Turning Points in the Transition to Adulthood

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Laura L. Fischer

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Jeylan T. Mortimer

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Dedicated to my daughter,

Tess Fischer Leighton

and to my parents,

Norbert and Mary Lou Fischer

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"It's All About the Question."

Research Questions

If anything has become my sociological mantra, it is this, "It's all about the question." If I have said it once, I have said it a thousand times and thought it even more. *Everything* follows from the question itself. Sociological significance is inherent in the question. Method for study derives from the question. Interpretations arise in the context of the question. Theoretical insights are born from the question. Questions guide our thinking and arouse our curiosities; they confuse us, inspire and concern us. Questions must be clear and concise; they must be important; they must be meaningful in terms of scholarship and everyday life. Questions are keys to the social world; they unlock and deliver the pieces of the sociological puzzle. Researchers must be able to respond to the challenge, "Why study this?" Thus, what one asks and how one asks it is of critical importance for a sociological research study.

The purpose of this dissertation is threefold: (1) to explore the central characteristics of the subjective experience of turning points; (2) to investigate the ways in which turning points are expressed in social contexts; and (3) to develop a more precise, analytical concept to test, refine, and employ in future research studies. Therefore the questions that inform this work are:

(1) How do young adults talk about change?
(2) What are the central characteristics of turning points in subjective experience? How are empirical characteristics similar to and different from the current classical definition of turning points?
(3) In what ways are turning points expressed in social contexts?

(4) How can the concept of turning point be developed as an ideal type for use in future empirical studies?

What is a turning point?

The iconic notion of a turning point usually involves something like a lightning bolt … we often talk about turning points as dramatic events unforeseen even in the wildest of dreams. Simply the words themselves, "turning point" conjures up all kinds of images at various levels of abstraction. Some images are biographical, such as graduation, marriage, divorce, tragedy, opportunity, birth and death; others are historical, such as the Great Depression, the Vietnam War, and September 11. Turning points are moments when lives are seen in new ways, when individuals leap off expected pathways and blaze new trails. Turning points are moments when the sky falls and chaos ensues; when revolution reigns and the world changes.

Sociologically, the turning point is an important concept in life course studies. Strauss first coined the term identifying turning points as "critical incidents that occur to force a person to recognize that 'I am not the same person as I was, as I used to be'" (1959:93). Elder, Johnson, and Crosnoe (2004:8) suggest turning points may include subjective *or* objective changes, but they always involve significant changes in direction. More recently, Shanahan and Macmillan (2008) present turning points as a life course concept, akin to transitions, that includes subjective and sometimes objective changes as well (Shanahan and MacMillan 2008: 82-86). In their discussion Shanahan and Macmillan (2008) cite examples of turning points that are both abrupt and gradual. They privilege however, the centrality of the subjective experience over behavioral changes. For an

experience to be a turning point, it must involve a change in meaning for individuals in the life course (Shanahan and Macmillan 2008:85). In addition, Shanahan and Macmillan note that turning points may bring about new opportunities for individuals. Mortimer (Lecture 2005) characterizes turning points as a particular kind of change in a person's life; change that includes a transformation of identity, change that involves both subjective and objective aspects, change that is more abrupt than gradual, change that brings about a completely different direction in behavior, change that is widespread and likely to involve multiple trajectories.

Although similar in some aspects, it is notable that there is no consistent definition of the concept, turning point. Strauss (1959) seems to imply change in self and identity as preeminent. Elder, Johnson, and Crosnoe (2004) suggest turning points are acute changes that include either subjective or objective changes, or both (Elder et al. 2004, Elder, 1986). Mortimer (2005) neatly summarizes all of these elements with the addition of widespread change in multiple trajectories, while Shanahan and Macmillan emphasize meaning, subjective aspects, and opportunities (2008). These definitions along with lay or iconic descriptions reveal snapshots, glimpses of what Becker (1998) calls the "underlying imagery" of turning points, yet the larger picture is unclear. Given the inconsistency in definitions of turning points, it is difficult to understand these experiences empirically; we cannot consistently identify turning points, we cannot precisely compare turning points to other turning points, nor can we compare turning points to a clear, standard definition.

Why Study Turning Points?

There are three reasons why a study of turning points will make a contribution to sociology; turning points are meaningful in everyday life; they provide insight into processes of change; and there is ambiguity in the literature regarding use of and as we have seen, inconsistency in the definition of the concept, turning point.

Turning points are meaningful in subjective experience.

Situated across social characteristics and a wide variety of domains, turning points are significant for those who experience them. Turning points are meaningful, not to mention fascinating. One could even say turning points are life-changing: consider the following examples …

October 22, 1989 was a Sunday night in small town Minnesota, a Sunday night when three young friends took a bike ride to the local Tom Thumb store to rent a video. The boys were enjoying that staple of childhood nights, 'the sleepover'. Jacob and Trevor were brothers; Aaron, Jacob's best friend since second grade. They picked up their video and began the ride back to Jacob and Trevor's house. Suddenly a masked man jumped up from the ditch, pointed a gun at the boys, and told them to lie face down in the ditch. He asked them their ages. He told Trevor to run to the woods and not look back. He told Aaron to run to the woods and not look back. Each boy ran as fast as he could. When they reached the woods, they did turn back, but saw only darkness. Jacob Wetterling, age 11, has never been seen again.

Aaron Larson has lived with the traumatic experience since that awful October night. According to his mother, Fran Larson, it has changed him, "I think it's shaped his attitude toward everything, from how he values everything to how he makes choices. It was such an extreme event, it has shaped him pretty much down to the core."

(Richard Meryhew, Minneapolis St. Paul Star Tribune Sunday, October 18, 2009)

Clearly, Aaron Larson's sense of self was changed in a single tragic moment of childhood; a moment that not only has transformed his sense of self, but also the way in which others see him. For Aaron Larson, a new chapter and a changed sense of self,

from a carefree young boy in Smalltown, USA to the boy known as the last person to see Jacob Wetterling; for Aaron Larson, a turning point.

Not only do turning points direct us to see changes in the self, they often include changes in identity, which often are seen ever more clearly in retrospect. Consider the example of Madeleine Albright who one night received a telephone call from President Bill Clinton asking her to serve as United States Secretary of State. In her autobiography she writes, "I hung up, hugged Elaine, and sat down for several minutes trying to absorb the fact that my life had just been transformed" (Albright 2003: 284). The next morning on the train from New Jersey to New York, after greeting her fellow commuters, she looked back upon the story of her life,

"As we rolled across the New Jersey flatlands, past New York Harbor and into the city, I returned to my seat and stared out the window. For all my awareness of how unexpected events can be, I had to marvel. I had arrived in that harbor half a century before, an eleven-year-old immigrant from Prague staring up at the Statue of Liberty. How astonishing that that girl was about to become the sixty-fourth secretary of state and the highest-ranking woman in U.S. history." (Albright 2003:284-285)

For Madeleine Albright, a new chapter, a changed sense of self, and a transformed identity, from a young immigrant girl to the highest ranking woman in United States history; for Madeleine Albright, a turning point.

In addition to changes in the self and changes in identity, turning points often drive changes in behavior and as Shanahan and Macmillan suggest, "new opportunities" (Shanahan and Macmillan 2008: 82). Consider this excerpt from a letter written by a young secretarial school graduate visiting Africa to her family at home in England,

"Most Darling Family,

Since I last wrote an awful lot has happened. For one thing I have had a great deal of work, now happily disposed of into various files and envelopes. Friday – when, as I believe I told you we have a bank holiday out here, only I had to work on Sat. morning and so couldn't go away – was my nicest day in Kenya. Here in Nairobi is one of the best Natural History Museums there is, with all the most up to date and modern methods of showing and arrangements, etc. The Curator, who is responsible for all of this, is a man called Dr. Leakey … Anyway Clo told me all about him, as they had taken an Aard Wolf to the museum to be stuffed – for the museum, not them! She promised to introduce me, having met him on one or two occasions, but of course, she didn't. So I rang up and asked to speak with him, told him how interested in animals I was, and left the rest to him. He immediately suggested I should go there on Friday morning, at 10 o'clock – which I did. And for the whole morning he took me round the museum, pointing out why one species of antelope had its head set on at a particular angle, or one type of pig had horny developments in one place and another sort in another… He told me so many fascinating things, that it would take me pages and pages to tell you, so I won't. We then had some coffee. Now comes the amazing thing – and it is just as amazing whether it comes off or not. You must realize he had never seen me before, and knew absolutely nothing about me at all. Over coffee we were talking about Levi, etc., when he suddenly said "Can you ride?" So I said that I loved it, etc. etc. Then he looked at me intently and said "Are you good with dogs?" So I answered in the same vein. Then he said "Would you be interested in living at my house while my wife and I are away, exercising the horses and seeing that all the animals are all right?" It absolutely took my breath away …"

(Goodall 2000:91-94)

And in that moment, a relationship began between Jane Goodall and Dr. Louis Leakey. It was a relationship that would take her to the Gombe Stream Chimpanzee Reserve on Lake Tanganyika; a relationship that would take her from secretarial work to the revolutionary anthropological study of chimpanzees. It was a moment in time that certainly changed Jane Goodall's life completely and in many ways has changed the world. For Jane Goodall, a changed sense of self, a changed identity, and changed

behavior from offices and paperwork to wild forests and animal observation; for Dr. Jane Goodall, a turning point.

Indeed as Aaron Larson, Former Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, and Dr. Jane Goodall would most likely attest, social life is full of surprises, surprises Strauss calls, "turning points" (Strauss, 1959). Turning points may be tragedies and crises; they may be opportunities and honors. They can occur at any moment in life, to anyone, in any social context. Turning points are those aspects of the life that, planned or serendipitous, are always transformative (Strauss, 1959). Turning points take us to new places, where nothing is as it was before, where we can say, "I am not the same person as I was, as I used to be" (Strauss 1959:93)

Turning points provide insight into processes of change.

There is no doubt that turning points have powerful relevance in the empirical world. But a study of turning points offers still more. Turning points are moments when history and biography intersect, when structure and the self collide; turning points are windows to the dynamic house of change. While much of our intellectual efforts are aimed at studies of stability, a study of turning points allows us a glimpse into the black box of change; not only behavioral change but the more elusive changes in the self and identity. Efforts to capture, to understand, and to isolate processes and change have scholarly utility. Efforts to illuminate the connections between biography and history have sociological utility.

Turning points draw our attention to process, to changes in the self, in identity, in behavior. The changes turning points bring in their wake are often dramatic both in

scope and in character. While behavioral changes may be more easily accessible in the research process, it is a change in meaning which may be at once more central and is certainly more elusive. The changes in meaning that occur when a turning point is experienced are changes in the self and identity. If "I am not the same person as I was, as I used to be" (Strauss 1959:93) I have changed the meaning of my sense of self and identity. Turning points involve changes in the deeply felt sense of self, in profoundly important aspects of identity: the authentic self, the extant self, the core self, existential identity (Turner 1976, Rosenberg 1979, Rossan 1986, Gecas and Mortimer 1987). They are entangled with what Rosenberg refers to as "psychologically central" aspects of self concept (1981). This is the kind of experience that Aaron Larson had that summer night in Minnesota, a turning point his mother observes, "has shaped him pretty much down to the core" (Meryhew 2009). Turning points also affect salient aspects of identity, elements to which individuals are strongly committed (Wells and Stryker 1986). Madeleine Albright no longer identifies herself as an immigrant, but rather "the highest ranking woman in United States history" (Albright 2003:284-285). I suggest, turning points may become "sacred objects" (Durkheim: translation 1965) around which we organize ourselves, our identities, and sometimes our behaviors.

To no one's surprise, not only do turning points have implications for the self and identity, the concept itself arose in investigations of the self and identity. Therefore an understanding of self and identity is critical for a study of turning points and a life course perspective a particularly sharp lens through which to study them . The self and identity have been characterized in a number of ways; dialectical, developmental, evolutionary, reflexive, negotiated, situated. Overall, the self is seen as a process, primarily social but

more or less structured and more or less stable over time. For some the self appears as dialectical and organized, developing throughout life in response to various crises and experiences (Erikson 1959). This conception of self implies a somewhat predictable and stable entity, punctuated by periods of necessary crisis. In this formulation there is a kind of end state, a complete self, perhaps an optimal self achieved in developmental fashion.

Alternatively, a more fluid conception suggests the self is discovered only in relation to others, and the character of that discovery is much more variable (Cooley 1902 1912, Mead 1934, Blumer 1969). Here individuals understand themselves not only as subject but also as object. This important reflexive capacity, developed in interaction, allows for interpretation, negotiation, intent, and action in the evolving self (Goffman 1959, Blumer 1969, Fine 1981, Wells and Stryker 1988). This creative self is less predictable, much more variable, and is ever-changing throughout the life course.

The various conceptions of self differ in their emphases on stability and change. But somewhere in the middle, the self can be understood as a site of both continuity and change. In this, the life course perspective is particularly useful for the study of turning points. Though the life course perspective, the self is seen as essentially stable but also situated in time and place (Wells and Stryker 1988). While embracing continuity, the life course perspective acknowledges the importance of the creative, dynamic, negotiating self (Wells and Stryker 1988). The long lens of the life course perspective allows us to see not only the possibilities for the self but also that the self is a "life-long process" (Wells and Stryker 1988:223) that involves not only stability, but also change, change which may occur as a result of turning points.

Ambiguity in the literature regarding the concept, turning point.

As noted earlier, there are various sociological definitions and lay notions of the concept turning point. As a result there is little consistency in the way the concept is applied or expressed in the sociological literature. The limited empirical evidence on turning points suggests they may be experienced in a number of ways, some of which are consistent with the working definition or underlying imagery, others which are not.

In contrast to the underlying imagery of the iconic turning points, there is empirical evidence to suggest turning points, more often than not, may be anticipated events. In his follow up to the Berkeley Longitudinal Studies, Clausen found that more than half of the turning points reported could be considered role transitions, and 2/3 of these were expected transitions such as entering an occupation, entering a marriage, or becoming a parent. Based on these interviews, Clausen suggested that while turning points for some are unanticipated, drastic events, for others they can be experienced as anticipated events that bring expected changes in their lives (Clausen 1995).

Some scholars have found turning points to be experienced as discrete, definable experiences with observable beginnings and endings (Elder 1986; Jasso 2004; Sampson and Laub 1990, 1996). Sampson and Laub (1990) found that various commitments, to work, to education, and to spouse, along with job stability, were discrete turning points in the transition to adulthood. These factors decreased the likelihood that juvenile offenders would become adult offenders (Sampson and Laub 1990). Military experience is often viewed by individuals as a turning point in their lives and tends to be characterized as a discrete, bounded, even a "knifing off" kind of event. Military service is definable,

having a clear-cut beginning point and a clear-cut end-point, often separating one's past life from the present and the future. Elder (1986) found that military service was important in redirecting the lives of men, particularly those who were disadvantaged in terms of family background, academically, and psychosocially. Sampson and Laub (1996) identify military service as a turning point in transition to adulthood among delinquent and non-delinquent boys. Their findings suggest military service improved occupational attainment and socioeconomic success particularly for disadvantaged young men (Sampson and Laub 1996). Migration has also been expressed as a turning point with entry to another country itself experienced as a discrete event bringing long term effects over the life course (Jasso 2004).

While turning points have been identified as discrete, bounded events by some, they have also been conceptualized as on-going processes (Clausen 1995; Uggen and Massoglia 2004, 2010; Vaughan 1986). Uggen and Massoglia (2004, 2010) suggest that the turning point of desistance from crime is a process in much the same way that schooling is a process that leads to graduation. Clausen (1995) found that while some respondents expressed turning points as "transforming incidents", others suggested a more gradual kind of experience, a process toward a new way of life. In her study of divorce, Vaughan uncovered a process of "uncoupling" where what appears to those on the outside as a discrete event, is experienced by those on the inside as a downward spiral, a slow disentangling of the connection between two people (Vaughan 1986). While there is empirical evidence that turning points may sometimes be experienced as processes, the bulk of the evidence suggests that turning points are experienced as

discrete, definable events (Elder 1986; Clausen 1995; Jasso 2004; Sampson and Laub 1990, 1996).

Experiences of turning points include both objective and subjective aspects (Clausen 1995; McAdam 1989). Yet this evidence is somewhat equivocal. In studying the Mississippi Freedom Summer Project, McAdam (1989) concluded that for volunteers, "the summer marked a watershed in their lives, a point around which their biographies can be seen in 'before' and 'after' terms" (McAdam 1989: 758). This turning point summer produced both an attitudinal, subjective change in terms of activism for volunteers as well as structural connections making long term behavioral changes more likely (McAdam 1989). Perhaps behavioral changes vary with structural connections. But the question remains, do turning points necessarily result in subsequent behavioral change? For Clausen (1995), it is not behavior that identifies a turning point, but rather subjective identity change. He concluded in his follow up to the Berkeley Longitudinal Study that turning points may not necessarily include behavioral change but they must include the subjective sense that an individual has taken on some new form of meaning (Clausen 1995).

Turning points can be seen as complete reformations, metamorphic changes but also as milder alternations to existing identities (Travisano 1981). Travisano (1981) takes it a step further suggesting turning points are important in terms of identity change. He reports two kinds of change in his study of Hebrew Christians and Jewish Unitarians, namely alternations and conversions. Alternations, experienced by Jewish Unitarians, are not complete reorganizations but rather extensions of life in permissible even predictable directions, transitions to the already established world. Hebrew Christians experienced

conversions, complete breaks with the past, breaks which took individuals to worlds completely negated by their previous experiences. Conversions have a particular quality to them; they involve what Travisano calls a change in the "informing aspect" of identity, but what of alternations? (Travisano 1981: 242). Are they any less a turning point than conversions are?

Thus according to the literature, turning points may at once be anticipated or serendipitous. They may involve role transitions and expected events or surprises that seem to come out of the blue. Turning points may be discrete, knifing off kinds of events, or long drawn out processes of gradual change. They may involve identity change, behavioral change, or both. How then do we account for, make sense of these inconsistencies? Is the concept correctly defined? Is the concept erroneously utilized? And importantly, is the concept turning point useful at all? These are the very questions that drew me to investigate turning points more closely and called for a return to that which is authoritative, empirical observations.

To Return to the Question: Why Study Turning Points?

Given the importance of turning points in peoples' lives, the potential contributions to our understanding of change and process, and the empirical and conceptual inconsistency in the literature, further studies of turning points are called for. According to Becker (1998) concepts are developed in conversation with the empirical world, a kind of back and forth discourse between theory and practice. My dissertation is situated at precisely this moment; seeking to bring empirical evidence to bear on current conceptions working toward clarity and understanding. When in doubt theoretically, it is best to return to the

source, how do people express their experiences of turning points? In what ways are these expressions similar to and different from the turning point as classically defined? This dissertation is a first step in exploring the contours of the concept itself, in looking to the ways turning points are experienced in various social contexts, and in developing a more precise analytical tool, an ideal type turning point, for use in further studies. I am hopeful it will be part of a much larger program of study for me; but for now, the journey begins in the following manner.

The Classically Defined Turning Point

To begin, in order to make consistent comparisons in my analysis of the expressions of change by the participants in the Qualitative Study on the Transition to Adulthood (QSTA) I have created a composite conceptualization of turning points based on definitions in the literature which I refer to as the **"classically defined turning point"**. For purposes of this analysis the **"classically defined turning point"** includes the following elements: substantial change, change more abrupt than gradual, change in self, change in identity, change in behavior, subjective change, objective change, a sense of meaningfulness, and widespread change in multiple trajectories. It will also be useful to keep in mind that some theorists emphasize certain elements of the classically defined turning point over others: Strauss (1959) emphasized changes to the self and identity in his formulation; Elder, Johnson, and Crosnoe (2004) emphasized significant change in direction; while Shanahan and Macmillan (2008) emphasized meaningfulness, opportunities, and subjective aspects of turning points as central to their conceptualization. QSTA participant narratives were analyzed to see how empirical

expressions of change compared to the elements and emphases of the classically defined turning point.

Chapter Outline

Chapter Two consists of a historical view of the concepts self and identity in order to situate the study of turning points firmly. **Chapter Three** includes a review of current literature on turning points. **Chapter Four** describes my methodological journey, from the choice of an inductive, grounded approach to its implementation in the Qualitative Study on the Transition to Adulthood (QTSA), which is part of the larger MacArthur Foundation Research Network on the Transitions to Adulthood and Public Policy. **Chapters Five, Six, and Seven** present my empirical findings: themes which arose in the process of analysis as compared to the elements of the classical definition of turning point. In **Chapter Five** I address the ways QSTA participants expressed less consequential changes in their lives. These experiences are insightful in differentiating substantial, or turning point change from changes that do not rise to this level of significance. **Chapter Six** includes the ways QSTA participants experienced and expressed changes of significant consequence and how these changes compare to elements of the classical turning point definition. **Chapter Seven** addresses the social contexts in which consequential change experiences and turning points were expressed. **Chapter Eight** consists of summary, insights and conclusion, along with suggestions for an ideal type turning point and topics for future study.

Chapter Two
Historical View: The Self and Identity

Like the moment Dorothy stepped into the Land of Oz, there are times in life that seem qualitatively different than others. In the black and white world of our life stories there are pictures that appear in living color, significant in the recollection. And as we tell our life stories, as we reveal ourselves, we talk about them all of the time. We call these experiences by various names, "defining moments", "lightning bolts", "paths not taken", "forks in the road", "turning points". They flash in our memories, meaningful in bold relief. They stand out as times when we find ourselves plunging through the 'looking glass', to the place where nothing is as it was before, to the place where, "I am not the same person as I was, as I used to be" (Strauss 1959:93). This is the stuff of "turning points".

The concept of turning point is widely used in everyday language and popular culture. It is the content of intimate conversation. It is the inspiration for drama in films, novels, poetry, and songs. Aside from the use of turning points in everyday discourse, the concept of turning point has been used in scientific analyses. Applicable at several levels of abstraction, the concept of turning point has been used to characterize macro level and micro level phenomena. Watershed events like World War II, the fall of the Berlin Wall, the Watergate Scandal, Tiananmen Square, New York September 11, the Great Tsunami, Hurricane Katrina, events that rock societies and revolutionize world systems can be considered turning points. Micro level personal experiences, of marriage, the birth of children, the experience of divorce, of tragedy, of opportunity, can be considered turning points. Turning points are moments when lives are seen in new ways, when individuals

veer off expected paths and changes ripple through relationships and generations. Situated across a wide variety of domains, turning points have provided insight into studies of careers, education, family life, deviance, military service, as well as cultural, political, and social change.

Turning points have been conceptualized in a number of ways. They can be seen in the expected and unexpected, planned for as well as serendipitous. Turning points have been characterized as discrete, bounded, definable events. On the other hand, turning points can be characterized as processes. However described, turning points have a powerful empirical reference for individuals, as ancient perhaps as the notion of repentance, the literal turning away from sin and turning towards God. Turning points are meaningful for people. Turning points are deeply woven into our notions of who we are for ourselves and who we are for others. Central to the workings of the self and identity, turning points are windows through which we may look into the very mechanisms of change. They are part of the relentless pursuit of the self to understand and define the parameters of identity. To understand turning points, we must trace the concept back to its beginnings, in studies of the self and identity. The concept "turning point" is revealed in studies of the self and identity.

HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT : TURNING POINTS UNCOVERED IN THE STUDY OF THE SELF AND IDENTITY

In the first half of the twentieth century, scholars from the fields of psychology, sociology, and social psychology were circling around several ideas, namely those of "the self" and "identity". Almost like wolves circling prey, coming closer and closer, scholars worked to capture the essence of these concepts. Craftsmen each in their own

way, they worked to harness the elusive notions: their goal, to render them useful for empirical study. To this end, Nelson Foote (1951) wrote about the genesis of motivation in identification with a group. In the interest of empirical development, Manfred Kuhn (1954) devised his famous "Twenty Questions Test" as a quantitative measure of identity. Several among them were or were to become leaders in their respective fields, their work foundational to the significant theoretical advances in areas of sociology, social psychology, symbolic interactionism, and studies in the life course. But it was in the early days of the scientific search for the self and identity that the concept of turning point was uncovered. The search was led by Charles H. Cooley, George Herbert Mead, Herbert Blumer, Erving Goffman, Anselm L. Strauss; and at the head of the pack, Erik H. Erikson.

THE SEARCH FOR THE SELF AND IDENTITY: EARLY DAYS: ERIKSON, COOLEY, MEAD, BLUMER, GOFFMAN, AND STRAUSS

Early Days: Erik H. Erikson

In tracing the development of identity as a scientific concept, Andrew Weigert (1983) credits Erik H. Erikson with paradigmatic contributions and paints a fascinating picture of Erikson's life and work. The concept of identity arose from the fertile ground of history and biography: the history was American culture during World Wars I and II; the biography was the life, the education, and the scholarly work of Erik H. Erikson.

The life experiences of Erikson permeate his work at every analytical twist and turn, with the concept of "identity" appearing as a significant theme throughout. It is quite interesting to see the way Erikson's personal challenges and conflicts find their way into

his scientific theory. It is almost as if Erikson is at once observer and observed, analyst and patient, scientist and subject, theory and data. He was born in Frankfurt, Germany June 15, 1902. His biological parents were divorced and it is reported that Erikson's Danish father left before he was born. When his mother remarried, he was adopted by his Jewish stepfather and became known as Erik Homberger. With his Nordic looks, Erikson felt the pangs of rejection from both his Jewish neighbors and his non-Jewish schoolmates. As he grew older, he bounced around a bit – traveling in Europe, becoming an artist, studying the Montessori Method of teaching children through play, and working as a teacher. Erikson ended up at the Vienna Psychoanalytic Institute and studied child psychoanalysis with Anna Freud. In 1933, Erikson immigrated to the United States (Papalia and Olds 1995, Friedman 1999).

Erikson arrived to a country in conflict, for in the first half of the twentieth century, America was at war. A nation of immigrants, America had gone to war against the birthplaces of its citizens. As an immigrant, Erikson adapted to America during a time when national identity was uppermost in the minds of the people, during a time of tension between his chosen country and the country of his birth. Once again, he felt the challenges of identity and the conflicts of development under the powerful influences of society. More than merely experiencing these things himself, Erikson began to investigate, analyze, and write about them.

From his personal, educational, and clinical experiences, Erikson followed a number of intellectual paths toward the notion of identity. These experiences sensitized Erikson to the challenges of identity formation and the effects of history and society on personal, psychological development. Curious about continuity, Erikson kept an eye toward

change. He studied the way children strive to create an integrated ego in the face of constant physical maturation. He looked across cultures to study the process of ego synthesis in children. This anthropological experience opened Erikson up to consider the effects of cultural change and the parameters of history at play in ego synthesis. His work in these areas was foundational to the development of identity as a scientific concept.

In the mid-1940's Erikson originated the term, "ego identity". He defined ego identity as,

"…the awareness of the fact that there is a selfsameness and continuity to the ego's synthesizing methods and that these methods are effective in safeguarding the sameness and continuity of one's meaning for others" (Erikson 1959a: 23).

In 1959 Erikson published what some consider his most influential work, "The Problem of Ego Identity" (1959b). In this important work, he posited a theory of psychosocial development where individuals experience specific crises at eight important stages over the life span. Healthy ego development or synthesis is possible when these crises are resolved by achieving an appropriate balance between positive and negative aspects of the particular stage, along with a relevant strength or virtue. The notion of identity is central to this work. Erikson argued that ego identity functions for individuals, that it is something they accomplish psychologically, and that it is shaped by social forces and historical boundaries (1959b).

Interestingly, Erikson studied in other people the very questions he faced in his own life, questions of identity (Weigert 1983:185). In fact, Erikson could be considered a

psychoanalyst with a 'sociological imagination'. At the juncture of history and biography, Erikson's was a fruitful endeavor. According to Weigert, Erikson "began a line of scholarly and literary productivity that gave birth to the concept of identity as a technical term" (Weigert 1983:184). Among those who would follow his path were Charles Horton Cooley, George Herbert Mead, Herbert Blumer, Erving Goffman, and particularly relevant to the concept of turning points, Anselm L. Strauss.

Early Days: Charles Horton Cooley

Although the pattern is original, by looking closely at the theoretical fabric developed by Charles Horton Cooley, one can see threads if you will, echoes from the works of his contemporaries, Emile Durkheim and Max Weber. Like Durkheim (1950, 1956), Cooley conceived of society as an organism, each part affecting another, the whole of it far exceeding its sum of individual parts. For both Cooley (1912) and Durkheim (1950), the group was integral to life, for if human life was anything at all, it was at its base, social. Yet while the focus for Durkheim was society, the focus for Cooley was the individual. Like Weber (1947), Cooley draws our attention to individuals and the subjective meanings we attach to each other, to ourselves, and to larger events. But for Charles Horton Cooley, individuals become quintessentially human only in the interaction of intimate groups (1902, 1912). He makes two seminal contributions to the study of the self and identity; he develops the notion of primary groups and he originates the concept of the "looking-glass self".

For Cooley, individuals come to know themselves and become connected to the structure of society through elemental building blocks that he calls, "primary groups",

"By primary groups I mean those characterized by intimate face-to-face association and cooperation. They are primary in several senses but chiefly in that they are fundamental in forming the social nature and ideals of individuals. The result of intimate association, psychologically, is a certain fusion of individualities in a common whole, so that one's very self, for many purposes at least, is the common life and purpose of the group. Perhaps the simplest way of describing this wholeness is by saying that it is a 'we'."

(Cooley 1912: 23).

In these primary groups, individuals communicate with each other, they come to know each other, and according to Cooley, ultimately they come to value each other.

In primary groups like families and neighborhoods, individuals appreciate others, and willingly submit self-interest to the interests of the group. Importantly, in primary groups, individuals also come to know themselves, to see themselves through others, by way of Cooley's mechanism, the "looking glass self".

The looking glass self has a certain poetry to it, perhaps because it is often described as Cooley writes of it in *Human Nature and the Social Order* (1902: 105),

"Each to each a looking glass
Reflects the other that doth pass"

It can become a little like a tangled web of words, "I think I am what I think you think I am", but it is also like a series of carnival mirrors, for accuracy is not at issue, in fact, accuracy is not even relevant. We see ourselves as we perceive others see us. It is not what others do in fact see, but what we believe them to see. And we are affected by this perception. In actuality, to apprehend the looking glass self is a complex mental process. Cooley (1902) suggests the looking glass self is made up of three parts. First, we imagine what we look like to another person. Next, we imagine that person's evaluation of our

appearance. Finally, we experience some sort of emotion attached to this perceived evaluation (Cooley 1902). In this way, our very sense of self comes not from an individual psyche, an essential nature, but is instead born in a social process. These abilities we have to evaluate others, to perceive their evaluations of us, to evaluate ourselves, are learned. They are developed and nurtured in the intimate interactions of primary groups.

Early Days: George Herbert Mead

Published in 1934 after his death, George Herbert Mead's *Mind, Self, and Society* has made a significant contribution to studies in social psychology. For Mead, the individual can only be understood in a social context. The self arises in interaction and society in turn is constructed from the bits and pieces of mutually oriented communication between its members. For Mead, society is constructed of "social acts".

Mead began to develop the idea of gesture as central in human communication, and central to social acts. Unlike animals, human beings communicate with significant, or self-conscious gestures. Significant gestures are generally predictable. They mean the same thing to different people (Mead 1934:149). But the ability to create and use significant gestures is based on something quite special. In order to develop significant gestures, human beings must be able to "take the role of the other', to literally step into the shoes of another and anticipate his/her reactions and responses. Once able to anticipate the actions of others, we can orient our actions accordingly. In this way human action is unlike the direct responses of animals, it is interpretive, based not on the symbols themselves, but the meaning they bring forth in us and the meaning we

anticipate they will bring forth in others (Mead 1934: 149-150). Human consciousness of self and others emerges in this social process of orientation and reorientation, interpretation and reinterpretation, definition, and redefinition (Coser 1977). For Mead, the self arises as an object only in social life (Mead 1934: 152).

Taking the role of the other is fundamental to social life, but it is not an innate human capability, rather it is learned. Mead (1934) discovers the self in the developing child. In this context, Mead points out that as children grow up, they learn to take the role of the other. This important ability arises in play and in games. Initially, children play by themselves, they play in solitary fashion requiring only themselves and some object, or toy. Next comes the world of make-believe where children pretend to be the other. Children act out the roles of others most significant to them, pretending to be mother, father, brother, sister, friend, teacher. As children grow up they move from simple two-role play to more complex games. And games have rules. This is the developmental move from, for example, a two role game such as "Hide and Seek", which requires one who hides and one who seeks, to more complicated activities like ball games which require multiple role taking and include complex rules. In the move from solitary play to Hide and Seek to ball games we see the developing ability to take the role of the generalized other. To take the role of the generalized other, one must be able to see every role as it relates to the others and to the self. Eventually, taking the role of the generalized other matures from representing all players in a game, to representing larger entities such as neighborhoods, communities, and societies. By internalizing the generalized other, society and its rules become a part of the self, and controls the behavior of the individual (Mead 1934:150-158).

Mead's great conceptual contribution, is his focus on reflexivity. Individuals are reflexive, but this privately accessed experience exists on a social level for Mead (1934: 166-167). The self is born through use of gestures and symbols, in interaction with others. Individuals take on the roles of others, this means that they understand the perspective of others, but importantly from the perspective of others, they also look back upon the self. In Meadian terms, the self is at once subject and object, it is reflexive, it looks back upon itself. Although privately we are able to experience certain things known only to the self, we truly come to understand who we are because we can see ourselves from the outside, from the perspective of others.

Mead elaborates his theory of the self by suggesting that the self is composed of two distinct parts, "I" and the "me",

> "The "I" is the response of the organism to the attitudes of the others; the "me" is the organized set of attitudes of others which one himself assumes. The attitudes of others constitute the organized "me", and then one reacts toward that as an "I"."
>
> (Mead 1934: 175)

The "I" is thus a 'wild child', it is the action component, it gives to the self according to Mead, "a sense of freedom, of initiative" (Mead 1934: 177). It is spontaneous, it can be unpredictable; incalculable, the "I" reacts to others in social interaction. The "me" on the other hand, is more obedient. The "me" is "an organized set of attitudes of others which one himself assumes" (Mead 1934: 175). It is the aspect of the self that holds the expectations and anticipations of others, the rules, if you will, of the social game. The "I" responds to the "me" but it also calls out the "me". The "me" is the basis, the diving board from which action springs forth. It is the reason for the action and it provides

parameters for that action, it shapes the response, although never perfectly, of the "I". While we may be more aware of the "me" in the moments of activity in our daily lives, it is only in recollection, after the action has taken place, that we capture this sense of "I". As Mead writes, "And when the response takes place, then it appears in the field of experience largely as a memory image" (Mead 1934: 176). As different as night is from day, Mead's concepts of "I" and "me" are equally "essential to the self in its full expression" (Mead 1934: 199).

Above all, for Mead the self is founded in a social process. He begins from the "standpoint of society" and theorizes the self through gestures, symbols, role-taking, and social interaction. It is only through these aspects of social life that we become aware of ourselves, that we see ourselves as objects, indeed, that we become fully human.

Early Days: Herbert Blumer

A student of Mead, Herbert Blumer was also interested in the singularity of the human self. While often sociologists locate social action in the group or society, Blumer puts in squarely in the realm of the individual. For Blumer (1969) social action may be found,

"in acting individuals who fit their respective lines of action to one another through a process of interpretation; group action is the collective action of such individuals."

(Blumer 1969: 84)

This kind of interpretation is made possible because the self for Blumer (1969) is an entity capable of "self-indication". For Blumer (1969) the process begins like this:

"The conscious life of the human being, from the time he awakens until he falls asleep, is a continual flow of self-indications – notations of the things with which he deals and

takes into account. We are given, then, a picture of the human being as an organism which confronts its world with a mechanism for making indications to itself. This is the mechanism that is involved in interpreting the actions of others. To interpret the actions of another is to point out to oneself that the action has this or that meaning or character."

(Blumer 1969: 80)

Taking from Mead, Blumer points out that this process has significance for human behavior. To be capable of self-indication means that we are capable of seeing the self as an object and that by making these indications to ourselves and tailoring subsequent action by them, we are not acting impulsively or instinctually. Instead we are vigorously involved. Armed with self-indications, we fabricate, compose, and form our actions. In this, we are all artists, discerning, combining and creating classic works of human behavior (Blumer 1969: 80-82).

This particularly peculiar behavior inspired Blumer to elaborate his theoretical perspective, Symbolic Interactionism. Symbolic Interactionism is based on Mead's foundational elaboration of the self. The term itself refers to this uniquely human kind of interaction, that because of the self human beings attribute meaning to action through apprehension of symbols, we are able to define each other's actions, and to take these actions into account when we act ourselves. The capabilities of the self are central in this perspective that begins its analysis of social life at the individual level. As noted, according to Mead, humans have the unique ability to be at once subject and object to themselves (Mead 1934; Blumer 1969: 81). We distinguish the self from other objects, we give it significance, when we attach meaning to it (Mead 1934, Blumer 1969) We act in the world by means of the self. It is through the self that we understand meaning. Because of the self we can interpret the acts of others, anticipate the responses others may have to our potential acts, and determine our own actions. Because the self has a

reflexive ability, humans can take the role(s) of others (Blumer 1969: 81-82; Mead 1934). As a result we interpret, define, and redefine objects and situations in social life. Individual action is guided by these interpretations, these translations, anticipated and serendipitous alike. Action is thereby social, it takes the other(s) into account and reality is in fact, created and recreated in interaction (Blumer 1969: 82). As the process marches on, individuals may be seen to develop 'lines of action' which are in turn fitted to the lines of action developed by others (Mead 1934; Blumer 1969). Norms, institutions, and social structures arise as particular lines of action become more common, more established, and somewhat reliable. Social reality is however always a negotiated reality and while it may provide general boundaries, it is at the same time fluid, unfixed, and unpredictable. Blumer (1969) maintains that behavior cannot be explained by existing or by prior conditions; it is to be studied in the moment, in the process of construction (Blumer 1969: 82). For the Symbolic Interactionist, the self and society are both continually created and recreated in social interaction (Blumer 1969: 82).

