life starting at age 18 and continuing into and through the third decade of life, now commonly referred to as emerging adulthood. The specific focus of the series is on flourishing (i.e., factors that lead to positive, adaptive development during emerging adulthood and the successful transition into adult roles) and floundering (i.e., factors that lead to maladaptive behaviors and negative development during emerging adulthood as well as delay and difficulty in transitioning into adult roles) in the diverse paths young people take into and through the third decade of life.

There is a need to examine the successes and struggles in a variety of domains experienced by young people as they take complex and multiple paths in leaving adolescence and moving into and through their twenties. Too often the diversity of individual experiences is forgotten in our academic attempts to categorize a time period. For example, in proposing his theory of Emerging Adulthood, Arnett (2000, 2004) identified features of the development of young people, including *feeling in-between* (emerging adults do not see themselves as either adolescents or adults), *identity exploration* (especially in the areas of work, love, and world views), *focus on the self* (not self-centered, but simply lacking obligations to others), *instability* (evidenced by changes of direction in residential status, relationships, work, and education), and *possibilities* (optimism in the potential to steer their lives in any number of

desired directions). Although this is a nice summary of characteristics of the time period, the scholarly examination of emerging adulthood has not always attempted to capture and explain the within-group variation that exists among emerging adults, often making the broad generalization that they are a relatively homogenous group. For example, emerging adults have been categorically referred to as "narcissistic," "refusing to grow up," and "failed adults." While there certainly are emerging adults who fit the profile of selfish, struggling, and directionless, there are others who are using this period of time for good. Indeed, there is great diversity of individual experiences in emerging adulthood. Hence, there is a need to better examine various beliefs/attitudes, attributes, behaviors, and relationships during this period of time that appear to reflect positive adjustment, or a sense of flourishing, or conversely those that lead to floundering.

For example, recent research (Nelson & Padilla-Walker, 2013) shows that young people who appear to be successfully navigating emerging adulthood tend to engage in identity exploration, develop internalization of positive values, participate in positive media use, engage in prosocial behaviors, report healthy relationships with parents, and engage in romantic relationships that are characterized by higher levels of companionship, worth, affection, and emotional support. For others who appear to be floundering, emerging adulthood appears to include anxiety and depression, poor self-perceptions, greater participation in risk behaviors, and poorer relationship quality with parents, best friends, and romantic partners. Thus, while various profiles of flourishing and floundering are starting to be identified, the current work in the field has simply provided cursory overviews of findings. This series provides a platform for an in-depth, comprehensive examination into some of these key factors that seem to be influencing, positively or negatively, young people as they enter into and progress through the third decade of life and the multiple ways in which they may flourish or flounder. Furthermore, the series attempts to examine how these factors may function differently within various populations (i.e., cultures and religious and ethnic sub-cultures, students vs. non-students, men vs. women, etc.). Finally, the series provides for a multidisciplinary (e.g., fields ranging from developmental psychology to neurobiology, education, sociology, and criminology) and multi-method (i.e., information garnered from both quantitative and qualitative methodologies) examination of issues related to flourishing and floundering in emerging adulthood.

It is important to make one final note about this series. Choosing to employ the term "emerging adulthood," is not meant to imply that the series will include books that are limited in their scope to viewing the third decade of life only through the lens of emerging adulthood theory (Arnett, 2000). Indeed, the notion of "emerging adulthood" as a universal developmental period has been met with controversy and skepticism because of the complex and numerous paths young people take out of adolescence and into adulthood. It is that exact diversity in the experiences of young people in a variety of contexts and circumstances (e.g., cultural, financial, familial) that calls for a book series such as this one. It is unfortunate that disagreement about emerging adulthood theory has led to a fragmentation of scholars and scholarship devoted to better understanding the third decade of life. Hence, although the term "emerging adulthood" is employed for parsimony and for its growing familiarity as a term for the age period, this series is devoted to examining broadly the complexity of pathways into and through the third decade of life from a variety of perspectives and disciplines. In doing so, it is my hope that the series will help scholars, practitioners, students, and others better understand, and thereby potentially foster, flourishing and floundering in the lives of young people in the various paths they may take to adulthood.

Larry J. Nelson
Series Editor

FOREWORD ⚡

"I seem to be lingering, forwards and backwards but never settling into an adult role." With these words, Yanakieva—one of the emerging adults who contributed a personal essay to this informative and creative volume—compellingly captures the crux of this new stage of life. For much of human history, children transitioned into adult-like work at an early age. Now that transition often occurs only in the course of people's twenties in economically developed countries and among the urban middle and upper classes in developing countries. Emerging adults are not as dependent on their parents as they were in childhood and adolescence, but they have not yet made commitments to the stable roles in work and love that structure adult life for most people (Jensen & Arnett, in press). As Nelson observes, "large proportions of young people do not see themselves as adults."

While emerging adults such as Yanakieva may have an unsettled sense of moving forward and backward, societal responses to emerging adults are likewise in flux—even pulling in opposite directions. As the editors Padilla-Walker and Nelson observe in their introductory chapter, reactions range from extolling the unprecedented opportunities of this stage of life to labeling emerging adults as materialistic, immature, and narcissistic. Why such divergent views? Clearly, emerging adulthood has not yet become a custom complex. A custom complex is a pattern of interlocked beliefs and behaviors that most members of a society

share without much questioning, and I would argue that developmental stages in many ways are custom complexes—not simply fixed ontogenetic periods (Jensen, 2016).

Developmental stages are ways that members of a culture segment the life course, imbuing each with distinctive roles and duties, tasks and goals. Cultural ways of segmenting the life course are not random or unmoored from biological constraints, but cultures nonetheless vary significantly on conceptions of life course stages. For example, one of the four traditional Indian life course stages is apprenticeship (*brahmacharya*), when persons from about 8 to 18 years of age are supposed to acquire useful knowledge, refrain from sexual activity, and learn humility (Saraswathi, Mistry, & Dutta, 2011). When a stage is a custom complex, it is not questioned. It just seems natural. Whereas emerging adulthood may not have reached the status of a custom complex, this volume takes us beyond whiplash-inducing views of its virtues versus its vices.

The volume title, *Flourishing in Emerging Adulthood: Positive Development During the Third Decade of Life,* indicates a tilt toward the merits of emerging adulthood. But the collection of almost 50 chapters by scholars and essays by emerging adults offers complex insights. King and Merola (Chapter 13) argue that "emerging adulthood is a propitious period of the lifespan. . . . Emerging adults have a newfound depth of psychological resources and breadth of social freedom." In focusing on religiously inspired service, their chapter joins with others that highlight realms in which many emerging adults thrive, such as identity formation, the development of purpose, civic and political participation, environmental activism, and global citizenship. Admirably, however, the editors have also included numerous essays addressing ways that some emerging adults face formidable odds, including inner-city violence, discrimination, disabilities, perils of migration, and harsh systems of justice. Even as the authors of these chapters remind us that individual resilience and social policies are ways to improve the odds, the sheer breadth of emerging adult experiences and life circumstances is rendered vividly and compassionately across the chapters and essays.

Only a minority of young people in economically developing countries currently experience anything resembling emerging adulthood (Arnett, 2016). Yet this volume makes it clear that this new stage is not simply a Western phenomenon. It is global, if patchy in places, and variegated. Five chapters on emerging adulthood in Africa (by Lo-oh), Asia

(Law, Shek, & Liang), Europe (Robinson & Zukauskiene), Latin America (Facio, Sireix, & Prestofelippo), and New Zealand and Australia (Barber) offer yet another reminder of how emerging adults cannot be sorted into simple categories or judged along simplistic dimensions. I was struck by the prominence of emerging adults' family ties and obligations in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. Facio et al. (Chapter 18) point out that many Argentinean 18- to 21-year-olds want "to live near [their] parents in the future." Lo-oh (Chapter 14) describes family as a "buffer" among South African emerging adults. Emerging adulthood, then, involves tasks pertaining to individuality and independence in some places. In other places, family membership and duties are paramount. The two kinds of goals are not necessarily in opposition, but where the balance is struck varies across cultures.

While chapters in this volume bring to life the diverse array of emerging adult experiences within and across cultures, perhaps its most unusual and creative feature is the inclusion of personal essays by emerging adults from around the world. Each narrative has a distinctive writing style, tone, focus, and message. For a brief but powerful moment, each allows the reader to step into the shoes of the narrator. Perhaps more than anything else, it is this moment of almost feeling like an emerging adult that will leave the reader cautious of judging emerging adults in a facile way, and that will leave the reader committed to contributing to the flourishing of emerging adults. Certainly, some emerging adults experience this commitment. I started with the words of one essayist, and will end with those of another. Of emerging adults, Dasianu writes, "We appreciate what we have been given and feel a sense of responsibility to give back."