Early Days: Erving Goffman

The social world for Goffman is more than a stage, it is in fact dressing rooms, parking lots, back stages, sets, programs, scripts, audiences, players, make up, costumes, lighting, music, directors, producers, stagehands and valets (Goffman 1974:1-2). And all play a critical role in theatrical production. Built upon the perspective of Symbolic Interaction, Goffman's approach to the social world is known as "dramaturgical". For Goffman, social interaction is theater, it is drama in which actors offer performances to be customized, edited, accepted and rejected by themselves and by others, and for themselves and for others. He is interested in the ways in which interaction is built up

and the ways in which interaction is broken down, and the subsequent effects of each upon the structures of social life. Goffman (1959a) describes his theory in the seminal volume, *Presentation of Self in Everyday Life.*

Individuals in social interaction are motivated to bring about certain desired outcomes. To maximize these outcomes, individuals come to social interaction and gather information. Actors are interested in discerning what is expected of them and what they can anticipate from others. This allows them to tailor their actions and expressions in such a way as to bring about their goals. Actors are interested in establishing, by inducing agreement among participants, their definition of the situation (Goffman 1959a: 1-4). Definitions may to some extent be negotiated by acting parties so that a kind of "working consensus" will develop (Goffman 1959a: 10). Goffman devotes the bulk of his volume to describing methods by which individuals control the impressions others have of them in interaction.

Goffman discusses and defines elements of performances, aspects of teamwork, considerations of regions, enactment and complications of role performances, secrets and use of proprietary information, types of communication, and the art of a successful performance. Goffman defines performance as,

"all the activity of an individual which occurs during a period marked by his continuous presence before a particular set of observers and which has some influence on the observers" (Goffman 1959a: 22)

The "front" is the background within which a performance is made. It consists of various tools used to support the performance, such as physical settings; personal qualities such

as demeanor, appearance, assurance, and confidence; and a context that represents a sort of collective front or backdrop. General characteristics of performances include dramatization (to highlight key aspects), idealization (to underscore the veracity of the performance), and maintenance of expressive control (to ensure that all actions, gestures, indications point to the intended message). These general characteristics work to frame the interaction and to delineate the performance (Goffman 1959a: 22-65).

Goffman (1959a) defines a team as, "any set of individuals who cooperate in staging a single routine" (Goffman 1959a:79). Whether identical or complementary, performances by team members will work in concert to promote a particular definition of the situation (Goffman 1959a:79). Regions are places within which performances may be observed. Regions are marked by physical barriers but also by time and space. Planned for, intended, public performances take place in front regions. Performances at odds with public intentions or desired definitions of situations take place in back regions. In this way, performances that reveal the inside story of the public representation are to some extent concealed. The outside region includes everything beyond front stage and back stage (Goffman 1959a: 111-139).

Roles are more complicated than might appear in everyday discourse, and they are complicated by the existence of secrets. Individuals and teams alike gear their performances toward establishing for themselves, and importantly for others, their desired definition of a situation. They work to define a particular reality. In this enterprise, they are apt to dramatize or idealize certain bits of information that will foster this desired sense of reality, and to suppress others that may detract from or even destroy the definition of the situation. Individuals and teams have secrets (Goffman 1959a:141-

143). Goffman suggests that, "a team must be able to keep its secrets and to have its secrets kept" (Goffman 1959a:141). Possession of this privileged information complicates roles; it seems to require a certain kind of loyalty, even collusion. In the extreme, it leads to role discrepancy. Role discrepancies can be seen in performances that are not at all what they appear to be, when people pretend to be something they are not, and oftentimes have, an unexposed agenda. In cases where individuals have access to the secrets of others, these discrepancies can be quite dramatic. Informers, shills, modern day whistle-blowers provide examples of role discrepancies where individuals appear to be on board a team, but armed with team secrets are able to expose the harsh realities of duplicitous performances.

Given the importance of communication that is consistent with and fosters the definition of the situation, Goffman (1959a) suggests there are several forms whereby individuals express contradictory information without necessarily destroying the interaction. For example, individuals may be openly critical of the audience backstage, they may engage in secret comments to other team members during a performance which would not be understood by others, teams may offer informal comments to other teams like innuendo, jokes, or hints, to elevate their position vis-à-vis the other team. The performance is an objective reality, from which members can step back and assess, evaluate and make adjustments (Goffman 1959a:207). The performance is real.

In closing, Goffman turns to the "arts of impression management" (Goffman 1959a: 208). To develop and perform a successful character, actors need certain skills. Goffman organizes these qualities into categories of "defensive attributes and practices", "protective practices", and "tact". Defensive attributes and practices include such things

as loyalty to the team, the ability to provide a disciplined and consistent performance, and what Goffman refers to as "circumspection", a capacity to anticipate the unforeseen and create the performance most likely to succeed (Goffman 1959a: 212-218). Interestingly, performers and audiences alike work to preserve the performance. Protective practices are largely employed by audience members. Without a backstage pass, observers will not, for example, enter the backstage area. Unlikely eavesdroppers, audience members will tend to avoid overhearing privileged team talk. Audience members will even be inclined to ignore mistakes that may occur in the performance. These protective practices are ways in which the audience exercises "tact", perceiving the minute exigencies of the performance and acting in ways to sustain it overall. But performers themselves must also exercise tact.

There is a complicity that occurs during a successful performance such that while audience members exercise tact to preserve the performance, so too do actors perform in ways that invite their cooperation. In general, actors must anticipate audience reactions and for example, leave room to save face in the presentation of potentially objectionable or false information. Furthermore, actors must be attuned to cues from the audience, warnings perhaps, and change their performances accordingly (Goffman 1959a: 234).

At the heart of the drama, at the center of interaction, is the self, and above all, the self for Goffman is social by its very nature. According to Goffman (1959a), the self is essentially twofold; the self is at once character and performer (Goffman 1959a:252). In its character aspect, the self offers a performance intended to draw from others an appreciation of the image or 'character' the self has attempted to create in the first place.

This self is not a product of the individual, it emerges in the context of interaction as a result of a complete performance,

"A correctly staged and performed scene leads the audience to impute a self to a performed character, but this imputation – this self – is a product of a scene that comes off, and is not a cause of it. The self, then, as a performed character, is not an organic thing that has a specific location, whose fundamental fate is to be born, to mature, and to die; it is a dramatic effect arising diffusely from a scene that is presented, and the characteristic issue, the crucial concern, is whether it will be credited or discredited."

(Goffman 1959a: 252).

The performance aspect of the self provides a training ground for future performances. This training for Goffman, is more than experiences with "successful" and "unsuccessful" performances. The self-as-performer taps into deep psychobiological feelings that are called forth in interaction. Feelings of shame, or anxiety, or "triumph" affect performances all in the context and confines of interaction (Goffman 1959a:254)

Particularly insightful is Goffman's notion that the self is "something of a collaborative manufacture" (Goffman 1959a:253). The self is not individually produced, but is instead a social enterprise,

"In analyzing the self we are drawn from its possessor, from the person who will profit or lose most by it, for he and his body merely provide the peg on which something of a collaborative manufacture will be hung for a time. And the means for producing and maintaining the selves do not reside inside the peg; in fact these means are often bolted down in social establishments. There will be a back region with its tools for shaping the body and a front region with its fixed props. There will be a team of persons whose activity on stage in conjunction with available props will constitute the scene from which the performed character's self will emerge, and another team, the audience, whose interpretive activity will be necessary for this emergence. This self is a product of all of these arrangements, and in all of its parts bears the marks of this genesis."

(Goffman 1959a: 253).

The collaboration Goffman refers to in the production of self and of performances requires a certain morality, and this "moral character" is among Goffman's central interests (Goffman 1959a: 13). Rules of conduct, moral principles exist in society. Goffman suggests two principles of moral character. The first is that individuals can rightfully count on treatment by others commensurate with their own social qualities (Goffman 1959a: 13). Secondly, individuals should truly be who they claim to be (Goffman 1959a: 13). Thus, when a performance takes place, an individual asserts a particular self and a particular definition of the situation. Given the principles of moral character, this creates a moral imperative for others to treat the actor in an acceptable manner. Nowhere is the presentation and production of the self more dramatic than in that very instance where people are most afraid of losing it, something Goffman suggests, "must be one of the most pervasively threatening things that can happen to the self" (Goffman 1959b: 431). And with that, Erving Goffman (1959b) takes us into "The Moral Career of the Mental Patient".

In 1959, Erving Goffman published an article in the journal, *Psychiatry*, which he contends "is an exercise in the institutional approach to the study of the self" (Goffman 1959b: 429). His empirical choice was the experience of the mental patient; experience singular, for as Goffman noted, while there are many paths to mental illness, once begun individuals encounter amazingly similar situations (Goffman 1959b: 430). An interesting analytical tool, Goffman used the concept of a "career" with its internal and official

components, to study in the minute detail of mental illness the interplay between public and private, the self and others, the individual and society.

Generally, people come to the mental hospital under duress at the hands of family, officials such as police, or misrepresentation by others. Reactions will differ. Some patients may be relieved, freed from the task of presenting or trying to present a healthy self. For others, admittance to the mental hospital is public affirmation of a previously concealed and fractured self. Whatever the path, whatever the reaction, the process has been instigated by some sort of complaint or grievance, an action as prologue to the social process that inevitably follows (Goffman 1959b: 432-433). And private troubles become public issues.

Early Days: Anselm L. Strauss

In 1959 Anselm L. Strauss published his seminal work on identity, *Mirrors and Masks: the Search for Identity*. It is Strauss who uncovers the notion of turning points in his study of identity formation/development. Resisting an attempt to precisely define the concept of identity, Strauss regards it as "connected with the fateful appraisals made of oneself-by-oneself and by others" (Strauss 1959: 9). He begins by suggesting that identity is carved from the appraisals we make of ourselves along with the appraisals others make of us (Strauss 1959:9). Identity can be understood as a product of the presentations we make with the 'masks' we put on, and the 'mirror' of others reflecting their assessments back to us,

"It is all a little like the experience of the small boy first seeing himself (at rest and posing) in the multiple mirrors at the barber shop or in the tailor's triple mirrors."

(Strauss 1959: 9)

Strauss admits the concept of identity is imprecise, but this appears to be exactly what he likes about it. For Strauss, the concept of identity is a jumping off point. Embracing its ambiguity, Strauss uses the concept of identity "as an agent for organizing materials and thoughts about certain aspects of problems traditionally intriguing to social psychologists" (Strauss 1959: 9) To the traditional problems investigated by social psychologists, group membership, motivation, personality development, and social interaction, Strauss takes a new, distinctively sociological path. Committed to a view that human behavior is not completely determined, Strauss applies the perspective of symbolic interaction to the problems of social psychology.

Importantly, Strauss (1959) acknowledges the changing nature of social life. He argues that change, not stability, is the standard of human experience. Instead of questioning the existence of change, social science should be concerned with understanding the specific directions of change as well as its meaning for social life. For Strauss, life is all about change. There is a temporal dimension to social life and a temporal dimension to the self. We understand social life and the self, we harness the temporality of social life and the self, through the social structure of language. Language of the past and language applicable to the future temper our present understandings of social life and the self. It is, as Mead suggests, "I cannot turn around quickly enough to catch myself. I become a "me" in so far as I remember what I said" (Mead 1934: 174). We see ourselves as objects. We appraise ourselves by considering the appraisals of others. Importantly, appraisals occur in face-to-face interaction. For Strauss, every

interaction involves mutual identification; we must identify ourselves and we must identify each other. The dance is complicated, symbolic, and developmental; its end result fundamentally unknown and open-ended. We determine future action based on the past or based on anticipations of the future, yet we can never be completely sure of the outcome. Thus, however structured by language our understandings of the social world and the self may be, there remains a fluidity to social life and the self, an indeterminacy, that cannot be captured or completely anticipated. In keeping with his commitment to change, Strauss sees that social life is full of surprises … surprises he calls, "turning points".

True to his interest in change, Strauss begins by reacting against the more static, linear conceptions of identity development. Strauss wanted to capture the conflicts, the challenges, the negotiations of social life. For Strauss, human action is "open-ended, tentative, exploratory, hypothetical, problematical, devious, changeable, and only partly unified …" (Strauss 1959: 91). Strauss opens up the concept of identity development, acknowledges that some development is indeed progressive, step by step, institutionally encouraged, even planned for. But some transformations of identity are messier, complicated, serendipitous, unexpected. Some transformations of identity "occur outside the orbits of the visible social structure" (Strauss 1959: 93). Some transformations of identity can be considered turning points.

Strauss creates a typology of turning points and importantly connects them to changes of identity. Strauss conceptualizes turning points as opportunities for individuals to "take stock, to re-evaluate, revise, resee, and rejudge" (Strauss 1959: 100). The change can vary from gradual to abrupt. To begin, sometimes changes are so gradual that the

individual fails to notice substantial change is indeed taking place. Strauss suggests that an incident, a "milestone", may occur which will illuminate the extent of the change. He uses the example of immigrants to the United States who, after visiting their country of origin and experiencing little connection to it, recognize how strongly they identify themselves as Americans. The immigrants had not realized the extent of the change in their identities until they revisited their homelands (Strauss 1959: 93).

Secondly, Strauss also writes about 'prophets' in the context of conversion, suggesting that once an individual is converted, prophets reveal new directions and experiences the convert can expect. Individuals come to recognize their transformations when the path is plotted for them by prophets and confirmed by their own experiences (Strauss 1959:94).

Thirdly, turning points can be forecasted and institutionalized. "Come to the platform and receive your diploma" (Strauss 1959: 94). These experiences are planned, marked by institutionalized steps through which individuals can chart their progress. According to Strauss, the completion of steps along the way may constitute turning points for individuals.

Fourth, in Strauss' typology of turning points is the situation where an individual makes a public statement about a position or goal. Having made such a proclamation, a person may feel compelled to live up to it, to finish what has been started. In addition, public announcements often indicate recognition that individuals have indeed changed (Strauss 1959: 94-95).

Strauss proposes a related turning point as the fifth in his typology, the ceremonial announcement of the passing of a test. In this situation, individuals will pass or fail on some difficult task related to their sense of themselves, as a mother for example, as a

physician, as a teacher. These are the circumstances we are prepared for but hope not to face, at least very often. These are the kind of circumstances that call people to "step up to the plate", they are if you will, "baptisms by fire". They are tests by which we assess ourselves. Furthermore, Strauss suggests an interesting form of self-test, temptation. When one is able to resist temptation, he or she will feel that they have changed, that they have turned away from the old way of life, to the new (Strauss 1959:95)

A sixth type of turning point for Strauss is rather subtle, when one finds oneself unexpectedly playing an important role, and playing that role successfully. This type of experience can be considered a turning point because the individual had not seen this potential in the self. They are, "those instances where you find yourself miraculously able to enact roles that you believed – at least as yet – beyond you" (Strauss 1959: 96). This may take a form such as exceeding the accomplishments of a mentor, or a role model.

Betrayal constitutes a seventh type of turning point. Sometimes individuals model themselves after others and closely identify with them. If the role model should abandon them in some way, the person is left with questions about themselves and their role model, or friend, questions about who they were and who they are. Betrayal doesn't always come at the hands of another person; it can sometimes take the form of deceptive experiences. People may deceive themselves about the choices they have made, particularly when it becomes obvious that alternatives thought to be open no longer exist. Strauss provides an example: "A severe instance of such a turning point occurs when someone traps himself into an occupation – much as a house painter might paint himself into a corner of the room – believing that he can always get out when he wants to" (Strauss 1959:98).

The final type of transforming experience noted by Strauss is like betrayal, where an individual may feel betrayed not by another person, or a set of circumstances, but rather by events in general. This betrayal may cause a person to question about how he/she sees the self, it is disorienting according to Strauss, identity is shaken, perhaps negated. The significance of such a turning point depends on the relative importance of the identity aspect involved (1959:99).

Regardless of the particular form of the turning point, the key issue for Strauss is the effect it has upon identity. His classical definition of turning points remains at the forefront of all subsequent work. Strauss (1959) referred to turning points as "critical incidents that occur to force a person to recognize that 'I am not the same person as I was, as I used to be' " (1959: 93). Thus, through the work of Anselm Strauss, turning points have historically been connected with changes in identity. Turning points involve both objective change and subjective meaning for individuals as they navigate the life course.

Summary: Early Days in the Search for the Self and Identity

As the "architect of identity" (Friedman 1999), Erikson not only lived but analyzed and elaborated the process of identity formation. Erickson cast identity formation as an active process of conflict and resolution (Erickson 1959b). Importantly, in acknowledging the influences of culture, society, and history Erickson opens the door for a sociological explanation of identity. It is clear from Cooley's significant conceptual contributions of "primary group" and "looking glass self", that individuals come to know

themselves through connections to and reflections from others (Cooley 1902, 1912). Thus the self is seen as arising in a social process. Mead (1934) takes the sociological train further down the tracks emphasizing the centrality of interaction and reflexivity as materials from which the self is made. For Blumer (1969), human interaction is unique in that we share symbols, give meaning to action, define ourselves and others, and take others into account when acting. Inspired by Blumer's perspective of Symbolic Interaction, Goffman (1959b) in his dramaturgical approach puts the self at the heart of the story, at once character and performer, stage hand and director. For Strauss (1959) identity is sculpted from the "masks" we wear and the "mirrors" in which we see our reflections. But some aspects of identity development are transformative, messier, complicated, serendipitous (Strauss 1959). Social life for Strauss is full of surprises … surprises he calls "turning points".

THE SEARCH FOR THE SELF AND IDENTITY: CONTEMPORARY WORK: TURNER, ROSENBERG, FINE, GECAS, AND STRYKER.

From the catalyst of earlier contributions, advances in concepts of the self and identity, particularly from the perspective of symbolic interactionism, came at the hands of Ralph Turner, Morris Rosenberg, Gary Alan Fine, Viktor Gecas, and Sheldon Stryker.

Contemporary Work: Ralph H. Turner

In his classic article," The Real Self: From Institution to Impulse" (1976), Ralph H. Turner provides a fascinating look at the self, not in terms of its capabilities like his

predecessors, but rather in terms of its authenticity. He begins with a monumental idea; that because humans can see the self as an object, a proposition articulated by Cooley (1902) and Mead (1934), we can differentiate among feelings and actions that come from ourselves. Some feelings and actions we will see as manifestations of our true selves; others we will know as something qualitatively different, as things alien to our true selves. Furthermore, experiences of the true self will be grounded in one of two places; either in what Turner calls "an institutional focus" or "as impulse" (Turner 1976: 204). Turner goes on to suggest that the locus of the real self has implications for sociological theory. People orient themselves to the world from the perspective of the true self. In this way, they will have either an institutional orientation or an impulsive orientation. Turner suggests that there has been a change in location of the real self, a movement from an institutional focus to a focus on impulse. In his article (Turner 1976) he describes the real self grounded in an institutional focus, and the real self grounded in impulse; he considers the possible move from institutional to impulsive locus of the real self; he offers theoretical explanations for this change; and discusses the ways in which it may affect sociological theories. Interestingly, he concludes by suggesting that these ideas provide insight into issues of social control.

Turner understands self-concept as a relatively continuous experience of the self across various circumstances and conditions. He defines the self primarily in three aspects, but above all, he assumes the self is an object that arises in relation to itself and in relation to others (Turner 1976: 204). This process of reflexivity is unique to humans and the resulting self is one that differentiates between what is real and what is unreal; that separates person from situation; and that is unique and personal (Turner 1976: 204).

For Turner, self-concept is more than a static combination of roles and statuses. He is interested in the ways in which individuals experience a sense of authenticity, and in understanding the various ways individuals experience their true selves. Turner suggests that the true self may be grounded in either an institutional focus or in impulse (Turner 1976: 205). An institutional focus suggests that the true self is experienced in achievements, it is attained, created, accomplished. It exists within an institutional framework and embraces institutionalized goals. This true self is faithful to high standards and does not waver in the face of temptation. Institutional true selves live for the future, commitments are made and met as an expression of the true self. The real self for those with an institutional focus is realized only when the individual is in complete control of "his faculties and behavior" (Turner 1976: 206). As Turner writes, "Whatever the task, perfection is both the goal and the means by which the real self finds expression" (Turner 1976: 207).

On the other hand, from an impulse orientation, the true self is discovered; it is not created. Moving theoretically from Turner's institutional locus to his conception of "impulse focus" is akin to picturing America moving from the 1950's to the 1960's (Turner 1976). With these stereotypical images in mind, one can sense just what it is that Turner is describing. "Drop in and drop out!" "Find Yourself" "I'm OK, You're OK!" In the 1960's youth refused to be defined by haircuts, clothing, traditional roles. Unlike the clear expectations of 1950's America, the 1960's were characterized by a quest for self-discovery, zeal to throw off the yoke of an earlier generation's values, rules, obligations, and trajectories. Drug use was seen as a way to throw off the shackles of society; as a way to experience the real, impulsive self (Turner 1976: 206). In 1960's

America, authentic action was rooted in personal, individual desire. Indeed Turner (1976) suggests the true impulsive self can only be revealed when separated from the weight of institutional constraints. When following the rules the real self is, in Turner's formulation, sacrificed. Imprisoned in a Weberian Iron Cage, the spirit of the real self is crushed by rules that are considered more important than people. Like Freud's concept of id, for Turner, the concept of the true self in an impulse focus consists of wild, deep, impulses (Turner 1976: 205) These impulses drive authentic behavior, to act against them is purely pretense. Acting in any way against one's self interest is what Turner refers to as "the ultimate hypocrisy" (Turner 1976: 207). Behavior conducted for any reason other than pure desire, is behavior that takes a toll on the true self (Turner 1976: 205). Society is seen as oppressive; it constrains expression of the true self. Unlike those with an institutional locus of self, impulsives strive not for perfection but for coherence between the true self and behavior.

The extremes of self as impulsive and self as institutional recall Freud's conceptualization of id and superego. But most of us find ourselves somewhere in between (Turner 1976:209). Turner's formulations provide a way of viewing the self, of characterizing the self in all of its versions, facets, dimensions (Turner 1976: 209). Turner's formulations of the self provide a tool for analysis at various levels of abstraction. At an individual level, action and social action can be seen in the context of the true self, motivations can be uncovered as consistent or inconsistent with a sense of the authentic self, and the effects of authentic/inauthentic behavior on group memberships and self esteem can be better understood. At a structural level, historical periods can be described, demographic and institutional changes may be understood as

affecting and affected by the predominant nature of the self in a given place at a given time; relationships between groups such as generations may be understood. Turner's formulation is more than mere description; it speaks to a sense of shared reality within which people come to know a true sense of self (Turner 1976: 209). Turner's work speaks to the way individuals are connected to the social structure and it speaks to the way in which individuals conceive of, are aware of themselves, their true selves.

Although Turner's interest is in historical shifts and social control, his ideas suggest the potential for turning points within the individual. As noted, Turner suggests that most of us possess a sense of self located in both institutional and impulsive loci. Most of the time, these emphases live in relative harmony within individual selves, accommodating one to the other. But the potential exists for this peaceful arrangement to be shattered, for extreme positions of the self to become entrenched. These are moments, Turner calls "crucial transitions of the life cycle" …

> "But at crucial transitions in the life cycle the coexistence will be interrupted. The latent opposition between institutional and impulsive selves then becomes manifest, figuring strongly in the turmoil of choice. The point of choice may be passed and the conflict recede into dormancy without the individual's self-conception being firmly anchored at one pole to the exclusion of the other."
>
> (Turner 1976: 220)

More than a transition, turning points may be conceived as significant transformations of the true self. Turning points change individuals profoundly such that they walk in the world in a different way, they experience themselves in a different way, they are connected to others and connected to society in different ways.

Contemporary Work: Morris Rosenberg

In the quest to "disperse the clouds, mists, and vapors" (Rosenberg 1979: 5) surrounding the self-concept, Morris Rosenberg's *Conceiving the Self* (1979) is certainly among the most, if not the most influential. Much of the subsequent work in the area can be seen against the backdrop of this substantial and ambitious treatment of the self-concept. Of particular relevance for the discussion at hand is Rosenberg's elaboration of the nature of the self-concept as well as the motives related to the self-concept.

Rosenberg defines the self-concept as "the totality of the individual's thoughts and feelings having reference to himself as an object" (Rosenberg 1979: 7). There are, according to Rosenberg, three general areas of self-concept, namely "the extant self", "the desired self", and "the presenting self" (Rosenberg 1979: 9).

Extant self-concept is essentially for Rosenberg, the way in which individuals see themselves (Rosenberg 1979: 9). He identifies content, structure, dimensions, and ego extensions as four important aspects of extant self-concept. The content of extant self-concept is made up of social identity, dispositions, and physical characteristics. Social identity derives from the groups a person belongs to (Rosenberg 1979: 10). Dispositions are more abstract elements that develop over time as people grow up. These are elements like attitudes, traits, tendencies, preferences (Rosenberg 1979:15). Rosenberg uses the term "physical characteristics" to refer to interest in the self as a physical object (Rosenberg 1979: 17). In sum, the content aspect of the extant self-concept consists of a social aspect, a more psychological aspect, and a physical aspect.

Not only is the extant self-concept made up of various elements, the elements exist in relation to each other, the elements have a structure, where the social, psychological, and biological parts combine to form a Gestalt (Rosenberg 1979: 17). Thus the elements are organized into a pattern and the organization of that pattern is hierarchical. Some elements are central, others more peripheral (Rosenberg 1979: 18). All of the elements, their relative significance, and the connections between them contribute to a sense of global self esteem (1979: 22). Rosenberg suggests that global self attitude is the "product of an enormously complex synthesis of elements which goes on in the individual's phenomenological field" (1979: 21) And as such, elements, relationships, and the significance of the parts as well as the whole should be subject to investigation and study (Rosenberg 1979: 20-21).

Extant self-concept can also be described in terms of dimensions. Dimensions are general attitudes taken toward the self, much as one would take general attitudes toward other objects (Rosenberg 1979: 23). What is it that we see when we look at ourselves? Do we have positive or negative feelings toward ourselves? Are such feelings weak or strong? Do we see ourselves as constant and fixed, clear, accurate, or not? These are examples of dimensions in extant self-concept and they can provide a fair sketch of the self-concept (Rosenberg 1979:24).

The last element of extant self-concept is termed "ego-extensions" (1979: 34). Ego-extensions are those things that we take into ourselves, that we treat as part of us, that we treat as our own. Ego-extensions are "experienced as part of what we are" (Rosenberg 1979: 35). Not only are ego-extensions taken into the self, they arouse in the self powerful emotions of pride and of shame (Rosenberg 1979: 34). The self comes to have

"a sense of oneness with them and to feel personally affected by what happens to them" (Rosenberg 1979: 36).

In this way Rosenberg has broken it down for us; he has taken self-concept apart, described its constituent parts and the relationship among them, and put it back together for us. He has drawn the picture of self-concept in colors of content, structure, dimensions, and ego extensions. It is the picture we see of ourselves. It is, for Rosenberg, "most of what the individual sees and feels when he reflects upon himself at a given point in time" (Rosenberg 1979: 38).

Rosenberg goes on to describe the second aspect of self-concept, the desired self-concept. The desired self-concept is simply put, what we want to be, what we imagine we can be (Rosenberg 1979: 38). Rosenberg breaks desired self-concept down into three elements, each with particular content and structure: the idealized image; the committed image; and the moral image (Rosenberg 1979: 38)

The idealized image is that Utopian, perfect, unattainable picture of self that we would like to be. It is the product of our imagination, an imagination that Rosenberg calls both a "gift" and a "curse" (Rosenberg 1979: 40). A more likely vision is that of the committed image. The committed image is more likely, more possible, more reachable. As such, individuals are generally more committed to this view of self and give it more weight (Rosenberg 1979: 41). Finally, the moral image is about propriety and obligation, it encompasses what we "should" do. It includes demands of conscience, of roles, and of personal standards (Rosenberg 1979: 43).

Importantly, the desired self-concept is the backdrop against which self-concept is measured. As such it can serve as a source of motivation whereby individuals will work to close the gap between extant self-concept and desired self-concept. For Rosenberg, "we can never attain an adequate grasp of the self-concept without taking account of man's extraordinary tendency to visualize himself as other than what he is, to construct in imagination a picture of what he wished to be" (Rosenberg 1979: 45) Thus the elements of desired self-concept (idealized, committed, and moral images) are all parts of "the individual's thoughts and feeling with reference to himself as an object – that is, of the self-concept" (1979: 45).

The final general area of self-concept outlined by Rosenberg is the "presenting self" (Rosenberg 1979: 46). It requires the wonderfully human capacity for reflexivity. Standing outside of the self allows individuals to see themselves in action, as objects, and further, to tailor that action in given ways to the situations at hand. Rosenberg contends that there is a basic consistency in the self we bring to all situations, but that certain faces will be shown at some times and not at others (Rosenberg 1979: 46). In other words, the self for Rosenberg is not totally variable, but has a more coherent core. Nonetheless, individuals will present themselves in ways that will encourage goal attainment, maintain self-consistency, preserve and increase self-esteem (Rosenberg 1979: 46-49).

Thus Rosenberg outlines three general areas of self-concept: the extant self; the desired self; and the presenting self. The self-concept is knowable, it is something we are aware of, something we can think about, evaluate, act upon, and investigate (Rosenberg 1979: 51). It is also something we have feelings about, and in this, we can see that the

self-concept serves as a motivational influence on individuals, with potentially powerful effects on behavior (Rosenberg 1979: 53-54).

To further understand the nature and operation of the self-concept, Rosenberg lays out two general self-concept motives, self-esteem and self-consistency, along with four basic principles of self-concept formation, reflected appraisals, social comparisons, self-attribution, and psychological centrality. The self-esteem motive involves the desire to think highly of the self, to have respect for the self, to believe the self has worth (Rosenberg 1979: 53-54). It is, according to Rosenberg, a ferocious motivator in human behavior (Rosenberg 1979:56). Because self-esteem is so critical for survival, humans are highly motivated not only to preserve self-esteem, but also to increase it (Rosenberg 1979: 57).

The self-consistency motive refers to the desire to preserve the self-concept and defend it against the onslaught of change (Rosenberg 1979:53). Self-consistency acts in service of stability, with a certain coherence between self-concept and behavior, to overcome the disputes of challenges and contradictory experiences (Rosenberg 1979: 57). It involves integrity, a resistance to perceived corruption of the self. Self-concept is important to individuals. It is, in a sense, the font from which all action springs forth. According to Rosenberg, it is foundational (Rosenberg 1979: 59). Thus, it is no surprise that we are motivated by self-esteem and by self-consistency, it is no surprise that we strive to protect and maintain self-concept against intrusion.

In terms of self-concept formation, Rosenberg describes four basic principles, namely reflected appraisals, social comparisons, self-attributions, and psychological centrality.

These four principles are essential to understanding the way we see ourselves, the way we wish to see ourselves, and the ways in which we present ourselves (Rosenberg 1979: 76). They are part and parcel of self-concept formation (Rosenberg 1979: 67). Through the process of reflected appraisals we are deeply affected by the way others see us. Over time we may take on these views ourselves (Rosenberg 1979: 63). We are affected by the "direct reflections" of specific others, by "perceived selves" (the way we think others see us), and by "the generalized other" or the attitudes of the larger community (Rosenberg1979: 63). The evaluations, judgments, and opinions of others are important in the creation of our own self-concepts.

A second critical aspect of self-concept formation involves social comparisons. Through social comparisons we assess ourselves in relation to particular people and particular social groups (Rosenberg 1979:68). Thirdly, self-concept formation rests on self-attribution. Self-attribution is the idea that we understand ourselves by looking at our conduct and its consequences (Rosenberg 1979:72). In the same way that we "attribute" things to others based on their behavior, we "attribute" things to ourselves. For example if one plays the flute well, she/he will attribute musical ability to the self. Rosenberg suggests, "it is undeniably the case that people do draw conclusions about how smart, kind, generous, or musically talented they are in considerable part on the basis of observing their own actions and its outcomes" (Rosenberg 1979:73). This is self-attribution. Finally, the notion of psychological centrality rests on the proposition that elements of the self-concept are arranged hierarchically and weighted as more or less important to individuals (Rosenberg 1979:73). "Dispositions", "identity elements", and "ego-extensions" are all as Rosenberg says, "differentially central" (Rosenberg 1979: 73).

In considering any aspect of self-concept, it is imperative to take into account the value of that aspect for an individual in the overall scheme of elements (Rosenberg 1979: 73). In fact, value for Rosenberg is related to change in the self-concept,

> "Whether it is difficult or easy to change a self-concept component thus depends in large part on how critical it is to the individual's system of values."
>
> (Rosenberg 1979: 76)

The far-reaching effects of turning points in individual lives are, for me, due to the fact that they bring change to a centrally valued aspect of one's self-concept.

Contemporary Work: Gary Alan Fine

Long before reality television programs took us into the boardrooms and bedrooms of America, there were ethnographies. The contrivances of 'entertainment' aside, I am not suggesting any kind of equality between them. However, both bring us to places we would not, as outsiders, normally be allowed to visit. They bring us to an inside world, a world beyond the velvet rope and behind the wizard's curtain. They bring us to the back stages of human social life, where the bits and pieces of action and interaction are sewn together, where performances for the stage are designed and created – manufactured and fabricated. Albeit vicariously, the sociological bus has taken us to fascinating places … drug subcultures, gangs, prisons, social movements, tearooms, street corner society. Foremost among the drivers is Gary Alan Fine. In his search for interactional realities and structural revelation, his work spans an impressive empirical area. From debate teachers and mushroom collectors, from the diamonds of Little League baseball, to the virtual realities of dungeons and dragons, to the kitchens of Middle America, Fine is one

of those sociologists who sees everywhere in the world around him, the bones of structure under the empirical flesh of social life. Let us begin by looking at friendship in the world of Little League baseball.

Fine's (1981; originally published) real interest inside the world of Little League baseball is the socialization of preadolescent boys into a culture of their peers. In his article, "Friends, Impression Management, and Pre-adolescent Behavior" Fine looks into preadolescent friendships to see the development of what he calls "considerable impression management skills" (Fine 1981:257).

To this task, Fine takes the perspective of symbolic interaction. As we have seen through the works of Cooley, Mead, Blumer, and Goffman, the concept of the self is central to this perspective. Symbolic Interactionists see children as active participants in the world. Children are not passive products of biology or biography. Nor do childhood social skills develop along prescribed lines of sequential or psychoanalytic stages. Children act in the world because they have the capabilities associated with the peculiarly human self (Fine 1981: 258). Children recognize symbols, they uncover meanings, they make interpretations, and guide their actions accordingly. And importantly children learn to take the role of the other. This ability to take the role of the other allows children to see the self not only as subject, but as object as well. Thus according to Fine,

"the self concept develops through social interaction, and emerges from the child's ability to take the role of the other."

(Fine 1981: 258)

For Symbolic Interactionists, a sense of self unfolds by virtue of a sense of others (Fine 1981: 258). When children are young, the self-concept is shaped largely by interaction with parents. As they grow older, children learn to interact with others outside the boundaries of family. And with time, children become more articulate. Eventually they learn the parameters of appropriate behavior in a number of different social environments (Fine 1981: 259). As children approach adolescence, these environments increasingly involve peers to the exclusion of family members (Fine 1981: 259). Fine suggests that preadolescence is a particularly important time in the socialization process because it is a time when children leave the nest, and socially at least, begin to develop autonomous lives. Friendships and friendship groups are crucial in this process at this time. They provide a place for preadolescents to experiment in their interaction and refine their skills of impression management, with less likelihood of negative sanctions for social errors (Fine 1981: 260-265). Fine takes his investigation of the preadolescent moment in time to the baseball field.

For three years, Fine was a participant observer of Little League Baseball Leagues in Beanville, Massachusetts, in Hopewell, Rhode Island, in Bolton Park, Minnesota, and in Sanford Heights, Minnesota. He learned that friendship is more than an emotional connection, it is also,

> "a staging area for interaction, a cultural institution for the transmission of knowledge and performance techniques, and a crucible to the shaping of selves – in other words, a primary group."
>
> (Fine 1981: 265)

It is in primary groups that individuals communicate with each other, they come to know and they come to value each other. Importantly, in primary groups individuals come to see themselves reflected by way of the looking glass (Cooley 1902). Thus the labor of self creation is often accomplished within the borders of primary groups, groups like friendship groups.

The bonds of friendship are particularly influential when friends are in the physical presence of each other. Thus the influences of friendship will be variously experienced, strongly when one's friends are present, less significantly when one's friends are not. The "staging area" of friendship provides preadolescents a place to experiment with communication on topics that range from school to sex (Fine 1981: 265). Furthermore, it is through friendships that preadolescents are actually connected with social situations in which they can try out their actions. Because the relationships are friendships, preadolescents are given wide berth by each other, to try different ways of acting without significant repercussions (Fine 1981: 265-266).

As cultural institutions, friendship groups provide preadolescents with a confidential kind of culture, a private realm in which to create and practice social action. Additionally, preadolescent friendship groups are social locations unconnected to the adult world, where important information about growing up is shared among its members, information preadolescents cannot get from the world of adults (Fine 1981: 267).

According to Fine, "Friendship is a crucial factor in the development of the social self…" (Fine 1981: 269). It has profound effects on self-image. Preadolescents accept

each other, at least vis-à-vis the non-preadolescent world, they are interested in each other, and as the parent of any teen-ager will tell you, they pay close attention to each other. Because friends give each other room to make mistakes without substantial effects, certainly without the potential repercussions of the larger social world, friendship groups remain relatively unchanged for periods of time (Fine 1981: 269). This engaging, steady, and positive atmosphere is somewhat unique. Without the pressure of negative sanctions or group disruption, members of friendship groups are at greater liberty to practice and try out potential lines of action. This allows them to add to their behavioral bag of tricks and at the same time, tends to validate the self-concepts they are struggling to attain (Fine 1981: 270).

For Fine, preadolescent friendship groups are golden moments in time, moments when children hunger for information they need to develop social competencies and moments when they are significantly under the influence of their peers (Fine 1981: 270). They provide an important playing field for preadolescents where they can practice for the game of adulthood. In friendship groups a particular kind of learning or development takes place. It is not the clean, expected transmission of societal values, norms, and proscriptions. Instead, Fine poses the preadolescent friendship group as a dress rehearsal, as a place where techniques of interaction are tried on and tried out. Friendship groups are places where strategies of negotiation spring forth, where moral instruction is cultivated, and where the self concept is fleshed out in a unique context. Indeed as Fine suggests, they are "a crucible to the shaping of selves" (Fine 1981: 265).

From the friendships of Little League baseball players Fine takes us to the cooks in the kitchen, where he uncovers organizational characteristics of restaurant life in real time,

beneath "the lived experiences of workers who labor behind the kitchen door" (Fine 1996: 2). In his book, *Kitchens: The Culture of Restaurant Work* (1996), he immerses himself in restaurant life in hopes of giving us theoretical "food for thought" (Fine 1996: 231). Fine sees the restaurant as a social system where artificially separate streams of micro and macro analyses come together; a delta that exposes the symbiosis between the self and society. Fine is interested in the ways in which reality is negotiated, in the ways in which individual action contributes to, changes, and is, in turn, affected by admittedly powerful social structures. This is an interactive process between individuals, between individuals and structures, and between structures and individuals. For Fine, the negotiations take place around the edges of what he calls "an obdurate, enveloping reality" (Fine 1996: 3). He provides an interesting quote by Erving Goffman,

> "All the world is not a stage – certainly the theater isn't entirely. (Whether you organize a theater or an aircraft factory, you need to find places for cars to park and coats to be checked, and these had better be real places, which, incidentally had better carry real insurance against theft.) Presumably, a "definition of the situation" is almost always to be found, but those who are in the situation ordinarily do not create the situation, even though their society often can be said to do so; ordinarily, all they do is to assess correctly what the situation ought to be for them, and then act accordingly. True, we personally negotiate aspects of all arrangements under which we live, but often once these are negotiated, we continue on mechanically as though the matter had always been settled."
>
> (Goffman 1974: 1-2).

Yet one cannot deny that at the heart of this interactive process, whatever it may be, is a beautifully reflexive, creative, active self, reflecting the ideas of Cooley, Mead, and Blumer (Cooley 1902; Mead 1934;Blumer 1969).

Fine's scholarly work takes flight from a runway constructed by Blumer and other Symbolic Interactionists. Fine answers the call put out by Blumer to engage in what he called "naturalistic study" (1969: 39). Blumer suggests we immerse ourselves in the empirical world, that we ask questions, collect information, that we analyze, develop, and test propositions (Blumer 1969: 47-48). It is a theory building process inspired by the realities experienced and observed in the empirical world. Human behavior cannot for Blumer be understood in the laboratory. To understand individual and group action, to "lift the veils" from social life, the sociologist must go out into the world (Blumer 1969: 39 - 49),

"The task of scientific study is to lift the veils that cover the area of group life that one proposes to study. The veils are not lifted by substituting, in whatever degree, preformed images for firsthand knowledge. The veils are lifted by getting close to the area and by digging deep into it through careful study."

(Blumer 1969: 39)

For Blumer, social action takes place within structural parameters, it is not determined by them. He cautions us not to rely too heavily on structural explanations for individual action, for to do so is to,

"leap over the acting units of society and bypass the interpretive process by which acting units build up their action."

(Blumer 1969: 87)

Fine doesn't assume structure or the self, but assumes only that each gives rise to the other, that a symbiosis of sorts exits between them. This approach combines the

individual and the structure, micro and macro in its attempt to explain the social world and life within it. Fine takes a "negotiated order approach" to the kitchen. This perspective combines micro and macro analyses, individuals and structures, in its attempt to explain the social world and life within it (Fine 1996: 2-3). The goal of a negotiated order approach is to reveal interaction, its development within social structures, its patterns, and its effects on future interaction (Fine 1996: 3). Interaction is at the center of a negotiated order approach. Symbolic interaction is a necessary requirement for those who seek to participate in the negotiations. Individuals, capable of using and understanding symbols, interact with others within established social parameters. These interactions become patterned over time and create structures. Fine suggests that a negotiated order approach assumes that social order is based on the negotiations of its members; that such negotiations occur within organizations which exist within larger areas of operation which are subject to contingencies of power and resources; that negotiations change over time; and finally, that structural changes occur when the negotiated order changes (Fine 1996: 2-4). This is the theoretical toolbox Fine takes to the kitchen. In his book, *Kitchens: The Culture of Restaurant Work* (1996), Fine looks at the "interplay of agency and structure" (Fine 1996:12), essentially the way that kitchen life is created, experienced, and recreated. He suggests his perspective is,

> "an interactionist sociology that takes organizational existence and social structure seriously" (Fine 1996: 14).

Fine spent one month observing the activities in each of four kitchens in Twin Cities Restaurants: "La Pomme de Terre", a top class French restaurant; the "Owl's Nest", a continental restaurant specializing in fish; "Stan's Steakhouse", a family-owned

restaurant; and the "Twin Cities Blakemore Hotel", a restaurant in a chain of hotels (Fine 1996: 15). In addition to his observations, Fine conducted in-depth interviews of all full-time cooks.

Fine writes about several elements in restaurant life that have sociological and theoretical significance, namely time, emotion, economy, and aesthetics. While it may be true that "time is money", time, in restaurant life, is much more than money. In restaurant work, there is a temporal aspect to food, to structure, and to labor. There are dimensions of time in meal preparation, what to put on first, when something is done. There are issues of timing throughout the day, some parts of the day are slow, others are experienced as "rushes". Individual work is affected by constraints of time. Furthermore, the way that workers handle these constraints affects the running of the restaurant (Fine 1996: 77). According to Fine, the kitchen rush can be seen as a nexus of structure, time, and emotion (Fine 1996: 77). Fine suggests that expression of emotions is important in work life. Workers may respond emotionally, particularly under pressing time constraints or conflicting demands. Cooks operating in the back stages of restaurants may display emotion as a way of supporting the atmosphere in the kitchen, as a response to their own personal sense of satisfaction, as a reaction to time constraints, or perhaps out of conflict between cooks and other work groups. Cooks act for an internal audience. Their emotion work backstage is an important factor in the experience of restaurant life (Fine 1996: 225).

Restaurants exist within larger economic structures. These structures influence patterns of interaction and patterns of work within the restaurant (Fine 1996: 138). For example, restaurants seek to maximize the number of clients they serve and also their

profits. At the same time, they must deal with economic realities of fixed labor costs and food costs (Fine 1996: 176).

In his exploration of kitchen work, Fine sees that world of cooking is an art world. Aesthetics are an important aspect in the work of cooks, but profit the important aspect of the organization (1996: 198). Fine sees that cooks must balance their personal artistic goals in the presentation of food against the organization's goals of making money (1996: 198). He suggests, "Work is a minuet between expressive form and instrumental function. In this dance, as in others, he who pays the piper ultimately calls the tune" (Fine 1996: 230).

Thus the notions of time, emotion, economy, and aesthetics are key elements in the living of restaurant work as well as in the larger organizational arena in which it exists. But Fine discusses two additional elements, namely interaction and community, which are relevant in considerations of the self and identity. For Fine, meals good and bad, are not the only creative products of restaurant work; the restaurant community is a place where the self and identity are created in interaction (Fine 1996: 222). Fine suggests that in addition to their organizational realities, restaurants are "interaction fields" (Fine 1996: 222). In restaurants, individuals are connected to each other as individual workers, and as members of particular work groups, they are connected to other occupational groups. In this social context, individuals develop a sense of themselves (Fine 1996: 222). They come to know themselves as workers in relation to their work and to the work of others. They come to know themselves in particular ways derived from the meaning their work holds for them (Fine 1996:222). Additionally, restaurants develop into communities and give rise to culture. Workers share the workplace and to accomplish their work tasks,

they depend upon each other. Expectations and routines develop into norms and values, labor is divided, decision-making hierarchies are negotiated (1996: 226). In short, community and culture develop, and individuals come to identify themselves as part of these social entities. In this way, according to Fine**,**

> "interactions provide the worker with a sense of personal possibilities that defines his or her identity. The workplace is an arena in which selves are established individually and collectively."
>
> (Fine 1996: 227).

Contemporary Work: Viktor Gecas

With great acuity, Gecas (1982) brings precision to the discussion of the self and self-concept. Giving a nod to nuances in sociological social psychology and psychological social psychology, he acknowledges the contributions and different vantage points of each perspective. (The sociological focus is toward interaction; it emphasizes culture, structure, or aspects of "social situation" in trying to explain behavior. Psychological social psychology has, according to Gecas, an "overly internal" bias. It considers behavioral effects or "consequences" of self conceptions [1982: 1]). Out of this theoretical mix, Gecas brings the notion of the self and of the self-concept into sharp focus distinguishing among the two and bringing richness to empirical exploration of each.

Gecas' (1982) particular interest is the self-concept. Distinct from the larger notion of the self, self-concept is an accomplishment of the human creative spirit. Self-concept

arises from the conversation between the "I" and the "me"; it arises in interaction and in the capacity for language; self-concept arises from the active, unobservable, elusive, reflexive, uniquely human process of "self" (Mead 1934, Gecas 1982).

More specifically defined, Gecas (1982) conceives of self-concept as "an organization (structure) of various identities and attributes, and their evaluations, developed out of the individual's reflexive, social, and symbolic activities" (Gecas 1982:4). Importantly, as such, Gecas notes the self-concept is "an experiential, mostly cognitive phenomenon accessible to scientific inquiry" (Gecas 1982:4). In his foundational work, " The Self Concept", Gecas (1982) goes on to outline the self-concept in terms of its sources and dimensions, in terms of motivation, and as it relates to stability and change over the life course.

As if panning for gold, Gecas shakes away the muddiness from the complicated world of the self-concept by first isolating two critical components. The self-concept may be understood as comprised of "self-evaluations" or "self-esteem" and of "self-conceptions" or "identities" (Gecas 1982: 4). The identity aspect of the self-concept is that part which sees the self as object. According to Gecas,

"Beyond self esteem lies the concept of identity, that vast domain of meanings attached to the self and comprising the content and organization of self-concepts"

(Gecas 1982: 10).

Whether Chicago School or Iowa School, it is at this intersection of self and society that Symbolic Interactionists have focused their work. Building on the work of Mead (1934) and Cooley (1902), Symbolic Interactionists (Chicago School) see identity as a

product of social interaction; fluid, negotiated, emergent, situated as the "I" in all of us is brought to the scene with the other. Identity formation is a critical aspect in the work of individuals as they define situations (Gecas 1982: 10). According to Gecas, self-concept is part and parcel, "cause and consequence" inseparable from the interplay of interaction among social actors (Gecas 1982: 10). This is quite clearly seen in Goffman's work (Gecas 1982: 11). Gecas cites the work of Goffman as an exemplar to show that people in social interaction try to achieve particular identities by creating supportive definitions of situations (Gecas 1982: 11).

As noted, Goffman's (1959a) work centers around the definition of the situation. This definition is based on the interplay – subtle and otherwise – between actors as they create identities. For social actors to take each other into account, they must apprehend the others' identity. Furthermore, identities must be created that are understandable, apprehensible, to other social actors. Thus, identity plays a key role; managing, creating, and sustaining identities in the interest of constructing a reality that is meaningful and useful for participants, for social actors. For the Symbolic Interactionist, identity is constructed moment by moment in social interaction.

While this more processual version of Symbolic Interactionism acknowledges the fusion of self and society, it has been criticized for failing to explain the nature of this connection. Gecas cites Turner (1976) as exemplary in considering the connections between social structure and self conception (Gecas 1982: 16). As we have seen by the work of Turner (1976), the self concept has implications for the larger social structure.

The location of the authentic self-concept affects the way individuals interact with each other and with the structural realities of everyday life. For example, individuals with an impulsive locus of self will relate to social structures as impositions, as hindrances to authentic experience. As a result they may resist rules, procedures, imperatives of social structure. On the other hand, those with an institutional locus of self find themselves in the structures of social institutions. They will comply with rules, procedures, structural imperatives as true pathways to authentic experience. Thus, the intricacies of the connection between real, authentic individual selves and social structure has implications for the society at large (Gecas 1982: 16). The way we see our true selves affects the way we interact with each other and the way we function in society.

Self evaluations are what Gecas calls the self esteem dimension of the self. It is the arena where estimation, appraisal, and assessment of the self-concept takes place. It is the emotional aspect of self-concept (Gecas1982: 4-5). There is so much emphasis on this esteem aspect of self-concept, that they are often viewed as the same thing (Gecas 1982: 5). In general, this aspect is made up of a sense of competence or efficacy and a sense of integrity or morality (Gecas 1982: 5). Self esteem which derives from competence develops in action, in agency, in achievement, and in performance. Self esteem which derives from moral excellence, known as self-worth, develops from norms and values impinging on individual and social behavior (Gecas 1982: 5). Its roots go back to Cooley's (1902) concept of the "looking glass self" and Mead's (1934) notion of taking the role of others. Although it has defied empirical demonstration, at the level of theory, self concept is formed by taking in the appraisals reflected to us by others in social interaction (Gecas 1982: 5-6). Self evaluation or self esteem is also affected by

social comparisons. For sociologists, social comparisons are made by way of "reference groups". Individual, personal evaluations are made by way of the group. Reference groups are yardsticks against which individuals measure themselves, in terms of norms and values, or in terms of standards (Gecas 1982: 7).

Gecas writes of the self concept as a source of motivation (Gecas 1982:17). Self concept can be characterized as active, agentic, and psychologically speaking, as self-preserving in the world. As such it is motivated toward efficacy, esteem, and consistency. Interestingly, he points out the importance of self-efficacy by noting the effects of its suppression. With a nod to classic sociological theory, Gecas (1982) points out that Marx's notion of alienation is essentially an effect of powerlessness – powerlessness results for Marx in alienation from one's true creative human self and from the product of one's own hands.

Self-efficacy can be thought of as that sense that one can affect things, it is about control, intentionality, causation – an ability to create change, to be "effective" in the world. Sociologically, self-efficacy is cast in terms of agency. Psychologically, self-efficacy is cloaked in motivation. Self esteem involves the intent to develop, to possess and preserve a positive sense of self (Gecas 1982: 21). The "Consistency Motive" as Gecas refers to it, reflects a desire for permanence, for coherence in terms of identities and beliefs about the self (Gecas 1982: 23). Psychologically the drive is toward consistency in attitudes about the self (Gecas 1982: 23). In sociological terms, the motivation is toward consistency between identities and role behaviors (Gecas 1982: 23).

This more process oriented version of Symbolic Interactionism has been criticized for leaving the connection between the self and society unexplained (Gecas 1982). On the other hand, Structural Symbolic Interactionists situate the self and identity within an organized collection of roles; it is these roles that connect individuals to social structure (Gecas 1982: 13-14). And this is precisely where Structural Symbolic Interactionists like Sheldon Stryker begin.

Contemporary Work: Sheldon Stryker

With his structural perspective, there is no doubt that Sheldon Stryker has made significant contributions to Symbolic Interactionism. Expanding a more structural version of symbolic interactionism, Stryker emphasizes the development of identities in social interaction based on roles played, roles taken, and roles evaluated. It is in this way, that individual identity itself has a structural organization and is furthermore, tied to social structure through the various roles occupied by individuals. The self in turn encompasses both the ability to be reflexive and the actual work of reflexivity (Wells and Stryker 1988: 193). Thus, it is no surprise that Stryker is interested in exploring the connections between individuals and society, situated most precisely in the concept of the self in the context of the life course. This is why the self is important. Through time, as individuals move through the life course, they move in and out of various social roles. But these "identity transitions"(Wells and Stryker 1988: 192) are more than changing positions in social structure. They bring changes in relationships, changes in interaction, changes in choices available to individuals. Such changes differ in terms of meaning and significance to individual selves. Thus "identity transitions" involve "identity transformations" (Wells and Stryker 1988: 192). Wells and Stryker (1988) suggest

identity theory is useful in studying the connections between the self and the life course, which in turn, clarifies the connections between the individual and society (1988: 192).

More specifically, Wells and Stryker (1988) consider the individual make up of the self with respect to identity, the ways in which selves are organized, and the operation of the self in terms of evaluation and esteem (Wells and Stryker 1988: 192). Identity is composed of self perception and reinforced though interaction with others. Identity Theory suggests the self is made up of many, different identities. These identities arise from positions and the role performances attached to them. Action is the result of choices; and choices are based on the relative salience or level of commitment one has to particular identities (Wells and Stryker 1988: 196-197). Social identities affect self-concept through the mechanism of commitment (Wells and Stryker 1988: 212).

The notion of commitment within identity theory is defined quite specifically by Wells and Stryker,

"Commitment is defined by the social and personal costs entailed in no longer fulfilling a role that is the basis for a given identity"

(Wells and Stryker 1988: 197)

The "costs" involved in commitment may stem from personal feelings individuals have for particular relationships, or from social connections influenced by particular relationships (Wells and Stryker 1988: 197). Regardless, the relative importance of identities is determined by commitments. Changes in commitments alter the salience structure of identities (Wells and Stryker 1988: 212-213). As people move through the life course, patterns of commitment change, for example as one moves from single to

married the commitment to family of origin may decrease as the commitment to spouse increases. In this example, the salience of one's identity as a child will lessen as the salience of identity as a spouse will increase. Commitments can be replaced or strengthened (1988: 212-213). It is in this way that the sense of self comes to be changed. Wells and Stryker acknowledge that,

> "Some life course events occasion more severe and virtually total change in commitments that can initiate radical change in the organization of self"
>
> (Boyanowsky 1984 in Wells and Stryker 1988: 213).

It is precisely these kinds of events that I suggest constitute turning points.

Wells and Stryker consider self-evaluation and self-esteem central aspects of the self concept (1988: 217). As such, these aspects of self concept may be influenced by age, by role performance, by identity, and by reference groups (1988: 217-221). Wells and Stryker suggest self-evaluation and self-esteem aspects are connected with age in the life course journey (1988: 218). In general, positive self-evaluations increase as individuals become more and more accomplished with age. However, after a certain point positive self-evaluations tend to decrease along with changes in abilities and responsibilities (1988: 218). Role performances can affect self-evaluations particularly when one is committed to the relationship. The more salient the identity, the more likely the self evaluation of the role performance will affect self esteem (1988: 218). In addition, the more connected a particular identity is with other social groups, the more significant self evaluations will be in regard to it (1988: 219). Furthermore, if self conception is made up of many identities, the evaluation of one identity is less likely to affect an overall sense of

self-esteem (1988: 219). Life course transitions not only influence positions, roles, identities and commitments, they change the groups with which individuals interact. As reference groups change over time, the bases of self evaluation will change over time as well (Wells and Stryker 1988: 221).

A significant contribution made by Wells and Stryker (1988) is the idea of a connection between the self and the life course. They theorize a relationship, an interchange between the self and the life course where the self is more than a simple snapshot at a particular moment in time, but rather acts to frame the life course as much as the life course frames the self.

Thus there is for Wells and Stryker (1988) a relationship, there is reciprocity between the self and the life course (1988: 202). On one hand, the life course affects the individual. Life course structures, like all social structures, affect individuals indirectly. Social structures affect individuals through changes in interactions and relationships that are experienced on the front lines of social life (Wells and Stryker 1988: 203). Importantly, the effects of social structures are experienced and processed within the self (Wells and Stryker 1988: 203). Because humans are reflexive we can act with others in mind, we can plan, we can enter into the labyrinth of social life armed with an ongoing strategy. The self is creative. It is within the self that the conversation, even the collision between the "I" and the "me" takes place (Wells and Stryker 1988: 204). Thus a fascinating process takes place within the self when people encounter social structures; social norms are internalized, taken on, translated into personal plans, private understandings, and unique orientations (Wells and Stryker 1988: 203). Structure is not merely reproduced within individual selves, it is modified, synthesized, processed,

changed in the chaos of the conversation. In this way, there is an element of autonomy, a cloak of individuality upon the impositions of social structure in personal lives (Wells and Stryker 1988: 203). And according to Wells and Stryker, "the relation of the life course (as well as other social structures) to individual persons necessarily implicates the self" (Wells and Stryker 1988: 204).

On the other hand, individuals affect the life course, both in terms of personal history and in terms of the larger social order (1988: 204). Not only can life changes come from outside the self, they can also arise from inside the self when comparisons are made between where one is and where one wants to be (Wells and Stryker 1988: 204). In this context, individuals may be seen to create, at least to some degree, their own stories (Wells and Stryker 1988). Furthermore, the choices of individuals affect the life courses of others. Choices made change relationships, alter support systems, affect resources, realign dependencies. In short, the choices available to others are changed by the choices made by some (Wells and Stryker 1988: 205). As individual choices accumulate, the structure of the life course, in a broader sense, can change (1988: 205) Stryker and Wells cite the postponing of parenthood as a case in point; as individuals' choices to have children later in life accumulated, the age norm for parenthood has changed (Wells and Stryker 1988: 205). Wells and Stryker see the self as "a mechanism through which both social order and social change are produced in individual lives" (Wells and Stryker 1988: 205).

Summary: Contemporary Work in the Search for the Self and Identity

Capabilities and component parts aside, Ralph Turner's (1976) interest in the self is in terms of its authenticity. Significantly, Turner draws our attention to the implications of authenticity not in psychological terms, but sociologically as it affects our sense of shared reality, our actions, social structures, and in a larger sense, culture and society. Morris Rosenberg (1979) brings clarity and specificity to the self-concept. He details the various components of self-concept and importantly directs our attention to its motivations. Thus the self as an object is also something toward which we have feelings, and in this, the self-concept motivates individuals, with powerful effects on human behavior. Assuming neither self nor structure, Gary Alan Fine begins from the notion that each gives rise to the other. Dispelling the artificial separation of micro and macro analyses, Fine is interested in the ways reality is negotiated, along with the ways individual action contributes to, changes, and is in turn, affected by powerful social structures (Fine 1981, 1996). From the diamonds of Little League baseball to the kitchens of Middle America, we vicariously experience in Fine's work interaction on the front lines of social life, we see the development of self and identity in living color. Viktor Gecas (1982) adds precision to the construct, self-concept, bringing it into sharper focus. He conceives of it as, "an organization of various identities and attributes, and their evaluations developed out of the individual's reflexive, social, and symbolic activities" (Gecas 1982: 4). Wells and Stryker (1988) situate the self at the interface of individual and society. Interestingly, they suggest that social identities affect self-concept through commitment; commitment involves facing the possible costs of losing a particular role. Wells and Stryker also draw our attention to the interaction between the self and the life course.

Wells and Stryker see the self as "a mechanism through which both social order and social change are produced in individual lives" (Wells and Stryker 1988: 205).

SECTION III: STABILITY AND CHANGE: TURNING POINTS DIRECT ATTENTION TO PROCESSES OF CHANGE

THEORETICAL EMPHASIS ON STABILITY AND RESISTANCE TO CHANGE

Stability and change in social life have long provided the scholarly impetus to investigate important human questions. In the same way, they have spurred intellectual debate in the quest to understand the development of the self and identity. Since the time of Erikson's developmental stages, which hinge upon change, there has been an historical emphasis on stability. Erikson (1959b) himself suggested that "the term identity expresses such a mutual relation in that it connotes both a persistent sameness within oneself (selfsameness) and a persistent sharing of some kind of essential character with others" (Erikson 1959b: 102). The point of the crisis for Erikson, was the development of a new ego synthesis (Erikson 1959b). It is almost as if stability in the self is desired. In fact, there is a sense that change is to be resisted. Strauss noted that particularly in unpredictable environments people are more likely to participate in groups that are familiar to them, and that they will seek to avoid challenging situations (Strauss 1959: 142-144). It has been suggested such stability helps individuals to function in society; a coherent, consistent self facilitates interaction, it can be known and understood, actions can be anticipated, apprehended by the self in reflexive and by others in social activities (Gecas and Mortimer 1987). Change is seen as incidental, disruptive, to be overcome in the interest of a new stability. Taken in this way, change could be considered as

problematic, chaotic, random, unpredictable, an unknowable process taking place within the self and identity, observable only in it behavioral effects. Symbolic Interactionists however, cast the notion of change in a different light. Symbolic Interactionists see change at the very center of the self, in its creative, reflexive capacities.

SYMBOLIC INTERACTION: CHANGE AS CREATIVE CAPACITY OF THE SELF

For Symbolic Interactionists, the very nature of the self is found in innovation. The self is reflexive; as humans we have the capacity to look back upon ourselves as objects (Cooley 1902; Mead 1934; Blumer 1969). Social life is all about change. To change is to interact, to adjust, to manage identity in the social world. Definitions of situations are continually changing as they are negotiated moment by moment in interaction (Goffman 1959a). In fact, social life is social action, where participants are constantly interpreting, reinterpreting, and changing their actions to fit those of others (Blumer 1969). Social life is, at least to some extent fluid and indeterminate (Strauss 1959). With change and negotiation, identity is transformed (Strauss 1959). And identity transformations are significant, some much more than others, some are considered “turning points” (Strauss 1959).

Turning points draw our attention to change. They are dramatic, acute, intense, and far-reaching as they affect the lives of individuals. Empirical evidence suggests turning points may be experienced in a number of ways. Turning points are at times anticipated events, but for others may be unanticipated events (Clausen 1995). They may also occur as discrete, definable events (Elder 1986; Jasso 2003; Sampson and Laub 1990, 1996;). Sometimes turning points are experienced as processes (Clausen 1995; Uggen and

Massoglia 2004. 2010; Vaughan 1986). Experiences of turning points include both objective and subjective aspects (Clausen 1995; McAdam 1989). Turning points can be seen as conversions or alternations (Travisano1981). Turning points require that we not only assume change or investigate its effects, but rather that we discover the way change actually happens within the self.

MECHANISMS OF CHANGE IN THE SELF AND IDENTITY

Change and stability within the self and identity have been theorized in a number of ways. To this endeavor, Anselm L. Strauss brought significant contributions with his work, *Mirrors and Masks: the Search for Identity* (1959). It is within this volume that the concept of "turning point" first arises as Strauss toils "around the corners" of the concept "identity". Strauss bases personality and identity sociologically; they are not confined to processes of childhood and adolescence, but significantly they derive from social life. Individuals develop a sense of who they are from the groups they are connected to. As individuals join or identify with membership groups, reference groups, and less concrete, more general groups Strauss calls "worlds", they develop a sense of themselves. Strauss adds the insight that social groups are tied to the larger notions of culture, of time, of history. In this way, Strauss acknowledges that identity can change with the vagaries of social life, while at the same time the influence of larger social structures provide some sense of continuity. Strauss writes about both stability and change, but importantly, Strauss assumes change. With the concept of identity as his springboard, Strauss strives to understand the particulars about identity changes. More than investigating change in an abstract, theoretical way, Strauss wants to specify identity changes, to know, "to whom they occur, under what conditions, and of what kinds they are" (Strauss 1959:

139). Thus for Strauss, identity and personality changes come with changes in group ties – membership groups, reference groups, social worlds. Change is inherent in social life; stability resides in social structure.

If Strauss' contribution was to locate change and stability sociologically, others have worked to carry on his call to specificity, to investigate and discover exactly how these processes involve the self and identity. Gecas and Mortimer address this issue head-on in their 1987 article, "Stability and Change in the Self-Concept from Adolescence to Adulthood". They contend that the seeds of change and of stability are found both in the self-concept and the environment. To understand this process, they precisely outline and define the constructs of the self and of identity.

Gecas and Mortimer (1987) remind us that the self-concept arises in a social context. It is through the process of socialization that we come to know ourselves essentially through others, particularly in reflected appraisals, social comparisons, and self-attributions (1987: 270). We see ourselves through the looking glass created by the views of others, we come to know ourselves in contrast to others, and we interpret from our behavior, something about ourselves.

If forces for change and stability are found within the self-concept and the environment, what then, do these parameters of the self-concept tell us about the ways in which stability and change operate? Because the self is reflexive, it is hard-wired for change; it has a natural ability to change (Gecas and Mortimer 1987: 271; Goffman 1959a). Changes and stability occur in the self-concept through external and internal agents (Gecas and Mortimer 1987: 272).

In terms of change, existential identity may be considered an internal, psychological construct (Gecas and Mortimer 1987: 267). Existential identity is like Erikson's "ego-identity", essentially a sense of individuality as well as a sense of endurance (Gecas and Mortimer 1987: 267). Gecas and Mortimer suggest that over the life course, existential identity changes (1987: 272). That sense of who we truly, most deeply are is revised, renovated and rebuilt as we live from past to present, from present to future. It is as if the existential aspect of identity conceives the self as a work in progress, a patchwork quilt that is constantly reworked as new pieces are added, in light of new experiences lived. While the impetus for change may come from outside experiences, the actual change is an internal process. In the case of turning points, the existential "quilt" would change its design and direction entirely. Externally, there may be structural changes that affect the composition of the self-concept. For example, role changes, changes in group ties, institutional changes could affect self-esteem and self-efficacy through alterations in reflected appraisals, social comparisons, and self-attributions (Gecas and Mortimer 1987: 271). Such changes occur throughout the life course and are likely to be felt in the self-concept, particularly to the extent that role identities are involved with the existential self (Gecas and Mortimer 1987: 273) Uncertain times in the environment, or within the individual, are likely to bring changes to the self-concept (Gecas and Mortimer 1987: 271). The ripple effect of turning points would certainly affect appraisals, comparisons, and attributions, thus self-esteem and self-efficacy.

In addition to their role in terms of change, reflected appraisals, social comparisons, and self attributions may also enhance stability in the individual self-concept. A stable foundation of social interaction, significant others, and reference groups would lend

stability, predictability to reflected appraisals, social comparisons, and self-attributions, and hence would lend stability and predictability to the self-concept (Gecas and Mortimer 1987: 272). Additionally, internally we are motivated to protect and enhance ourselves. This provides individuals with a self-concept that can be known, can be understood, can be successfully interpreted in interaction with others (Gecas and Mortimer 1987: 272). This important motivational component of the self, the self-evaluation component, acts in the interest of stability through powerful self-sentiments of self-esteem, self-efficacy, and authenticity (Gecas and Mortimer 1987: 268).

Armed in this way, the self can act against outside challenges, and may resist change of all kinds, particularly those that include significant and far-reaching change like turning points. We know that the self-concept is composed of many components and that it is motivated to protect and enhance itself. This is why turning points are so dramatic. An assault against this protection could have significant consequences. If we can understand change within the self, then we can understand particular kinds of changes, and articulate the differences between them. We can move beyond looking at the effects of changes on behavior, even the effects of changes on the self-concept, and move toward an explication of the process of change. The most dramatic kinds of changes are turning points.

THE MEANING OF CHANGE IN THE SELF AND IDENTITY

Echoing the work of Gecas and Mortimer (1987) particularly with regard to existential identity, Sheila Rossan writes on "Identity and its Development in Adulthood" (1987). Rossan suggests identity is comprised of three key elements: sub identities, generalized traits, and a core (1987: 304). Sub identities may be seen as the roles taken on by

individuals. Generalized traits are characteristics or attributes that arise in role enactments or are part of a significant role identity. Core refers to the very basic, profound, deeply held sense of self. Evaluation takes place in each of these elements and contributes to self-esteem (Rossan 1987).

In terms of continuity and change, Rossan (1987) contends that sub identities change the most, generalized traits change "less so", and interestingly that the core changes least of all. In fact she notes that the core does not really change, but instead reorganizes itself with new experiences, adding rather than subtracting core elements. Rossan suggests it is the core that contributes a sense of continuity to the self (Rossan 1987: 305). I would suggest turning points are different from other changes in that turning points involve "core change". And core change has meaning for individuals because the core contains a sense of the true self. It is in the true self that we experience authenticity (Turner 1976). Changes that involve the true self have significant meaning for us; unlike other changes, they are turning points. Turning points affect the way we experience ourselves and the way we live our lives.

CHANGE AND THE LIFE COURSE

As Wells and Stryker (1988) write about the life course and its effects upon the self, they are really writing about the processes of change and stability in terms of identity as well as in terms of the self. For Wells and Stryker (1988) the life course is experienced in role changes (1988: 207). With role changes, a series of other changes ensue. Role changes bring changes in relationships, and this will affect the salience of identities. Salience of identities affects the level of commitment one has to that identity and as commitments change, so too, do selves change (Wells and Stryker 1988: 207). In

contrast to a more Eriksonian, linear, developmental model of change, Wells and Stryker (1988) propose one that is evolutionary, a model that unfolds over the life course in a less predictable, more open manner (Wells and Stryker 1988: 208). Wells and Stryker point out that the characterization of the self as more or less stable derives from its definition. And definitions exist at each end of the spectrum. Those who define the self as an embedded, broad structure will more likely see the self in terms of stability. Those who define the self as more fluid from situation to situation will more likely see it in terms of change (Wells and Stryker 1988: 208). The structural symbolic interactionists like Wells and Stryker see it somewhere in the middle and suggest that the life course perspective allows one to account for both stability and change within the self (1988: 208-209).

For structural symbolic interactions, the heart of stability and change is interaction and the social structures that encourage or curtail it (Wells and Stryker 1988: 209). The idea is essentially that when individuals are consistent in their relationships with others and their ties to social groups, they will experience stability in terms of the self. When, on the other hand, there is disruption in relationships or to social ties, individuals will experience change in terms of the self (Wells and Stryker 1988: 209). Wells and Stryker find the life course perspective particularly useful in understanding the self. Importantly, the life course perspective sees the self as embracing both stability and change (Wells and Stryker 1988: 222). While the self is essentially stable, it is also situated in time and place (1988: 222). The life course perspective acknowledges continuity but also admits to the importance of the creative, dynamic, negotiating self (Wells and Stryker 1988: 223). Perhaps most significantly, the life course perspective awakens us to the self as a "life-long process" (1988: 223). The self is at once a momentary, situated process as well

as a long -term accumulation of experiences (Wells and Stryker 1988: 223). Among such experiences in life are turning points.

Chapter 3
Parameters and Dimensions of the Concept, Turning Point
A Review of Empirical Work.

Turning Points: Useful in Understanding Life Course Processes

In general, life course study is directed to understanding the relations between history and biography. Situated at this critical juncture, turning points provide a unique window through which to study change, as well as its antecedents and effects in individual lives. C. Wright Mills calls on those of us with a "sociological imagination" to "grasp history and biography and the relations between the two within society". This is, according to Mills, the "task and promise" of sociology (Mills 1959: 6). One way to understand relations between history and biography is through the study of the life course. According to Elder, "the life course is primarily viewed as an age-graded sequence of socially defined roles and events that are enacted over historical time and place" (Elder, Johnson, and Crosnoe 2004: 15). Life course theorists recognize that history can affect existing pathways, developmental trajectories, and ultimately change the life course itself (Elder et al. 2004).

The Life Course Approach can be said to encompass five of what Elder, Johnson, and Crosnoe (2004) call "paradigmatic principles". First we must recognize that developmental processes may be continuous throughout life, they do not necessarily have stopping points at particular ages (Life Span). Secondly, our lives are not completely dictated nor determined by macro level structures, we make choices for our lives within structural parameters of available options (Agency). Third, individuals live their lives against the backdrop of historical events and features of the places they live in, such as

geography, culture, and meaning (Time and Place). Fourth, it is important to understand that *when* an event happens in a particular life will affect the *way* it is experienced by an individual and its consequences (Timing). Lastly, we are, at the end of the day, social animals, and we experience our lives at macro and micro levels, in relationships with others (Linked Lives).

Given this general paradigm outlined by Elder et al. (2004), studies using a life course approach involve analyses of pathways, trajectories, transitions, and turning points (Elder et al. 2004). These concepts awaken the Millsian sociological imagination, encouraging students of the life course to discover the organization of social lives against the backdrop of history and biography. Individuals and groups follow social *pathways*, affected by history and institutions, as they experience education, work, family, and place in their lives. Social Pathways that individuals take in their lives to work, and to family, are particularly important. *Trajectories* can be thought of as sequences of roles including transitions or changes in these roles. The more time between transitions, the more stable the trajectory is thought to be. Transitions offer particularly interesting opportunities to study individuals in the process of change and it is during times of transition that turning points are more likely to occur. When individuals experience a substantial change in direction in their lives, subjective or objective, it can be said they are experiencing a "*turning point*" (Elder et al. 2004).

Situated at the critical juncture between history and biography, turning points allow a unique window from which to study change for individuals throughout the life course. They are dramatic moments, relatively acute situations where issues will be accentuated, highlighted to the sociological observer. In this way we can see not only the process of

change but also the antecedents and effects of those changes in individual lives, and perhaps the lives of generations. The study of turning points allows the sociological observer to consider life course principles at work; the principles of agency, time and place, and timing uncovered, adding flesh to the theoretical bones of the concept.

Turning Points Distinguished from other Concepts in Life Course Study

The concept of turning points has been defined in various ways as the life course approach has developed. Turning points are associated with some sort of change in an individual's life, which can be subjective or objective in nature (Elder et al. 2004: 8).

Turning points can be seen as at once a moving away and a moving toward something, a change in direction in a person's life. Instead of a gradual, normative, expected kind of shift, turning points are usually considered more abrupt, having more to do with discontinuity than continuity. The splash of a turning point may have ripple effects in other trajectories. There is often a sense that turning points involve widespread change, and may indeed involve multiple trajectories (Lecture, Mortimer: 2005). But at the very heart of the concept is the notion that turning points are meaningful to individuals and significantly affect the self and identity.