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TABLE 22.1 Predictors of Post-school Success

Predictor	Outcome area		
	Education	Employment	Independent living
1. Inclusion in general education	X	X	X
2. Exit exam requirements/ high school diploma status		X	
3. Program of study		X	
4. Transition program	X	X	
5. Occupational courses	X	X	
6. Paid work experience	X	X	X
7. Vocational education	X	X	
8. Work study		X	
9. Career awareness	X	X	
10. Community experience		X	
11. Self-advocacy/self-determination	X	X	
12. Self-care/independent living skills	X	X	
13. Social skills	X	X	
14. Parental involvement		X	
15. Parent expectations	X	X	
16. Student support	X	X	X
17. Interagency collaboration	X	X	

Source: Adapted from NSTTAC: http://www.transitionta.org/sites/default/files/
effectivepractices/Execsummary_PPs_2013.pdf

⚠ Recommendations

This chapter has presented information related to the unique challenges and opportunities individuals with disabilities encounter as they as enter adulthood. Based on the information presented and on the authors' experiences, two recommendations have been developed. These recommendations have the potential to positively and significantly impact individuals with disabilities as they transition into adulthood.

1. Start planning early. Research has indicated that the earlier an individual with a disability starts planning for his or her future, the better the outcomes will be. This planning should occur in

ABOUT THE EDITORS ◭

Laura M. Padilla-Walker, PhD, is an associate professor in the School of Family Life at Brigham Young University. She received her Phd in 2005 from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Her research focuses on how parents and other socialization agents (e.g., media, siblings) help to foster prosocial and moral development during adolescence and emerging adulthood. Dr. Padilla-Walker has published over 70 peer-reviewed journal articles and has co-edited a volume on prosocial behavior published by Oxford University Press.

Larry J. Nelson, PhD, is a professor in the School of Family Life at Brigham Young University. He received his PhD in 2000 from the University of Maryland, College Park. His research examines (a) social and emotional development in childhood, with a particular emphasis in shy and withdrawn behaviors, and (b) flourishing and floundering during the third decade of life, including the role of parents and culture in the transition to adulthood. He has served on the Governing Board of the Society for the Study of Emerging Adulthood and is the editor of a series of books on emerging adulthood published by Oxford University Press. He has published over 75 peer-reviewed journal articles and chapters in edited volumes. He is a devoted teacher-scholar who has received numerous awards for excellence in teaching.

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Section 1 ▲

POSITIVE DEVELOPMENT DURING EMERGING ADULTHOOD

1 ⚠

Flourishing in Emerging Adulthood
An Understudied Approach to
the Third Decade of Life

LAURA M. PADILLA-WALKER AND LARRY J. NELSON

There is a growing body of literature that suggests that the third decade of life is anything but a time to foster positive development. Indeed, emerging adulthood has been referred to as a time of arrested development during which young people avoid responsibilities that are thought to be typical of adulthood (Cote, 2000), and instead engage in behaviors they feel they will not be able to enjoy once they become adults (e.g., travel, exploration of substance use and sexual experiences, living a carefree lifestyle; Ravert, 2009). Emerging adults have been referred to as "Generation Me" and are increasingly typified as narcissistic, self-absorbed, and unhappy (Twenge, 2006). In a book focusing on emerging adults, Smith (2011) characterized young people as generally lost in transition, a condition reflected in their moral confusion, risk behaviors, materialism, and disengagement. In sum, the stereotypical emerging adult is one who is experiencing a general failure to launch into the adult world.

Yet despite the focus of research and the popular press on the negative or dark side of emerging adulthood, there is also mounting evidence that this time period, at least for a significant majority, is a unique developmental time period in which positive development is fostered (Nelson & Padilla-Walker, 2013; Padilla-Walker, 2015). Although it is clear that positive and negative development are not mutually exclusive during any time period, the third decade of life is one in which many opportunities are available for positive development that are not an option during either adolescence or adulthood (e.g., Peace Corps, Teach for America, Study Abroad; Ravert, 2009). Although many of these opportunities seem most applicable to emerging adults in middle-class Western cultures where resources and opportunities make a period of self-exploration more readily available, a growing body of research and practice suggests that positive development is also evident

across cultures and needs to be highlighted in both scholarship and intervention.

Flourishing, or positive human development, has experienced a surge of popularity in the literature since the turn of the 21st century, and it has been particularly salient in the adolescent literature as the study of positive youth development (PYD; Lerner, Lerner, Bowers, & Lewin-Bizan, 2012). PYD has sought to identify individual aspects of young people that, when paired with social and ecological assets provided by families, schools, and communities, lead to flourishing (or thriving well-being and health). This approach posits that youth who have a sense of competence (e.g., academic, vocational), confidence (e.g., self-worth), connection to people and institutions, character (e.g., values, morality), and caring for others will in turn contribute to their families, communities, and societies (Lerner, Lerner, von Eye, Bowers, & Lewin-Bizan, 2011). Flourishing leads to and is evidenced by both the promotion of positive behaviors and the avoidance of negative behaviors. Although this model has typically been applied to adolescents, it is easily applicable to flourishing during emerging adulthood as well, and it suggests a broad definition of what might constitute flourishing during the third decade of life.

Individual evidences of flourishing have also been organized into dimensions, including emotional, psychological, and social (McEntee, Dy-Liacco, & Haskins, 2013), and flourishing is constituted when these dimensions are elevated in comparison to others (Keyes, 2005). Emotionally, flourishing is often viewed as experiencing feelings of happiness (North, Holahan, Carlson, & Pahl, 2014), optimism (Diener et al., 2010), or general positive affect. Other research defines flourishing as psychological well-being (Diener et al., 2010), the ability to cope, and optimal mental health (Keyes, 2002). Further, successful functioning in social situations is used to describe flourishing, such as comfort in relationship contexts (Diener et al., 2010), taking on leadership roles, helping others, and valuing diversity (Scales, Benson, Leffert, & Blyth, 2000). Research suggests that a range of behaviors and attributes can indicate flourishing, such as displaying self-control, avoiding procrastination, seeking educational attainment (Howell, 2009), and maintaining one's physical health (Scales et al., 2000).

▲ The Current Volume

Although the current volume does not espouse any particular definition of flourishing, it does seek to define flourishing broadly, and to include

diverse ways in which emerging adults might be considered to be experiencing positive development. With that in mind, the purpose of this volume is to highlight the third decade of life as one in which individuals have diverse opportunities for positive development that may set the stage for future adult development. The goal is to highlight the extant work that examines the numerous ways in which young people flourish during the third decade of life, as well as to encourage more research on how young people are flourishing during this time period in ways that contribute to self-enhancement, along with the enhancement of local and global communities. In order to achieve this goal, the volume comprises chapters by leading scholars in diverse disciplines. In addition, most chapters are accompanied by essays from emerging adults that exemplify the aspect of flourishing denoted in that chapter and make note of how choices and experiences helped them (or are currently helping them) transition to adulthood. Taken together, these chapters and essays provide rich examples of how young people are flourishing both as a group and as individuals in a variety of settings and circumstances.

Section 1 of the volume provides a broad overview of flourishing, with particular attention to how key areas of emerging adulthood might be indicative of flourishing during this period of life. Section 2 highlights four unique types of positive engagement that may occur during emerging adulthood, with each chapter providing a more in-depth look at these types of service and how they impact the transition to adulthood. Section 3 recognizes that flourishing may look different as a function of culture; it focuses on some of the ways in which emerging adults are flourishing around the world, including in Africa, Asia, Australia, Europe, and South America. Finally, Section 4 makes a case for resilience as a form of flourishing. It emphasizes situations that might make the transition to adulthood more difficult, but also how, in many cases, these challenges are the very forces that help to propel emerging adults to flourish into adulthood.

▲ Flourishing in Key Areas of Emerging Adulthood

Identity development in the areas of love, work, and worldviews is a central task of the third decade of life. Although Section 1 is not solely about identity development, we know that thinking about, exploring within, and making progress toward goals related to the areas of

love, work, and worldviews are important to emerging adults, and also important, generally, in progressing toward adulthood. Thus, we begin this section with an overview of identity. Lapsley and Hardy (Chapter 2) first discuss identity formation broadly, considering the development of personality, morality, and self-identity as they interconnect during the third decade of life to set individuals on a path for the remainder of adulthood. Bronk and Baumsteiger (Chapter 3) build on the importance of identity by focusing on purpose as a part of identity formation during emerging adulthood. They take a unique approach by highlighting purpose exemplars, or those emerging adults who are driven by a clear sense of purpose that provides direction and leads them to meaningfully contribute to bettering the world around them.

Section 1 then continues to consider developmental tasks in specific areas of love, work, and worldviews. Holmes, Brown, Schafer, and Stoddard (Chapter 4) discuss both the challenges and benefits of dating and sexuality during emerging adulthood, as well as the role of commitment in the building of long-term relationships. They also present original data on the role that growing up in a stepfamily has on later family formation, and provide an overview of the transition to parenthood. The next chapter in this section focuses on obtaining employment or work. Gardner and Chao (Chapter 5) review current statistics on the labor force and job opportunities for emerging adults. They then discuss the centrality of work and the importance of job characteristics based on a survey of over 10,000 individuals between the ages of 18 and 28. Suggestions are also made for how emerging adults can successfully transition to the workforce. The next two chapters in Section 1 capture areas related to young people's worldviews or ideologies, including overviews of civic and political engagement (Hart & van Goethem, Chapter 6) and environmental engagement (Matsuba, Pratt, & Alisat, Chapter 7). Hart and van Goethem review how opportunities during adolescence might set the stage for civic and political engagement during emerging adulthood, and also argue that sometimes being politically engaged during this time period may be, by necessity, somewhat unconventional. Matsuba and colleagues continue this focus on ideology by making important links between environmentalism, morality, political ideology, and generativity, arguing that developmental tasks typical of both late adolescence (identity) and adulthood (generativity) are active during emerging adulthood in influencing environmental engagement.