Parameters and Dimensions of the Concept Turning Point: A Review of Empirical Work

Turning Points: Anticipated and Unanticipated Events

The concept of turning points has been refined and elaborated by empirical study in diverse contexts, from military service to migration, from social activism to desistance from crime. Although turning points are often considered unexpected, even abrupt events or experiences, Clausen (1995) found that *expected* or *anticipated* events could be considered turning points by those experiencing them as well. Intrigued with preliminary findings on turning points in his work with the Berkeley Longitudinal Studies, Clausen followed up with a sample of participants, asking them in interviews about their life histories and turning points in their lives. Interestingly, he found that more than half of the turning points reported could be considered role transitions, and 2/3 of these were expected transitions such as entering an occupation, entering marriage, or becoming a parent. This led Clausen to conclude that turning points are not necessarily drastic, unanticipated changes in direction, but can also be expected changes that people experience in their lives (Clausen 1995: 372).

Turning Points: Discrete, Definable Events

Turning points are often understood as discrete, definable, bounded events or experiences that take individuals to new places in their lives, literally and figuratively. Sampson and Laub (1990) suggest job stability, commitment to work, commitment to education, and attachment to spouse as more discrete turning points, which have an effect on adult crime. They suggest these turning points in transition to adulthood as underlying the fact that few juvenile offenders become adult offenders (Sampson and Laub 1990). This more discrete formulation of turning points can be seen in the example of military service as well, which Sampson and Laub (1996) conceptualize as a key turning point. They suggest military service is a great equalizer, that it may work to overcome

individual differences by taking people away from their surroundings. Looking at the effects of World War II in the life histories of 1000 delinquent and non-delinquent boys, they found support for military service as a turning point in transition to adulthood. Their findings suggested that military service improved occupational attainment and socioeconomic success particularly for disadvantaged youth (Sampson and Laub 1996).

Elder (1986) in studying a cohort of 214 men born between 1928 and 1929, found that military service was important in redirecting the lives of men, particularly those disadvantaged in terms of family background, academically, and psychosocially . Military experience can be seen as a discrete, definable event, with a clear-cut beginning point and a clear-cut end point. Military service as a turning point is sometimes characterized as a "knifing off" event, which dramatically separates the person's past life from his or her current life.

If military service can be described in this way, certainly migration could be conceptualized in this way as well. In fact, in migrating from one society to another, individuals leave one culture for another, one language for another, one job for another. Thus, migration is a turning point that can have ramifications for many, if not most, aspects of the life course. Madeleine Albright, former U.S. Secretary of State, has said that had her family not moved to the United States, her life would have been totally different (Minnesota Public Radio Interview 2006). In her memoir, *Madam Secretary,* she remembers that moment when she entered the United States,

"Our ship passed through a November sea. The winds were strong and the waves high. Enormous black clouds gathered overhead, bringing pelting rain and freezing cold. We peered through the portholes and only rarely ventured out on deck. I thought the trip I had anticipated so much would never end. Only when we neared our destination did the skies clear. Finally, on November 11, 1948, Armistice Day, we steamed into New York

Harbor. There was the Statue of Liberty. Holding my sister's hand, I stared in awe at the welcoming figure."

(Albright 2003: 21)

Within the broader experiences of migration, entry itself can be seen as a discrete event with long-term effects over the life course (Jasso 2004). And as Jasso suggests, because the Life Course perspective connects lives with time and place, explores the links between lives, attends to timing of events in lives, and allows for human agency, it is particularly well suited to analyses of migration (Jasso, 2004).

Turning Points: Processes

Turning points can be seen as processes as well as pivotal events. In considering desistance from crime, Uggen and Massoglia (2004, 2010) frame it as a process through which a person gradually takes on the role of desisting from crime, much like a process of schooling that leads to graduation. In this way, desistance from crime can be seen to constitute a separate dimension in the transition to adulthood. Furthermore they suggest that desistance can affect and be affected by transition through other life course markers; individuals may lessen deviant behaviors as they become more involved in adult arenas of social life, such as work and family. In turn, desistance from deviant activities encourages involvement and success in the same spheres. Thus, they characterize desistance as both a cause and consequence of moving through the transition to adulthood (Uggen and Massoglia 2004, 2010).

In his work with the Berkeley Longitudinal Study, Clausen (1995) found that individuals often reported turning points as processes as well. While some respondents characterized turning points as more clearly defined "transforming incidents", some

spoke about them more in terms of a gradual kind of process toward a new way of life. Clausen suggests that in studying turning points, we should be open to continuity as well as discontinuity. For some people, turning points may be defined as a kind of "attenuated continuities" (Clausen 1995).

Whereas the usual emphasis in life course study is upon stability, turning points direct our attention to discontinuity. Consider the example of divorce or break up of a relationship, what Diane Vaughan in her work, *Uncoupling: Turning Points in Intimate Relationships* (1986), refers to as "uncoupling". Uncoupling often appears to the outside world as a discrete event, but Vaughan brings us into the downward spiral that is the demise of a relationship, and thus brings us into the process of change. When uncoupling, partners slowly redefine themselves as separate people. Uncoupling begins, suggests Vaughan, with a secret, the secret that one person in the relationship starts to feel out of sync, begins to feel he/she doesn't fit, a partner who feels uncomfortable in the relationship. Initially, the secret is expressed by the initiator in subtle, indirect ways. For the dissatisfied partner, the process of identity transformation has already begun, for the other, it remains unnoticed. The dissatisfied partner has begun to see him/herself in a new way, a way that is not compatible with the relationship. Thus begins the spiral, small and secretive at first, pervasive and public at the end. In either case, definition and redefinition of the self and identity are involved at every step of the way for both parties and for the many others who may be part of their life together. Identities change of volition and of necessity. People change in the way they view themselves, the way they view others, and the way they present themselves to the world. And their social worlds must of necessity change along with them.

Turning Points: Objective and Subjective Aspects

We have seen that turning points involve both objective change and subjective meaning for individuals as they navigate the life course. In an interesting look at "Biographical Consequences of Activism", McAdam (1989) explores the short and long-term effects of what he calls "high-risk" activism on participants in the Mississippi Freedom Summer project. McAdam concluded that for the volunteers of the Mississippi Freedom Summer Project, "the summer marked a watershed in their lives, a point around which their biographies can be seen in 'before' and 'after' terms" (McAdam 1989:758). According to McAdam, the experience of high-risk activism changed their attitudes by way of a 'radical resocialization' making them more likely to participate in activism at other times in their lives. In addition, there were structural implications to this 'watershed' as well, in that the volunteers were connected to organizations and personal relationships that made it possible for them to continue their activism (McAdam 1989).

While McAdam's (1989) work shows that turning points can have attitudinal (subjective) and structural (objective) aspects, Clausen (1995) suggests that perhaps the critical aspect for an individual is found in the meaning attached to a turning point. In his follow-up to the Berkeley Longitudinal Study, Clausen found that turning points don't always signify a different direction objectively, but that they must include a subjective sense that the individual has taken on some new form of meaning (Clausen 1995).

TURNING POINTS: CONVERSIONS AND ALTERNATIONS

In considering turning points as conversions or alternations, Travisano (1981) begins with a conception of human beings as artists who create the stories of their lives after the experience of "blundering" through them. Building on the work of Strauss (1959) and

others, Travisano considers turning points or transformations important in terms of identity. From this perspective Travisano (1981) distinguishes two different kinds of personal transformation, namely conversions and alternations, by empirical study of Hebrew Christians and Jewish Unitarians as converts and alternators.

Hebrew Christians as converts experienced breaks with the past and completely reorganized their lives. Hebrew Christians found that they had a new principle of organization for activity and everyday life. For Hebrew Christians, the Christian identity became central to their sense of felt self and to the self as experienced.

On the other hand, Jewish Unitarians experienced an alternation rather than a conversion. They did not break completely with their pasts, nor did they completely reorganize their lives. Jewish Unitarians saw themselves as extending their lives into new, but permissible directions. In interaction, Jewish Unitarians seldom saw their identity as Unitarian as central.

From this, Travisano concludes that conversions involve a change in the "informing aspect" of identity (Travisano 1981: 242). For Travisano, conversions and alternations are different kinds of identity change. Rather than simply asserting that identity change is salient for individuals, Travisano looks deeper to see how such changes affect important conceptions of the self. Alternations may be seen as transitions to those identities prescribed or part of an individual's established world. Conversions in contrast, are transitions to the proscriptive world of the individual, or importantly, to a world negated by or different from the person's past.

Thus, from the literature we have seen turning points described theoretically and empirically as changes in a person's life, as movement away from something old and as

movement to something new. These changes have meaning for individuals and resonate with change in multiple trajectories of a person's life.

As we have seen, within studies of the self and identity, turning points have been touched upon in a variety, if sometimes in tangential, ways. Strauss coined the term as an experience that makes one a different person than one used to be (Strauss 1959: 93). Erikson couched change in terms of developmental conflict through which individuals synthesize a new sense of identity (Erikson 1959a). Structural changes may lead to turning points and may also occur as a result of turning points. Turning points for Goffman can be seen in the career of a mental patient; as the audience no longer supports the performance, significant change occurs for the individual, a significant redefinition, perhaps a turning point takes place (Goffman 1959b). Turning points may involve role changes and accompanying changes in reference groups, friendship groups, social networks, relationships, and resources. The effects of turning points trickle into identity and self-concept through changes in processes of self-attribution, reflected appraisals, self-evaluation and self-esteem. Perhaps turning points involve a dialectical process – a kind of conflict within identity where the existential identity (thesis) is shaken by a turning point (antithesis) and results in a new identity (synthesis). Turning points can be abrupt changes, but can also be anticipated events. They can be discrete, bounded kinds of events or more continuous experiences in process. Turning points can be framed in discontinuity or can be characterized as "attenuated continuity" (Clausen 1995). Turning points have subjective and objective aspects; they highlight attitudinal and structural components of experiences along life course trajectories. Yet, above all, a critical aspect

of turning points is that because of them, individuals take into themselves some new form of meaning.

However in need of specification, the turning point is a useful concept precisely because it resonates centrally in the experiences of individuals. Turning points are important to people, they are seen as defining moments in many lives. Turning points are significant not only for the scope of the changes they bring, but importantly because of the nature of the changes they bring. Turning points involve changes in the deeply felt sense of self, in profoundly important aspects of identity: the "authentic self" for Turner (1976); what Rosenberg calls "the extant self" (1979); what is for Rossan "the core self" (1986); for Gecas and Mortimer "existential identity" (1987). Turning points are entangled in, to coin Rosenberg's phrase, "psychologically central" aspects of the self concept (1981). They are likely to be involved in salient elements of identity, elements to which individuals are strongly committed (Wells and Stryker 1986). Thus, turning points offer a unique window through which to study the subjective experiences of individuals in transition and the ways in which such changes play out in the living of their lives. Eminently fascinating, turning points are significant. They are moments in life when person realizes everything has changed, when one is, "not the person I was, as I used to be" (Strauss 1959: 93).

Chapter Four
Methodological Journey

A Grounded Theoretical Approach to the Study of Turning Points

Because turning points are meaningful to individuals, because turning points are windows into the intricacies of change, and because there is ambiguity in the literature regarding the concept of turning point, it is reasonable to return to empirical data for clarity and as well as elaboration. Simply put, we need to learn more about turning points in order to use the concept precisely in further studies of human life, identity, and behavior. Thus, a grounded method is most appropriate to analyze the ways young adults talk about change; to study the central characteristics of turning points; to examine the ways turning points are expressed in different social contexts; and to generate an ideal type conceptualization of turning points to apply in future research. However, it is important to note that given the theoretical and empirical literature on turning points, it is difficult to approach the data with a purely grounded approach. This investigation takes into account existing understandings of turning points derived from the literature yet is open to new expressions and experiences of the concept. Specifically, a classical conception of turning point is developed from the literature and included in the coding scheme as well as novel expressions of change that arise from the data. In this way, the present study may be understood as guided by the grounded theory approach of Glaser and Strauss, rather than an exact application of their method in its purest form.

Grounded Theory

In a curious bit of symmetry, Anselm L. Strauss, responsible for naming and instrumental in developing the concept of turning point, came together with Barney G.

Glaser in naming and developing the qualitative research method, "grounded theory" (Glaser and Strauss 1967). Glaser and Strauss were concerned with what they saw as an oppressive focus on verification in sociological research (Glaser and Strauss 1967). Inspired in part by increasing statistical sophistication of the 1960's, this emphasis on verification has not only endured, but along with exponential advances in statistical tools, has flourished since that time. While certainly not problematic in and of itself, the preeminence of logico-deductive theory and its verification has arguably eclipsed other methods of sociological research, namely endeavors of theory generation. In response, Glaser and Strauss put forth an inductive process, situated firmly in empirical data itself, geared towards creation of theory as opposed to and distinct from verification; and they called it, "grounded theory" (Glaser and Strauss 1967).

Description of a Grounded Theoretical Approach

"Grounded Theory" is an inductive method of study; it begins with the data itself and aims to discern concepts, patterns, and relationships through what Glaser and Strauss refer to as "a general method of comparative analysis" (Glaser and Strauss 1967:1). In this way theory is generated without appeal to existing categories, concepts, and hypotheses but is instead developed without preconceptions as the process of investigation proceeds.

Glaser and Strauss describe the Constant Comparative Method as a set of four tasks: "comparing incidents applicable to each category"; "integrating categories and their properties"; "delimiting the theory"; and "writing the theory" (Glaser and Strauss 1967: 105-113). These tasks are part of a larger, organic process of discovery and distillation; each task rests on previous tasks, blends into previous tasks, and proceeds at times,

simultaneously with other tasks (Glaser and Strauss 1967: 105). Capturing dynamic, effervescent social life can be a messy business; distinctions are not neat and clean, but emerge with increasing clarity as the research process unfolds. Theory thus becomes a process of discovery, it comes alive for sociologists and for lay people, and according to Glaser and Strauss it bears important fruit, "relevant predictions, explanations, interpretations and applications" (Glaser and Strauss 1967: 1).

Strengths and Weaknesses of a Grounded Theoretical Approach

From its inception, Glaser and Strauss (1967) suggested, much like Cinderella's glass slipper, grounded theory fit and worked well. What they meant by "fit" was that because concepts, themes, and categories arose from the data itself, they retained a closeness and connection with the empirical world. Thus concepts are not forcibly squeezed into the feet of distant deductive theoretical stepsisters, but instead slip more easily on the feet of our inductive Cinderella, from whom the conceptual glass slippers arose in the first place. This empirical closeness had another yield for Glaser and Strauss (1967), namely it "worked". Grounded theory by method is meaningfully connected to individual lives and for this reason works to explain social life. Likely we can safely say that the glass slippers had meaningful relevance for Cinderella that did not exist for her stepsisters, thus more powerfully explained her behavior. Fairy tales and metaphors aside, closeness to the data for Glaser and Strauss make theoretical imperatives of applicability, relevance, and explanation , requirements to "fit and work", more likely for and thus an advantage of grounded theory (Glaser and Strauss 1967:3).

There have been a number of criticisms aimed at grounded theory: Glaser and Strauss suggest it has been called "unsystematic", "impressionistic", "exploratory", "sloppy", and

"unsophisticated" (1967: 223). In large part they suggest these criticisms stem from an emphasis on the requirements for deductive theorizing and quantitative research; however, inductive, qualitative research is a different process entirely. If the discovery of grounded theory is a different process, then evaluating grounded theory is a different process as well. Regarding the process of discovering grounded theory, Glaser and Strauss outline a number of techniques to render the research most rigorous in terms of "credibility, plausibility, and trustworthiness" (Glaser and Strauss 1967: 223). In their model of discovering grounded theory, they propose a number of tools to increase the accuracy of the data and inferences drawn from it. In closing they turn more precisely to the overall issue of credibility.

Credibility is deeply connected to a faithful following of the inductive process throughout data collection and analysis. The grounded theorist engages in a unique dance of immersion and detachment (Glaser and Strauss 1967: 226). By combining tasks of identifying, evaluating, interpreting, and comparing into simultaneous activity there is a coherence of approach unique to the discovery of grounded theory. Glaser and Strauss suggest that we take two skills to sociological research: the first is the reflexive ability so important to successful interaction, our uniquely human capacity to see ourselves and others, and to direct our actions accordingly; the second skill is our ability to systematize ideas, concepts, and knowledge and weave them into intelligible and useful theory (Glaser and Strauss 1967: 277). This is what Anthony Giddens refers to as the "double hermeneutic" that we experience in our endeavor to interpret and understand social life: on the one hand we understand what it is that people think of their own lives and at the same time, we understand social life in terms of sociological concepts and theories

(Giddens 1976). Engaging in this process creates a level of confidence at each step of the theoretical stairway; it culminates in a credibility borne of intimacy with the data and confidence in the method.

Yet I have found in the method even more. There is a reliance in the discovery of grounded theory on the classical Weberian concept of "verstehen" (Weber 1947). Verstehen is the capability of human beings to step into the shoes of another, to have an empathic understanding of the experiences of others. In elaborating this concept as an integral aspect of social life Weber for the first time brings the importance of meaning as a central aspect to sociological study. Many (Cooley, Mead, Blumer, Goffman) have crossed this Weberian bridge bringing new formulations to the sociological canon and inspiring new traditions in theory and research, formulations that recognize and seek to capture meaning in social life. This remains not only at the heart of the grounded approach, but is in my mind, its strongest contribution. We do approach the social world as Glaser and Strauss (1967: 226) suggest, as "shrewd or thoughtful visitors" ; but we come in the Weberian spirit of verstehen.

Questions of utility, strength, and rigor have certainly been revisited since Glaser and Strauss' classic elaboration of 1967. As recently as 2005, scholars from Cultural Anthropology, Law and Social Science, Political Science, and Sociology gathered for a workshop funded by the National Science Foundation, entitled "Interdisciplinary Standards for Systematic Qualitative Research". The goals of the workshop were to specify disciplinary standards, to consolidate design and evaluation criteria across disciplines, and to create a program to strengthen skills and training in qualitative methods (Lamont and White 2005:3). They begin their report by outlining the numerous

strengths of qualitative research; it is capable of capturing intricacies of dynamic social life at micro, macro and all levels in between. It draws out rich understandings of culture and the subjective experiences of actors. Qualitative research allows us to access temporality and causal mechanisms as they unfold. Qualitative approaches are useful in comparative analyses, in uncovering the intricacies of processes, for the creation and refinement of theory. Uniquely, a kind of reflexivity is built into the method of qualitative research itself; an ability to reflect and refine as we go along. This reflexivity applies to issues of method, of theory, and to more pragmatic aspects of the research process. Finally, qualitative research enables, and in fact, requires intimacy between researcher and participant; an intimacy which allows us to delve ever more deeply into social life (Lamont and White 2005: 10).

DATA

MacArthur Foundation Research Network on the Transitions to Adulthood and Public Policy: the Qualitative Study on Transition to Adulthood

Data in this dissertation are from the Qualitative Study on Transition to Adulthood (QSTA) which is part of the larger MacArthur Foundation Research Network on the Transitions to Adulthood and Public Policy (Application for Use and Approval July 9, 2007). The QSTA is a large qualitative study, which has gathered extensive data on subjective experiences in the transition to adulthood of 489 participants in five sites chosen to illustrate diversity in the transition to adulthood. In-depth interviews across sites used the same set of core questions on 15 topics such as: household and living arrangements: families of origin; relationships; children; education; work; military; leisure and time use; religion; identity; civic engagement and politics; September 11; justice system; subjective aging, success, turning points, and health; the future (Core

Interview Schedule Appendix A). Participants ranged in age from 22 to 35 at the time of the interviews, and described a wide array of experiences given their diverse backgrounds, communities, and regions. Interviews were transcribed and coded using the analytical software ATLAS.ti. The sites include both rural and urban areas: New York, NY; St. Paul, MN; San Diego, CA; Michigan; and Iowa. Sub-samples to be interviewed for the QSTA were drawn from respondents in particular studies conducted at each site (Rumbaut et al, 2007).

QSTA Samples: New York, Minnesota, Michigan, and Iowa

The New York sub-sample (n=150) for the QSTA is drawn from *the Second Generation in Metropolitan New York Study* (1994 Waters, Kasinitz, Mollenkopf). It began with a 1999 random sample telephone survey of 3,424 respondents aged 18-32 whose parents were immigrants from China, the Dominican Republic, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Jewish immigrants from the former Soviet Union, and comparable native-born whites, native-born blacks, and Puerto Ricans. In 2000, 350 of the original respondents were interviewed in person and in-depth; of these, 150 respondents were included in the QSTA. The 150 respondents for the QSTA were re-interviewed in 2002-2003 at ages 26-35 (Rumbaut et al, 2007).

The St. Paul, Minnesota sub-sample for the QSTA (n=55) is drawn from *the Youth Development Study* (Mortimer, Swartz, Hartmann). The Youth Development Study is a longitudinal study that began in 1988 when respondents were 14 and 15 years old and in the 9th grade in St. Paul public schools. Respondents have been contacted near annually by mail since leaving high school. Fifty-five respondents aged 29-30 years old are

included in the QSTA; 20 were chosen because they had at some point in the past received Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC). The sub-sample also includes ten respondents who are Hmong (Rumbaut et al, 2007).

The Michigan sub-sample for the QSTA (n=56) is drawn from *the Michigan Study of Adolescent Life Transitions* (Eccles). This study began in 1985 when respondents were in middle school living in southeastern Michigan. Nine waves of data have been collected. Fifty-six respondents aged 29-30 were selected for the QSTA (Rumbaut et al, 2007).

The Iowa sub-sample for the QSTA (n=104) is drawn from *the Iowa Young Adult Study* (Kefalas and Carr). The sample for this study was drawn in 2002 from a list of 368 young people who attended a local high school in a community of 2,000 people in northeastern Iowa. A mail survey was conducted of graduates and in-depth interviews were conducted with a sub-sample of 104 respondents aged 22-31 for the QSTA. Respondents include both those who remained in Iowa and those who relocated (Rumbaut et al, 2007).

Sample for the Present Study

Twenty cases from each of four geographic sites were randomly selected for this study for a total of 80 interviews. To accomplish this selection I began with a large SPSS file of all participants for all sites; this file contained demographic information for all of the participants (Demographic Variable List Appendix B). The comprehensive SPSS file was then separated into four geographic SPSS files from which random selections could be made via SPSS. In this way, I created randomly selected cases, N=20, for each of the

four geographic subsamples: New York, Minnesota, Iowa, and Michigan. The San Diego site was dropped as a result of technical difficulties in accessing the narrative data files. In addition, the San Diego site is rich with the experiences of immigrants as is the New York site. In this way, the immigrant experience was already included in the present study through the New York subsample; 40% of the New York subsample included participants who were foreign born and immigrated to the United States as children.

After random selections were completed, hermeneutic units were created in ATLAS.ti for each random selection subsample for each geographic location. According to the ATLAS.ti codebook, the hermeneutic unit is "an idea container, meant to enclose your data, all your findings, codes, memos, and structures under a single name" (Muhr: 2003-2005: 27). Because I wanted to preserve geographic differences, I organized the four hermeneutic units geographically. Each hermeneutic unit then contained twenty randomly selected participants from the larger QSTA subsamples; for each participant the full, uncoded, transcribed interview was included. Therefore at the completion of the selection process I had created four geographic hermeneutic units in ATLAS.ti corresponding to four geographic areas of the QSTA; each included full, uncoded interviews for twenty randomly selected participants. These hermeneutic units were named as follows:

LRS1NewHU: Hermeneutic unit of 20 randomly selected participants containing full, uncoded interviews from New York QSTA subsample.

LRS1IowaHU: Hermeneutic unit of 20 randomly selected participants containing full, uncoded interviews from Iowa QSTA subsample.

LRS1MinnHU: Hermeneutic unit of 20 randomly selected participants containing full, uncoded interviews from Minnesota QSTA subsample.

LRS1MichiganHU: Hermeneutic unit of 20 randomly selected participants containing full, uncoded interviews from Michigan QSTA subsample.

MEETING THE PARTICIPANTS

Samples for the present study were randomly selected from the larger QSTA samples. Distributions of Gender (Table One), Age (Table Two), Race/Ethnicity (Table Three), Immigration Status (Table Four), and SES Attainment (Table Five) for subsamples included in the present study (LRS1MN, LRS1NY, LRS1MI, LRS1IA) were compared with those of the larger samples (MacMN, MacNY, MacMI, MacIA). The tables are based on information gathered by a team of student researchers led by Arturo Baiocchi under the direction of Professors Teresa T. Swartz and Douglas Hartmann at the University of Minnesota. A complete table describing the distributions of all demographic variables in the four samples and the MacArthur samples is included in Appendix C (Expanded Demographic Table). Tables reflect frequencies in percents after deleting missing values. It should be noted that not all demographic information was gathered for all variables at all sites; thus there are blanks or omissions in the demographic information presented.

TABLE ONE GENDER BY SITE

GENDER	LRS1MN	Mac MN	LRS1 NY	MacNY	LRS1MI	MacMI	LRS1IA	MacIA
Male	30	24.1	50	54.7	45	36	45	51.5
Female	70	75.9	50	45.3	55	64	55	48.5

In terms of gender, the Minnesota sample for the present study is more heavily female, whereas the distribution between males and females in the other samples is

approximately equal. The gender distributions for the present study in all subsamples are consistent with the gender distributions of the broader MacArthur QSTA samples.

TABLE TWO AGE BY SITE

AGE	LRS1 MN	Mac MN	LRS1 NY	Mac NY	LRS1 MI	MacMI	LRS1 IA	MacIA
Less than 27			60	44.6			60	48.5
27-29	90	85.2	15	21.9	15	8	30	27.8
30-32	10	14.8	20	18.8	85	92	10	22.7
33-41			5	14.9				
Missing								1

Regarding age, Iowa and New York subsamples include the most participants aged less than 27 years; in each, 60 % of the participants in the present study are younger than age 27. The Minnesota subsample is also fairly young with 90% of the participants aged 27 to 29. The Michigan subsample has the greatest percentage of older participants, with 85% aged 30 to 32. The age distributions are thus fairly consistent with the broader MacArthur QSTA sample distributions for participant age.

TABLE THREE RACE/ETHNICITY BY SITE

RACE /ETH	LRS1 MN	Mac MN	LRS1 NY	Mac NY	LRS1 MI	MacMI	LRS1 IA	MacIA
White	65	64.8	40	23.4	85	84	100	96.9
Black	10	7.4	10	17.2	15	12		
His-panic	5	1.9	15	25.8		2		
SE Asian	15	18.5						
Other Asian			30	28.1				
Native Amer-ican	5	1.9						1
Mixed		3.7	5	.8		2		2.1
Other				3.9				
Missing		1.9		.8				

The distributions of race/ ethnicity in the samples for the present study are again for the most part consistent with the broader MacArthur QSTA samples. For the present study Michigan and Iowa samples are heavily White, while the Minnesota and New York subsamples, although also predominantly White, include small numbers of Black, Hispanic, SE Asian, other Asian participants. The New York subsample includes a smaller percentage of Black and Hispanic respondents than the MacArthur sample, and a larger percentage of Whites. The New York subsample and the larger MacArthur sample

also include a fairly large number of participants identified as Other Asian. There is one Native American participant in the Minnesota subsample (5%).

TABLE FOUR IMMIGRATION STATUS BY SITE

IMM. STATUS	LRS1 MN	Mac MN	LRS1 NY	Mac NY	LRS1 MI	Mac MI	LRS1 IA	Mac IA
Foreign Born/To US as Adult				.8				
Foreign Born/To US as Child	15	18.5	40	30.5				
Born in US			45	49.2		4		2.1
3rd Gen or More				2.3	90	62		1
Native Born Gen Unknown	85	81.5	15	14.1	10	34	95	95.9
Missing				3.1			5	1

In terms of Immigration Status, findings are relatively similar between the subsamples of the present study and the broader MacArthur QSTA samples. As would be expected, given their youthful age, virtually none of the participants in the present study were Foreign Born. The New York subsample for the present study includes the greatest number of participants who immigrated to the United States as children (40%);

Minnesota follows with 15% of the participants in the subsample immigrating to the United States as children. In Michigan, 90% of participants indicated they were Third Generation or More. No respondents in the Iowa subsample indicated Immigration Status of any kind (1% of the broader sample responded Third Generation or More).

TABLE FIVE SES ATTAINMENT BY SITE

SES Attain	LRS1 MN	Mac MN	LRS1 NY	MacNY	LRS1 MI	MacMI	LRS1 IA	MacIA
Poor	10	7.4	5	7	10	6	15	11.3
Work Poor	10	9.3	30	18.8	15	10	15	15.5
Work Class	20	31.5	20	34.4	35	34	40	50.5
Middle Class	60	44.4	35	30.5	30	38	25	18.6
Higher		7.4	10	7.8	10	12		2.1
Missing				1.6			5	2.1

Considering SES Attainment, most respondents in the subsamples across sites reported their attainment as Working Class or Middle Class: 80% for the Minnesota subsample, 55% for the New York Subsample; 65% for the Michigan subsample; and 65% for the Iowa subsample. There were also reports of attaining a Working Poor status: the New York subsample contained the highest percentage of respondents at 30%, with Michigan and Iowa subsamples at 15% Working Poor and Minnesota with 10% Working Poor. Across sites, 5 to 15% considered themselves poor; and even fewer respondents considered themselves higher than middle class. Fewer respondents in the Minnesota,

New York, and Iowa subsamples considered themselves working class than in the larger MacArthur samples.

To summarize, the subsamples of the QSTA for the present study approximate the larger MacArthur QSTA samples in terms of Gender, Age, Race/Ethnicity, Immigration Status, and SES Attainment. All subsamples were even in terms of gender with the exception of the Minnesota subsample which was primarily female. Iowa and New York subsamples have the youngest participants, namely those under age 27; while the Michigan subsample has the largest group of oldest participants ages 30 to 32. With the exception of New York, all subsamples were predominantly White. The New York subsample contains the most foreign born participants who immigrated to the United States when they were children; Minnesota also included 15% of participants as foreign born immigrating to the United States as children. Michigan and Iowa subsamples primarily described their immigration status as at least Third Generation in the United States. The participants largely identified themselves as working or middle. the respective subsamples.

Inferences and Boundaries: Advantages and Disadvantages of QSTA Data

The QSTA data offers many advantages in my study of turning points. First, the focus of the QSTA is on the transition to adulthood. This period is particularly important in the life course, some in fact have called it "the most pivotal turning point in the life course" (Uhlenberg and Mueller 2004:130). Experiences in domains of education, of family, and of work are centrally important in the transition to adulthood and may significantly affect future opportunities for individuals (Hogan and Astone 1986). Thus, the QSTA maximizes the opportunity to investigate turning points in important domains at a critical

transition, which may have important implications for the life course. Secondly, as a qualitative study it provides the powerful lens of narrative, the story of an unfolding life course. With access to the full interview transcripts, I have been able to analyze experiences of turning points in the context of individual lives, from the perspectives of individuals, as told to interviewers in their own words. Turning points are meaningful for individuals and this meaning is best understood in the context of individual lives, in the words of those who express them. Thirdly, as can be seen by the sample descriptions of each site, this data set offers tremendous range in terms of participant experiences, backgrounds, and regional environments. This has provided a unique opportunity to uncover characteristics of turning points and the ways they are patterned by social life within the richness of individual narratives.

There are several limiting aspects of my use of the QTSA data set. The first issue is one of generalizability. QSTA subsamples were not randomly selected, thus findings will, strictly speaking, not be generalizable to broad populations. However, because my random subsamples were taken from the QSTA subsamples, my findings are generalizable to the larger QSTA study subsamples. Furthermore, to the extent that the QSTA subsamples are indicative of trends in broader populations, so too are my subsamples applicable to those broader populations. In addition, characteristics, patterns, and connections uncovered are insightful in exploring the concept of turning point, how turning points are reported and who they are reported by. It is expected that such themes and connections will be useful in understanding turning points, in bringing greater analytical precision and understanding to the concept, and for developing testable hypotheses for future research.

Secondly, some interviewers in some of the subsamples asked direct questions regarding turning points, but many did not. While this may minimize the reporting of turning points, the existence of unsolicited reports serves to underscore their significance to participants. Additionally, the data set does not offer independent assessment of behavioral change; it may be mentioned by some participants, it may be substantiated by subsequent comments, while it may not be mentioned at all by others. In this way, findings regarding behavioral change following the experience of turning points will be suggestive in scope. Finally, it must be noted that the QSTA narratives contain self reports of change that are retrospective in nature.

Process of the Study

If all research is to some extent a leap of faith, an inductive approach felt to me, like sky-diving. But in the end it brought me full circle; it reaffirmed what I learned in Sociology 101; that people are social animals with patterned behavior discernable by empirical study (Durkheim 1950). As I began to write, the process felt a bit like a travelogue, the record of an exotic journey, one that might be of interest to others who could not make the trip with me. And indeed, the paragraphs that followed in the narratives looked like slides in my mind, images of moments shared between researcher and participant, intimate across time, place, and other dimensions of difference. I approached each day with excitement – and with a question, "Who will I meet today?" What, I wondered, will they have to tell me about turning points in their lives. This journey was filled with trepidation and curiosity, with fear and fascination. I even fancied myself an intellectual adventurer of sorts. And as is often the case, my quintessential question was accompanied by her skeptical siblings: what if I didn't

understand what the people were telling me? What if they didn't have anything at all to say about turning points? If they did, would I fairly interpret their comments or would I jump too enthusiastically at the chance for something to say?

The only way I could address my questions was to jump in, to immerse myself in the data and to faithfully record anything that might be of interest. Instead of rushing to code excerpts from the interviews (a huge temptation for sure) I felt that if I was to interpret whatever I found correctly, I would need to as fully as possible understand participant comments in the contexts of their lives. So I spent a great deal of time getting to know them. I began by writing extensive analytical notes on each interview, one region at a time. These analytical notes included summaries, impressions, things to follow up on, questions to look into, patterns that appeared to be emerging, my own feelings. They allowed me not only to see the individuals in personal context, but the places in regional context as well. These notes became much longer than I wanted them to be – I often chided myself that they were too long, too detailed, that somehow this would cloud my analysis. But since I didn't know exactly what I was looking for, I had to be detailed and be true to a grounded approach. I asked myself often why it was taking so long to read and make analytical notes for each interview. I was about 4/5 of the way through the samples when it dawned on me; I wasn't just reading the interviews, I was trying to know the people. And that takes some time. It impressed upon me once again what a privilege it is to step behind the gates, to gain entrée into someone else's life, their musings, their experiences, indeed their fears, their hopes, their regrets, their dreams, their secrets and disappointments. Truly this is no small thing. As I poured over the narratives, I got to know the participants, and I got to know them well.

Methodological Insights: Context, Meaning, and Secrets

Early on in the research I quickly realized the importance of understanding the participants in the context of their entire narratives. This has strengthened my confidence in my findings and interpretations significantly. Reading the full interview transcripts has enhanced the research process in many, sometimes unanticipated ways. If we are to discover something in narrative data, it is imperative to understand the context; to be able to pick up on something that is different, significant, insightful, unusual, and importantly, something that is not. An understanding of full interview transcripts has made the discernment of discoveries more precise; for example it has allowed me to evaluate the relative importance of events in the context of individual lives; it has enabled me to observe changes in language which signify meaning. In addition, the powerful nature of narrative data is revealed in the context of a complete narrative, as participants tell us secrets about their lives.

Importance of Context

First, in order to understand the relative importance of an event or experience for participants, it is absolutely necessary to understand the way it fits into other aspects of their lives. For Andrew from Michigan (AMI14), education and military service are powerfully connected; had I not read the entire interview transcript carefully I would have missed the connection and certainly the significance of each, not to mention that both were turning points in his life that could be characterized as a kind of loss and recovery. This young man dreamt of going to a big university, away from home; however, this dream was thwarted. Instead he turned to the military, which subsequently

affected his life in many ways. In this telling excerpt, he talks about what his life might have been like if he hadn't joined the military (Andrew AMI14 2167 – 2186),

> ***Interviewer****: What do you think your life would be like now if you hadn't gone into the military.* ***Andrew:*** *Well, that goes back to a lot of what we talked about earlier, about the education. I wonder if it would be the same. I wonder if my wife and I would be together. I really do. Because if I would have went away to school and she was at her school and I was at mine, it's like well, wait a minute. Would we still be together? Would we have met somebody else? What would have happened. Really? I wonder. I wonder if … I doubt it. I really doubt it that we would have been together*

It would have been easy for me to focus on military service, a well established turning point in the literature, and to have attributed the changed direction of his life largely to military service. However, at a deeper level as he indicates, many life choices were a result not of his military experience, but instead due to his lost educational opportunity. Significantly, it was the lost opportunity of a university education away from home that changed this participant. It changed his choice of occupation, it changed his choice of spouse, and likely it changed the direction of his family life.

Changes in Language Style as Indices of Meaning

In addition to the words that people use, the manner in which people speak is an important form of information to take into account. Changes in form of language can indicate a variety of things from discomfort, to authority, to fear, sadness, or excitement. This was a nice bit of serendipity for me, and it happened as I read the interview transcript of Amelia from New York (ANNY7). This participant had very short, direct responses to the questions she was asked. She did not elaborate or offer much of note at all. I found her responses to be succinct to the point of sparse. But when she was asked about the September 11 terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center she began to speak

with much more detail than previously; the change in form was dramatic and it grabbed my attention: (Amelia ANNY7 0484-0537),

Amelia: *"That day is was a Tuesday. On Tuesdays I don't go to work until 3:00 pm. The phone rang at around nine o'clock, which I figured is odd because nobody really calls that early at my house and I got up, I jumped out of bed and I saw the caller-id and it was like my father's cell phone and I was a little shocked, 'cause by that time he's usually at work and he'd be calling from his desk phone, and it usually says "Company Name" 'cause that's who he works for and I thought it was strange that it was his cell phone, but I went back to bed 'cause my mother picked it up and the next thing I know, she came into my room and she could hardly speak and she was in tears and she said, "I was just talking to your father on the cell phone. He said the twin towers are afire, put the TV on, put the TV on." And I lost contact with him – the signal dropped or whatever, and I put the TV on and I saw what was happening and I'm like trying to calm her down. Calm down. It's probably just the cell phone. I'm sure he's fine 'cause if he just got there now – 'cause he had told her that he had just stepped out of the train station and seen that the twin towers were on fire. And she kept saying how he said that he couldn't get into his building because it was across the street but he wanted to see if he could find somebody that he worked with to find out what was going on. So that's what she was upset about – that he was going back towards the building he worked in to look for people and then I kept trying to get him on the cell phone and with things going on I couldn't get the office phone. I couldn't reach him. His beeper wasn't working. Nothing was working that morning. And then I saw the first tower come down and I just like – I thought he was gone because it looked like the whole city was covered in it. And then my mother saw and we were just like hysterical crying and I couldn't get him on the cell phone. We had no idea where he was for like two and a half hours and the second tower had already come down. I called work, frantic, crying, you know and a couple of people at my job were going through the same thing, 'cause they had husbands down there too so finally at eleven thirty he managed to call from a pay phone and I was just so happy to hear him, I started crying on the phone. It was very – and the neighbor, like at 2:00 my mother and I sat outside 'cause we were waiting for him, 'cause he was trying to find a way home when he called on the pay phone and the neighbor, our next-door neighbor came, managed to get home first before him apparently. I didn't know this but she worked in the same area too. And she came home covered with soot and stuff, and it was just a very horrible experience. Those hours when we didn't know where he was it was real – not a good feeling."* (ANNY7 0484 - 0537)

Not only did this awaken me to the fact that differences in the way we talk about things, over and above the language we use, is an important source of data for interpretation, it also led me to question whether people talk about turning points differently than they talk

about other experiences. Differences in language styles can be important indices of significance for participants.

People tell us secrets.

At times the power revealed in reading the full transcripts stopped me short. The truth of it is that people tell us many things that they would not reveal to others from the merely embarrassing to the incriminating. It reminds us that we are in a unique position as interviewers, as researchers; we are as Simmel would say, "strangers". For Simmel, the stranger is that person who is at once near and far; at once part of the group and separate from the group; the person who understands the group and is at the same time objective. The stranger is often a confidante, and a keeper of secrets (Simmel1950 translation). In the following example, this participant, Corey from New York, reveals highly sensitive information about gang meetings, meetings that were allegedly protected by the police (Corey ANNY14 2023 – 2045),

***Corey**: The only thing was sometimes we had like, when we would have our universal meetings, that was like the only time you actually met people you didn't even know that were in the place. Yeah, 'cause that's when everybody comes. All the boroughs come together. Like, and we would do that meeting in Central Park.*
***Interviewer:** Really?*
***Corey:** Yeah. Cops and everything would protect us, so we can have our meeting. They keep all the regular civilians away from us, so they won't take no pictures of us while we're having our meeting.*
***Interviewer**: Right.*
***Corey:** It'll be at least, at least give or take at least two thousand people out there. Give or take. Just in a giant, big circle. And we'll go into Central Park, we'll go to like one certain area, where there's this big, big grass area. The main leader'll go get a special table, and he'll stand on top of it, so all of us can hear him. But, that's like the only time you'll see all the chapters inside Brooklyn come out, all the chapters from Queen, Manhattan, Bronx, um, Jersey, Long Island. All the main boroughs are out here in the city. Everybody'll just come into that park."*

Not only is it surprising that people reveal secrets, it reminds us of our obligation to protect their confidentiality.

Methodological Issues: Playing Monday Morning Quarterback

There is no question that reading 80 narratives from many different interviewers allowed me to learn an awful lot about the interview process. The methodological issues that arose along the way attest not only to the difficulty of the interview task itself, but also to the requirement for ongoing reflexivity, review, and transparency as a research project marches forward. While in no way a critique, it is important to note these issues as they impinge upon interpretations that can confidently be made on various excerpts; they are in fact, a crucial part of the data.

Leading Questions

Leading questions can render a response useless – or at least of questionable value. And they are easy to ask. In this example, the respondent Patrick is a playwright and the interviewer is questioning him about his "career" (ANNY 13 Patrick 0472-0497),

Interviewer: *You mentioned being a professional playwright. Is that something you see yourself doing as a career?*
Patrick: *Oh yes, except that –*
Interviewer: *But not like a paying job. You need to sort of distinguish between day job and -- profession.*
Patrick: *I don't think any playwright who has any sense of economics would count on playwriting being a paying profession. I mean, some of the best in the business, you talk to them, they said oh yeah, don't expect to get any money whatsoever out of this. I mean, I might want to segue into screen writing, except that it's a slightly different discipline with its own language, so to speak, and it's not exactly where I come from in background. My background is more in stage. So what I probably want to write for. It would be nice to like 'Oh yeah, I can chalk a couple of screen plays', but at the same time there's not as much creative control. I mean, once you sell your screenplay, they can do whatever they damn want with it, whoever's making the film. A Picture. That sounds more professional. Whoever's making the Picture can basically mangle as much as they want. There's also something that's more immediate about theater, to me. It's more mutable as*

far as what actors can do with it, what directors can do with it, they can change it from night to night. It's a lot more exciting."

In this excerpt, the interviewer interrupts the respondent suggesting that he "needs" to make some sort of distinction between a day job and a profession while at the same time the interviewer states that writing plays is "not like a paying job". As a result, I cannot really tell what the respondent wants to say in this regard; his response has been structured, or at the very least, guided by the interviewer.

Offensive Comments: Liking and Disliking Participants

What happens when we find ourselves offended by participant responses? I have experienced a number of feelings as I analyzed these narratives: there were people I felt sorry for, people I was afraid of, people I didn't like and many I did like. It was rare not to have a reaction to the person I was getting to know. Consider this example when a participant from New York Claire was asked if the September 11 attacks had affected her feelings towards Arabs or Arab Americans (Claire ANNY 10 0660-0666),

***Interviewer**: Has it affected how you feel about Arabs or Arab Americans?*
***Claire:** Bomb them all. I won't go up to someone and spit in their face or anything but I know there are innocent people but it just??? It's sad to say, that one bad apple kills the rest but it's the same effect."*

What do we make of all of this in terms of a well done qualitative analysis? My own reaction to the interviews became apparent in the negative examples. It is difficult to take our feelings out of the mix; at the very least one's level of engagement with an interview can be affected. But as we strive to overcome our reactions to what we read and hear, we must also note these reactions as important aspects of the data analysis. In addition, we must use these reactions to dig a little deeper, they may indeed provide opportunities for

insight. In the case of the respondent above, she later comments that she doesn't really know how she feels about Arab Americans born in the United States and notes almost as an aside, that Claire doesn't feel her own ethnic group will be singled out because they already have been in World War II, *"we had our share. That should be enough"* (ANNY 10 00680). A bigoted comment becomes insight into a participant's experiences of discrimination.

Crossing the Line Between Engagement and Encouragement

There is a dance that occurs between interviewer and respondent; a dance that is at once comfortable and awkward. In the interviews I analyzed I saw many instances of this delicate balance, done well and done not so well. We must somehow maintain engagement and interest without encouraging particular responses. We must somehow guide participants to those issues we want to hear about without guiding the content of their responses. This is no doubt a difficult task. I noticed that this was especially pronounced when the interviewer and the respondent were similar to each other. In the interview excerpted below, the interviewer and respondent were both immigrants from China. While this gives a kind of privileged view or "strong objectivity" (Harding 1991), it can also encourage certain comments from the participant. It becomes difficult to know what the respondent would have said without the enthusiasm from the interviewer.

Interviewer: *What about their views on China. Do you think your views on China differ from your parents' views on China?*
Caitlin: *In all honesty, I probably don't have that much opinion one way or another. And for them, it's – they're here for a reason, you know, and what gives me pause is to think that you know, my mother was twenty years old and came clear across the world and left her family and everything, so –*
Interviewer*: It's amazing, isn't it?*

Caitlin: *Yeah. Could I ever – I'm having trouble just going to nearby state, you know what I'm saying? I'm having trouble just going a couple of states about five hours away. So. (laugh) I: I like to think when push comes to shove, we'd be amazed – as a remarkably strong, independent woman, you'd be surprised what you could do.*
Interviewer: *Yeah, but I definitely have to give my parents that kind of respect to come to this country, not speak the language, and make it thus far and be successful where they are, with their kids and so it's definitely , definitely something I'm very proud of."* (Caitlin ANNY3 1892 – 1913).

In the case of this excerpt, prior comments by the respondent were apathetic and ambivalent in terms of her parents' experiences and immigration. The latter part of the quote reveals a more positive response, but how much does this have to do with the interviewer's enthusiasm? We simply don't know.

The Art and Science of Qualitative Research

As is often the case with other aspects of life, in research endeavors we often learn the most from our mistakes and missteps. Qualitative research is an amazing experience, a journey into other lives, other moments, other places. In some ways the approach is artistic, while the analysis more scientific. It is clear that the qualitative researcher is a part of the process in a unique way. These examples affirm that qualitative researchers must remain reflexive, we learn, we adjust, we improve as we go along in the process. Methodological mistakes offer opportunities for improvements and insights and attest to the importance of transparency in the process of discovery.

Moving from Narratives to Interpretation to Narratives and Interpretation

There are many exciting steps involved in the move from narrative to interpretation. The interview transcripts from the MacArthur QSTA were tremendously rich. Not only did each interview schedule include 132 questions, the narratives themselves ranged from

30 to 100 pages in length. Beginning with Iowa narratives, followed by Michigan, Minnesota, and finally New York, I approached the data by region, completing all narratives in one region before moving to the next in hopes of highlighting any regional differences that might emerge. By this time, no new themes, codes, or categories emerged indicating I had reached a saturation point in the data. As a result, along with technical difficulties in accessing the San Diego narratives, in consultation with Jeylan T. Mortimer and Teresa T. Swartz, I determined to forego analysis of the San Diego narratives. The San Diego narratives are rich in terms of immigration stories along with military experiences, both of which I considered to be adequately covered in the data already reviewed and analyzed.

My research process involved thorough reading of each narrative; writing of extensive analytic notes and summaries; recognizing, developing and organizing narrative statements into codes which emerged from the data; interpreting and analyzing the data; generating new ideas, questions, engaging in contradictions. This was in most cases a painfully slow process; while for some of the narratives I was able to complete my work in two days, for most I was immersed in their stories for three to five or six days. Clearly, this is the nature of the grounded approach; it is not amenable to schedule and routine. Depending on the relevance of the narrative for the concepts under study and many other factors, a researcher may spend "hours on one page or he may code twenty pages in a half hour" (Glaser and Strauss 1967:107). This immersion in the data albeit a necessary element to the method of grounded theory, was in my experience fascinating, frustrating, insightful, creative, freeing, arduous, riveting, and especially important when using secondary data. It was for me, in a word, invaluable.

Although the research process reads like a series of steps taken in sequence, in reality all elements of the process happened at once in a delightful collusion of experiences, ideas, questions, confusion and clarity. In the interest of creating theory, Glaser and Strauss (1967) developed the "Constant Comparative Method of Qualitative Analysis". This method was developed to include the strengths of explicit coding without the restrictions of predetermined codes; and the freedom to create theory in a systematic and constantly evolving manner (Glaser and Strauss 1967). The intent of this method of analysis is to generate as many categories, properties, hypotheses, as possible, but not to engage in testing. This freedom from requirements of proof and testing encourages the researcher to take note of many things, potential causes, consequences, experiences, conditions, dimensions and processes in an open minded fashion (Glaser and Strauss 1967:104). Given my questions, I found this process at once exciting and surprisingly natural. While ultimately the goal of the constant method of comparative analysis is to develop theory that is closely tied to data; in like manner, my goal was to develop the concept turning point by stepping off from existing conceptualizations into the lives of the QSTA participants in order to see how they express such experiences.

In approaching my data, I followed the four stages of the constant comparative method as outlined by Glaser and Strauss (1967); "comparing incidents applicable to each category"; "integrating categories and their properties"; "delimiting theory"; and "writing theory" (Glaser and Strauss 1967:105-113). Boundaries between theses stages are somewhat artificial; I found myself working back and forth between stages, and often in several stages at once.

Comparing Incidents Applicable to Each Category: Uncovering Theme Codes

I began by reading each narrative carefully and creating a document for each narrative; these documents are stored both in paper and in electronic form. Each document was identified by my own notation as “AN” (analytic notes) “NY” (location identifier: NY, MI, MN, IA) and “1” (numbers 1 through 20 to indicate participant number). These notations were not connected to the participant identification numbers utilized in the original transcripts, nor to the MacArthur QSTA in general. These documents contained first a thorough summary of the individual’s narrative and secondly, a section entitled “Analytic Notes”. The summaries were intended to capture the context of the narrative as well as the individual’s experiences. They were written in my own words, although quotations and original excerpts were included as well, along with references to line numbers in original narratives in case review or clarification was necessary. In the Analytic Notes Section, I recorded my ideas, questions, reactions, participant idiosyncrasies and experiences, impressions, discoveries, methodological concerns, and excerpts that I coded along with my interpretations. These documents range from three pages to 37 pages; the paper copies are arranged in notebooks by participant by location without any reference to MacArthur participant identification number or the MacArthur QSTA. Further, the notebooks are locked in a file cabinet for which I have the only key. The electronic documents are housed on my personal laptop computer for which I alone have the password.

While I was reading, summarizing, and analyzing each narrative, I was also developing codes and selecting excerpts for inclusion in those codes. Not knowing exactly what would be important, I began to develop codes for everything having to do with change and lack of change that was expressed in the interviews. In addition, I had in

mind the elements and emphases of the composite classic definition of turning points as well as my understanding of turning points from the literature. Therefore I was attuned to aspects of change that were abrupt, involved changes in self, identity, behavior and were widespread affecting multiple trajectories. I also attended to aspects of change that were meaningful, brought new opportunities, included marked shifts in direction, and involved objective aspects of social life. Importantly, I was in no way confined by these preexisting notions.

Each excerpt that was coded was recorded in a minimum of three places: first in the summary per participant; secondly in the analytic notes section of each participant document, and finally in at least one code document. In this way, I could accomplish several tasks: I could see the relevant excerpt in the context of the participant's narrative (summary section); I could see the relevant excerpt with my notes, rationale for inclusion, queries, impressions, interpretations, and burgeoning analyses; and finally I could see the relevant excerpt with other excerpts of its kind. As is required by the constant comparative method, each time I selected an excerpt for inclusion in a code, I compared it with the other excerpts already included in the code. This comparison so integral to the method provides many opportunities: among them the chance to see the way the selections hang together, to see what unites them; to assess the fit of each selection to the code category; to recognize the necessity of a new code. Importantly the constant comparative method also offers opportunities to see ways selections may differ: the range of experiences that comprise a code category are revealed; the various manifestations of conceptual elements become more visible with the process of constant comparison. Even

at this early stage, the elemental seeds of theory are created. According to Glaser and Strauss,

> "This constant comparison of the incidents very soon starts to generate theoretical properties of the category. The analyst starts thinking in terms of the full range of types or continua of the category, its dimensions, the conditions under which it is pronounced or minimized, its major consequences, its relation to other categories, and its other properties."
>
> (Glaser and Strauss 1967: 106)

In keeping with the constant comparative method, each excerpt was coded into as many codes as possible. Fairly general and broad, these "theme codes" were the first to arise in the data; as noted a few theme categories were suggested by turning points definitions or applications in the literature. Initially, I put everything that might have something to do with the theme code into that particular theme code. Thus, I consider the theme codes as a kind of middle range data: they would later be distilled into smaller subcategories and subcodes (Integrating categories and their properties); and later still grouped into larger categories (Delimiting theory); finally they would be interpreted (Writing theory). The initial theme codes were as follows:

Theme Code: Methods
This theme code consisted of excerpts from the narratives on issues relevant to the qualitative method and interview process, for example leading questions or importance of confidentiality.
Theme Code: Search for Identity and Immigration Stories
This theme code began as a code for identity changes but was quickly dominated by identity changes in the context of immigration.
Theme Code: Turning Points as Processes
This theme code reflects changes expressed as processes by QSTA participants.
Theme Code: Turning Points Unrecognized
This theme code included consequential change experiences that were unrecognized by those experiencing them.
Theme Code: Turning Points as Repudiations

This theme code consisted of excerpts by participants reflecting denial of earlier stages in life.

Theme Code: Turning Points and Changes in the Self

This theme code included comments on change that included references to the self.

Theme Code: Turning Points versus Transitions, Stress Events, Significant Events and Plain Old Change

This theme code consisted of change events that were not likely turning points.

Theme Code: Turning Points as Loss and Recovery

This theme code included expressions of change by participants that replaced previous losses; for example, Mary notes that her religious conversion has given her the father she lost as a child. **Theme Code: Turning Points as Loss, Downward Spiral, and Missed Opportunities**

This theme code consisted of change experiences that resulted in loss, continuing trajectories downward, as well as changes experienced subsequent to missed opportunities.

Theme Code: Turning Points and Gender Identity

I created this theme code as a result of reading an experience in another context where a young woman "came out" to her family and friends; to them it was consequential but it was not consequential for her. I found this interesting and was curious whether I would find comments on gender and gender identity in the narratives of the QSTA participants. However, there were no such expressions coded in this theme code.

Theme Code: Turning Points and Self Efficacy

This theme code arose as I read narratives that seemed to express a sense of defeatism in the face of change or alternatively an attitude that embraces change, a sort of 'when one door closes, another opens' attitude on life. The expressions included in this theme code indeed reflected such attitudes but could not be directly tied to self efficacy. This finding is insightful and potentially fruitful for further study.

Theme Code: Turning Points Mitigated by SES, Race, Gender, Capital

This theme code came to mind at the same time as I was pondering potential connections between turning points and self efficacy**.** There were some QSTA participants who spoke about their lives in idealized terms and some who appeared to be shaken about by events of life almost as if they had no mooring or stability. There were a few comments on financial stability and reverse racism, but nothing that could be clearly tied to mitigation of turning points by race, SES, gender or capital of any kind. This finding is insightful and potentially fruitful for further study.

Theme Code: Turning Points Unsolicited

This theme code includes spontaneous comments on consequential change experiences. The fact that such comments were unsolicited lends them a sense of significance or meaning.

Theme Code: Turning Points Exacerbated and Compounded

This theme codes includes expressions of significant change that accentuate or intensify subsequent events in life, suggesting the longstanding influence of turning points.

Theme Code: Variable Change Responses to Turning Points

This theme code was intended to reflect different responses to turning points in terms of changes to self, to identity, to behavior. It was an early code and not clearly distinct from other codes. Expressions originally coded in this theme code were re-coded into other

more appropriate theme codes specific to the kinds of changes engendered by a consequential change experience: for example Jaimie's experience of mental illness as a consequential change affecting all aspects of her life was re-coded into the theme code "Quintessential Turning Points".

Theme Code: Turning Points as Knifing Off Events

This theme code reflects consequential change experiences as abrupt, discrete, discernible events.

Theme Code: Turning Points and the Military

This theme code includes comments on military experience and change.

Theme Code: Turning Points and Behavioral Change

This theme code consists of expressions of behavior change as part of larger consequential change experiences.

Theme Code: Psychological Openness to Turning Points

This theme code arose along with my thoughts on tuning points and self efficacy, and turning points mitigated by race, SES, gender, and capital. For some participants change was met with a kind of openness, as opportunity. This led me to wonder about a psychological orientation that may invite significant change opportunities. There were no excerpts that could be connected to a psychological orientation of openness, but I believe this is an interesting thread to follow up on in future studies.

Theme Code: Macrolevel Turning Points

This theme code included experiences largely on September 11 few of which met the classical definition of turning point. Excerpts in this code are included with Turning Points and Stress Events.

Theme Code: Turning Points and Ambivalence

This theme code reflected expressions of ambivalence in the face of change.

Theme Code: Turning Points and Religious Experiences

This theme code consisted of experiences of consequential change in the domain of religion.

Theme Code: Quintessential Turning Points with Identity and Behavioral Change

This theme code included expressions of consequential change that met all aspects of the classical definition of turning point.

Theme Code: Expected Turning Points That Are Not Turning Points

This theme code reflected experiences that might be expected to be consequential but were not. For example, the events of September 11 might be expected to meet elements of the classically definition of turning points, but many participants did not express them as consequential.

Theme Code: Turning Points Experienced by Others yet Told by Respondents

This theme code included turning point experiences of others told by the QSTA participants. It was considered an indication of meaning, that someone else's experience would be important enough for a QSTA participant to express it.

Theme Code: Turning Points and Occupation

This theme code consisted of consequential change experiences in the occupational domain.

Theme Code: Turning Points as People, as Relationships

This theme code included consequential change experiences as a result of other people, as a result of relationships.

Theme Code: Turning Points and Education
This theme code reflected QSTA participants' expressions of change in the domain of education.
Theme Code: How Do People Talk About Turning Points
This theme code reflected the ways people talk about turning points; for example, Amelia's (New York) uncharacteristic detail in her expressions on the events of September 11th.
Theme Code: Turning Points and Symbols
This theme category emerged through a tattoo; Amelia's experience of September 11 having solidified her American identity so strongly that she had the American flag tattooed on her shoulder. This symbolic representation suggests significance and points to an insight: turning points may take on the cloak of sacred objects and organizing structures in people's lives.
Theme Code: Turning Points and Place
This theme code was constructed to reflect connections between consequential changes and places or regions. While participants may have talked about places that they liked or did not like, in their expressions there was no clear connection to experiences of change.
Theme Code: Turning Points and Race
This theme code was intended to capture comments by the QSTA participants on race and experiences of change. There were no expressions categorized in this theme category.
Theme Code: Turning Points as Something Sought
This theme code reflects a sense of opportunity as expressed by the QSTA participants in their comments on consequential change. (See also Shanahan and Macmillan 2008)
Theme Code: Turning Points and Physical Change
This theme code consists of comments on physical changes which are part of larger consequential change experiences of the QSTA participants.

Integrating Categories and Their Properties: Discernment of Subcategories and Subcodes

The theme codes emerged haphazardly, without any discernible order. I am not sure why this should have surprised me, but it did – and it oftentimes created a sense of panic for me. The possibility that all of this information might not come together in a meaningful way was like a pair of hands around my throat. There was much to be learned however, in these moments of panic; for all the intellectualizing about data as authoritative, for all the understanding of grounded theory, it was easy to forget that the

story arises from within the data, it is not imposed from without. My responsibilities as a researcher centered on listening to, reporting on the data, and interpreting the data sociologically. And I learned especially in those moments of panic, that valuable lesson of returning to the data, and listening to what the participants were telling me about turning points. I had been getting ahead of myself.

Tabling for the moment the challenge of theory generation, I went back to the theme codes to review the properties and characteristics contained within them. From the theme codes subcodes emerged, and upon further analysis, these subcodes grouped themselves into various subcategories within the theme code. The most abstract "categories" were the last to develop and the most difficult to discern. In this way theme codes were both broadened into categories and distilled into subcategories and subcodes. The final coding scheme is as follows including, from most to least abstract, "Categories", "Theme Codes", "Subcategories", and "Subcodes":

Category: Methodological Insights and Issues (Chapter Four)
Theme Code: Methods
Subcategory: Methodological Insights
- **Subcode: Importance of Context**
- **Subcode: Language Style and Meaning**
- **Subcode: People Tell Us Secrets**

Subcategory: Methodological Issues: Playing Monday Morning Quarterback
- **Subcode: Leading Questions**
- **Subcode: Liking and Disliking Participants**
- **Subcode: The Line Between Engagement and Encouragement**

Category: Differentiating Turning Points from Other Concepts of Change
(Chapter Five)
Theme Code: Turning Points and Transitions
- **Subcode: Increasing Maturity and Responsibilities**
- **Subcode: One Step Forward, Two Steps Back**

Theme Code: Turning Points and Stress Events
Theme Code: Turning Points and Significant Events

Theme Code: Turning Points and Plain Old Change

Category: Structural Forms of Turning Points (Chapter Six)

Theme Code: Turning Points as Knifing Off Events
- **Subcode: Military Service as Knifing Off Event**
- **Subcode: Immigration as Knifing Off Event**
- **Subcode: Religious Conversion as Knifing Off Event**

Theme Code: Turning Points as Processes

Category: Indices of Meaning (Chapter Six)

Theme Code: Turning Points Experienced by Others Yet Told by Participants
Theme Code: How Do People Talk About Turning Points
Theme Code: Turning Points and Symbols
Theme Code: Turning Points Unsolicited
Theme Code: Turning Points and Ambivalence

Category: Indices of Change (Chapter Six)

Subcategory: Objective Elements
- **Subcode: Turning Points and Physical Change**
- **Subcode: Turning Points and Behavioral Change**
- **Subcode: Turning Points and Changes in Relationships**
- **Subcode: Turning Points Recognized by Others**

Subcategory: Subjective Elements
- **Subcode: Turning Points and Identity (Immigration Stories)**
- **Subcode: Turning Points and Changes in the Self**
- **Subcode: Turning Points and Changes in Worldview**

Subcategory: Iconic Change
- **Subcode: Quintessential Turning Points**

Category: Widespread Effects of Turning Points (Chapter Six)

Theme Code: Turning Points as Loss and Recovery
Theme Code: Turning Points as Loss, Downward Spiral, and Missed Opportunities
Theme Code: Turning Points Exacerbated and Compounded
Theme Code: Turning Points as Repudiations

Category: Turning Points and Social Contexts (Chapter Seven)

Theme Code: Identity and Immigration Stories
Theme Code: Turning Points and Education
Theme Code: Turning Points and Occupation
Theme Code: Turning Points and Religious Experiences
Theme Code: Turning Points and the Military

Category: Turning Points and Insights (Chapter Eight)

Theme Code: Turning Points and Self Efficacy
Theme Code: Turning Points Mitigated by Race, SES, Gender, Capital
Theme Code: Psychological Openness to Turning Points
Theme Code: Turning Points as Something Sought

Delimiting Theory: Organizing by Emergent Categories

Interestingly, the "categories" emerged last and were by far the most difficult to discern; from my review of theme codes, subcodes, and subcategories I searched for larger categories into which the theme codes and their contents could be meaningfully organized. If it were only that simple! I struggled with this organizational overlay mightily. The theme codes were straightforward, as were the subcodes and subcategories within them. But how could I wrap them up in a meaningful sociological package? I tried many different ways of organizing the theme codes, but none seemed useful or natural. I went back to the data and re-read the entries over and over again. Soon I felt I was reorganizing what I had just reorganized, rewriting what I had already rewritten (which I am happy to do if it is an improvement – unfortunately, it wasn't). At one point in frustration I wrote in my notes, "The levels of abstraction are all over the place!" Indeed they were; I realized then that themes don't arise neatly all at the same level of analysis. Thus my coding scheme had to be built up for larger categories as well as down for smaller subcategories and subthemes. This realization provided an interesting clue bearing on the potential utility of an ideal type turning point. There certainly is a difference between a bridge falling out from underneath you on an August afternoon and

becoming a mother; yet both may be considered turning points; both have great meaning for individuals yet are vastly different in their structural composition, characteristics, and consequences. How then do we analyze such different events as a common concept? How can we possibly compare them to each other, to other concepts? Can we take our analyses any further? This is the task to which Max Weber set himself in developing his analytical innovation, the "ideal type".

IDEAL TYPE: Max Weber

In an effort to bring precision and objectivity to the blossoming science of sociology, Max Weber develops an analytical tool he calls, "ideal type" (Weber, 1904; 1949). Weber defines the ideal type in this way,

> "An ideal type is formed by a one-sided *accentuation* of one or more points of view and by the synthesis of a great many diffuse, discrete, more or less present and occasionally absent *concrete individual* phenomena, which are arranged according to those one-sidedly emphasized viewpoints into a unified *analytical* construct *(Gedankenbild*). In its conceptual purity, this mental construct *(Gedankenbild)* cannot be found empirically anywhere in reality. It is a *utopia."* (Weber 1949 in Calhoun et al 2007).

Weber developed several kinds of ideal types. Some ideal types derived from particular times and places: some ideal types were more general and abstract in nature; and some referred to specific social behaviors or action. In this analysis, the proposed ideal type turning point is more general, abstracted from the empirical experiences expressed by QSTA participants as they discuss changes in their lives and assessed against the backdrop of classical conceptions of turning points. The ideal type is a kind of measuring stick against which to compare empirical reality. As such, it allows comparison to a consistent if utopian case, as opposed to relative comparisons of

individual cases to each other. Weber is unwavering: an ideal type is not a hypothesis; instead ideal types serve to guide us in developing hypotheses (Weber 1949 in Calhoun et al 2007). The formulation of an ideal type turning point will allow us to say more about turning points; to move from description to various comparisons, structural connections, and hypotheses. The ideal type is especially well suited for work in grounded theory: ideal types that arise from empirical data are useful in generating hypotheses for further study. As Lewis Coser notes, "Ideal types enable one to construct hypotheses linking them with the conditions that brought the phenomenon or event into prominence, or with consequences that follow from its emergence" (Coser 1977:224)

The ideal type allows us to capture complex realities that do not neatly fall into categories that are either individual or general; instead we can include more specifically in our analyses experiences that are meaningful (Heckman 1988:121). Indeed, Weber created the ideal type as a way to improve concept formation without limiting scientific studies to those of either subjective experience or structural forms. As Susan J. Heckman in her assessment of ideal types suggests, ideal types offer us a platform "for the analysis of subjective meaning and structural forms" (Heckman 1988:119). In this way, what is unique and what is general can both be considered and sociological analyses may be situated in that all important connection between history and biography (Mills 1959).

In this study I analyze turning points experienced by participants in the QSTA in the interest of developing an ideal type turning point. From this, future study may include systematic comparisons between individual empirical experiences and the ideal type turning point; useful comparisons between individual empirical experiences of turning points; exploration of linkages between turning points and structural form and context;

generation of hypotheses regarding turning points; and hypotheses testing. And as with all things Weberian, subjective meaning is a central element in the development of this tool and indeed, is a central element in turning points. Heckman sees Weber's ideal type as a kind of synthesis based on meaning (Heckman 1983: 121). Ideal types are not composed of common characteristics nor by unique characteristics; but instead ideal types are composed of meaningful characteristics from the perspective of individuals (Heckman 1983). Although not all of Weber's ideal types were based on subjective meaning, Weber does turn our attention to this important aspect of social life. The ideal type is a way to capture complexities in social life and submit them to systematic sociological scientific analyses.

Presentation of the Empirical Findings
Chapters Five, Six, and Seven

Introduction to Empirical Findings: Chapters Five, Six, and Seven

What is the nature of the events, of the changes we call, turning points? As the previous literature review indicates, turning points are experienced as both anticipated and unanticipated events (Clausen 1995); as discrete events (Elder 1986, Sampson and Laub 1990, Jasso 2004); as processes (Vaughan 1986, Clausen 1995, Uggen and Massoglia 2004, 2010); as complete conversions and alternations to existing beliefs (Travisano 1981). But what do we do when conflicting characteristics (such as conversion and alternation, knifing off events and processes, anticipated and unanticipated events) are reported as turning points? Such contradictions and inconsistencies left me puzzled and curious: what would the participants of the QSTA have to say about turning points?

The goal of this analysis is to understand how people express their experiences of turning points in light of the current composite conceptualization, turning points classically defined. How do QSTA participants express change, both consequential and less consequential? How are subjective experiences of turning points similar to and different from current understandings of turning points? What new insights may be garnered from the subjective expressions of the QSTA participants? How can the subjective expressions of turning points from the QSTA participants contribute to an ideal type turning point?

The following chapters (5,6, and 7) present empirical findings on subjective expressions of change, consequential and less consequential, by the participants of the

QSTA. As a point of reference I have combined definitions of turning points from the literature into what I refer to throughout the analysis as the "classical definition of turning points" (See Page 13). Once again, for purposes of this analysis the **"classically defined turning point"** includes the following elements: substantial change, change more abrupt than gradual, change in self, change in identity, change in behavior, subjective change, objective change, a sense of meaningfulness, and widespread change in multiple trajectories. In addition to these elements, emphases of various theorists will be kept in mind: namely the emphases of changes to self and identity (Strauss 1959), significant change in direction (Elder, Johnson, Crosnoe 2004), and meaningfulness, opportunities, and subjective aspects of turning points (Shanahan and Macmillan 2008).

The chapters that follow are organized as the journey progressed; they are organized to reflect the process of discovery I experienced as I worked with the MacArthur QSTA data. As noted, using theory and literature on turning points and the QSTA narratives in a qualitative approach, a number of categories, theme codes, subcategories, and subcodes were developed. Expressions of change by the QSTA participants were coded within this framework. Empirical findings are reported in the chapters that follow. Chapter Five discusses the differentiation of turning points from other expressions of change. Chapter Six is concerned with the recognition, expressions, and experiences of changes of the QSTA participants as compared to the classical definition of turning points. Chapter Seven concerns the social contexts of turning points. In Chapter Eight I will summarize my conclusions, suggest a Weberian ideal type formulation as a useful conceptualization of turning points, and provide suggestions for future studies. I begin Chapter Five by

discussing the differences between turning points and less consequential changes experienced and expressed by the participants of the QSTA.

Chapter Five
Turning Points and Less Consequential Experiences of Change

Introduction

Individuals experience many kinds of changes throughout the life course, and the QSTA participants are no different. Having employed an open coding scheme recording any description of change offered by the QSTA participants, it was possible to investigate how a variety of changes are expressed in the QSTA. How do participants express their experiences of more consequential and less consequential changes? And what does this have to tell us about the more consequential changes of turning points?

This chapter is concerned with expressions of less consequential changes by the QSTA participants. Keeping the framework of the classical notion of turning points in mind, we would not expect the less consequential changes to include elements of abrupt, definable precipitating events, identity change, behavioral change, an element of meaning or significance, widespread changes in multiple trajectories, as well as subjective and objective aspects. In addition, it is likely that less consequential changes would be expressed as continuations, as moves in similar if not the same directions, rather than the more dramatic change in direction suggested by conceptions of turning points. How then did the QSTA participants express experiences of change? These experiences will be insightful in differentiating substantial change or turning points from changes that do not rise to this level of significance. The following theme codes emerged under the category "Differentiating Turning Points from Other Concepts of Change":

Category: Differentiating Turning Points from Other Concepts of Change
Theme Code: Turning Points and Transitions
    Subcode: Increasing Maturity and Responsibilities
    Subcode: One Step Forward, Two Steps Back

Theme Code: Turning Points and Stress Events
Theme Code: Turning Points and Significant Events
Theme Code: Turning Points and Plain Old Change

Differentiating Turning Points from Other Concepts of Change

Turning Points and Transitions
Increasing Maturity and Responsibilities: Parenthood, Adulthood, Aging

Many participants spoke about changes in life as transitions; transitions are thought of in life course studies as movement to new statuses or identities which may involve new behaviors (Elder, Johnson, Crosnoe 2004). Participants expressed transitions generally in terms of increasing responsibility and increasing maturity. Andrew from the Michigan subsample describes parenthood as a transition of increasing responsibilities; Mark, Caitlin, and Piper reiterate this theme of accumulating responsibilities in moving from teen agers to adults; while Claire tells us about "finding her voice".

Early on in his interview Andrew is asked if having children changed his relationship with his wife; he advises us that it made them closer and that it "sling-shotted us into maturity" (ANMI 13 Andrew 1195). Later, when asked how having a child changed his life, he speaks of this change as an increasing kind of maturity, an exponentially increasing maturity at that, a transition of a kind. While Andrew may have used the word "sling-shotted" he doesn't talk about drastic change, changes in plans, or identity, or sense of self or widespread change in other elements of his life. Instead Andrew describes the movement to parenthood as a set of increasing responsibilities and additional considerations, like health insurance (ANMI 13 Andrew 1214 – 1226),

Interviewer: *How did having a child change your life? Did it shift your priorities? Did it change your plans?*

Andrew: *It was definitely exponentially-speaking, it really raise our responsibility, especially on my part. Before, if I had a job and I was like "oh, this isn't working, I gonna have to get a new job", and I could either go ahead and get a new job or do what I would like to do, but now I have to be thinking about – wait a minute, what about health insurance for the family or whatever…*

In subsequent comments Andrew reinforces his sense of parenthood as a transition rather than a classically defined turning point; in fact he suggests his life would have been very similar without children - plus a little money and minus a few photo albums (ANMI14 1245-1250),

Interviewer*: What do you think your life would be life if you never had kids? Like what it would be like right now.*
Andrew: *Well, we'd have more money. There wouldn't be a whole bunch of (photo) albums and kitchenettes over there in the corner. I think we'd still be living here in the house and we'd still be together and I guess just more of a social life, I guess.*

Mark, a young man from New York, describes the role change from teen ager to adult clearly as a transition, as in his words, "an accumulation", as "more" (ANNY 9 Mark 1240 - 1244),

Interviewer: *What do you think are the main differences between being an adult and being a teenager?*
Mark: *More responsible, you understand more, understand the consequences of your actions. And you are better able to make decisions for yourself.*
Interviewer*: At what age do you think you started thinking of yourself as an adult?*
Mark: *Maybe like twenty seven, twenty eight.*
Interviewer: *Why that age? (talk over)*
Mark*: Nothing really happened just an accumulation of everything."*

Mark does not express elements from the classical conception of turning points; there is not abrupt change, identity or behavioral changes, he doesn't tell us about changes in other areas of his life. Instead Mark expresses an accumulation of things already in process; increasing responsibilities, understanding, and independence.