Flourishing in any of the areas that have been covered to this point (love, work, worldviews) is not an individual endeavor, but rather takes place in and through relationships. Padilla-Walker, Memmott-Elison, and Nelson (Chapter 8) highlight the role of family (e.g., parents, siblings, grandparents) and peers (e.g., spouses, friends) in helping emerging adults to achieve key developmental tasks and to flourish during the third decade of life. The final chapter in this section discusses why there may be multiple trajectories during emerging adulthood, and suggests this may be due to differences in the way young people cognitively approach this period of their lives. Nelson, Jorgenson, and Rogers (Chapter 9) present theory and research depicting the ways in which beliefs, attitudes, and perceptions about the present *and* future can shape current behaviors and the paths that young people take through their twenties. Taken together, this section provides a broad overview of flourishing during emerging adulthood by considering positive development within developmentally important areas during the third decade of life.

⚠ Unique Opportunities to Flourish in Emerging Adulthood

Because the third decade of life is generally characterized as having fewer relationship demands (most emerging adults are not yet married and few have children), and at least half of emerging adults spend a sizable portion of this decade pursuing higher education, emerging adulthood may be a time when unique opportunities for service present themselves (Ravert, 2009). The second section of this volume focuses on four examples of ways in which emerging adults might become involved and help others that could, in many cases, be more difficult in other decades of life. Faust and Flanagan (Chapter 10) begin this section by highlighting national service opportunities that foster both relational and collective well-being, including programs like AmeriCorps and Teach for America. This chapter provides research on the effectiveness of these programs and highlights important avenues for future research in this area of unique service. Sokol, Donnelly, Vilbig, and Monsky (Chapter 11) emphasize cultural immersion programs and focus on how these experiences promote personal agency and global citizenship. These experiences are primarily available through university

study abroad experiences, and this chapter presents data on two unique immersion experiences (Mexico and Belize) and how these contribute to personal growth for emerging adult college students.

Though understudied as a form of flourishing, Kleykamp, Kelty, and Segal (Chapter 12) provide an overview of military service during emerging adulthood, highlighting how involvement can both detract from and contribute to key aspects of development during emerging adulthood, including family formation, education, employment, and mental health. Similarly, religious service is a form of flourishing during the third decade of life that may be less optimal during other times of life, but can be a means of motivation and transformation. King and Merola (Chapter 13) consider both formal and informal religious service as means by which emerging adults explore, search for meaning, and provide transcendent opportunities. Taken together, this section provides examples of four different ways emerging adults may engage in behavior indicative of flourishing that might be somewhat unique to this developmental time period.

⚠ Flourishing in Emerging Adulthood Around the Globe

In the first two sections of the book, the cultural lens for most of the work is the United States and Canada. The authors of these chapters were challenged to consider the role of culture and, where possible, present work from a variety of countries and cultures. However, the work examining flourishing, or positive development, in emerging adulthood is just beginning to grow in the United States and Canada. Unfortunately, there are countries around the world in which work on flourishing in emerging adulthood is very limited. Thus, we not only wanted to underscore cultural differences in what might constitute flourishing by shining a light on the work that has been done in a variety of cultures, but also draw attention to the extensive need for work to be done in examining the positive things that are occurring during the third decade of life around the world.

To do this, Section 3 includes chapters on five different regions of the world. All of the authors who contributed to this section took on the challenging task of trying to address in a single chapter the flourishing of young people from entire continents or regions of the world that include numerous countries, cultures, and belief systems. This was a daunting

task, but the work that emerged shines a light on positive development in emerging adulthood around the globe. Lo-oh (Chapter 14) outlines the numerous challenges facing young people in Africa (e.g., difficult economic, social, political, cultural, health, and psychological conditions) before focusing on the assets that African emerging adults draw upon to make a difference for themselves, their families, and their communities. Examples of the type of assets that are discussed in the chapter include psychological capital and personhood, agency, resilience, social support networks, and life skills development, as well as risk prevention in communities and families. Law, Shek, and Liang (Chapter 15) focus on prosocial development during emerging adulthood in Asia, with a particular focus on volunteerism. The chapter provides rates of volunteering among young people across a number of Asian countries and attempts to explain the practical, cultural, and individual reasons for why young people volunteer in Asia. Barber (Chapter 16) provides an overview of positive development in Australia and New Zealand. The chapter looks at findings from a number of exceptional longitudinal studies that have helped to outline indices of positive development in these countries, including civic action and engagement, trust and tolerance of others, trust in authorities and organizations, social competence, and life satisfaction. The chapter also focuses on the role of activities such as sports and arts in the lives of young people as indices of positive development, but also as contexts for facilitating positive outcomes in the areas of health, personal well-being, social capital, and connection.

Robinson and Zukauskiene (Chapter 17) examine flourishing within Europe by specifically exploring the relationship between variations in national wealth and migration and levels of flourishing among emerging adults across the continent. Also, in light of recent terrorist attacks throughout Europe, the authors provide interesting insight into how the lack of opportunities to flourish may be linked to the acts of terror committed by marginalized European young people. Finally, Facio, Sireix, and Prestofelippo (Chapter 18) provide an overview of features of positive development in Latin American emerging adults, with particular emphasis on the high level of psychological well-being they enjoy, despite the difficult social, political, and economic challenges facing them. Taken together, this section provides an overview of the work that is emerging showing the unique ways that young people flourish in countries around the globe. It also underscores the need for more work on the role of culture in flourishing during emerging adulthood.

⚠ Flourishing Despite Challenges: A Case for Resilience

Although the purpose of this volume is to focus on the ways in which young people flourish during the third decade of life, we fully recognize that many young people have to overcome tremendous challenges in order to flourish. Many young people face obstacles such as challenging upbringings, poverty, violence, illness, disabilities, and prejudice and marginalization. The very act of persevering in the face of these obstacles and rising above them constitutes a form of flourishing. The chapters in Section 4 identify some of the obstacles that many young people face in their efforts to flourish, and then address how these challenges can be the very forces that help to propel some emerging adults to flourish into adulthood. Van Dulmen and DeLuca (Chapter 19) outline the challenges (e.g., dealing with a challenging past while facing an uncertain future) young people experience as they transition out of foster care, as well as the components of foster care that predict success. Smith (Chapter 20) provides the sobering realities of life for those young people attempting to come of age amid the violence that makes up life in economically disadvantaged urban neighborhoods. She then provides a general overview of work on post-traumatic growth and resilience, as well as introducing specific interventions aimed at saving, healing, and transforming lives. Rocque, Plummer-Beale, and Serwick (Chapter 21) outline the problems facing young people who come face-to-face with a criminal justice system that is separated along the lines of juvenile and adult systems, with the dividing line being age 18 based on an outdated and legal notion of what it means to be an adult. The authors provide an argument for the need to change how emerging adults are treated within the system so as to obtain the best outcomes, including, but not limited to, lower rates of rearrest. They provide an example of one state's initial attempts to implement just such a program.

Another set of challenges faced by many young people is related to their physical bodies. The next two chapters deal with the obstacles that some emerging adults face in the form of disabilities and health, respectively. Kellems, Rowe, Palmer, and Williams (Chapter 22) demonstrate how, with support, young people with disabilities have opportunities to lead successful lives with an amount of self-determination and personal choice. The chapter outlines the skills and supports that are needed by those with disabilities to facilitate flourishing. Yi, Tian, and Kim (Chapter 23) focus on the challenges facing emerging adults with

major health issues. The authors take the perspective that strengths may develop despite or even because of their illness experiences. The authors examine how progress in significant features of emerging adulthood (e.g., identity exploration) may be facilitated as a result of dealing with health challenges.

For some young people, the challenges they face in successfully navigating the third decade of life come as a result of societal constraints such as discrimination and marginalization. Peter, Toomey, Heinze, and Horn (Chapter 24) examine positive development of queer populations in emerging adulthood. The chapter explicates the adversity that queer young people face because of inequalities and societal norms, but then identifies how the mental and behavioral health disparities among queer emerging adults can be explained by differences in levels of family and peer social support. The chapter highlights the importance of these various forms of support in facilitating flourishing. Finally, immigration provides some young people the chance to flourish by improving financial prospects, providing safety from violence, and obtaining political freedom, but it also comes with numerous risks, especially when done illegally, including the possibility of sexual and economic exploitation, detention, or deportation. Seif and Jenkins (Chapter 25) outline the benefits and risks of immigration and then focus on the factors that make emerging adulthood, compared to other periods of life, a particularly positive time to immigrate. The chapter also highlights factors that promote positive outcomes for immigrants.

Taken together, the final section of the book recognizes the numerous challenges facing many young people as they attempt to navigate a successful path through their twenties, but it also highlights the assets, skills, supports, policies, practices, and interventions that can help young people rise out of the adversity facing them in order to experience high levels of well-being and other indices of flourishing.

▲ Conclusion

It is a common occurrence to hear adults opine about the "glory days" of past generations of young people or to disparage today's young people with sentences that typically start with "When I was young . . ." or "The problem with today's young people . . ." Without a doubt, there are many emerging adults who give their age group a bad name with

their egocentric beliefs and behaviors. Unfortunately, these young people often provide the material that receives a lot of attention, including the negative images that often get propagated, such as those of jobless young people playing video games in their parents' basements, or spoiled frat boys participating in nonstop parties and thinking they are above the law. These stories, however, should not define a generation, because they do not reflect the diversity that exists in how young people approach the third decade of life. As readers move from one chapter to another in this book, they will be exposed to research demonstrating the vast and varied ways in which emerging adults are flourishing. For scholars, the chapters will provide an in-depth look into the work that has been done examining various indices of positive development and hopefully inspire them with ways to move the field forward with new questions.

Finally, we believe that the essays accompanying most chapters will introduce the readers to some incredible young people whose voices and stories will put real faces to the research that is presented. In general, we hope that the variety of topics covered, and the theory, research, and narratives presented in the book, will begin to challenge the myth that all emerging adults are part of a narcissistic Peter Pan generation (i.e., they won't grow up) that is floundering. We believe the chapters that follow will provide strong evidence that the third decade of life is one in which many opportunities are available for positive development that are not an option during either adolescence or adulthood, and show that a great number of young people are utilizing this time in their lives to flourish and establish a positive trajectory for their future.

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2 ⚡

Identity Formation and Moral Development in Emerging Adulthood

DANIEL LAPSLEY AND SAM A. HARDY

It is not uncommon for individuals to look backward into personal history to discern the events and experiences that seem to have foreshadowed the way one has turned out. The contours of personality, one's range of adaptation to challenge and stress, the entire complex of social-affective characteristics that both individuate and situate us in a sociocultural landscape are presumed to have a deep developmental source that often take us back to the first two decades of life. Certainly the energies of developmental science have prioritized the study of early life, childhood, and adolescence, and for good reason: the sheer extent and pace of developmental change across the first two decades is of unquestioned importance.

Yet there is increasing recognition that the third decade of life is also of crucial significance for understanding successful adaptation across the life course (Lapsley, 2014). Many important developmental acquisitions, such as interpersonal understanding and self-understanding, and individuation and identity, are not completely won by the time of emerging adulthood. This transitional phase will pose new challenges, and how well one navigates this terrain will depend critically on the social-cognitive ability to forge new, stable, and workable understandings of self-and-other in a relational world that is increasingly mobile, fleeting, and changeable (Lapsley & Woodbury, 2016). How these challenges are resolved in emerging adulthood will either provide forward-leaning momentum into a life that is fulfilling, unified, and whole, or it will result in one that seems stagnant, fraying, and unfulfilled.

Of course, mere adaptation is not the goal. One hopes to flourish. One hopes to live well the life that is good for one to live. How to live well the life that is good for one to live is a fundamental question that has endured since antiquity. How to live well draws attention to what it means for human nature to flourish, and under what conditions. It

draws attention to what it means to be a person and how the characteristics of personality conduce for achieving objectively desirable ends. The goal of a good life lived well is referred to as *eudaimonia*.

But eudaimonia requires doing well as well as living well. Living a life that is good for one to live raises questions about the ethical dimensions of our aspirations and commitments, about the projects that structure our identity, and about the purposes that animate our ambitions. Moral notions, on this view, go to the heart of what it means to be a person (Carr, 2001). This makes adult development an inherently moral project, and it makes the third decade of life a period of profound moral development.

Hence, morality, personality, and self-identity are inextricably connected issues in emerging adulthood, and how these themes are woven into a coherent self-narrative is arguably the most significant developmental challenge of the third decade (McAdams, 2015). Indeed, there is reason to believe that morality is crucial to our very self-understanding as persons, and that emerging adulthood is a fertile period during which personality organization is open to transformation and reorganization.

Damon and Hart (1982) showed, for example, that within each domain of the "Me Self" (*physical, active, social, psychological*), the highest level of self-understanding (as self-concept) implicates a moral point of view. Moreover, recent research has shown that morality is considered indispensable to selfhood; it is the moral self that is essential to our identity, more so than personality traits, memory, or desires (Strohminger & Nichols, 2014). Moral categories are more chronically accessible than competence traits, and they dominate our impression formation (Wojciszke, Bazinska, & Jaworski, 1998). It is moral character that is most distinctive about identity and what we care most about in others (Goodwin, Piazza, & Rozin, 2014; Brambilla & Leach, 2014).

There is now increasing evidence that early adulthood might also be a fertile period for investigating identity and personality development. Although rank-order stability of personality is remarkably high across the lifespan, Roberts, Walton, and Viechtbauer (2006) showed in a meta-analysis of 92 longitudinal samples that mean-level change in personality is most pronounced in young adulthood, such as increases in conscientiousness, agreeableness, and emotional stability. Indeed, emerging adulthood may be a period of "personality trait moratorium" just as it is an identity moratorium, a time of exploration not just in terms of identity commitments, but in dispositional qualities as well.

But these qualities become consolidated when individuals make the transition to adulthood. "It is during young adulthood when people begin to confront the realities of becoming an adult and when we find significant gains in personality traits" (Roberts et al., 2006, p. 20). The implication is straightforward for researchers interested in the development of moral personality during the third decade of life. We will see this theme again, for example, when we examine narrative approaches to personality and the keenly felt challenge that arises during emerging adulthood to author a life story that makes sense.

In this chapter we take up the topics of moral development and identity formation in emerging adulthood. These are not disjunctive topics. Indeed, morality and identity ramify in the personal formation of emerging adults in ways that have dispositional implications for how the rest of their lives go. Moral self-identity is crucial to living a life of purpose and for setting one's life projects on a pathway that contributes to well-being, generativity, and integrity. In the next section we review research on the role of moral purpose in personality development and the conditions that encourage it. We then review the major ways that self-identity has been conceptualized in terms of statuses, processes, and narratives, with particular emphasis on the achievement of identity maturity and its contribution to successful adaptation. We then discuss moral self-identity more directly and outline gaps in the literature and possible lines of future research.

⚠ Moral Purpose and Eudaimonia

If emerging adulthood is an unusually fertile period for consolidation of personality traits as young people confront the possibilities and realities of becoming adults, then what moral constructs must be in place to lay the ground plan for eudaimonia? Recently, the notion of purpose has emerged as a candidate moral construct (see Bronk & Baumsteiger, this volume). Ryff (1989a, 1989b) suggested that establishing a purpose in life involves setting goals and identifying a sense of direction for achieving them. A growing body of theoretical and empirical literature suggests that having a purpose in life contributes to optimal human development. For example, purpose is an important feature of resilient youth and is considered a developmental asset for positive youth development (Benson, 2006). Burrow and Hill (2011) showed, for example,

that purpose commitment is associated with positive affect, hope, happiness, and well-being among both adolescents and emerging adults, and that purpose commitment fully mediates the relationship between identity and changes in daily positive and negative affect. In their view, "cultivating a sense of purpose may be an important mechanism through which a stable identity contributes to well-being" (p. 1196).

Of course, purpose can be construed according to any domain or subjective set of criteria (e.g., prosocial, financial, careerist), and it can be noble or ignoble (Damon & Bronk, 2007). William Damon and his colleagues circumscribe the definition of purpose to refer to a stable and generalizable intention to accomplish something that is at once meaningful to the self and leads to productive engagement with some aspect of the world beyond the self (Damon, Menon, & Bronk, 2003). On this definition, purpose requires a focus on an overriding life project that structures one's striving and aspiration ("accomplish something"); it must be deeply rooted in one's self-conception ("meaningful to the self"); and it must be other-directed to effect some good in the world other than mere self-aggrandizement ("productive engagement beyond the self").

One study showed that having an identified purpose is associated with greater life satisfaction across three age groups (adolescence, emerging adulthood, young adulthood), but that searching for purpose was associated with positive outcomes only for adolescents and emerging adults, but not young adults (Bronk, Hill, Lapsley, Talib, & Finch, 2009). In other words, if one is still searching for purpose beyond the "psychosocial moratorium" allotted for identity work, then the arc of one's personality development is not going well. In contrast, searching for purpose is part of the adaptive life task of adolescents and university-age emerging adults, and so underscores the importance of this age period for constructing the personal requirements for eudaimonia.

The personal values and goals that individuals construct during college have been an enduring topic of interest for researchers (e.g., Astin & Nichols, 1964; Astin, Green, Korn, & Schalit, 1986). For many students, the collegiate experience is a transitional period of great personal exploration that brings clarity to goals and values in a way that contributes to identity formation and other developmental markers of positive adaptation (e.g., Brandenberger, 2005).

There are notable recent efforts to explore the contributions of the collegiate experience to the moral formation of emerging adults (e.g.,

Colby, Ehrlich, Beaumont, & Stephens, 2003). Brandenberger (1998, 2005) articulated a theoretical framework that outlines the developmental implications of service-learning and pedagogies of experience, while an emerging empirical literature examines the potential for volunteer engagement during college to promote personal development and social concern. Engagement during young adulthood, whether through direct volunteer service or service-learning, has been shown to predict identity development (Yates & Youniss, 1996), moral development (Boss, 1994), feelings of personal or political efficacy (Reeb, Katsuyama, Sammon, & Yoder, 1998), and civic responsibility (Ehrlich, 2000).