Caitlin from New York reiterates this theme of responsibility in moving from teenager to adult; she talks about the movement from being a teenager to an adult as becoming "more"; as an adult she takes better care of herself, is more responsible, enjoys herself more. When prompted, she describes moving from a teenager to adult as more of a transition than a turning point,

***Interviewer**: So you feel that there are movements and transitions that you feel…*
***Caitlin:** Yeah …*
***Interviewer**: … and you feel that you're in one of those now?*
***Caitlin**: I felt it …*
***Interviewer:** … at Twenty-eight?*
***Caitlin:** No. I felt one when I – when my boyfriend and I decided to really commit to the relationship. That was a different kind of commitment than I had before with other people or that I wanted to make to another person. So that was one, and then, as far as with work, and everything, you know, I got promoted a year ago and I just got promoted again. So, you know, as these things happen, I'm excited and I'm happy about it, but you know, nothing's changed in my life.*

Caitlin moves through her life gaining relationships, promotions without expressing the kinds of elements we would expect to see with turning points. She is excited, she is happy, but nothing has changed for her of consequence, in terms of direction, self, identity, behaviors, subjective or objective elements, or widespread change to other trajectories.

For Piper (New York) getting older is moving through life accumulating experiences; she talks about getting older as transitioning through expected movements in the life course (ANNY 6 Piper 1958 – 1966),

***Piper:** … I mean, I think as you get older, you get a lot more life experiences and that causes you to mature. The mistakes you've done allow you to become more mature but off the bat, someone that's been sheltered all their life and who's twenty-four, would not be as mature as that twenty year old girl who is married and has kids and has a job. She*

has a lot more responsibility and she knows how to handle herself and her money and her child than probably I can."

Piper defines maturity in terms of responsibilities; she defines responsibilities in terms of marriage, children, and work. This suggests these things are expected transitions and accumulated experiences. Note that Piper doesn't relate anything about identity change, transformative moments, but seems instead to indicate routine movements, expected role changes and role specific behaviors in a rather pragmatic, down-to-earth manner.

Piper's interview is filled with references to independence, and to be financially independent from one's parents is of particular importance to her. In fact, she sees financial independence as the biggest challenge facing people her age. And while she notes that her parents' move to Puerto Rico had a big impact on her, it forced her to become completely independent and financially stable, this was not a change in direction but instead something she had been working towards for some time.

Claire (New York) talks about growing up as finding her voice, emerging over time (ANNY10 Claire 1213 – 1228),

Interviewer: *Looking back, is there anything you wish had been different about the way you grew up?*
Claire: *I wish I was more outspoken and not as shy growing up and not on to, I would just sit there. Okay. I wish I was more aggressive, more pushy in a sense.*
Interviewer*: With your family?*
Claire: *With both. That I voiced myself more and not hold it in for so long and then later on, ??? from all the stress.*
Interviewer*: Have you been more outspoken recently?*
Claire: *Yes.*
Interviewer: *When do you think that change happened?*
Claire: *Over a few years. Certainly now but over time I just emerged.*

Claire speaks to us of process, of emerging over time. She doesn't tell us that she is now a different person, although her behavior has changed this change has not been abrupt or

apparently consequential for her identity. Finding her voice appears to be for Claire a slow process of becoming someone she already was. This is quite a different experience than we would expect a turning point to be based on the classical formulation.

Transitions
One Step Forward, Two Steps Back

In many cases participants revealed that not only was the movement to adulthood a transitional experience, such transitions could be anything but linear or progressive. For some, the movement to adulthood is more like "one step forward, two steps back". Winston and Patrick reveal their transitions to adulthood as follows.

Winston from New York describes the movement to adulthood as a transition, with more than a little ambivalence. But even a status change can be transitional, with movement back and forth, back and forth. Winston uses words like "progression" "limbo", he suggests he still doesn't think of himself as an adult (Winston ANNY8 2714-2719),

***Interviewer**: And at what age did you start thinking of yourself as an adult?*
***Winston**: I had like half a mid-life crisis when I was turning twenty-one, no twenty.*
***Interviewer**: Twenty?*
***Winston**: Yeah, because I was losing that teen status. I didn't want to get older without having a definite goal. It was simpler in high school. I had a progression of what I wanted to do. Now, I'm starting to get back – it's really bad – I don't like being in limbo where you don't know what's going to happen. I just don't like that feeling, you know?*
***Interviewer**: So when would you say you started to think of yourself as an adult?*
***Winston:** When I finished school, but then again, I'm still not at that phase where I'm thinking of myself as adult. I think not until I get a family, maybe.*

Although Winston can point to a mid-life crisis at age 20, he doesn't tell us that he changed his identity or sense of self. He talks about not having a plan or goal, of being in

limbo thus certainly his behavior is not geared to a new direction. Winston is not at all clear that he has in fact made a change at all. His expression of the movement to adulthood does not reflect elements of the classically defined turning point.

According to Patrick, from New York, there is a clear difference, an "inverse relationship" when it comes to teenagers and adults. Patrick suggests that while teenagers rely on their parents financially and care what their parents think; adults do not. For example, Patrick speculates on what might happen if he brought a Taiwanese girlfriend home to meet his parents (ANNY13 Patrick 2182-2191),

Patrick: *... raise a stink, but now, it's like, I'd actually raise a stink to my mom, and that's the whole – willing to defy your parents in order to defend something that you care enough about and having the justification for that. I think being able to justify your actions to your parents, and either in defiance –*
Interviewer*: Take over.*
Patrick*: Exactly. Establishing them for yourself.*

While this excerpt may suggest an anticipated change in direction, Patrick's experiences are far different from his speculations. Patrick talks about the realities of moving from a teenager to an adult as a process, a transition where there is disagreement and ambivalence, as well as equivocation (Patrick ANNY 13 2211-2226),

Interviewer*: How old were you when your parents started thinking of you as an adult?*
Patrick*: I don't know if they do now. My dad thinks I'm perpetually five and my mom – I don't know to what extent my mom truly thinks of me as an adult just yet.*
Interviewer*: What do you think it would take for them to think of you as an adult?*
Patrick*: Maybe if I had kids. If I brought them a grandchild. Progeny then they'd truly think of me as ...*
Interviewer*: How old do you think you have to be to be completely grown up?*
Patrick: *I don't thinks like three's (there's) an age.*
Interviewer*: Do you think you're completely grow up*
Patrick*: No. Definitely not.*

This is for Patrick a transition, and further more a transition that is incomplete. Patrick says he began to think of himself as an adult when he moved to New York after college (ANNY13 2196), but clearly neither he nor his parents think of him as having completed this transition. And while he characterizes the change from teenager to adult as reversing one's relationship with parents, his narrative doesn't include any speculation about potential identity changes or behavioral changes; instead he expresses changes in responsibilities and attitude.

Turning Points and Stress Events

Young adulthood is without question a stressful time, and our QSTA participants had much to say on the topic of stress events. By and large, such events may result in changes, but these are not major turn abouts, oftentimes stress seems to accentuate changes already in process, behaviors already established. Some participants, such as Winston and Claire displayed a kind of "go with the flow" approach; while others, Michael, Caitlin, Piper, Molly, and Andrew experienced changes as a result of stress, none of which appear to be turning points as suggested by the classical conception.

Winston from New York mentions several stressful events both social and occupational, that he has experienced over the last year. When directly asked, he mentions stresses in personal relationships, friendships, and stress over being unable to fulfill his plan of working with the Foreign Service. However, Winston displays an easy-going attitude towards such difficulties and disappointments, Winston isn't about to say "Oh, my life is ruined" (ANNY 8 Winston 2680 – 2696),

Interviewer: *Some people think that young people should be in school first, then get a job, then get married and then have children. Others think that the order doesn't matter at all.*
Winston: *Well, I'm that type of person. (laugh) I think you need to be grounded first. Of course, if it happens by accident, I would still embrace it without being "oh my life is ruined" you know. Because I was planning to do Foreign Service and it didn't happen.*

Winston's comments indicate a kind of acceptance that doesn't really square with the elements of turning points as classically defined. These excerpts demonstrate that Winston has experienced stressful events, but he doesn't suggest these have been significant in terms of his identity, self, even his behavior; he doesn't express objective or subjective changes. Instead of being turned around by stressful events, Winston simply moves on, in fact, he "embraces" them.

Claire from New York echoes an attitude similar to Winston's way of embracing change, she says where change is concerned, she went with the flow (ANNY 10 Claire 1095 – 1100),

Interviewer: *What event or events would you say have had the biggest impact on the choices you've made so far in your life?*
Claire: *I don't know. I've never really thought about it. It's nothing I've dwelling on. Something that changed. I went with the flow.*

Without consequential impact on her life, it is unlikely that events have to date propelled Claire towards significant changes as would be suggested by the classical definition of turning points.

Few would argue the stressful consequences of a death in the family; truly for some, this would indeed be a turning point. However, this is not always the case, as is demonstrated by the experiences of Michael and Caitlin, both from New York.

For Michael from New York the death of his grandfather was traumatic and unexpected. Having recently moved back in with his family, he had just come home from work when his grandfather passed away (ANNY 5 Michael 2172 – 2150),

Interviewer: *Did anything stressful happen to you in the last year?*
Michael*: I'll say a month ago when my grandfather passed away.*
Interviewer*: You moved back into the house.*
Michael*: I moved back a little before that.*
Interviewer: How does that make you feel?
Michael: I mean, it's really unexpected the way he passed away, so that kind of, I kind of realized I say again, you never know when you're gonna go, because when my grandfather passed away, the morning it happened, I went to work, I say hello to him before I went to work and he waved. And the next thing I know I came home, I begin doing things, then my grandma came down. He's in bed and he's not responding – tried to wake him up. So I went downstairs, he ain't got no pulse. I called 911. After that I kind of look at how I spend my life, like taking my grandma more, looking after the family. Like I told you last time, they can't speak much English, so if anything, I've got to take her here and there. Anything that has to do with English, I've got to try to take care for her.

Michael talks about being there for his family – that he doesn't really mind, that it is something he should do and shouldn't have a problem with (2164). He says that nothing else in his life has changed as a result of his grandfather's death (2168). His grandfather's death caused him to look at how he spends his life and reconfirmed that he should be helping his family – something he has done all along. The stressful event of his grandfather's death reminded Michael of his responsibilities, perhaps even accentuating them. But Michael does not speak of overwhelming change in a new direction, new identity, new behaviors or relationships, instead he moves in the same direction in the same relationships with the same behaviors albeit with more conviction.

Caitlin from New York has also experienced the death in her family, she tells us about the death of her father (ANNY 3 Caitlin 2758 - 2786),

***Interviewer**: What event or events would you say had the biggest impact on the choices or plans you've made for your life*
***Caitlin**: My father's death.*
***Interviewer**: How did that change your plans for your life, do you know?*
***Caitlin**: I guess because – you know, I just could never have imagined him not being around for graduation, and for my wedding and stuff like that. So it was a challenge you know, for me to get past that. Kind of you know, I miss him from an aspect that he was always so proud of me and encouraging of me and you know, stuff like that. So that was difficult for me.*

And again, Caitlin verifies that her father's death was a change, requiring an adjustment, but she doesn't articulate any life changes. Instead Caitlin talks about missing him, his place by her side and also his encouragement. While she notes she always thinks about her father, she misses him, and although she would hate to disappoint him, she doesn't tell us that it has changed what she's done in her life, her identity, or her sense of self (ANNY 3 Caitlin 2861 – 2867),

***Caitlin:** … And I always think about my father. I don't do things in my life you know, thinking oh dad will be so happy or proud of me or whatever, but …*
***Interviewer**: -- he would be –*
***Caitlin**: -- Yeah. I just know that – because he was such a good person, I would hate to disappoint him in any kind of way. So*

Participants in the New York sample were asked about the events of September 11, 2001; the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon. Certainly a stressful time for many, few talked about these events as classically defined turning points.

Piper from New York describes her experience of the September 11, 2001 attacks on the World Trade Center as a stressful event that changed her thinking, but not her life,

and not her behavior, and not her sense of self as would be expected in the classical conceptualization of turning points (ANNY 6 Piper 0787 – 0799),

***Interviewer**: Did it make you think about changing anything in your personal life?*
***Piper**: Yes. It made me want to move. Just pack up my stuff and move to Puerto Rico. It made me want to be near my family, and it made me want to be in a place that wasn't a target. I feel that New York is like a blinking light bulb and I feel like it's going to happen again. All the time, the newspapers, at least once every two weeks, report a story about how they capture somebody of they caught someone who had bombs. I feel like we're constantly going to keep being targeted, and it's kind of scary to know that something could happen*

Piper could very easily have moved to Puerto Rico, her parents live there and although she felt like doing this, she didn't. She continues to talk about how the events of September 11 have changed her thinking but not her life, not her behavior, nor her identity, her sense of direction or meaningfulness (ANNY6 Piper),

***Interviewer**: Since September 11, would you say that you are more cautious about going certain places or more careful about what other people are doing? Are you more suspicious about some people?*
***Piper:** I don't think it's affected where I go. I feel like, if I move to the Bronx, or stay in the Bronx and a bomb hits, ok, yes I would have been more safer, but I don't feel like I should change my life, because of fear. I worry now, like, not worry but, but you become more wary when you're on the train and you notice that you can have anything in your bag, and someone can have a bomb and you know, they could drown the trains, I mean, you think about crazy stuff that could happen. I don't think you have any control over it. You worry, but I don't think you can really do anything, so you try not to think of it too much.*
***Interviewer:** Did the impact of the attacks and the recovery effort change anything about the way you go about your daily life or inconvenience you?*
***Piper:** I think we were all inconvenienced minorly. Bridges were closed, and you know, people that live in Staten Island now need to carpool and stuff like that, but I wasn't directly affected. Maybe more traffic. There's definitely a lot more security around where I live, because of Gracie Mansion so there's constantly helicopters around but I guess you feel little safer Seeing the helicopters. It's kind of sad to see them, but you see them there because of that.*

Piper's changes in thinking are fairly mundane; her concerns practical in nature. She also notes that she did not take a different route to work, that she didn't avoid traveling, that

although she was always interested in the news, she became "hypnotized" by it after 9 – 11, and that she did not put off anything like changing jobs, buying a house, going back to school, that she didn't put anything else off after 9 – 11 (ANNY 6 Piper 0988 - 1006). Thus the events of September 11 did not bring significant changes to Piper's life, identity, or sense of self or in any other areas as would be expected based from a classical formulation of a turning point.

Molly from New York also experienced September 11 as a stressful time, but she does not express it as a turning point experience with elements of the classical definition. Molly did however change her thinking becoming more "patriotic" and also in the short term her attitudes towards Muslims or Arab Americans (ANNY 12 Molly 0313 - 0335),

***Interviewer**: How did it affect the way you think about the U.S. or being American?*
***Molly**: Well, for the first time, I guess, I'm a very cosmopolitan person, but for the first time this few days of the Friday when I came back to New York, I really felt like – that I'm a patriot of this country and it was very important to me and the whole neighborhood, this whole Ocean Avenue, like I guess Avenue M and way to King's Highway and beyond, people would light candles and we'd just stay and sing in the streets. It was very sad and I go to the gym here – in Brooklyn – it's mainly firemen and cops. It's on Nostrand and Tyra (noise) and on Saturday I went there and it was really freaky, because it's always loud, there's a lot of men and it's great, I love that place, and it was just like this weird silence and nobody was talking, and then I found out that one of the - nicest guys there, he's a fireman, he died. It was Very sad. It was like – he was always smiling and he was just gone. He was very young too. So it Did make me realize that I Am an American and while I disapproved of like violence and I was firmly Pro-like Afghanistan Was and the War on Terrorism, so it Did make me feel like- that, I never think that war is justified, but in that case, I felt like it was justified*

September 11 intensified Molly's feelings of patriotism, her identity as an American to some degree, and also her feelings towards Muslims and Arab Americans – at least for a time (ANNY12 Molly 0313-0335, 0363-0387),

***Interviewer**: And what about in terms of immigrants or Arab Americans and Muslim Americans. How do you think that - did that change the way you thought about those groups or -*

Molly: *In the beginning it did. But I also, I Know that like one must disassociate the terrorists and the crazy fundamentalists from people who just practice religion.*

Molly's experiences after September 11 are not significant in her recollection, they appear more transitory, less transformative, not connected to other changes as one would expect the consequences of a turning point to be. And importantly, Molly characterizes September 11 as a stressful event, but she doesn't talk about identity changes, behavioral changes, widespread changes as she might if she experienced September 11 as a turning point (ANNY 12 Molly 1135 – 1137),

Interviewer: *Has anything especially stressful happened to you in the last year?*
Molly: *Yes. September 11th. I think anybody would answer that.*

And although stressful, Molly confirms that September 11 didn't change her life,

Interviewer: *Did it make you change anything at all about your personal life or your life in general. Did it kind of affect you in any way?*
Molly: *No. Not that I can – maybe yes, but I'm not sure. I don't know. I don't think so."*

Taken together Molly's comments have a remarkable consistency suggesting for her, September 11 was a stressful event, but not a turning point as classically defined.

Turning points classically defined include as noted widespread changes in identity and behavior, changes in direction, self, meaningfulness, subjective and objective aspects. Mack's (New York) experience highlights the point that sometimes we change our thinking without changing anything else. Mack talks about the effects of September 11 on his behavior and on his thinking,

Interviewer: *Did it make you think about changing anything in your personal life?*
Mack: *It didn't change anything in my personal life. It did change my way of thinking.*
Interviewer*: How so?*

***Mack**: That these types of disasters can happen any time, without us knowing any – with no control. I guess I'll just continue the way I do and hopefully I'll do as much as I can before something bad happens.*
***Interviewer:** Have you done anything actively to change anything in your life?*
***Mack:** I just try to get my certification, get my job as soon as possible and just hopefully start my family and if necessary, I'll move out.*

This suggests that change can happen which makes us speed up our plans, perhaps focus more intensely, and get on with our lives, but Mack expresses this not as significant change but rather a change in pace of his plans and behaviors. Certainly he does not tell us he is a different person, nor is there any indication of a change in direction – Mack talks about his life as continuing in the same direction, with an increased sense of urgency.

Oftentimes family dynamics are stressful and may greatly affect family members. For Andrew from Michigan, growing up was a stressful time when his mother stopped drinking alcohol but his father did not (Andrew ANMI14 0431-0450),

***Interviewer:** Okay. So how well did you parents get along when you were growing up?*
***Andrew:** I can really only remember one time when there was, when it was very stressful, I want to say it was 1986 – 87, and that was just because – kind were at another time line – I was younger so my brother and sisters are probably able to tell you a little bit more, but there were – my mom, she quit drinking and then there was the longest time when she was really pushing my dad to quit drinking, or was really against it for a couple of years there. And then, in 1987 he did quit drinking to the aspect - or becoming a recovering alcoholic, whatever you want to say. He wasn't the type of alcoholic that would be blown-out drunk and beat the family, that kind of thing. He was the kind that would drink a six-pack when he came home from work and then go to bed. And he just got to be in that routine. So, very quiet, very into himself, you could say. And like I said, I was kinda more or less removed from that because they get some, maybe, I don't know if it was difficult at times in the late '70s, early '80s when I wasn't really aware of this around me, and then when I got older. Like the only time that I remember there ever being tension. Other than that, you know.*
***Interviewer:** Did divorce ever come up?*
***Andrew:** No. Not even a little bit.*
***Interviewer:** How has that affected your relationships?*
***Andrew:** Well, it's very … give it a little more structure, a little more stability.*

While Andrew describes this stressful time, and even briefly that this has somehow given his relationships a little more stability, he does not tell us that he has changed his identity, his behavior, his sense of self, or any other elements of the classical concept turning point.

Turning Points and Significant Events

Sometimes events and experiences are significant within a certain context, as part of larger stories. This is the case with Winston from New York. When asked about events that may have had a big impact on his life, Winston relates a series of events and experiences that have moved him in a progression to a life of international interests and travels,

***Interviewer**: Is there any event or events that had a big impact on your life – your plans or choices?*
***Winston:** Getting out of college. Writing my thesis was a very big issue (talk over).*
***Interviewer:** Was it a positive experience?*
***Winston:** Positive.*
***Interviewer:** Did it have any impact on you now?*
***Winston:** It makes me more of an adult, I think, to master something independently. It's like giving birth.*
***Interviewer:** And having come, having immigrated when you were twelve, did that also --*
***Winston:** -- Yes. A huge part. And going to high school here. Very important. And going to school in DC. Every little – I can bring you like a million influences. Going to Ghana, that was one of the biggest impacts on my life.*
***Interviewer**: Did it affect you today --*
***Winston:** -- Today – my friends. My best friend I met there. A very like close relationship there, I have in terms of my interests. My mom was not against me going to Ghana but partially she was hoping that I would lose interest. Instead I fell in love with continent, so now she's at a loss.*

These experiences are cast by "Winston" as "one ofs"; each having a significance, but all moving him in a similar direction; he does not tell us however, that any of them turned him around.

Turning Points and Plain Old Change

As we have seen, participants of the QSTA expressed changes in thinking as a result of transitions and stress events. Sometimes we simply change behaviors. Turning points are by no means simple. Sometimes the QSTA participants related experiences of change that were much more straightforward and did not involve the conceptual elements of turning points as classically defined.

Maureen from Michigan for example, dramatically changed her drinking and driving behavior as a result of her experience while driving under the influence of alcohol at age 19; having been charged and convicted, she served a three day sentence in a detention center. Maureen definitely changed her behavior, but she does not express any resultant change to her sense of self or identity, she does not elaborate on any changes to her life course or relationships. The change appears to be limited to behavior and does not reflect any other components of the classical turning point definition (ANMI 16 2182 – 2211),

Maureen: *… I mean I wasn't stuck in a cell of anything. It was like a detention center for three days. I was in big room with a bunch of women and we had to share toilets and showers and sit through classes and it was fun!*
Interviewer*: So that was like more than ten years ago?*
Maureen*: Right.*
Interviewer: *Was that the only time?*
Maureen: *Yeah.*
Interviewer*: Did it have much effect on you?*
Maureen*: I don't drink and drive anymore. That's definitely taught me a big lesson. I won't ever drink and drive.*
Interviewer: *Were you on probation or anything like that?*
Maureen: *No.*
Interviewer*: Did you have to do community service?*

***Maureen**: No. Served three days.*
***Interviewer**: So you were in jail for three days. What was that like? Or you were in the detention center for three days?*
***Maureen**: Right. It was rough. I mean we couldn't … We could only bring clothes. No smoking. Showers didn't have doors on them. Stalls didn't have doors. You weren't allowed to … I mean the blow dryer was mounted to the wall and sitting through eight hours of classes and movies a day. I mean it was a pain in the ass but I learned my lesson so it obviously did some good. Especially when you are 19 and don't know anything anyway and you are scared to death.*
***Interviewer:** Do you think you would be different in any way if you hadn't got a DUI?*
***Maureen:** I would probably be drinking and driving. Got to learn a lesson the hard way.*
***Interviewer:** So you think you wouldn't have changed that behavior ___?*
***Maureen**: Probably not. Right. Thankfully I was caught at a young age.*

Andrew from Michigan has also changed behavior – having stopped chewing tobacco (ANMI 14 Andrew 2328 – 2336),

***Interviewer:** What about smoking or drinking? Do you or your wife smoke or drink?*
***Andrew:** Nope. Nope. I never took to a liking to smoking. I tried it once, way back in the day, but I never liked it at all. I used to chew tobacco a lot. It was more or less, Child 1 is the one who got me to quit because when I saw her walking around with, like I'd be on the computer or something, I'd be chewing my tobacco and I'd see her walking around with a bottle pretending to spit in it. That's … that was … that really woke me up and that was it. That was it. I'm done. It was just like flipping a switch*

Changes in habits as exemplified by Maureen's and Andrew's excerpts do not express the kind of deep, widespread effects we anticipate from turning points. Nor do simple lifestyle changes reflect key conceptual elements of turning points either. Earlier in her life Maureen (Michigan) enjoyed camping and canoeing, but financial constraints and her husband's different interests have changed her leisure time behaviors. Maureen again speaks about changing her interests since meeting her husband (ANMI 16 Maureen 1817 – 1826),

***Interviewer:** Has the way you spend your free time or leisure time changed at all over the years or has it stayed pretty much the same?*

Maureen: *It has changed. I know when I was younger, especially living at home and having a babysitter whenever I wanted it, I did a lot of bar hopping, a lot of partying. That kind of stuff. I kind of changed though after I met my husband. He's not … I hate to use the word anti-social, but he would much rather sit home than go out and do something. So my bar hopping went way down. But once in awhile, we will go out. Like if we go down to my mom's and I have a sitter, we will go out and play some darts or something like that. But basically, we are homebodies now.*

This speaks to behavioral change but there is no indication it has changed the way she thinks of herself, no indication that it has turned her life around, no indication that these changes are significant or affect multiple trajectories in her life course.

Summary

This chapter considers the ways QSTA participants recognize and express changes in their lives that may be seen as less consequential than turning points classically defined. I have presented the empirical experiences and expressions of the QSTA participants on change against the back drop of the classical conceptual formulation of turning points which sees turning points as more abrupt than gradual changes; as involving changes to identity, to behavior; as involving both objective and subjective changes; and as involving widespread changes in multiple trajectories; and further which emphasizes changes to self and identity, changes in direction, subjective changes and a sense of meaningfulness.

Participants expressed many experiences of change that may be distinguished from the more significant experiences of turning points. QSTA participants related transitional experiences such as transitions to parenting, adulthood, and aging that differed from the classical definition of turning points. These experiences were expressed as accumulations, increasing responsibilities, emerging voices, essentially as more of the

same. This suggests a kind of continuation or shift rather than significant change in direction. Although in some cases participants talked about changes in thinking or orientation, they did not report changes to their lives, changes in direction, changes to identity, or drastic behavioral changes. Transitions were also talked about by participants as incomplete, as back and forth movements which may be distinguished from the abrupt, recognizable and bounded expectation of a turning point experience. They spoke of their transitions in some cases with a sense of ambivalence and as processes that were incomplete and different than what might be speculated about in the abstract. Some changes were expressed as routine movements, expected role changes and role specific behaviors in rather pragmatic terms, without a sense of significance attached to them. Yet in each case, elements of the definition of turning points were absent as was the drama: the participants did not tell us about abrupt changes, identity changes, behavioral changes, changes to the sense of self, increased meaningfulness, widespread effects nor did they tell us of substantial changes in direction. Thus transitions as expressed by the participants of the QSTA were inconsistent with the classical definition of turning point.

Stressful events were clearly part of the QSTA participant's lives, but they did not express them as classically defined turning points. Participants talked about moving through life with an easy going, go with the flow kind of attitude where difficulties and disappointments were recognized without significant changes to the life course in terms of identity, behavior, self, meaningfulness, or widespread effects. In some cases stress events reinforced and accentuated the importance of behaviors already in place. September 11 represented a stressful event for many of the New York QSTA participants, but most did not express it as a classically defined turning point. For most QSTA

participants the events of September 11 induced an often momentary or short term change in thinking, but not behavior, identity, widespread effects or other aspects of the concept of turning point.

QSTA participants also experienced significant events which were expressed as part of a consistent story, as if acts in a play moving in one direction. This singular direction does not reflect turning points as classically defined. Simple behavioral changes alone also do not suggest turning point experiences. Many QSTA participants spoke of changes in behavior in rather simple terms. Habits and changes in leisure activities were expressed without the consequent changes in any elements of the classical definition of turning point.

Thus, it appears from the experiences expressed by the QSTA participants that change is a part of everyday life, but not all changes include the elements of turning points. In telling us about their experiences of transitions, stress events, significant events and simple changes, participants of the QSTA do not express them as abrupt changes engendering significant changes, in direction, identity change or changes to the self, behavioral changes other than simple adjustments, subjective or objective changes, changes in meaningfulness, nor widespread changes in multiple trajectories.

Chapter Six
Experiences and Expressions of Turning Points

Introduction

Chapter Five presented evidence suggesting that for the participants of the QSTA, transitions, stress events, and significant events were not expressed as changes consistent with the classical definition of turning points. Although participants expressed experiences of simple behavioral changes, minor lifestyle changes, and changes in habits, their experiences did not rise to the level of significance characteristic of turning points, nor did they include elements of the classical definition.

Chapter Six is concerned with the ways QSTA participants express their experiences of more consequential changes. These expressions of change will be compared to the classical definition of turning points to assess their fit with the definition, its elements and its emphases. In addition, attention will be given to new elements expressed in QSTA narratives which may be seen as potential contributions to the existing conceptualizations.

This chapter will discuss the following categories, theme codes, subcategories, and subcodes:

Category: Structural Forms of Turning Points
Theme Code: Turning Points as Knifing Off Events
    Subcode: Military Service as Knifing Off Event
    Subcode: Immigration as Knifing Off Event
    Subcode: Religious Conversion as Knifing Off Event
Theme Code: Turning Points as Processes

Category: Indices of Meaning
Theme Code: Turning Points Experienced by Others Yet Told by Participants
Theme Code: How Do People Talk About Turning Points
Theme Code: Turning Points and Symbols

Theme Code: Turning Points Unsolicited
Theme Code: Turning Points and Ambivalence

Category: Indices of Change
Subcategory: Objective Elements
- Subcode: Turning Points and Physical Change
- Subcode: Turning Points and Behavioral Change
- Subcode: Turning Points and Changes in Relationships
- Subcode: Turning Points Recognized by Others
- Subcategory: Subjective Elements
- Subcode: Turning Points and Identity
- Subcode: Turning Points and Changes in the Self
- Subcode: Turning Points and Changes in Worldview
- Subcategory: Iconic Change
- Subcode: Quintessential Turning Points

Category: Widespread Effects of Turning Points
Theme Code: Turning Points as Loss and Recovery
Theme Code: Turning Points as Loss, Downward Spiral, and Missed Opportunities
Theme Code: Turning Points Exacerbated and Compounded
Theme Code: Turning Points as Repudiations

To begin, there is a sense about turning points, perhaps due in part to iconic imagery and dramatic lay representations, that they are lightning bolts from the sky bringing tremendous changes in their wake. This is reflected in the element of the classical turning point definition as an abrupt, discrete, critical event. How is it that people identify an event as a turning point, how can they look to an experience as qualitatively different from other forms of change? It is clear from the literature that people experience turning points abruptly in the classically conceived "knifing off" experiences, but also as processes that unfold gradually. Participants in the QSTA expressed both kinds of experiences.

Structural Forms of Turning Points

Turning Points as Knifing Off Experiences

The classic "knifing off" characterization of a turning point may be attributed to Elder (1986) in his studies of military experiences. This knifing off characterization is echoed in subsequent work on immigration (Jasso 2004), and also desistance from crime through various attachments to work, to occupation, to spouse, to education (Sampson and Laub 1990). This theme category suggests that the turning point change is abrupt, singular, discrete and definable. These knifing off experiences indeed arose in the MacArthur data; and they arose in specific domains of military experiences, immigration, and religious experiences.

Military Service as Knifing Off Event

Andrew from Michigan notes that in retrospect he has come to see his military experience as a "point" when his life changed. He describes this moment much like the classical notion of a knifing off event, something his mother seemed to sense at the time (ANMI 14 Andrew 0103 – 0113),

Interviewer*: So, then you went into the military when you were 19. How did you feel about moving out of your parents' house? What was the situation like?*
Andrew*: :You know what, in that respect, I didn't understand why mom was like crying when I left that morning. Because it really didn't feel like I was leaving for good; it was kind of like going off to school, yeah you're going away, you know, but you're gonna be coming home; you're gonna come home. But now (inaudible) retrospect, looking back, when I left that day is when I, more or left, you could say left the nest, I mean left for good. That was it. You know, I never went back, I never actually lived there. It was never – it's never even come up now. Here it is now, 10 years later, 12 years later, now and it's – that was it. That was the point. At the time, I didn't know that. It just felt like I was going on a little vacation for this week."*

In subsequent excerpts/responses, Andrew discusses the ways the military has changed his behavior, introducing him to a wide variety of people and places, something he describes as a "culture shock" (ANMI14 1307-1320), in other words, a whole different world, with different rules, a different language, a different life. This change appears so

significant that other experiences are seen in relation to his military service. When asked about his high school experiences, Andrew begins to talk spontaneously about his military experience (Andrew ANMI 14 1307-1320),

Interviewer**: Okay. Were there any like really good or bad things that stick out in your mind?* ***Andrew: *You know, ethnically diversity, being down here, we only had one black student and she was only there for less than a year. And I don't even remember her name. But my biggest culture shock was when I went in the Navy, in the military, where unlike society where African-American ins like 12 percent of the populations or something like that, in the military there was more than that. It's a bigger breakdown. S I really was thrown into an environment that I wasn't used to with social interaction and talking and just communicating and "What's up Gee?" What's that? I never had that. I never had to go, "What's up Gee?" Totally different. It really was."*

It is particularly notable in this excerpt that although Andrew is asked about his high school experiences he responds by referring to his military experience. This reaffirms the salience of his military experience, a knifing off experience that redefines his life in important ways and has set in motion a number of changes in his life. In fact, as Andrew looks back upon his life, he reflects on how the military changed his life,

Interviewer: *So do you feel like your siblings' education situations or work situations – have had an influence on you?*
***Andrew**: Yeah, I've always said that, you know, I finally had that wish where maybe – and it's a fine line to say – if I didn't go in the Navy and would have stayed in school, I would have gotten my bachelor's and been, you know, just a normal everyday life. But if I did that, I wouldn't have had the life experiences of the military, of living overseas, of seeing everything and doing everything I've done which I know had a profound impact on how you live your life on a daily basis. For instance, like I said, on the island of Crete everybody, there's like 50% of the island has telephones. You know. That's how laid back or just removed from today's technical society that they are. And I never would have know that or cared or anything like that if I just went to … you can't learn that out of a book and just see it firsthand. That was one of the greatest, I mean, it was really nice that my parents were able to come visit us over there, too. Because I felt that that was something like a gift to themselves."*

Thus Andrew reports that being in the Navy living on Crete has changed his life from what it would have been had he stayed in the U.S. and gone to college like his siblings. It

was the beginning for him of a "culture shock" of new experiences with new people and new cultures that would change his worldview. It brought a new lifestyle and new behaviors, things that had "profound" influence on his daily life in ways he and his parents could never have imagined. Joining the Navy for Andrew was "the point" at which his life turned around; it was an experience consistent with the classical definition of turning point.

Immigration as Knifing Off Event

Oftentimes the theme of immigration as a turning point came up in the data during conversations about identity, indeed identity as "American". Interestingly, there is evidence of immigration as a knifing off event, and as with Andrew's military experience, it was the start of important processes of change. Michael (ANNY5), a young man from New York, describes immigration as a knifing off event, one that changed his life completely in unforeseen ways. In this excerpt, Michael is asked if there is anything he wishes had been different about the way he grew up. Michael expresses frustration with the things his parents taught him, the things he did growing up as a result of the family's lack of money. He notes his parents had a different attitude than middle class families with regular incomes. This prompts the interviewer to suggest the topic of immigration, to which Michael responds (ANNY5 2370 – 2389),

Interviewer: *Sort of immigrating to the United States*
Michael: *Yeah*
Interviewer*: was really hard on the family.*
Michael: *Yes, especially.*
Interviewer: *Do you think that they should have stayed in China – that you should have stayed in China?*

Michael: *I mean, I can't, there's no way to see how my life would be, so I would say, definitely my life would have been different – I'd be a totally different person, but I don't have any regret on it or don't know if it would be better or not, so I can't really say."*

For Michael this single event of immigration, this move taken by his parents, has completely changed his life. For better or worse, "Michael" cannot say; but he is unequivocal that he would be a "totally different person…".

Religious Conversion as Knifing Off Event

Mary's knifing off event was a religious experience. Mary tells us that although she attended church with her grandmother as a child, it didn't play a big role in her upbringing; in fact, she considered herself an atheist, until one singular moment when her life was transformed,

Interviewer: *Umm … what about religious values and beliefs?*
Mary: *None. Now my religious beliefs is very, very strong. And my values are very strong. It's a total, it was a total change in one day kind of thing. It was like from black to light you know. It was … it was an amazing thing that happened in my life.*

Mary continues to tell us about her transformations as a result of this religious conversion; her experiences are consistent with the classical definition of turning point. Mary expresses changes to her identity, in her behavior, physical changes, changes in many aspects of her life including her views of the world.

Turning Points as Processes

"Patrick" (ANNY13) is a young man living in New York. His mother was born in China; she left China for Hong Kong to escape Communism. It is unclear where Patrick's father was born; he notes however that both his parents are Chinese. At some point Patrick's parents immigrated to America; Patrick grew up predominantly in Seattle.

Patrick is living in New York having attended college there and is active in the theater community; he in fact, is a playwright. When asked about his identity, Patrick responds as follows (ANNY 13 Patrick),

Interviewer: *Do you generally identify as Chinese?*
Patrick: *I identify as American, well, I think now Chinese American, I think is the label I've settled on now. I used to be more American, but I realize the influences, especially like hanging out with the friends that I do. I stop and think about my social circle; it's almost entirely Asian American.*
Interviewer: *Is that a conscious - Patrick: - - I think it's because of the choices I made, like the programs I went to. And also like the theater circles, the theater production I've chosen. Like I started out in the Asian American Theater back in Seattle, and most of my contacts come from there, and I think I maintain those, because I maintain those, my artistic circles are primarily Asian – influenced.*

Patrick's identity is a process, moving from American to Chinese American. This process of change is set in motion by a particular and discrete event, his parent's immigration. The immigration not only set in motion a process of identity formation, it also appears to have influenced Patrick's choices in terms of programs, theatre productions, professional contacts and friends. Furthermore, Patrick's move from a primarily American identity to a Chinese American identity can be seen as a way to recover the ethnicity he lost when his parents came to America.