It is not surprising that service engagement and related pedagogies show a variety of positive outcomes during the college years. Engaged forms of learning provide opportunities for students to explore complex issues directly—with concomitant elements of risk and potential—in a manner consist with their developing abilities. Similarly, engaged learning places students in moral contexts, in a "web of cooperative relationships between citizens" (Brehm & Rahn, 1997, p. 999) where life goals and a sense of purpose may develop. Hence an important moral responsibility of higher education is to cultivate "dialogic competence in public moral language" (Strike, 1996, p. 889), and to provide occasions, in the context of scholarly engagement and intellectual inquiry, where these virtues are on frequent display and avidly practiced.

Of course, purpose-in-life comes in plural forms, and it is important for researchers to identify not only *that* one is invested in a purposeful life or *how much* one is invested, but also the causes from which one's purpose stems. The content of purpose, be it financial, creative, personal recognition, or prosocial, appears to influence the trajectory of well-being, integrity, and a sense of a good life lived well, with prosocial purpose most strongly linked to eudaimonia. This was shown in longitudinal research that tracked individuals 13 years after their university graduation. Although financial, creative, personal recognition, and prosocial purpose orientations were stable over time, only a prosocial purpose orientation was associated with generativity, psychological well-being, and integrity in early middle life (Hill, Burrow, Brandenberger, Lapsley, & Quaranto, 2009; Bowman, Brandenberger, Lapsley, Hill, & Quaranto, 2010; Bowman, Brandenberger, Hill, & Lapsley, 2011).

It would appear, then, that a prosocial moral purpose orientation holds a distinct advantage over other purpose orientations with respect

to successful adaptation in early midlife. Moreover, certain aspects of the collegiate experience appear to canalize this dispositional tendency in a way that maximizes the likelihood of eudaimonia. For example, two separate forms of community engagement during college—time spent volunteering and taking at least one service-learning course—was positively related to well-being 13 years after graduation. These forms of community engagement contributed to future volunteer work and prosocial orientation, both of which are associated with four different types of well-being: personal growth, environmental mastery, purpose in life, and life satisfaction.

▲ Identity and Morality in Emerging Adulthood

When Erikson was writing about the challenges of psychosocial development across the lifespan, it was perhaps to be expected that the eight stages that he described would appear like an epigenetic staircase. Each successive challenge would be encountered just when one was expected to meet it. During adolescence, for example, one was expected to resolve the identity question ("Who am I"?) before meeting the challenge of intimacy in early adulthood. Typically, the identity question was resolved around vocational commitments that made possible a subjectively felt sense of continuity between one's ability, avocation, and skill set with the adult role structure of society. A clearly articulated and convincing set of identity commitments made it possible to enter into the sort of authentic intimate relationship that does not smother or absorb selfhood, but instead allows one to confidently give something away to the coupleship without feeling depleted or enmeshed by it. The normative sequence, in short, was to develop identity, find work, and then marry.

Yet this sequence is hardly normative for an increasing number of young people in the present generation. The third decade of life finds many young people extending their education and dependency, and struggling find a place in a fast-changing technological and service economy. Many delay marriage until their mid- or late twenties or beyond. The very notion of "emerging adulthood" now commonplace (and controversial) in developmental science is testimony to the greatly altered circumstances of coming-of-age (Lapsley, 2014). One consequence is that the stages of psychosocial development are no longer affixed to a stepladder or staircase. Many young people, indeed, find it necessary

to work on identity and intimacy simultaneously as overlapping projects rather than as psychosocial challenges encountered sequentially. The psychosocial tasks of adolescence (identity) and young adulthood (intimacy) are now conjoined in emerging adulthood, a condition that elevates the risk that pseudo-intimacy will be taken to the altar if identity questions are not answered with sufficient firmness and clarity before vows are exchanged.

Identity and intimacy, then, are developmentally linked psychosocial challenges of the third decade of life. But identity development is also a project of moral formation. It is a project of figuring out what one's life is for, of determining which pattern of personal identifications is best suited to build a life of purpose and meaning. Indeed, Erikson (1968, p. 39) argued that an ethical capacity is the "true criterion of identity," and that "identity and fidelity are necessary for ethical strength" (Erikson, 1963, p. 126). This suggests that moral identity is the clear goal of both moral and identity development, and that the two developmental tracks are ideally conjoined in adult personality. Of course, a construct so richly variegated as identity will be studied in a variety of ways.

Identity Status Paradigm

The identity status paradigm is a venerable way to study identity in adolescence and emerging adulthood (Schwartz, Zamboanga, Luyckx, Meca, & Ritchie, 2016). James Marcia distilled from Erikson's writings two fundamental identity processes: exploration and commitment (Kroger & Marcia, 2011). Exploration was likened to Erikson's notion of "identity crisis" and entails searching for and experimenting with various identity alternatives (e.g., political ideals, religious beliefs, career choices). Commitment involves choosing and investing in particular identity options (e.g., subscribing to certain political ideals or religious beliefs, or moving toward certain career choices). Consideration of the relative depth of exploration and commitment in any particular individual yields four possible identity statuses: diffusion, foreclosure, moratorium, and achievement. Those in diffusion have neither explored identity options nor made commitments; those in foreclosure have made commitments without exploring options (e.g., mindlessly taking on parental religious beliefs); those

in moratorium are actively exploring but have not yet made commitments; and those in achievement have made commitments after a period of exploration.

Marcia's status paradigm is not a developmental model, but it can be used to examine age trends in statuses (Kroger & Marcia, 2011). Scholars have hypothesized that, based on Erikson's and Marcia's ideas, progressive developmental status transitions (e.g., diffusion to foreclosure, diffusion to moratorium, foreclosure to moratorium, and moratorium to achievement) should be more prevalent than regressive ones (i.e., the inverse of those just listed). A meta-analysis of 72 studies found support for the predominance of these progressive developmental patterns of identity status change among longitudinal studies, although there was also marked stability as well as some regression (Kroger, Martinussen, & Marcia, 2010).

In terms of age trends, the same meta-analysis found that the proportion of people in identity achievement increases through emerging adulthood (from about a quarter of emerging adults being identity-achieved in their early twenties to about half by the late thirties), while moratorium rates peak at age 19 and then decline. They also found that trends in diffusion and foreclosure are unclear during early emerging adulthood, but prevalence starts dropping steadily by the mid-twenties. Lastly, cross-sectional studies that used continuous scores for each status, rather than classifying individuals into statuses, found that diffusion and foreclosure scores decreased across age groups, while moratorium and achievement scores increased.

Another recent review of longitudinal studies echoed the patterns noted in the meta-analysis, but also pointed out that in addition to progressive mean-level changes (e.g., decreasing diffusion and increasing achievement), there is also at least a moderate amount of rank-order stability (Meeus, 2011), and this stability increases over time. Hence change in identity status during emerging adulthood is marked both by significant mean-level change in the direction of identity achievement, but also significant rank-order stability—a pattern that holds true for personality development more generally. What's more, there is evidence that identity status is related to moral reasoning. A recent meta-analysis of 10 studies showed, for example, that there is an association between identity exploration, identity achievement, and Kohlberg's account of postconventional moral reasoning (Jespersen, Kroger, & Martinussen, 2013).

A Dimensional Approach to Moral Identity

Recently, several researchers proposed a process-oriented approach to studying identity that involves dimensions rather than statuses (Luyckx, Goossens, & Soenens, 2006; Luyckx, Schwartz, Goossens, Beyers, & Missotten, 2011). This model involves four identity dimensions: exploration in depth, commitment making, exploration in breadth, and identification with commitments. There are two processes involved. First is commitment formation, where people explore their identity options broadly (exploration in depth), and make an initial commitment (commitment making). The second process is commitment evaluation, where people explore their existing commitments in depth (exploration in depth), and then decide whether or not to further identify with those commitments (identification with commitment).

Luyckx and colleagues use as an example a girl choosing a college major. She will initially explore a wide range of options for a major, researching the different possibilities that look appealing to her (exploration in breadth). Eventually she will choose one specific major to pursue (commitment making). As she starts taking courses and learning even more about the major, she will be able to further evaluate her choice of major (exploration in depth). This can lead to a stronger conviction that she made the correct choice of majors (identification with commitment). However, the process is dynamic, as she may change her mind and decide to start exploring other options more broadly again.

Longitudinal studies of these identity dimensions reveal interesting developmental trends (Luyckx et al., 2011). By emerging adulthood, most people are actively engaged in these processes. Change is gradual but fluctuates somewhat dynamically. On average, though, there are linear increases in commitment making and exploration in depth. Exploration in breadth increases linearly but also has a negative quadratic slope, suggesting a leveling off over time. Identification with commitment decreased linearly with a positively quadratic slope, also suggesting a leveling off with development. In contrast, cross-sectional age comparisons have found that, across adolescence and emerging adulthood, the two commitment processes increase linearly while the two exploration process follow a quadratic trend of increasing until about the early twenties and then decreasing. Taken together, in line with the identity status research, the trends over time suggest developmental progression in identity formation across adolescence and emerging adulthood (McAdams, 2009). To date the dimension

approach to studying identity has not taken up an investigation of the moral dimensions of identity development in emerging adulthood. One exception, which will be discussed in more detail below, is that commitment making is more strongly linked to adaptive outcomes in emerging adulthood when people have a greater sense of moral identity (i.e., it is important for them to be a moral person; Hardy et al., 2013).

Narrative Identity

The principle challenge of personality development during emerging and young adulthood is the construction of a narrative identity (McAdams, 2016). Narrative identity is an evolving story of the self that brings order and sensibility to one's lived experience (McAdams & McLean, 2013), including the integration of self-distinctiveness with relational commitments (McLean, Breen, & Fournier, 2010). It attempts to reconcile the scenes, characters, and events of one's past with imagined prospects of the self in the future, and in a way that brings a sense of unity, purpose, and meaning to one's life.

The very construction of stories creates our sense of selfhood (McLean, Pasupathi, & Pals, 2007). We want the plot lines of our life story to cohere. We want the narrative arc of our story to make sense to ourselves and to others, even if it means that our take on the storyline is not entirely objective or even accurate. We make it fit. We fashion the narrative in a way that makes desirable outcomes seem inevitable, as if the way our life is turning out is itself the product of a coming of age that seems inexorable. And when we are confronted with moral failure, we construct a narrative to make sense of our moral agency, forcing us to come to grips with the sort of person we claim ourselves to be, and inducing, as one result, a more charitable and forgiving outlook on others (Pasupathi & Wainryb, 2010).

Authoring the life narrative takes on a certain urgency during emerging adulthood given the many transitions and life-changing events that occur during this period, such as graduating from college, starting a career, getting married, and having children (McAdams, 2011)—and given the fact that the capacity for constructing a personal life story is well in place by emerging adulthood (Habermas & Bluck, 2000). Hence the self-as-author is the dominant metaphor of personality development during emerging adulthood; life authorship the dominant developmental task (McAdams, 2013).

Life-story narratives tend to show substantial continuity over the course of emerging adulthood, but there is change as well. For example, older emerging adults report more emotionally positive stories, as well as more stories marked by emotional nuance, self-differentiation, and self-reflection, than do younger emerging adults (McAdams et al., 2006). Moreover, identity narratives are refractive of lived experience. For example, themes of self-transcendence show up in the narratives of emerging adults who undertake service obligations (Cox & McAdams, 2012). In one study, emerging adults who were considered moral exemplars told life-story narratives that were more often characterized by agency themes, ideological depth, contamination sequences, redemptive experiences, and awareness of others' suffering than were the narratives of matched controls (Matsuba & Walker, 2005).

Pratt, Arnold, and Lawford (2009) examined narratives of moral experience in the life story as a way of assessing how moral identity takes shape in emerging adulthood. In one study, a large sample of Canadian youth were administered measures of personality and generativity at ages 19, 23, and 26. At age 26, participants were asked to generate five stories of moral issues from their lives: an ambiguous situation that posed a moral dilemma, a story of moral goodness or success, one of moral weakness or failure, one that involved moral courage, and another of moral cowardice. The stories were rated in terms of the salience of moral identity, defined as the concern evinced in the stories to the needs or rights of others, and often at a cost to the self. The authors believed that these five stories provide a useful first start to mapping the narrative terrain of moral identity in emerging adulthood. Perhaps not surprisingly, participants found it easier to generate stories about instances of moral ambiguity and courage than moral failure.

Narrative moral identity was positively correlated with benevolence-universalism values at ages 19 and 23, with community involvement at ages 17 and 26, and with generativity concerns at ages 23 and 26. Global ratings of moral identity were particularly associated with telling a story about moral goodness and about moral courage. Indeed, individuals higher in generativity at age 26 were particularly likely to tell moral courage stories. These data showed that narratives reflective of moral identity are moderately associated with moral motivation and prosocial behavior in emerging adulthood.

In a second longitudinal study, Pratt et al. (2009) collected interview and questionnaire data from youth at ages 16, 20, and 24 to determine the link between early moral narrative identity and generativity

development in emerging adulthood. The prompts for the story narratives were not specifically moral in nature (as in the first study). Here, adolescents were asked to relate a story about a turning point, a situation of moral uncertainty, a time when they were taught a value by a parent, and a time when they were proud of themselves. The results showed that moral identity ratings at age 16 were correlated with community involvement, and at age 24 with generative concerns. Moral identity ratings at age 20 were associated with community involvement, and at age 24 with generative concerns and generative story themes. Hence, narrative moral identity at age 16 and age 20 predicted later youth involvement in the community and generative concerns in emerging adulthood.

Identity Maturity and Identity Content

Much of the work on identity has focused on identity maturity, but there is another facet of identity that is equally important—that of what a person bases his or her identity on (Blasi, 2004). People can base their identity on a wide variety of issues, such as physical characteristics, personality traits, behaviors, roles and relationships, attitudes and preferences, values and goals, or beliefs and ideologies. Some such "identity contents" might be more adaptive than others (Hardy & Carlo, 2011). For example, some might be more "personally expressive" of who we are, and thus more conducive to flourishing and self-actualization (Waterman, 1993). In line with this, it has been suggested, based on self-determination theory, that identity commitments which are in line with our intrinsic motivations are more likely to fulfill innate psychological needs and motivate value-congruent behaviors (Soenens, Berzonsky, Dunkel, Papini, & Vansteenkiste, 2011). Further, the specific contents of our various possible selves (e.g., ideal/desires and feared/dreaded) have important motivational implications, as people try to approach their ideal/desired self and avoid their feared/dreaded self (Oyserman & James, 2011).

This interaction between identity maturity and content has been demonstrated to be relevant to moral personality in emerging adulthood. First, as reviewed above, research on narrative identity has found that the moral content of narratives is predictive of prosocial engagement over time (Pratt et al., 2009). Additionally, as noted earlier regarding the dimensional approach to identity formation, identity maturity

and moral identity content (i.e., the extent to which people based their identity on moral issues, such as being a moral person) interact in predicting emerging adult mental health, health risk behaviors, and psychological well-being (Hardy et al., 2013).

These interactions can be interpreted in two ways. Put one way, identity formation is more predictive of outcomes at higher levels of moral identity. In other words, having a mature identity will matter more for one's health to the extent that one bases one's identity on being a moral person. From a different interpretation, moral identity is more predictive of outcomes at higher levels of identity formation. In other words, moral identity contents will have stronger claims on peoples' actions when they are a central part of a mature identity (Hardy & Carlo, 2011). Either way, emerging adults who have a mature identity and center their identity on being a moral person are more likely to be healthy and well.

⚠ Moral Self-Identity

We noted earlier that personality, morality, and self-identity are inextricably connected in emerging adulthood. These themes come together in recent social-cognitive accounts of moral personality that attempt to capture the dispositional, motivational, and contextual features of moral behavior by reference to moral self-identity (Aquino & Read, 2002; Hardy & Carlo, 2005; Lapsley & Narvaez, 2004). The moral self-identity construct has philosophical sources in attempts to link personhood to second-order desires (Frankfurt, 1971, 1988) and strong evaluation (Taylor, 1989), as well as psychological sources in Blasi's (1984) account of the moral self.

On Frankfurt's account, a person (as opposed to a *wanton*) is someone who cares about the sort of desires one has, who reflects upon desires and motives and forms judgments with respect to them. A person wills that second-order desires be carried "*all the way to action*" (Frankfurt, 1971, p. 8). A moral person, on this account, is one who cares about morality as a second-order desire, and whose behavior is motivated accordingly (as *second-order volitions)*. In contrast a wanton does not care about his desires or his will. As Frankfurt (1971) put it, "Not only does he pursue whatever course of action he is most strongly inclined to pursue, but he does not care which of his inclinations is the strongest" (p. 11).

Taylor's (1989) account of strong evaluation draws a more explicit connection between second-order desires and morality. He argued, for example, that "being a self is inseparable from existing in a space of moral issues" (p. 112). On this view, identity is the product of strong evaluation; it is defined by reference to things that have significance for us. Strong evaluators make ethical assessments of first-order desires (following Frankfurt). They make discriminations about what is worthy or unworthy, higher or lower, better or worse; and these discriminations are made against a "horizon of significance" that frames and constitutes who we are as persons. "To know who I am," Taylor (1989) writes, "is a species of knowing where I stand" (p. 27). He continues: "My identity is defined by the commitments and identifications which provide the frame or horizon within which I can try to determine from case to case what is good or valuable, or what ought to be done or what I endorse or oppose" (p. 27).

The notion that personhood hinges on the importance of what we care about (Frankfurt) and by reference to things that have significance for us (Taylor) had an outsized influence on moral development theory. It greatly influenced, for example, Augusto Blasi's writings on moral self-identity. Blasi (1984) was concerned to render a better account of the relationship between moral judgment and moral action. He argued that a person is more likely to follow through with what moral duty requires to the extent that one identifies with morality and cares about it as a second-order desire. In Blasi's view, the moral person constructs self-identity around a commitment to morality. One has a moral identity to the extent that moral notions—such as being good, being just, compassionate, or fair—are judged to be central, essential, and important to one's self-understanding. Further, moral identity is when moral claims stake out the very terms of reference for the sort of person one claims to be. And failing to act in a way consistent with what is central, essential, and important to (moral) identity is to risk self-betrayal; it is this desire for self-consistency that serves as the motivation for moral behavior, for following through on what one knows to be required by moral commitments (Hardy & Carlo, 2005).