Winston's expressions on change provide additional insight. Winston immigrated to the United States with his mother from Moldova Russia when he was twelve years old; his father from whom he is distant stayed in Moldova. He and his mother are now living in New York. Two years prior to the interview, Winston gained his U.S. citizenship. At the very end of the interview, Winston is asked if there is anything else that would help us to understand his situation more. Interestingly he does not mention his immigration at age twelve, he does not mention his achievement of citizenship, in summing up he tells us that he is "more American" than he used to be,

Interviewer: *Finally, is there anything else going on in your life that would help us understand your situation that I haven't asked about?*
Winston: *I think just to sum up, I'm more American than an immigrant that I used to be a few years ago. At this period, I'm in the stage of life where I'm not exactly settled yet, so I could go many different ways, as a path.*

Winston expresses a continuing process of identity change set in motion by discrete events, immigration and citizenship. This consequential change experience is consistent with elements of the classical definition of turning point.

Summary

The classical formulation of turning points defines them to be abrupt, discernible, discrete forms of change while other applications in the literature suggest turning points may be more gradual in nature. Participants of the QSTA expressed both kinds of changes. QSTA participants expressed experiences of change that were abrupt, like knifing off events as classically defined. Such changes occurred for the QSTA participants in domains of military life, immigration, and religious conversion. These experiences also included identity and behavioral changes, changes to the self, subjective and objective elements, and in one case, changes to worldview. In many ways these expressions of change by QSTA participants reflect the spirit of Strauss' notion, that "I am not the same person that I was, that I used to be" (Strauss 1959). Thus, these experiences could be considered turning points based on their similarity to some elements of the classical definition.

In considering consequential change as more gradual, a temporal dimension to turning points was uncovered suggesting that discrete events trigger significant processes of change. These significant processes are recognized by participants often without

acknowledging the triggering event. For example, participants spoke about identity transformation without acknowledging that these processes of change were prompted and made possible by the event of immigration. Without immigration and U.S. citizenship, it is unlikely Winston would be experiencing a process of identity formation becoming "more American." Patrick's identity is also in process, but that process would likely be quite different had his parents not immigrated to the United States. These expressions too, included elements of the classical definition of turning points: namely an abrupt change with accompanying changes to identity.

The empirical evidence suggests that in both forms of change, knifing off and gradual, consequential change is due to an abrupt, discrete event which is recognized in some cases and not recognized in others. Insights from the experiences of the QSTA participants suggest that turning points may be recognized discrete events or by the processes that follow these events. In all cases, participants expressed elements of the classical definition of turning points.

INDICES OF MEANING

Turning Points Experienced by Others yet Told by Respondents

In responding to a question on the terrorist attacks of September 11 in New York City, Angela (New York) offers a second-hand experience; she does not tell us about her response but rather the response of her uncle. Angela's contribution was insightful to me if a bit surprising; her experience suggests that turning points may not only be visible to others but may have powerful effects on others as well. The fact that Angela brings up the experience of her uncle and indeed, expresses it in detail, suggests it holds some

meaning for her. Angela tells the interviewer that she got one good thing from the experience of September 11, she gained something from her uncle's transformation, which in many ways, based on the classical definition represents the idealized or quintessential turning point (Angela ANNY 1 1401-1418),

Angela: *But I did get one good thing out of it, and that was uncle, 'cause my uncle used to mess with drugs and you know, he wasn't doing things that he needed to do, but that day he had an interview and he got there at about six or seven o'clock in the morning and he forgot his paper, and he had to go back home to get the paper, and when he got off the train, and went upstairs. He looked up and that's when he saw the building. He was carrying and walking back from Manhattan. He walked from Manhattan and he was just like "just hold me", and "I love you", and from that day on, he never touched another drug and right now he's got a good job , working during the day, trying to take care of his kids. He's trying to buy a house and everything, and it opened His eyes and had him realize that he had to stop drugs. He's in church now, a deacon in the church and stuff, and that was the one high point that I got from it."*

Importantly, this observational component encourages us to acknowledge the objective aspects of turning points and to recognize the power they may hold for those who observe them. Angela describes her uncle's experience as including many key elements of the turning point definition; he experienced an abrupt event, has changed his behavior, turned his life around from drugs, and perhaps identifies himself differently, as a person who not only does not use drugs but embraces a new spiritual life. While this excerpt does not reveal how Angela's observation of her uncle's experience affected her, clearly she offers this experience as a powerful one, in her eyes for her uncle and likely for her.

How Do People Talk About Turning Points

Amelia's (New York) experience of September 11 was discussed in Chapter Four as a methodological insight. As noted Amelia's responses were, short, brief, direct, to the point, and unelaborated. That is until she came to talk about the terrorist attacks of

September 11, 2001 in very great detail. This provides as noted a methodological heads-up, that in our analyses of narrative data we must be attuned to subtle changes in ways of speech and expression. But there is also an important substantive point; different, uncharacteristic ways of speech may indicate meaningfulness, significance, that there is something different for participants in the experience that is revealed by a change in speech patterns. In Amelia's case, we can impute that the experience was meaningful to her because she spoke of it in uncharacteristic detail – her response was at least twice as long as any other in the interview. Amelia's narrative was insightful in many ways, although with her curt responses "insight" was what I least expected in the beginning. As I was to see later on in the narrative, September 11 was meaningful for Amelia and although she didn't change her behavior, she does express a change in identity, solidified with symbolic action - Amelia had an American flag tattooed on her shoulder.

Turning Points and Symbols

After her significant experience with September 11 Amelia says she appreciates her father more having almost lost him, and she relates a bit of fear being in large stadiums or on the trains, although she admits that other than increased security measures, September 11 hasn't really changed her everyday life. Thus in many ways Amelia's behavior has not changed. However, there is an element of turning points as classically defined in this experience because Amelia has changed her identity, she says she feels "more American", and she backs this up with a symbolic gesture, a new tattoo (Amelia ANNY 7) ,

***Interviewer**: Do you feel more or less American after the attack?*
***Interviewer:** How or why?*
***Amelia:** Why? Because I think even though we're all of different ethnicities, being here I think we're all Americans, by living here and I always used to be, not – I'm still proud*

to be Puerto Rican or whatever, but I'm also very proud to call myself an American. I even had the American flag tattooed on my shoulder blade after that. I hope my parents don't hear that, 'cause they don't know. It made me feel very much a part of the United States."

This insight suggests that turning points as Durkheimian social facts (Durkheim 1895, 1982) have a coercive power over individuals. But there may be even more to turning points; turning points may become symbols, and sacred objects at that. Sacred objects invoke powerful cultural themes: consider Winston's (New York) expression of what it means to be an "American" (ANNY 8 Winston 2570 - 2580),

Interviewer: *How do you see immigrants in general? Do you think they are making New York a better place to live?*
Winston: *Without it, there's nothing. And in terms of the real driving force of this country, it Is this country.*

Winston has expressed his sense of being an "American" in terms of what America is all about, a nation of immigrants. In this response, Winston attaches a sense of meaning to this identity change, making him, as an immigrant, part of the "driving force of this country". Winston's expression taps into the deeply held cultural belief that America is not only made up of immigrants but is in many ways defined by immigrants. This kind of symbolic attachment or symbolic cloak can hypothetically become an organizing structure in one's life, potentially bringing with it all the power of the collective conscience. It may constitute a mechanism through which changes subsequent to turning points occur. Stories of our lives may be written by turning points.

Turning Points Unsolicited

I anticipated that unsolicited expressions of turning points would underscore and indicate a sense of significance or meaning to these experiences. However, in most cases participants' expressions of change were made in response to questions, although not

necessarily direct questions. Thus it was not possible to determine that expressions were completely unsolicited. In some cases, inferences of meaning can be made from more spontaneous expressions or references to turning point changes expressed in other contexts. For example, Andrew from Michigan expresses his military experience with all key conceptual elements of a turning point: abrupt incident, identity change, behavioral change, subjective and objective changes, and change in multiple trajectories. The significance and meaning of his experiences are supported by his reference to them, even when they are out of context. As noted previously (p 160), when Andrew is asked about his high school experiences he responds by talking about his military experience. This excerpt is interesting in that it demonstrates one of the ways the Navy represented a totally new world for Andrew, in terms of ethnic diversity and new relationships. But more subtly, these comments point to the importance of the military experience for Andrew in many aspects of his life – in talking about high school he spontaneously comments on his military experience. This happens many times in the interview, for example when he is asked about his athletic experiences (ANMI 14 Andrew 1362 – 1377),

Interviewer: *Do you feel like you learned any kind of skills or made social contacts or anything that was really helpful about that?*
Andrew: *I think, I don't know if it's really derived from being a part of that team concept, I don't know if it's like if you're driven to that because of who you are and say you're a believer or a follower, you're just part of that group or community – that small little community called a team – you know and if it gives you that sense of, let's say in the military environment, as well, that's a very strong great bond of "we take care of our own; no one behind", that kind of mentality is – you're very close. This is closer to a family – as far as being with non-family people, I mean, over there in Greece, if you were an American, you were a brother. I mean, it was like, I've never seen or felt another feeling like that. It's very – and now, even now you're thinking oh your losing some of the edge off of it, but if something happened to somebody, the camaraderie that took place was so close and that's kind of I think what I just said, I don't know if you're drawn*

to that to be a part of the baseball team or the football team to be together, or if being there causes you to have that sense.

We can see that Andrew experienced in the Navy a kind of camaraderie that was different than anything he'd experience before or since, it stands out for him. Thus we can see that when Andrew answers questions with reference to his military experience he is telling us they are meaningful and also indicating that his military experience has had far reaching effects.

Turning Points and Ambivalence

Yet before I get too carried away, it must be noted that turning points are not always cloaked in symbolic significance. Sometimes they are met with ambivalence, a kind of neutrality, an acceptance of changes that may come in their wake. Mary (ANMI15) from Michigan expresses a turning point, having her first child in an almost ambivalent manner (ANMI 15 Mary 1051-1063),

Interviewer: *And you … you talked about how having your daughter, your first daughter changed your life. Did … did it change plans?*
Mary: *Oh yeah. Yeah. I was going to the (A University). I was … I was gonna do this. I was gonna do that. I mean I had all kinds of plans. I mean I had my outlook on my life set. 'Cuz I was a very organized person and I loved organization. And then that happened and all my organization was … was gone. Even though I could have still. It was like, I became lazy. It was just too much. It was, each year of college (inaudible) having another baby, you know so. It was, it sidetracked me but I can't say that I (inaudible) not happen. 'Cuz I could have still did it. I just got lazy and said no way that I'm gonna be a mom and.*
Interviewer: *Seems like some of the priorities too changed.*
Mary: *Yeah. Yeah.*

Having a child changed Mary's life dramatically and is consistent with the elements of the turning point definition: she experienced an abrupt precipitating event, she changed her behavior, she experienced subjective and objective changes and she also changed her identity. Interestingly, she doesn't reveal an emotional response to these significant

changes or imply any sense of meaning. Instead she simply tells us that she couldn't both be a mother and be who she used to be. This indicates that although many times turning points will be associated with positive or negative emotions, with a sense of meaning, there may also be an ambivalent response.

Summary: Indices of Meaning

It is clear from the data that QSTA participants expressed experiences consistent with the classical definition of turning points as meaningful. Furthermore, these experiences were expressed as meaningful to individuals who experience them directly and may also be meaningful to those who merely observe them. QSTA participants communicated meaningfulness in a number of ways, in particular, by talking about turning points in uncharacteristic ways and referring to turning points out of context. The degree to which these events are meaningful varies. Turning points can be characterized at one end of the spectrum as sacred objects. At this level of significance turning points could be seen hypothetically as organizing the stories of people's lives: where subsequent experiences are perceived and interpreted in the context of highly symbolic events; where behavior, relationships, sense of self and identity are all infused with the sanctity of the sacred object. At the other end of the spectrum, the meaningfulness of turning points may be less salient, the turning point may be expressed with ambivalence as participants take a more pragmatic approach in accepting life changes.

INDICES OF CHANGE: SUBJECTIVE, OBJECTIVE, AND ICONIC ELEMENTS

This section considers the ways participants describe changes that, including elements and emphases of the classical definition, can be understood as turning points. Definitions of turning points emphasize critical, substantial change in direction and the importance of subjective change, meaningfulness, and new opportunities (Strauss 1959, Elder et al. 2004, Shanahan and Macmillan 2008). The classical definition of turning point includes elements of abrupt change, identity change, behavioral change, and widespread change in multiple trajectories. The definition also suggests turning points include objective and subjective elements. This section is organized around those objective and subjective subcategories of experiences as expressed by the QSTA participants.

INDICES OF CHANGE: Objective Elements

Physical Change

Objective changes as included in the classical definition of turning points may be manifested in several ways; those expressed by the participants of the QSTA were physical change, behavioral change, changes in relationships, and changes recognized by other people. The context of physical change was insightful for me bringing to my mind the notion of the looking glass self as developed by Cooley (Cooley 1902). In experiences of physical changes expressed there was an interplay between subjective and objective elements of the turning point experience, namely the enactment of the looking glass self (Cooley 1902). The way we think we appear to others determines the way we see ourselves. If for example, others acknowledge physical changes, this can serve to underscore the significance of the change experience. Certainly this was the case for Corey who expresses his military service consistent with the classical definition of a turning point. As we will see Corey describes experiences of the abrupt change of

entering the military, of behavioral change, and of identity change. But let's begin with the objective physical changes Corey describes, and the resultant reactions of others. Upon coming home to New York after Basic Training and combat experience in the military, Corey tells us how his family and friends hardly recognized him, the physical transformation was so great (ANNY 14 Corey 1704-1732),

***Corey**: ...Now, this* is *'cause I've been working out. But when I first went in, I was weighing like a hundred and thirty pounds. After the two months, I was weighing one eighty. One eighty, just solid muscles. My arms were big, my [inaudible]/ I was like, people were like "whoah". Then I went through AIT, which is Advanced Individual Training. That's like the second part, after you go through all this training. And I did the combat, and that got me more bigger, I started weighing like almost one ninety – five. 'Cause you don't get constant workouts, but you get your workout doing what you do.*
***Interviewer:** Mm hum.*
***Corey:** Then after that I went into the electrician. When I got into the electrician I dropped weight. I got, like, maybe one seventy. But I was still rock-solid. Then I came home, after everything. So now I'm back on the block. And they're like "Do this, do that." When I got to the block, half the people on this block didn't recognize me. 'Cause they saw like a big muscle that came out of nowhere. 'Cause when I first, when I got back to the city, I had – I was outside the airport smoking a cigarette, and my cousin and my mother went to pick me up. And my cousin got to me, you know, my mother, and they're like "Who's that? I think that's him." They were like "That's not him. Yeah it is. He's holding a cigarette. He looks too big.*

Thus, for Corey a physical transformation accompanied his military enlistment as an objective element to his change experience; one that was recognized by his friends and family, and through the mechanism of the looking glass self reinforced a changed identity.

<u>Turning Points and Behavioral Change</u>

Behavioral change is an aspect of the classical definition of turning points expressed in experiences of change by the QSTA participants. Returning to Corey's example, we can see that he experienced behavioral changes directly attributable to his military enlistment. Corey tells us the hardest thing about being in the military for him was

getting up in the morning; he had to wake at 3:00 am. Unfortunately, on his first morning in Basic Training Corey overslept, for the first and last time (ANNY 14 Corey 2099 - 2155),

Corey: *Now, when I first got there, once we got situated, I didn't know half of these guys. It was like the first day. So I went to sleep, now three-thirty came in the morning, you see the lights turn on, you hear the sergeants yelling "Wake da da da da, this and that!" I'm the only one still sleeping in the room. All my friends are, everybody in the room are jumping up, like "Oh shit, da da da, this and that", trying to get dressed. I'm the only one sleeping. The sergeant comes to my bed, and he sees me sleeping. He starts screaming at me "Wake up, private! Da da da!" I just rolled over, looked at him, and I'm still sleeping. But I opened up my eyes, in my sleep. I open up, looked at him and then rolled over again.*
Interviewer: *Oh shit.*
Corey: *[laughter] I just rolled back over, didn't give a fuck. And he just looked at me, "Private! Da da da!" And I didn't care what the hell he was saying. I went right back to sleep. Next thing I know, I feel my body in the air. 'Cause he grabbed my whole bunk bed, and he just pulled it, with me on top of it, he just pulled it and I just felt that I was in the air falling. Once I hit the floor with by bed –*
Interviewer: *That woke you up?*
Corey: *Oh shit! And I got up and I wanted to hit him. 'Cause I didn't know who the fuck he was, while he was yelling at me. So, I got up I was like, I saw him and I was like – I just grabbed my bed, put it back up there and started getting dressed. I was like "I'm not getting in trouble." And he noticed that I was ready to hit him and he was like "Oh, you want to raise your hand? All right." We went out, we did our exercises, came back to the house. He took me alone into my room, into a certain room that they called the Big Bay, which is the punishing room. He took me . there, you saw about six sergeants come into that room and you see all of them were talking at first, talking about me, what I was ready to do. And all of them were like "All right, let's do this." So, all of them leave except for one. That first one started giving me all the punishment he could. Then, once he got bored, you saw the next sergeant come in, trade, it was his turn to punish me, then the next one, and so on and so one. I was in there for at least five hours, just doing workouts. And after a while I was just dead tired. I was like "I can't do shit anymore. I want to sleep." I came out of that room like at one o'clock in the afternoon, sweating. The whole room was sweaty.*
Interviewer: *That's the last time you slept too much.*
Corey: *Yeah, that was the last time I actually stayed asleep. After that I started keeping like one eye open, like – So, I heard my friends go "Yo, wake up. Time to wake up." I'd be like [gesture] "I'm up*

Oddly enough, this behavioral "adjustment" represents one of the things Corey likes the most about military life, the discipline. Not only did Corey make sure he didn't

oversleep again in the morning, Corey incorporated this behavioral change on a more permanent basis, he talked about being 20 minutes early most of the time and never being late …

Interviewer: *Until four. Regarding your military experience, what did you like the most about it?*
Corey: *The most?*
Interviewer: *Yeah, the most?*
Corey: *The strictness. [laughter]*
Interviewer*: The strictness?*
Corey: *The strictness, the exercise, the learning how to be disciplined.*
Interviewer: *What did the strictness give you that you liked so much?*
Corey: *What did that give me? Well, how they used to treat everybody, how they always make you be straight. You know, you couldn't slack off, and once they got me like that, I couldn't go away from it. Once they got me to be always on-point, like, if I had to be at a certain place at a certain time, I'll be there either at the time or maybe twenty minutes before the time. Just to make sure. And, like, let's say, all right, either that, or let's say um, they told me you have to do certain things. I will do it in the form that they told me to do it in. I won't try to make it up my own way. Because if it came out wrong, I get in trouble. So, they would tell me how the layout would go, that's how the layout would go. And that's how I treat these guys over here.*

These excerpts indicate behavioral changes in keeping with the classical definition of turning points. Continuing with Corey's story (ANNY 14), on returning home to New York, Corey moves from active military duty to reserve duty. Corey wrestles with the different behavioral expectations; he still thinks as though he is on active duty, he doesn't feel part of the Reserves. This implies that his identity changed when he joined the military so much so that he cannot seem to change his thinking and identify himself with the Reserves. Taking on the identity of a reservist is difficult for Corey, because he has been significantly changed by his active military experience (ANNY 14 Corey 1762 - 1813),

Corey: *Yeah, I was ready again. Then I went there. They were like – I went to report to my captain, inquisition, [?365] how long is your book stamped? [? 365] He was like "Relax. You can talk to me however you want." And I was like – In my mind it didn't register?*

Interviewer: *It wasn't like "No"?*
Corey: *Yeah, I was like "No. I see a bar on your shoulder, so that's how I'm treating you." So I'm talking to him, and I'm still in the same position of how I'm supposed to talk to him, and he's over here trying to calm me down, like "Just relax", this and that. And then I see another private come out of nowhere and tell him something like "Oh hey, da da da da." I'm looking at him like "Oh, he's in trouble", in my mind, and then all you see is the captain looking at him, like "Oh, I'll take care of that later." I was like "Hold on."*
Interviewer*: Yeah, it wasn't fitting for you. It's like a strange world for you.*
Corey*: It was like "Whoah, this is not how the military taught me." So, I'm like "What the hell is going on?" So after awhile, after awhile I got used to how they were acting. So I was like, "Oh, well." I act like that even now. I was just relaxing, talking to them like how I wanted, and after that I was like "Shit, this ain't for me." I was like "I can't be talking to a captain or a general however I want." I was brought up to talk to a general with the respect of his rank. You don't talk to him like you're on the block. And I was like "Oh, great." That's why being, right now, with the reserves, I'm not that comfortable with it.*
Interviewer: *But you're in the reserves right now? That's where you're at?*
Corey: *Yeah, I'm still in the reserves. I'm still in the reserves, but I don't feel like I'm really part of them. 'Cause it feels awkward, even to today, I still feel awkward, 'cause I'll be like "damn, I wish I was in charge of the entire reserves. I'll put this shit straight." 'Cause I know my stuff, if I could do it at work and I'd put everybody straight. I'd put them on line. It ain't like I would let everybody slack off and do whatever they want. I'd put everything straight, how it's supposed to be. Just like how it is in full time. Even though over here you know you're just doing it for the weekend, but even though, you come to the weekend, at least act the right way. Don't act like you're still on the block with your friends.*

Several things are highlighted as a result of Corey's story; after joining the military he changes behaviors and experiences physical changes which are acknowledged by his family and friends. Evidence of identity change is seen by his inability to take on the new identity of reservist; Corey is unable to shake his sense not only of proper military behavior, but also his sense of identity. Thus Corey expresses an experience of change that meets many of the elements of a turning point as classically defined: he experienced an abrupt event, he experienced objective physical change, he experienced behavioral changes, and he also experienced a change in identity.

<u>Turning Points and Changes in Relationships</u>

In Andrew's (Michigan) expressions of military experience, he describes several elements of the classically understood turning point. At various points in his narrative Andrew tells us of changes which resulted from the abrupt experience of military enlistment; Andrew tells us of a change in identity, he has indicated that military life was meaningful for him, that it gave him a new sense of self, new opportunities, even a new view on the world. In the following excerpt, Andrew describes a more objective element, how military life signified his entrance to adulthood and made him a "man", something recognized by his father (ANMI 14 Andrew 2811 – 2816; ANMI 14 Andrew 0643 – 0654),

Interviewer: *Yeah, it's about making the transition to adulthood. When do you think that people become adults?*
Andrew: *Well, like I said for me it was when I went in the military. It was when I became mature. Probably wasn't right when I went in it, it was like, maybe like a year or so afterward, when I was out on my own. When you can sufficiently subsist by yourself.*
Interviewer: *Has your relationship with your parents changed as you've gotten older?*
Andrew: *Yeah, yeah absolutely. I think I even (inaudible) in the letter when my dad was saying that he was not behind me going into the military back in '91 and I guess you could say I kinda did that as a way of escaping out of the house (inaudible). That's why I'm really a firm believer in instead of just going to a community college or something like that just going away to school. I think that gives you your sense of individuality. I think that's kind of the escape I was looking for. Like I mentioned not knowing that that would be permanent. And he said, he told me that one time, that he didn't think that that was going to be the right move or the right decision. And he said that after seeing how I really took well to the military discipline and it just really turned me into a man and he said, in retrospect, he thought it was probably the best thing that ever happened."*

The changes for Andrew have occurred in several roles; namely in his role as an adult and in his relationship with his parents. These experiences can be interpreted as subjective elements (the way Andrew sees himself) and objective elements (the way Andrew's father sees Andrew) of the classically defined turning point experience.

The objective element expressed in terms of relationships is also present in Amelia's description of becoming an American. For Amelia her subjective experience of identity change has objective consequences; when she visits Puerto Rico, people see her not as Puerto Rican, but as an American (ANNY 7 Amelia 1073 – 1079),

Interviewer: *When you go to Puerto Rico, do people see you as Neuyorican*
Amelia*: Yeah*
Interviewer: *or American?*
Amelia*: Yeah.*
Interviewer*: So they can tell you from*
Amelia: *Oh yeah.*
Interviewer: *Puerto Ricans. And how does that make you feel?*
Amelia: *It makes me feel like I'm not from there, like I don't really belong there, like I don't fit in. But sometimes it's not good to fit in."*

This solidifies Amelia's identity change: on an objective level others notice it; on a subjective level Amelia experiences being an American, and not being Puerto Rican. Once again we can say that through the enactment of the looking glass self, turning points are reinforced. To have an identity change is to go from being one thing (Puerto Rican) to not being that thing – and to become something else; Amelia has become an American with a capital "A"; she can see herself as she thinks others see her, and Puerto Ricans see her as an American.

Piper expresses the demise of a relationship as characteristic in part of a turning point as classically defined. Looking back over her life Piper sees how much she has changed from the moment the relationship ended (ANNY6 Piper New York 2018 - 2099),

Interviewer: *Has anyone close to you ever been arrested or served time in prison?*
Piper: *Yes.*
Interviewer: *Who and –*
Piper: *-- an ex-boyfriend of mine. He's actually there now. And I feel like it shows me how much I've grown. When I was with him, I was with him from when I was eighteen to about twenty one, and it shows me how far I've come from there. Like now, not that it's embarrassing to look back on that, but it's just, I think Oh my , I was so stupid, you*

know? Oh my G, how could I have been that quote unquote ghetto. You know? I think you learn over life. I think anyone who comes into our life for a reason and you know, he had his purpose in mu life, but I just feel like it's shown how much I've grown 'cause now I wouldn't even, I can't imagine how someone would date someone who's in jail or anything like that. And a lot of Spanish or minority do do that. And I just can't see myself. I just can't.

Although in the rest of her narrative Piper doesn't talk much about this, we can see from her comments here that she can no longer see herself as she was when she was in a relationship with her former boyfriend. In this way her experience resonates with Strauss' conceptualization that "I am not who I was, who I used to be" (Strauss 1959:93). As Piper looks back and sees how much she's grown, she implies changes in behavior, but this isn't directly stated. What she does talk about is a change in identity, from a person who would have a relationship with someone in jail to a person who would not; from a person she describes as "ghetto" to one who is not. There is an objective element to Piper's experience, a change in structural position, a relationship change accompanied by a subjective change in Piper's identity.

Turning Points Recognized by Others

There was evidence in the QSTA narratives that sometimes consequential experiences are recognized by others. This was the case for Andrew (Michigan) whose military experience is consistent with all elements of the classically defined turning point. In the excerpt previously detailed on page 159, Andrew tells us about the morning he left for the Navy. Andrew draws us a picture of his mother crying as he left for his military service. This picture can be seen as a symbolic representation, a powerful image that reflects the significance of that moment. We know that Andrew's life is completely different in the

military than it would have been had he stayed home; and Andrew in retrospect, can pin that change down to the morning he left, and the picture of his mother crying, an objective element of what can be defined as a turning point experience.

Summary: Indices of Change: Objective Elements

Experiences of change described by the QSTA participants contained objective elements of turning points as classically defined. Objective elements of turning point experiences were expressed by QSTA participants as physical changes, behavioral changes, and changes in relationships. These objective aspects may be noticed by others and reflected back to participants reinforcing identity changes through enactment of the looking glass self (Cooley 1902). This insight suggests that objective changes may be important in reinforcing the significance of the turning point experience.

INDICES OF CHANGE: Subjective Elements

Turning Points and Identity

Identity formation, alteration, transformation are among the most significant of human activities. Identity change is an element of the classical definition of turning points as expressed by Elder et al (2004), Mortimer (Lecture 2005) and Shanahan and Macmillan (2008). But importantly, identity change is expressed in Strauss' (1959) conceptualization as well, if we are not who we were, who we once were, then we have experienced some form of identity change. Additionally, Shanahan and Macmillan (2008) privilege subjective aspects, including identity change, over objective aspects of

turning points. In this way, identity change may be seen as emphasized in definitions of turning points. I was curious to see if participants of the QSTA emphasized identity change as well.

More specific than the sense of self, identity has an objective component; identity involves naming ourselves in some way, and furthermore in a way that others recognize as well. Certainly this is no easy task. When asked about the biggest challenge facing people his age, Winston from New York provides a telling response, suggesting not only that identity formation is the biggest challenge facing people his age, but also that everything else follows from it (ANNY 8 Winston 2763 - 2771),

Interviewer: *What would you say is the biggest challenge that people your age face.*
Winston: *Right now?*
Interviewer: *Yes.*
Winston: *Establishing who you are and who they will be for the rest of their lives, in terms of their views, the circle of people they hang out with – their friends, picking a job and setting up the relationship with their family long-term.*
Interviewer: *Are you going through that, would you say?*
Winston: *Yeah.*

Arguably identity formation or solidification is an important task at any age, but certainly in the transition to adulthood. The clearest expressions of identity transformations arose in the context of immigration experiences among the participants of the QSTA. Participants spoke of immigration as an acute, abrupt experience with subsequent identity changes. Thus their experiences may be considered turning points as defined by the classical formulation. Mark from New York, identifies himself as an American, unaffected by ideas of race or ethnicity (ANNY 9 Mark 1072 – 1088),

Interviewer: *If someone comes up to you and asks you what's your race, what's your ethnic group, what do you say? How do you respond?*

Mark: *Well, the race is obvious, white, the ethnic, I don't know. You can say you're Jewish, but people still think you're Russian. Basically I don't know how you can differentiate between the two.*
Interviewer: *But do you mostly tell people you're Russian or do you, like if someone –*
Mark: *People guess. Sometimes people guess the accent. So, you can't say "Jewish" because the accent is Russian, that's what you gotta say. Sometimes you say Jewish, sometimes you say – depending on what they say.*
Interviewer: *How do you like think of yourself, though.*
Mark: *I think I'm American.*
Interviewer: *Would you say that you're American?*
Mark: *Yeah.*

Winston from New York also identifies himself as American, in fact, he identifies himself with the very fabric of America (ANNY 8 Winston 1451-1464),

Interviewer*: Did you feel any need to be patriotic? Like you said you didn't want to fly the flag.* ***Winston:*** *No, I mean, we put the flag on the car, but beyond that, nothing that we were forced to do.*
Interviewer: Did you feel any pressure?
Winston: *No. In terms of, like trying to prove our American – not really. I have my citizenship finally, so, that's it. I'm like everybody else. I'm more American I think than like most people born here.*
Interviewer: *Because of your involvement?*
Winston: *No, not that, because I represent what the idea is supposed to be of an immigrant coming. Coming and making – integrating yourself as opposed to being born into it, you know?*

For Winston, his identity as American is the most important for him (ANNY8 Winston 2384 – 2393),

Interviewer: *Do you feel Russia(sic) or do you feel more that you came from Moldova?*
Winston: *Moldova.*
Interviewer*: Do you feel closer to people from Moldova than people from Moscow, for instance?*
Winston: *I do feel – yeah, definitely. I feel closer to people from Moldova. If at all, then again, I'm an odd case. I feel more American than anything else. The identities – four if you want to bring Israel into it – I feel more American than anything, you know?*

In these responses Winston tells us who he really thinks he is. His identity has changed from a Russian Jew from Moldova to an American. He has experienced immigration at age 12 as a knifing off or abrupt event that set in motion a change in identity. Thus the

experience he has expressed contains elements of the classical definition of a turning point. At the very end of his interview Winston talks about being an American once again without being asked directly about identity or immigration; Winston identifies himself as "more American than an immigrant" (3034-3046). This unsolicited comment underscores the fact that this identity is meaningful for Winston.

Molly from New York shares her immigrant experiences with the interviewer, once again illustrating the salience of an American identity, (Molly ANNY 12 0801 – 0818)

Interviewer: *So do you usually feel like you're Russian, or is that the country your parents come from? You come from Ukraine.*
Molly: *None of that is important. I really feel that I'm an American. I think that – I'm half-ling because I was born there and I lived there for thirteen years, and of course, some parts of me – I'm inextricably linked to that culture, that late Soviet period of the Nineties. And most of my friends are Russian and that's because you meet your friends hear (sic), during the immigrant years and they're Russian-speaking, and then you maintain friendships. But I feel strongly, that I am an American and when I have left, and I hear Russian, it makes – it's just a language that I understand. I have no intention of going to talk to these people. Usually, if I meet Americans abroad, I always, unless it's just in a setting where it's not possible – if I'm in a hostel and I meet an American, I always ask, so like where are you from, what are you doing here? If I meet someone who's Russian-speaking, I would say 'hello' but not much.*

Molly's experiences are in keeping with the classical definition of turning points. She experienced an abrupt event and a subsequent change to identity. In her transformation from Ukrainian to American, Molly has not only changed how she identifies herself, but also who she identifies with. Further, Molly has experienced new opportunities as a result of her immigration (ANNY 12 Molly 1115-1126)

Interviewer: *What event or events in your life had the biggest impact on the choices that you've made in terms of studying and trying to get your PhD.*
Molly: *Maybe not the choices, but the possibility of having these choices coming to fruition and certainly the immigration, certainly. Then the fact that I went to NYU and I met the professors that I met. Definitely. 'cause they made it possible for me to apply*

and successfully get into the programs and get the fellowships and it's crucial – the NYU part of my life is absolutely crucial. It's worth every penny that I spend for it and God knows I did not – it was Very expensive, but I completely, you know, stand by that choice.

This excerpt suggests that immigration may be characterized as a turning point for Molly; one that not only brought about the process of identity transformation, but also made possible other choices such as NYU and its incumbent experiences, which have changed her life.

Turning Points and Changes in the Self

The classical definition of turning points (p 13) includes the element of change to the sense of self. Indeed it is emphasized in Strauss' original description of the concept, that "I am not the same person as I was, as I used to be" (Strauss 1959:93). The self contains subjective understandings as well as actions (Mead 1934) that we take towards others and towards ourselves. While it is socially created, the self is less tied to structure than identity and in this way, is broader and more general than identity. While with the concept of identity there is an objective element as well as a subjective element, a kind of naming that we and others recognize, changes in the sense of self can be more subtle. For these reasons, changes to the self are elusive and more difficult to study, yet they may be more long-lasting than other changes that occur as a result of turning point experiences. And the participants of the QSTA did talk about changes to the self. Patrick and Sean experienced what scholars have expressed as the tendency in the self toward stability and resilience in the face of change (Erickson 1959b, Turner 1976), while Andrew tells us about the tearing down of his old self and the building up of a new one.

For Patrick from New York, a consistent sense of self was very important, particularly in the face of change. "Patrick" moved to New York from the Pacific Northwest first to attend Cornell University and later to live there. He frankly shares with the interviewer his difficulties in adjusting to the academic workload and stresses of college life, to New York in wintertime, to new social circles, to the isolation in his college town. Patrick suggests that one needs a lot of skills to manage these adjustments, and "*it requires really a big sense of self, like where are you at and what's important to you"* (0268-0314). This sense of self is critical for Patrick, he says,

Patrick: *In the whole journey, like if I didn't have a sense of self, of where I was coming from, then I think that would have just destroyed me.*

Patrick's journey was one of great changes, but not necessarily changes consistent with the elements of the classical definition of turning points. After attending two years of college in his home the Pacific Northwest, Patrick moved to attend college in New York. He was pursuing Asian American Studies when he was asked to create a skit for a Chinese Association. Patrick's skit was met with such "an overwhelming response" that he reports an occupational epiphany; he "knew" that doing theater was what he wanted to do. His subsequent behavior changed as a result; he is currently a playwright. But because Patrick had been involved in theater while in the Pacific Northwest, this is not a complete behavioral change, instead it is more of an accentuation. Patrick did experience an acute, abrupt event that changed or accentuated an already existing area of his life, changing it perhaps from an interest to an occupation. Furthermore, there is no indication that Patrick changed his identity and in fact, he tells us he did not change his sense of self, that his consistent sense of self was critical for him as he faced changes. The classical definition of turning points does privilege identity change over behavioral

change (Shanahan and Macmillan 2008) and based on Strauss' conception self and identity are central. Patrick's behavioral changes are not consistent with the changes in direction suggested by the classical definition of turning points, nor does he report a changed identity. Thus, Patrick's experience is not consistent with the classical formulation of turning points.

Sean from Michigan, as we will see in a subsequent section (Exacerbated and Compounded), has experienced many changes and difficulties in his life, a downward spiral as a result of an on-the-job injury. Sean's life, behavior, attitude have all been turned around by the abrupt event of his injury; his has a new identity, different behaviors, and new problems in widespread multiple trajectories and thus his experience is consistent with the classical turning point definition. Yet Sean still sees himself as the same person. As the interview closes, the interviewer asks if there is anything they haven't talked about that Sean feels is important, and also how he sums himself up at this point in his life. He says he doesn't think they've missed anything important, and that he thinks he is still a good person underneath all the problems; that the problems haven't changed his essential nature; that he always tries to be a good person, that he always tries to do the right thing (2666). Although his co-workers see have given him a new identity, Sean tells us he still feels as though he is the same person; he hasn't accepted the transformed identity attached to him by his co-workers and he has not change his sense of self.

However, when changes do occur in the sense of self, they can be shattering, consequential, and transformative. Andrew from Michigan has spoken a lot about his experiences in the military. In this excerpt he reveals that his sense of self was indeed

changed by his military experience which is consistent with the classical conception of turning point. Andrew tells us not only that at he has had a transformation of identity but he specifies the way in which the military accomplishes this; by stripping down what you thought you were and giving you a new sense of self in its place (ANMI 14 Andrew 2125-2149),

Interviewer: *How did your expectations before you joined came compare with reality once you were in the military.*
Andrew: *I had to do a lot of soul searching, so-to-speak, to see what kind of person I really liked. Especially in boot camp. You look back at it and you're like, oh, it's no big deal. But at the time, when you're actually going through it, it's a big ordeal cause they're breaking down your beliefs and everything you stand for and then they build them back up again. So it was like, if you look back at it, you say, oh, okay, but at the time you're really – you really do questions your whole ability of who you are.*

Andrew's expression calls up Strauss' (1959) notion of turning points, Andrew is no longer who he was, who he used to be.