Presumably, there are individual differences in the degree to which individuals align the self with morality; there are individual differences in what people care about. For some individuals, moral considerations rarely penetrate their understanding of who they are as persons, nor do they influence their outlook on important issues, nor do they "come to mind" when faced with the innumerable transactions of daily life.

Some choose to define the self by reference to other priorities, some incorporate morality into their personality in different degrees, and some emphasize some moral considerations ("justice") but not others ("caring").

Blasi's seminal writings generated much interest in the moral dimensions of personality (Lapsley & Narvaez, 2004), although they also attracted critics. Some noted that Blasian moral identity is limited only to moral behavior that is the product of effortful deliberation and explicit invocation of the moral law and so misses everyday morality that is driven by tacit or automatic processes (Shao, Aquino, & Freeman, 2008). The theory also fails to specify just when moral identity is evinced, and under what conditions (Nucci, 2004). Indeed, moral self-identity is assumed, on the standard account, to be an adhesive personal quality that carries strong evaluation and second-order volitions across contexts as if impervious to situational complexity (Leavitt, Zhu, & Aquino, 2016; Jennings, Mitchell, & Hannah, 2015). That moral self-identity is a dimension of individual differences collides with the claim that everybody thinks morality is important (Nucci, 2004), that it is essential to person perception (Goodwin et al., 2014) and it is essential to our identity as persons (Strohminger & Nichols, 2014).

Yet a social-cognitive approach to moral self-identity addresses these concerns, and in a way that retains three core features of Blasi's theory: it affirms that morality is central to the identity of at least some (if not most) individuals, it is strongly cognitivist but acknowledges that not all morally significant cognitive activity is explicitly deliberative, and it claims that moral self-identity is a dimension of individual differences. Moral centrality, cognition, and individual differences, then, must be part of any robust conception of moral identity, but these features must also be reconciled with evidence of situational variability (Lapsley, 2016).

The application of social-cognitive theory to the moral domain is straightforward (Aquino & Reed, 2002; Lapsley & Narvaez, 2004). Lapsley and Narvaez (2004) argued, for example, that moral personality is best understood in terms of the chronic accessibility of morally relevant schemas for construing social events. A moral person, on this account, is one for whom moral constructs are chronically accessible and easily activated by contextual primes. If having a moral identity is just when moral notions are central, important, and essential to one's self-understanding (following Blasi, 1984), then notions that are central, important, and essential should also be those that are chronically

accessible for appraising the social landscape. Highly accessible moral schemas provide a dispositional readiness to discern the moral dimensions of experience, as well as to underwrite the discriminative facility in selecting situationally appropriate behavior. Hence the accessibility and chronicity of moral schemes are the cognitive carriers of moral dispositions (Lapsley & Lasky, 2001).

Karl Aquino and his colleagues improved this account by noting that moral identity competes with other identities that constitute the self-system (Aquino & Reed, 2002; Aquino, Freeman, Reed, Lim, & Felps, 2009). The moral self-system is heterogeneous and interacts dynamically with contexts. The self-concept is a network of identity schemes, but not all of them can be active at any one time, given the limitations of working memory. Whether any of them are influential is partly a function of how trait accessibility interacts with situational cues. Situational cues can activate or deactivate the accessibility of moral identity, or they can activate some other identity at odds with morality. Hence situations are crucial to any social-cognitive theory of virtue. A situation that primes or activates the accessibility of moral identity strengthens the motivation to act morally. Situational factors that decrease accessibility weaken moral motivation.

An impressive empirical record documents the central claims of moral self-identity theory (Lapsley, 2016; Jennings, Mitchell, & Hannah, 2005). For example, individuals with a highly central moral identity report a stronger obligation to help and share resources with out-groups (Reed, Aquino, & Levy, 2007) and include more people in their circle of moral regard (Reed & Aquino, 2003). Individuals with a strong moral identity are more empathic (Detert, Trevino, & Sweitzer, 2008), are more likely to have a principled (vs. expedient) ethical ideology (McFerran, Aquino, & Duffy 2010), show greater moral attentiveness (Reynolds, 2008) and moral elevation (Aquino, McFerran, & Laven, 2011), and are less aggressive (Barriga, Morrison, Liau, & Gibbs, 2001) and less likely to engage in organizational deviance (Greenbaum, Mawritz, Mayer, & Priesemuth, 2013) and unethical behavior at work (May, Chang, & Shao, 2015).

In addition, individuals with a strongly central moral identity are less likely to adopt moral disengagement strategies (Detert et al., 2008), derogate outgroups (Smith, Aquino, Koleva, & Graham, 2014), or otherwise resort to cognitive rationalizations that justify visiting harm upon others (Aquino, Reed, Thau, & Freeman, 2007). Moral identity predicts health outcomes and psychological well-being (Hardy et al.,

2013). Moreover, moral identity can be activated by subtle contextual cues even outside of conscious awareness (Leavitt et al., 2016), and otherwise moderate the influence of situation primes (Aquino et al., 2009).

The social-cognitive moral identity research program has several salutary features. It is theoretically integrative with other areas of psychological science (e.g., spreading activation theories of memory, cognitive science models of information processing, and social-cognitive theories of personality). It rests on an impressive and growing empirical foundation. It justifies the original Blasian expectation that moral self-identity would be a robust predictor of moral behavior. Indeed, no other dispositional account of moral personality comes remotely close. It makes bold claims about the work of moral identity as a mediator and moderator, with ample and interesting empirical corroboration. Hence moral self-identity constitutes a robust, progressive research program that will continue to drive novel, innovate questions concerning what it means to flourish in the third decade of life and beyond (Lapsley, 2016).

⚠ Future Directions

The literatures on identity formation and moral development are rich in theory and have generated a substantial amount of empirical research. As we have seen, research at the intersection of the two constructs (i.e., moral identity) is yielding highly promising lines of research. Yet there remain substantial gaps in the literature. There are still questions concerning the developmental trajectory of moral identity (Krettenauer & Hertz, 2015). Additional research on the dispositional features of moral identity is required, as is research on its role in moderating or mediating behavior across a full range of experiences in context.

One way to move forward in this effort is to be more integrative in our thinking. There is research on moral identity across multiple disciplines, including psychology (Hardy & Carlo, 2011), neuroscience (Moll, de Oliveira-Souza, & Zahn, 2009), business (Shao et al., 2008), sociology (Stets & Carter, 2006), political science (Monroe, 2001), anthropology (Cassaniti & Hickman, 2014), and philosophy (Taylor, 1989). However, most scholarship in these disciplines is fairly insular. Thus, cross-pollination of ideas may more efficiently and effectively generate innovations in theoretical work on moral identity.

Additionally, there are a number of critical questions regarding moral identity that remain relatively unexamined. First, how might moral identity best be conceptualized and measured? In other words, what is moral identity and how should we study it? Although various approaches to conceptualization and measurement have found their way into the literature (for a review, see Hardy & Carlo, 2011), little has been done to compare and contrast them. For instance, we do not know how the existing conceptualizations of moral identity compare in terms of descriptive, explanatory, predictive, or operative power (which is considered criteria for evaluating the strength of theories). Moreover, the relative utility of different measurement strategies is unknown. As an exception, one recent study provides data on several common self-report measures of moral identity (Hardy, Bean, & Olsen, 2015).

Second, how does moral identity develop? Some have argued that the process involves the merging of moral and identity development, rather than a unique developmental system (e.g., Bergman, 2004). Or it may be that morality and identity are two facets of the same developmental system (Davidson & Youniss, 1991). Either way, moral identity seems to be the developmental goal of both moral and identity development, which is likely unrealized until at least emerging adulthood (Moshman, 2011). Unfortunately, at this point we know of no studies that have directly examined these developmental processes. Although studies of moral identity have involved adolescents or adults, few have spanned across the age periods. In fact, to our knowledge, only two studies of moral identity have involved longitudinal data (Krettenauer, 2011; Pratt, Hunsberger, Pancer, & Alisat, 2003). Further, specific to emerging adulthood, although many of the moral identity studies have involved college student samples, few have done so with a developmental focus (Padilla-Walker, 2016). Thus, longitudinal studies are needed, examining developmental processes of moral identity, spanning at least the adolescent and emerging adulthood years.

Third, what is the role of important life transitions and salient life events? Most research on moral development, including that on moral identity specifically, has focused on linear and normative developmental changes. Thus, we know little about nonlinear changes that might happen as a result of life transitions (e.g., getting married or having children) or salient life events (e.g., graduating from college or the death of a loved one). Such transitions or events, many of which occur during emerging adulthood, may lead to marked transformations in moral identity (Gibbs, 2013; Skalski & Hardy, 2013). These transitions

and events might ideally be studied using longitudinal mixed-methods design to fully capture the depth of transformation.

Fourth, how stable is moral identity? In other words, to what extent is it trait-like and relatively stable across situations? Social-cognitive approaches to moral personality highlight the situational nature of moral identity (Lapsley & Narvaez, 2004). In line with this, there is ample evidence that moral identity can be manipulated (e.g., activated) in experimental settings (Monin & Jordan, 2009; Narvaez, Lapsley, Hagele, & Lasky, 2006; Shao et al., 2008). Nevertheless, it is unclear to what extent moral identity is stable throughout daily life (i.e., outside of the laboratory setting). This requires the use of experience sampling methods to obtain numerous occasions of data close together in time (e.g., at least daily). We know of no such studies on moral identity, although the methods have been used to capture intra-individual variability in other aspects of morality (Hardy, Zhang, Skalski, Melling, & Brinton, 2014).

Lastly, how does moral identity vary across cultures? The majority of studies on moral identity have involved samples from the United States or Canada, with only a few studies in Eastern cultures (Tu, Lu, & Yu, 2016). No study that we know of has explicitly examined cross-cultural differences in moral identity. Therefore, research is needed looking at how moral identity might be conceptualized and experienced in different cultures, how moral identity development might vary cross-culturally, and how the role of moral identity in motivating behavior might be culture-specific. There is certainly reason to believe that such aspects of personality development and functioning might differ cross-culturally (Heine & Buchtel, 2009).

The developmental opportunities and challenges of the third decade of life are coming into clearer focus. In this chapter we argued that nothing less than our moral status as persons is at stake as emerging adults navigate a range of transitions, relationships, and settings. Answering the great identity question will involve confronting the sort of life that is good for one to live. It will involve coming to grips with the sort of person one claims oneself to be. We argued that morality and identity are ideally conjoined developmental considerations in the third decade, and that identifying the self with morality, building self-understanding around moral ideals and commitments, is one way forward toward a life of well-being and flourishing characteristic of eudaimonia.

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▲ References

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Emerging Adult Essay

Between "Being" and "Having": How Faith and Charity Changed My Life

BY NICOLÒ MARIA IANNELLO

My name is Nicolò and I am a 30-year-old white Italian. I am attending my last year of the doctoral program in behavioral and social sciences at the Department of Psychological, Educational, and Training Sciences at the University of Palermo. At the moment, I live in the United States, spending my training period abroad, as expected by my doctoral program. I am a visiting student at Brigham Young University in Provo, Utah, in the Department of Psychology.

I grew up in Palermo, the state capital of Sicily, the largest island in the Mediterranean Sea, and one of the southern regions of Italy. I also lived in Rome, the capital of Italy, from 2008 to 2012, to get a master's degree in communication and social research. There I worked as a journalist for the newspaper of the Diocese of Rome.

I am Catholic and my faith was, and still is, a discovery that has led me to important experiences. In the past I was not a very religious person, but I would say that I have always been searching for a meaning in life. My parents were not churchgoers, but they talked to me about God in many ways, leaving me with a sense of curiosity. Still, I would not define myself as religious, but instead as a kind of spiritual-religious individual, coming from my realization that religious norms without an in-depth, spiritual understanding are just empty actions.

Sicily is a land of social conflicts, due in large part to the presence of the Mafia, which corrupts politicians and afflicts the economic development and the cultural life of the territory. I have often heard Sicilians say, "The only thing worth doing is accepting reality the way it is." However, at school, during my adolescence, I found that some people from Sicily had sacrificed their lives in the name of the common good, fighting resignation. Their testimonies unveiled several existential questions: "Is this how things are meant to be? What can I do? What responsibility do I have?" By chance, a close friend of mine told me about the Community

of Sant'Egidio and what its members were doing with children from the slums of my city. In these areas the culture of violence is widespread, and it is here that the Mafia recruits its illegal drug sellers and its killers, and where it educates children to hate their neighbors. When I saw the volunteers of Sant'Egidio at work for the first time, I was very excited. They were offering youth a free service called "The School of Peace," where they gave them an educational model to overcome social barriers and discrimination, and to promote peace, solidarity, and hope in a better future. I joined this group in voluntary service with the Community when I was 15 years old.

Yet at that time I did not realize that I was part of a bigger family, and that this experience would forever change my life. In fact, during my adolescence I was not very faithful to the service. I learned fidelity as time went by, and I have to admit that at many times and in many ways during my growth, I turned my back on what the Community wanted to show me. Particularly in my late adolescence, I was convinced that my service would prevent me from fulfilling myself and my career goals. In addition, service was just "service," like another task to accomplish, a way to feel at peace with myself, or a way to look "cool" in everybody's eyes. I was missing something.

At the age of 23 I moved to Rome, where I was very busy. The study, the job, and a new life to build filled my days, but not my soul. I worked hard to reach my goals at school and to succeed as a journalist. I wanted to be the best at everything. That way of being resulted in anxiety attacks, leaving me feeling really alone and empty, especially when I realized that all of my teenage dreams about a better world were over. Instead, I now turned inward, with a new self-centered way of thinking. Thankfully, some friends of mine from Palermo invited me to go and see the Community in Rome, since the capital of Italy is a very special place. In fact, the Community was established here by Andrea Riccardi in 1968 after the Second Vatican Council. It was in Rome that I learned more about the story and the charisma of the Community of Sant'Egidio, a Catholic movement now spread to more than 73 countries all over the world. The members are lay people, and there are more than 60,000 of them. I would add that they are normal people who made a choice in their life: to testify the Gospel and to help those who are in need.

In Rome I took part in several voluntary services, like distributing food to the homeless, and for the first time I worked as an educator with children from different cultural backgrounds, namely Gypsies. Gypsies

are people going through a very difficult situation in Italy, mainly as they are one of the most isolated minorities. We provided the children of this ethnic group with activities of "The School of Peace" and we tried to integrate them with the Italian kids. Moreover, we went and visited them in the "ghettos" where they lived with their families. In fact, in Rome there are several travelers' camps located in suburban areas.

The more time I spent with Gypsy families, the more I realized that these people were seeking a normal life. For instance, one day I was talking about the future with a child from one travelers' camp. He told me that he wanted to be an architect and build a house for his family.

One other important moment put me to the test and showed me that beyond my little, fragile world there was another one full of suffering. I am referring to the Christmas lunch, a central occasion to stay with poor friends that the Community organizes every year all over the world for the homeless and for children, families, and elderly people who are in need, and who would otherwise spend their Christmas alone. Sharing the table with them was a very touching experience, as I listened to many stories revealing the humanity of these people, regardless of their social, religious, and cultural backgrounds. They were immigrants who traveled across the sea to Italy looking for a better life. They were people who had seen the war and their friends and relatives dying because of the violence. They were as young as I was, they were lovers, they were fathers and mothers who had lost their jobs. They were people who were seriously ill; they needed care and understanding. At that point I discovered how hard life was for those who had learned to survive. They had nothing, and, similarly, I had nothing either.

During my stay in Rome, "service" changed for me. The stories that I had collected, the poverty that I had touched with my own hands, showed me that beyond myself there was much more. Looking back now, I find that while I was serving poor people, I was also served by them. I gave them food, while they gave me life. It still sounds strange to me, as I have always been a perfectionist. They taught me to love what is generally considered imperfect in this world. Through their eyes I understood that love is more than a feeling: it is a challenge, a responsibility. It is about fidelity.

After a long period in Rome, I came back to Palermo, to where everything began—the poor areas of my city. Today I am part of a group of emerging adults helping adolescents with their academics and even finding meaning in life. Among other activities, the volunteers,

adolescents, and I go and visit the elderly in order to promote an inter-generational encounter; we take part in initiatives favoring the abolishment of the death penalty; we meet children and adolescents from different cultural backgrounds with the aim to foster intercultural relations. Last, but not least, we educate our adolescents to not adhere to the Mafia, trying to explain how it annihilates human dignity and fosters hate and violence. In this sense, every year we do a pilgrimage in Palermo to the house of a Catholic priest, Father Pino Puglisi, who was killed by the Mafia just because he showed young people that it is not the right answer in their lives.

Finally, the experience with the Community impacted my existence in many ways. I would define, now, just three areas: my religion, my personal life, and my job. As I stated before, I was not very religious. Religion was just about a series of devotional gestures that did not correspond to any real intentions. Through my service in the Community of Sant'Egidio, I learned that poor people are one of the most interesting theological books ever leafed through, as they show a living God calling you to take part in something greater than yourself.

From a personal perspective, the friendship with the poor (the Community taught me to consider poor people "friends") helped me to heal from my anxiety attacks and from my individualism. They taught me that one can accomplish a number of goals yet still be unhappy in life. In fact, if you don't have love and you live with yourself as the center of your world, you are condemned to loneliness. In short, they taught me that life is not about "having" but is about "being."

Moreover, they changed my perspective in approaching several questions in my life. Today, not only do I ask myself, "Why do you do what you do in life?," but also, "For whom?" As a consequence, my job and my studies have a new meaning. I try to see beyond the papers I write for men who, like me, are asking for understanding and for knowledge. My study of youth development is guided by the willingness to learn more about the universe of teens. Psychology, in this sense, has so much to teach. I also have a new vision of journalism: it is a way to tell people's sufferings to the world, to be the voice of those who do not have one. Life, job, and faith are services, and they get some meaning only when shared with others and lived for others. Finally, the contact with my poor friends and adolescents improved my personal skills. I am now aware of my limits and prejudices, and I am more able to communicate with people from different social, cultural, and ethnic