Social life is indeed "messy" as has been noted by Strauss (1959) and from the experiences of the QSTA participants it is evident that sometimes life experiences comply with all elements of the classical definition of turning points, and sometimes they reflect only some of the elements of the classical definition of turning points. An ideal type turning point concept would allow more precise comparisons on particular dimensions; for example, in this case we could see that Andrew's experience included a change to his sense of self, while Sean's experiences did not, and Patrick's occupational epiphany is not consistent with a turning point at all.

Change in Worldview

Turning point experiences may include behavioral changes, identity changes, and perhaps changes to the sense of self. But working definitions have not acknowledged

that turning point experiences may also include changes to an individual's worldview. This discovery arose in Andrew's comments on the differences between him and his siblings; in terms of occupations and also in terms of the ways they view the world. Andrew from Michigan tells us that all of his siblings have graduated from college and are engaged in occupations like nursing, sales, teaching. When Andrew is asked if his siblings' educations have influenced him he responds in a way that once again underscores the significant of his military experience, and indicates not only objective behavioral change, but also a change in his worldview, his way of approaching daily life, something he considers a gift he could give to his parents when they visited him on Crete (See excerpt page 160). In this excerpt, Andrew reports that being in the Navy and living on Crete have changed his life from what it would have been had he stayed in the U.S. and gone to college like his siblings. His Navy experience has changed his behavior but also his perspective on the world, he now approaches his daily life differently, something he apparently considers a gift.

INDICES OF CHANGE: Iconic Change

Quintessential Turning Points

Thus the fit between the classical definition of turning point and empirical experiences of significant change varies. It appears from the experiences of the QSTA participants that there are variable responses to significant changes in life: some when aspects of life may change, some when aspects of identity may change, some when aspects of behavior may change, and some when everything changes dramatically. Jaimie's experience of mental illness provides an example of the latter.

Jaimie's story (from Michigan ANMI 13) is difficult and sad by any measure. She has suffered a great deal in this period of her life. She tells us of her suicide attempts, hospitalizations, self mutilation since high school and perhaps earlier. What is consistent and striking about this interview is that Jaimie answers almost every question in terms of mental illness, from political leanings, to identity suggesting that this is the salient aspect around which her sense of self, her identity and her behavior are organized. Because she yearns for more in her life, because she sees that her life could have been so different without mental illness, because mental illness has changed her identity, her behavior, and her sense of self, it can be seen as consistent with the classical definition of a turning point.

Mary (from Michigan) provides us with a more detailed example of what can best be identified as an iconic turning point experience, an experience that contains all elements as well as emphases of the classical turning point definition. (Mary's experience was briefly noted in Chapter Five) Although Mary was brought up attending church with her paternal grandmother, she notes it didn't play a big role in her formative years; instead she saw church as primarily social and identified herself as an atheist. But then Mary had an experience that can only be categorized as a quintessential turning point, one in which all conceptual elements are evident (1240 – 1284 ANMI15 "Mary").

Mary begins by describing her turning point experience as more abrupt than gradual, as a total change that happened in a single day,

Interviewer: *Umm … what about religious values and beliefs?*
Mary: *None. Now my religious beliefs is very, very strong. And my values are very strong. It's a total, it was a total change in one day kind of thing. It was like from black to light you know. It was … it was an amazing thing that happened in my life.*
Interviewer: *When was this?*

This experience for Mary brought about a completely different religious life than the one she had lived as a child,

***Mary**: It was a year ago May. It was, I mean, and … and now it's like, oh Lord I'm not a holy roller. That's sounds so silly. I just, I know that I feel the presence of God that I never, ever felt before I tried. I prayed every night when I was little. But then when I became a teenager I just went, oh. I didn't go Gothic. I wasn't a devil worshipper. I just didn't believe there was any of it. I just didn't understand it and I started analyzing the Bible and saying we'll how'd this happen then. And then they're saying this happened then. So, it was I didn't, I wasn't looking at the Bible in the right way, so. 'Cuz I tried plenty of times to read the Bible growing up and it just was stupid to me. I just hated it.*
***Interviewer:** Tell me about this un …*
***Mary:** Transformation?*
***Interviewer**: … real quick. Yeah.*

As Mary tells us more about her turning point experience, she reveals that it gave her something she had been missing, it gave her a father, one who would never leave her. Mary goes on to tell us about the changes in behavior that have resulted from her religious turning point as well as those subjective changes she experienced. These changes are meaningful for Mary and involve not only her life, but the lives of her children,

***Mary:** It was, I felt lost. I knew something was missing. And I was very, very depressed. Very depressed. And I started going to church and I felt like my body was just … my heart was healing, but I didn't know why it was healing. And it was just an amazing feeling. I had a father, you know. And that's, I never had a father growing up so I had a father that was never going to leave me. And it was just that was the meaning. That was just, my heart got real filled. It got real light. And I … I don't cuss like I used to. And it sounds … people don't understand. When you get a gift, that I was given, you … you … your body transforms without you even trying. You know. I don't say things I used to say. I don't do things I used to do. And in my head I'm thinking before I'm doing it. To where there's, there's something in there telling me ok, that's not the right way to go. You know. And I'm … I'm very aware of sin and of … of bad things now that I was just, you know. Before I was just, I'm even better with my children. I don't lose my temple like I did. I mean it wasn't like I was violent or anything. But I noticed that things they do now, would have bothered me you know then that don't really bother me. It's just like we're kids. You know that's (inaudible) so. But I also read in the Bible too*

that it's a sin not to discipline your children. And my children are disciplined in different, each one is different, of course. But umm … I know that their upbringing is gonna be so different from my upbringing that by the time they're teenagers I'm not gonna have, I pray, a prostitute or drug addicted kid that you know is looking for sex. I just, I hope … I hope that my children are with God in their life. I hope they're not gonna be pregnant at 16. That's for sure. You know because I'm gonna stop the statistic right there. 'Cuz my mother was 18. I was 16. And they say that statistics you know, say that one of my daughters, or my son, are gonna be young parents. No. No. It's not gonna happen. Come back in ten years and we'll see.

Mary's religious experience is nothing short of an iconic turning point as articulated by the classical definition. It is change more abrupt than gradual; it is change that brought about a completely different direction in behavior, change including both subjective and objective elements, change that is meaningful, widespread change involving multiple trajectories, change that includes a transformation of identity and indeed a change to her sense of self. This is the classically defined turning point as articulated by Strauss (1959), Elder et al (2004), Mortimer (Lecture 2005), Shanahan and Macmillan (2008).

Summary: Indices of Change

Turning points are theoretically followed by all kinds of changes; while some are more objective in nature, others are more subjective. Objective and subjective elements are considered elements of the classical definition of turning points. In both experiences of objective and subjective changes, we can see the exercise of the looking glass self (Cooley 1902). The way others see us and respond to us is important; it gives us a sense of the way they see us; in this, we construct our views of ourselves. This can serve to underscore the significance of changes, objective and subjective, in experiences of turning points.

Objective changes as evidenced by the QSTA data include physical changes, relationships, and behavioral changes. After his entrance into the military, Andrew's

parents viewed him differently, they saw him as an adult, and in this their relationship changed. In fact, Andrew recognizes his military turning point experience in retrospect when he acknowledges his mother's reaction to his departure; her recognition may add a sacred, symbolic aspect to the turning point experience. Corey's changed physical appearance, noticed dramatically by his family and friends accentuated the broader changes subsequent to his turning point of military service. Not only was Corey's physical appearance significantly different, no longer a night owl, his behavior also changed objectively. And when Corey returned home and entered the Reserves, it was clear he had also experienced a more subjective change as well, namely an identity change subsequent to his turning point of military service. When Amelia visits Puerto Rico, she is seen as an American, somehow this change is objectively viewed by her Puerto Rican friends. Amelia's changed identity has a structural element as well, she no longer feels as though she fits in in Puerto Rico, but seems to prefer her new, "American" identity. Piper's turning point was the demise of a relationship which, along with a changed structural position, brought her to an entirely new sense of self.

In terms or more subjective changes, identity changes were observed to be prominent among immigrant experiences of the QSTA participants (Mark, Winston, and Molly). For some, like Patrick and Sean, the sense of self was constant, while for others it was more changeable. Andrew describes to us how the military shatters one's sense of self and replaces it with a new sense of self. In addition, on a broader level, Andrew tells us of a new approach to daily living, a new view from which he acts in his world because of his military turning point. Finally, in her religious conversion, Mary changes her mental and emotional state, gains a new relationship in a father, changes her behavior,

transforms her body, becomes attuned to sin, to right and wrong, and changes her parenting. Mary's religious conversion is consistent with all elements and emphases of the classically defined turning point.

WIDESPREAD EFFECTS OF TURNING POINTS

In keeping with the classical formulation of the concept turning point, it would be expected that those experiencing turning points would experience widespread changes in many areas of life. QSTA participants did report widespread effects of experiences that may be defined as turning points. These effects were coded as: Turning Points as Loss and Recovery; Turning Points as Loss, Downward Spiral and Missed Opportunities; Turning Points Exacerbated and Compounded, and Turning Points as Repudiations.

Turning Points as Loss and Recovery

In Patrick's narrative (excerpt noted page 163) we can see his identity transformation as a process that began as "American" and has moved towards "Chinese American". It appears that Patrick may be attempting to gain the ethnicity that was lost to him through the experience of immigration. What is particularly interesting in this context is that it seems to be a conscious effort …(Emphases –underlined- added),

Interviewer: *Do you generally identify as Chinese?*
Patrick: *I identify as American, well, I think now Chinese American, I think is the label I've settled on now. I used to be more American, but I realize the influences, especially like hanging out with the friends that I do. I stop and think about my social circle; it's almost entirely Asian American.*
Interviewer: *Is that a conscious -*
Patrick: *- - I think it's because of the choices I made, like the programs I went to. And also like the theater circles, the theater production I've chosen. Like I started out in the Asian American Theater back in Seattle, and most of my contacts come from there, and I think I maintain those, because I maintain those, my artistic circles are primarily Asian –influenced.*
Interviewer: *That's where you get a lot of your energy.*

Patrick: *yeah, it goes too. And academically, I think I wanted to, being in primarily non-Asian contexts academically, in both high school and the first years of college, I actively sought more of an Asian presence in my social life when I went to Cornell as well. So it's not like I don't have friends of different backgrounds, it's predominantly Asian American.*

Mary (Michigan) offers another example of turning point as loss and recovery. We have seen that Mary's religious conversion (excerpted earlier page 189) is consistent with all elements and emphases of the classically defined turning point. Looking deeper, Mary speaks of her religious conversion as recovering the father she had lost, and gaining a father who was never going to leave her. Mary lived mostly with her grandmother growing up because her mother had to work. Her father was never around for her having left her mother while Mary was a child. When Mary is asked if she could change something about the way she was raised, she talks about wanting a father and about how her mom struggled (Mary ANMI 15 0338 – 0353),

Mary: *I would have wanted a father of course. Definitely.*
Interviewer*: What was it like to …*
Mary: *It was hard. It was really hard because I had friends that were normal, you know but then I had a lot of friends that you know had single moms too. But I wanted it. I … I wanted a dad sooo bad. I, my dad would say he'd come and pick me up. I'd wait all day for him to show up and he wouldn't show up, and. And my dad was very, very wealthy. And, here my mom struggled. And he gave her child support but it just, never seemed like enough. So I was angry about that. I was angry.*

And later, Mary expresses that her religious conversion gave her something she had lost, a father (ANMI15 Mary 1240-1284),

Interviewer*: Tell me about this un …*
Mary: *Transformation?*
Interviewer*: … real quick. Yeah.*
Mary: *It was, I felt lost. I knew something was missing. And I was very, very depressed. Very depressed. And I started going to church and I felt like my body was*

just … my heart was healing, but I didn't know why it was healing. And it was just an amazing feeling. I had a father, you know.

Thus Mary's experience of a religious turning point includes an element of recovery, of gaining something that was lost to her.

We've met Andrew before as he spoke about leaving his home and joining the Navy, an experience for him that was consistent with the classical definition of a turning point. And without a full reading of his narrative, it would have been easy to take this military knifing off experience at face value. However, a careful reading of his narrative reveals that the loss of university attendance was an important aspect of his military enlistment (See also Chapter Four). Andrew dreamed of attending a big university away from home and although he was accepted, because of financial hardship Andrew went instead to a nearby community college and lived at home. Joining the Navy can be seen as a turning point for Andrew, having changed his identity, his behavior, his direction in life, his sense of self and indeed his world view, but it is also more, it is a recovery from the university experience he lost (ANMI14 Andrew 1658 – 1662),

Interviewer: *Is there anything that really sticks out in your mind that you liked of didn't like about the colleges that you went to?*
Andrew: *Well, that goes back to like I said is the "what if" mentalities, is still living at home and doing the commute. I still say if I was away at school, if I did go say to (University A), I don't think I would have went in the Navy; I truly believe that."*

Thus the path not chosen, not going to University A, could be seen as a turning point having directed Andrew to a new plan, joining the Navy, which set in motion a number of changes consistent with the turning point concept as classically defined. By not attending University A, Andrew lost experiencing the college of his choice, and this led him to gain a wholly different experience in the military. Certainly, his military experience is

consistent with the classically defined turning point; and it has affected many, many aspects of his current life and behavior. Andrew discusses what life might have been like without the Navy (ANMI14 Andrew 2167 – 2186),

Interviewer: *If you didn't have a family do you think that you would re-enlist?*
Andrew: *Yes.*
Interviewer: *Do you feel like your military training helped you in civilian life?*
Andrew: *Yes. I think so. Because I know for one, my military background was the defining reason to hire me at Employer 2. I found out* later *that they really looked for people as they come out of the military. But I think just like what I said, before then I was just floating through life on, you know, I knew what everything was I was doing and I was ___ (inaudible) about everything and then after you get that sense of discipline and structure and just how things really are you try to kind put some perspective that you're not ___ (inaudible).*
Interviewer*: What do you think your life would be like now if you hadn't gone into the military.* ***Andrew:*** *Well, that goes back to a lot of what we talked about earlier, about the education. I wonder if it would be the same. I wonder if my wife and I would be together. I really do. Because if I would have sent away to school and she was at her school and I was at mine, it's like well, wait a minute. Would we still be together? Would we have met somebody else? What would have happened. Really? I wonder. I wonder if … I doubt it. I really doubt it that we would have been together."*

Significantly these comments by Andrew attest to the importance of several methodological and theoretical issues. First, it is critical to analyze events in the context of participants' lives; had I not carefully analyzed all of Andrew's responses, I wouldn't have understood the importance of his educational loss and his military gain, nor the connection between them. Secondly this excerpt emphasizes the importance of confidentiality as participants often reveal secrets about their lives; Andrew's comments about his choice of spouse are volatile and potentially harmful information. Finally, it speaks to the utility of the life course perspective as a way of understanding life changes, trajectories, relationships; would Andrew have a family, a different life if he had gone to University A? Certainly, he thinks he would have. Military life has indeed included widespread effects in multiple trajectories. Andrew's experience also sensitizes us to the

structural effects of turning points. Aside from the widespread effects in multiple trajectories, there is a change in opportunity structure. Had Andrew experienced university life as expected, he would not have experienced the opportunities of his military life. This is a powerful example of turning points as loss and recovery, of the importance of carefully reading the entire narrative, of seeing the concepts in full context, and of the widespread effects of turning points in multiple trajectories.

Turning Points as Loss, Downward Spiral and Missed Opportunities

Nathan is a young man in the Michigan subsample. From the beginning his narrative exemplifies the theme of Turning Points as Loss, Downward Spiral, and Missed Opportunities. At the time of the interview Nathan is 30 years old, single, and has graduated from high school. Nathan is living with his mother in a rural setting because of his credit problems, and working in a factory. He has had a difficult childhood and adolescence; he describes these years as very stressful because of his father's alcoholism, abuse, financial problems and his parent's divorce. Nathan wishes he'd gone straight to college when he had an opportunity to play football. He clings to this idea, almost like a lifeline, and is still thinking about going back to school. Nathan's very first comments in the interview pretty much sum up what is to come later and strongly speak to his missing college as an experience consistent with the classical definition of a turning point: he has experienced an abrupt, discernible change, identity change to one who is unsuccessful, changes in behavior, changes in multiple trajectories, both subjective and objective changes. Thus not going to college can be considered consistent with the classical turning point definition for Nathan (ANMI 11 Nathan 0011-0027),

Interviewer: *… so what I'd like you to start out doing is just talking for a while, open ended about what's going on in your life now and…and then looking back to how that transition went you know, from adolescents to adulthood.*
Nathan: *Well I'm thirty years old. I graduated high school. I wish I would have went straight to college. But I'm working in a factory. Working for (a major manufacturing company). And I'm really thinking about uh going back to school. Umm … still single. I shoulda started earlier. But , it's been, it's been really tough. I know some people they're like eighteen and younger than me that they're going to school. They're going to college. And, their life is totally, they have set goals and patterns. And I wish I woulda done that a long time ago. And I wouldn't be just … la-de-da … you know, like I am now. But ummm … it's different in somebody else's point of view. Like my younger friends, umm … they look at me as always … always having problems in the future with money, financially, and relationships. And they try to help me out which sometimes that don't work because it's a whole different …, she, they're twenty and I'm thirty. But …*

As the conversation continues, the interviewer suggests that Nathan likely knows a lot more in some areas than his younger friends do. This prompts Nathan to discuss giving advice to his younger friends, while they still have time to change course (ANMI 11 Nathan 0031-0038),

Nathan: *But I, they always come up to me and ask me for options, you know. Saying what should, do you think I should do. And I tell them to do the best of what you can do. If you wanna do that, you're … you, more power to ya if that's what ya wanna do. But always watch yourself. If you feel like this is not the right opinion, you got, you're young enough you can start, fresh and do something different. You have a chance to change. Once you hit thirty, you're already almost in the middle there. And there's no turning back. So.*

Nathan notes that it was because of family pressure to work that he chose his job over the chance to play football and go to college. Consistent with the classical definition, this choice can be considered a turning point for Nathan, from which his life took a completely different direction,

Interviewer: *OK. Do you think it would have been good for you to have been involved or ?*
Nathan: *Probably. My life would have been different. I know it would have.*
Interviewer*: So how would that have affected you?*

Nathan: *It probably would have affected me/it probably would affect me a lot better than what it is now.*
Interviewer: *OK. So you think, what would be different do you think?*
Nathan: *I probably, be in a different job. Umm…going to college. And a lot more friends and people. Probably would have been married by now.*
Interviewer: *OK. What, can you think of anything that would have uh motivated you to get involved in some of those activities?*
Nathan: *Family. Truthfully.*
Interviewer: *So if your family had wanted you to.*
Nathan: *They didn't, they were just there try to be there. But they weren't as strict and pushy like some parents are.*

When asked about any regrets he may have, Nathan talks about the missed opportunity of football, and when asked about any regrets he may have regarding work, Nathan reiterates his regret of not going to college (1331 – 1334)1882-1884),

Interviewer: *How about any regrets? Any things you'd change if you could? About high school?*
Nathan: *I probably woulda went in sports. Hung around certain groups. And just probably, try to be popular.*
Nathan*: Shoulda went back to college and wanted to do what I wanted to do. Try not to predict where I could a worked. You don't, nobody knows how I feel about that. I just …*

The extent of the downward spiral for Nathan is indicated in his definition of success, as everything he doesn't have (ANMI 11 Nathan 2795 – 2800),

Interviewer: *Umm … how would you define success for somebody about your age?*
Nathan: *Success. Wife, kids, money up the ying ying. Everything that I don't have. (laughs)*

Life for Nathan is not what he expected, and his concerns for the future express a lack of self-efficacy bridging on almost giving up (ANMI 11 Nathan 3006 – 3011),

Interviewer: *What are you worried most about with regards to your future?*
Nathan: *I'm not gonna be worried because it's gonna happen it's gonna happen for a reason. Because there's no way of changing it. You can change some things but there's some things you just cannot change. So, practically, if something you know, I can't, it's out of my hands. That's something I cannot predict."*

The choice not to play football and attend college was, according to the classical definition, a turning point for "Nathan"; a loss, a missed opportunity that set a downward spiral in motion, a spiral about which "Nathan" says, "And there's no turning back." (ANMI 11 Nathan 0038)

In order to avoid regrets, people may minimize turning points and their subsequent effects on the life course. Maureen's experience as a teen aged mother in the Michigan subsample suggests that at least in the recollection, we may remember events as less significant. She calls the birth of her son a "side step" rather than a turning point, but her description suggests otherwise (ANMI 16 Maureen 2236 – 2242),

***Maureen**: I did it ass backwards. I had intentions of going to college, got pregnant in my senior year of high school and everything just flew out the window. If I had to do it all over again I wouldn't have had a child right out of high school and I would have gone to college and at least got that stuff done, gone to college. I can't say how things would have been different. If I would have met my husband or whatever but I definitely would have gone to college right after school had I not taken a side step first.*

In earlier excerpts Maureen tells us that she changed identities when her son was born, that she thought of herself as an adult because she had someone she was responsible for (2245). Coupled with the selection noted above, her statement on adulthood is consistent with elements of the classical turning point definition: giving birth to her first child not only changed the direction of her life, it changed her behavior in terms of responsibilities, and it changed her sense of identity to that of an adult. In this way, her experience of teenaged motherhood can be seen as a turning point, despite the fact that she calls it a "side- step".

As we learn more about Maureen in the course of her narrative, we see that Maureen has given birth to a second child and married. Instead of going to college, she attended a vocational school earning certification as a medical assistant. She worked in a doctor's office and in a hospital setting for three years as a medical assistant. Since the birth of her second child Maureen has stayed at home with her children instead of working outside her home. At the time of the interview, Maureen was taking a part time medical transcription course on-line so in the future she can work as a transcriptionist from home. She appears to be happy with the way things have turned out (ANMI 16 Maureen 1386 – 1388),

Interviewer: *When you think back on like your post high school education, things that you have done, have you considered any regrets or anything that you wish you had done differently?*
Maureen*: No. Basically from the time I was small, I knew I wanted to do something medical. I just didn't know what. So it just kind of fell in my lap, this medical assisting and it's all worked out real well. I'm happy with it.*

Maureen's experiences suggest that she was able to recover her desire to work in the medical field despite not attending college as she had hoped. While she may have minimized her experience of becoming a teen-aged mother and its effects on her life, she was able to regroup and go forward in a desired direction by an alternate path.

Turning Points Exacerbated and Compounded

QSTA participants expressed turning point experiences that were also exacerbated and compounded by other related factors and experiences in individual lives. Sean's experience provides an example. As a young man from Michigan, Sean was working in the security department of a large company. Sean experienced an on-the-job injury as part of an evaluation role play, and it set in motion a number of related events which

exacerbated the downward spiral, and the significant effects of the turning point injury. The event of the injury and subsequent changes include elements of the classical formulation of the concept turning point: identity change, behavioral change, changes in both subjective and objective elements, and widespread change in multiple trajectories. Sean's story begins in this way (ANMI 12 Sean 1921 – 1960),

Interviewer: *So how was the job before you were injured?*
Sean: *It was good. I was highly respected by everybody there because of my job capabilities. I was always rated as being one of the best for any job in the security department. I got a lot of awards for safety, awards for ideas and never really missed that much work, except the one year. But for the most part, I was always involved in helping write new procedures and making changes for the better. And once I was injured, though, all of a sudden they're – the way that they viewed me was totally different. I was a liability. I was worthless, useless, didn't need to be out there. I was everything bad. I wasn't any good any more cause I let this guy injure me somehow.*
Interviewer: *And you told me that you were injured by a supervisor.*
Sean*: That's true.*
Interviewer*: Intentionally?*
Sean: *Intentionally.*
Interviewer*: Can I ask what happened?*
Sean: *He had given me a pat down – which is a hands-on search of my person. My palms were up, my legs apart. Turns off the side, at that point he proceeded to finish the pat-down, the evaluator was giving us an evaluation, proceeded to ask – "let's say he's got a gun, what would you do?" Bam! I'm face down on the floor; his weight's on top of mine; my right foot stayed flat though. And I couldn't get any words out cause I just had the wind knocked out of me. And he's got his knee on the back of my head and he's handcuffing me, which isn't our normal procedure. We're not – we're trained in verbal command only and we only have to use physical force as needed. So even if he did find a weapon on me, if he already had the weapon in his hand, he's already eliminated the threat. So he's got the weapon. If I oblige him through his use of verbal commands, ordering me down on the floor, then there's no need for any physical contact like that – just the handcuff. So – it's just the case of somebody thought they'd be a funny guy and that nobody was going to get hurt and as a result of that the client, through their safety committee, deemed it to be my fault that I got injured. How I don't know. And then I had to get an attorney cause I could see I was going to be physically blackballed out of a job, which sucks. I mean I don't think it's right and it still frustrates me when I see anybody that works up there, that I used to work with, cause a lot of them have this misconception that I was faking it or milking it or they just stand there and throw their opinions out in the wind, but had it been them in the same situation, they would have went through with the lawsuit and I don't think they'd be too happy with it, so."*

Particularly interesting in Sean's case is the clarity with which we can both the objective and subjective elements that follow in the wake of the turning point. Sean's co-workers viewed him completely differently. And as it turns out, they treated him differently as well (ANMI 12 Sean 1969 – 1998),

Sean: *... But these big companies. The way they work out – I mean during the time I was up there they were putting so much pressure on me. But I'm the type that I actually do better under pressure. And it's really hard to throw me off cause I am into that type of pressure. And one of the times it would blow up right back in their face. Here's the numerous thinks they tried: they tried paying people to sneak down into the factory while I was out there and they offered me part of their gig and I put the one face down to the ground with my full weight on him, just sitting on him. Turned out he was related to the guy I injured or the guy that injured me, rather. And it was led to believe that it was just a coincidence. But they had people call up there and ask stupid questions and see if I was going to give out information about the client that shouldn't be given out. And it was just one thing after another. During the time I was being driven to work by the limousine, if the limo was a few minutes late, they wanted to right me up. I'd have to fight because I'm like, wait a minute, if he wouldn't have injured me, I'd be driving myself to work and I'd have been here twenty minutes early like I normally was. So if you want to write anybody up, write him up. And that's exactly the way I take it. And if they actually had the audacity to do it, I'd say well fine, I'm just going to document this and hand it over to my attorney cause I'm not going to take this harassment. And after awhile, it got to the point where I had words with pretty much everybody there as far as supervisors. And this jerk that injured me, he's still up there, he's still making $80,000.000 a year, still has his benefits and he's still able to provide for his family. And I'm in a situation where it's like, my G, I gotta start all over, you know. Gotta get through all the schooling again. It sucks. If I would have left on my own, I would have felt better.*
Interviewer: *So when you left in 2000, you were forced out?*
Sean: *It was a case of where I had to leave. It was a condition of the settlement…"*

Having experienced pressure at work and a very different atmosphere, Sean settled his lawsuit with the company; the company paid him a settlement without admitting any wrongdoing. Sean continues to describe their living conditions, after the injury and settlement (ANMI 12 Sean 2000 – 2020),

Interviewer*: So how have you been able to survive the last 2 years? Has it been …*

Sean: *It's been barely. Whatever money I had from the settlement, I had to spend it away in order for the state to help us medically. So one of us to get the medical because our kids have medical conditions and that's why we had to get rid of the money cause we had to dwindle down our funds before they'd even help us. So once we did all that, they give us – I think it's like $400 a month if that financially. Well, that's barely enough to pay the car payment let alone our utilities altogether and the car insurance; put gas in the car. But the food amount is 500 and some odd dollars and I'm like you gotta be kidding. I don't need to eat all that fruit and crap, I don't need to spend all that in food. So it was basically a case where we got screwed over and I think that's the problem with the system. They are still looking at it as well, this guy's worked here this many years, he's piddling the system, we'll help him for a year to where he can keep his house, keep his car, keep money in the bank while I went on medical for a year – and that would have been fine. And I think it wouldn't have hurt this bad and I don't think we would be in this situation. But we had to fight tooth and nail just to get that and it wasn't even worth it by the time we got it.*

In addition to the financial desperation and frustrations Sean describes, he talks as if having to fight so hard for a settlement that he considered unfair made the injury experience even worse; it is as if the lawsuit exacerbated the turning point. Importantly we also see how the injury turning point affected so many aspects of his life. Sean's roles as worker, husband, provider, colleague, and father have all been affected, as well as his identity as a "highly respected" worker. In fact, Sean's injury painfully exemplifies all the aspects of the classical definition of a turning point: an abrupt change, including both subjective and objective aspects, behavioral change, change involving multiple trajectories, and change that includes a transformation of identity. And somehow the exacerbations that followed the injury worked together, melted together into a set of experiences that cannot be separated out. When asked about the most important positive and negative things in his life, Sean responds in this way (ANMI 12 Sean 2616 – 2634),

Interviewer: *Looking back, what do you feel like is the most important positive thing that has happened in your life so far?*
Sean: *Well, my kids. I think that's the thing that's had the most positive impact – just basically it reminds you it's not just you anymore; there's other people to consider. And*

it can be very rewarding at times; some of the stuff that they can come up with is just amazing.
***Interviewer**: What about the most negative thing that's happened?*
***Sean:** I'd probably say it's my wife with her depression, the house and everything that's happened and the injury. That's all at the same time and I don't know if it would have been any easier even if I wouldn't have had the injury or not. But that didn't help.*

Sean's narrative suggests that his injury was exacerbated by subsequent experiences which compounded the negative effects of the turning point.

Turning Points as Repudiations

This theme code was fascinating and unexpected. Rose (ANNY11) from New York used an unusual word when describing her move from childhood to adulthood, "repudiation". This word, "repudiation" captures the essence of a turning point, a turning away from, actually rejecting a previous existence. In her interview Rose talks about difficulties she experienced in high school, being depressed in particular she experienced what she herself called "a sort of freakish adolescence". In college she seemed to find herself, it is almost like she felt she began living when she went to college, that in some way she awoke. On the encouragement of a graduate student she was teaching with, Rose decided to go to graduate school herself. Rose describes her more adult life as the result of a turning point, living in an entirely different world of her own making, as opposed to the world of her childhood which was handed to her (Rose ANNY 11 (1205 - 1215),

***Interviewer:** What do you think is the best part about being an adult?*
***Rose:** Being able to do whatever I want.*
***Interviewer**: What kinds of things do you get to do?*
***Rose**: It's true that all I ever do do is work on my books. I guess what I like about being an adult is (short pause) I mean, some version of what I enjoy about my adult life is that Boyfriend's Name and I go to the theater a lot, concerts a lot, so it's all kind of a repudiation of my childhood that I found a place in this other world which I value."*

She is asked about the turning point that took her to a different world,

Interviewer: *What event or events have had the biggest impact on the choices and plans you've made in your life? It seems like one of the biggest decisions for you was to do your PhD.*
Rose: *Yeah, and I think everything follows from that.*
Interviewer*: So what had the biggest impact on --*
Rose: *-- my decision to do that? I guess – I guess the transition from high school to college. Being just depressed in high school for years and then just going to college and living it. And this is the world I want to stay in.*

And further, (Rose ANNY 11 1144-1155 and 1379 – 1396)

Interviewer: *What do you think are the main differences between being an adult and being a teenager?*
Rose: *(laugh) (short pause) Autonomy. Being able to select the world you live in.*
Interviewer*: Can you explain that.*
Rose*: I actually have – I'm amazed that I've achieved the life that I would have desperately wanted when I was a teenager. I have managed to, you know, be in a world where people like to read books and all this was very – after spending this sort of freakish adolescence, so I guess that's the great achievement of adulthood, right – you don't have to live in the world that's handed to you.*

Interviewer: *Looking back, do you wish something had been different about the way you grew up?*
Rose: *Well, looking Back, it's all fine because it got me where I am. At the time, it was, I was sort of unnecessarily traumatized by middle school and high school. I wish I had gone somewhere else. I think I was sort of depressed for a long time.*
Interviewer*: Wish you had gone to a different school, you mean?*
Rose: *Yes.*
Interviewer: *What was it about the school that –*
Rose: *I mean, I used to deal with - it was a school that was first of all terrible and then secondly only recognized Math abilities and I was terrible in Math and so they kept trying to put me in classes with people who were in no way college bound because my Math kind of sucked. All that kind of bullshit. I just had a terrible education; I didn't have enough friends, so it was miserable.*

These excerpts indicate that college was a turning point for Rose; she experienced identity change, changes in behavior, changed life direction. Rose suggests she has also experienced widespread changes as she transformed from a freakish academic failure to a

successful graduate school candidate. This experience for Rose is consistent with the classical definition of turning point, and is for her, a repudiation of her childhood.

Summary: Widespread Effects of Turning Points

As observed in the lives of the QSTA participants, experiences consistent with the classical definition of turning points include widespread effects on other areas of life. Looking very closely at Andrew's narrative, it can be seen that not only is the Navy a turning point in his life, it is also a response to the loss of an important goal; for financial reasons, Andrew was unable to attend the big university of his dreams. Instead he attended a local community college and lived at home with his parents. His military enlistment can be seen as a recovery from this loss. Nathan too was unable to go to college and play football. This was for him a turning point that sent his life in a downward spiral from which he seems unable to recover. When Maureen describes being a teenage mother as a "sidestep", it appears she is minimizing the effects of motherhood as a turning point in her life to avoid experiencing regret. In Sean's experience we can observe the way an on-the-job injury has not only transformed his life, it has complicated his life significantly. Indeed as seen by Rose's experience, turning points may be experienced so strongly so as to be seen as repudiations of earlier stages, or perhaps, earlier identities, selves, behaviors, relationships, worldviews.

SUMMARY

This chapter includes deep descriptions of consequential change experiences as expressed by the participants of the QSTA. Participants in the QSTA experienced and expressed changes in their lives which were in many ways consistent with the classical definition of turning points, but most often did not include all elements of the classical

definition of turning points, its elements, and its emphases. In their discussions of change, participants expressed elements of the classically defined turning point such as changes in terms of meaningfulness, changes in objective and subjective elements, iconic changes, and widespread effects of changes.

Several themes arose which indicated a sense of meaningfulness or significance in turning point experiences. Angela (New York) spoke of a turning point experience that happened to her uncle in the wake of September 11. Amelia (New York) spoke of her September 11 experience in uncharacteristic detail, signifying that for her, this event was somehow different than all the others she talked about in the narrative. There were symbolic elements to expressions of turning points as well. Amelia (New York) expressed her American identity as prominent by getting a tattoo of the American flag. Winston (New York) identified himself in the cloak of a powerful cultural theme; as an immigrant he sees himself as part of the very fabric of America, as "the real driving force of this country." In other cases, unsolicited references to turning points were made in different contexts. Andrew (Michigan) talks about his military experience in response to questions about high school and athletics signifying the far reaching and meaningful aspects of his military experience as turning point. Yet in some cases, turning point experiences were met with a kind of ambivalence. Thus the indices of meaning varied for participants as they expressed turning point experiences. For some these experiences could be understood as highly meaningful, as symbolic and infused with the sanctity of sacred objects. While for others participants, turning points were met with pragmatism, an acceptance of change as a way of life.

Objective elements of turning point experiences were expressed in terms of physical change, behavioral change, changes in relationships, and the recognition of turning points by others. Corey underwent physical changes so great that he was unrecognizable to his family and friends on coming home from his military experience. Behavioral changes were common for turning point experiences. Turning points also affected relationships, for example, Andrew was seen as a man by his father, their relationship changed by Andrew's military experience. Amelia's relationships have changed as well; her friends in Puerto Rico no longer see her as Puerto Rican; they see her as American. This recognition by others, a structural element, was also experienced by Andrew in that his mother recognized the significance of his military turning point the morning he left for military service; the picture he describes of her crying was an indelible moment. These objective aspects are important and may be seen to reinforce identity change through the operation of the looking glass self (Cooley 1902). Objective elements may also serve to underscore the significance of the turning point experience. Finally, these objective aspects of participants' experiences are consistent with the classical turning point definition.

Subjective elements are elements of the classical definition of turning points and are often emphasized by in the literature as particularly central to the concept (Strauss 1959, Shanahan and Macmillan 2008). Subjective elements of turning point experiences were expressed by QSTA participants as changes in identity, changes in the self, and changes in worldview.

Most often identity change arose in the context of immigration. Participants spoke about immigration as an abrupt event followed by changes in identity. Mark, Winston,

and Molly talked about becoming an American in their eyes and in those of others. There were also indications that the self is involved in turning point experiences. For some like Sean (Michigan), the self was not changed despite the turning point experience of injury that exacerbated and compounded other aspects of his life; Sean maintains that he is "essentially" still the same person. Andrew (Michigan) on the other hand tells us that in the military he experienced a tearing down of his old self and the building of a new self. Thus the changes to the self may be part of the turning point experience.

A change in worldview is not an element of the classical definition of turning point, but it was present in Andrew's (Michigan) experience of a military turning point. Through his experiences in the Navy, Andrew has changed his view of the world and his approach. This insightful expression makes change in worldview a potential addition to the conceptual definition of turning points. There were also expressions of iconic change, including all the key elements of the classical turning point definition by the QSTA participants. Mary's (Michigan) religious conversion provides a rich example of abrupt change, change in direction, change in behavior, change in identity, change in self and change in worldview as well as objective and subjective changes.

It was clear from the experiences of the QSTA participants that there are indeed widespread effects of turning points reaching into multiple trajectories. These stories were about loss and recovery, downward spirals and missed opportunities, exacerbations of turning points, and the repudiation of earlier stages in life. For some participants, there was an attempt to gain ethnicity lost through immigration (Patrick), for others the gain was of a father lost by separation (Mary). Others like Andrew and Nathan told us about the loss of a hoped for university education; for Andrew this loss was recovered by his

military experience; for Nathan the loss was not recovered, the turning point sending him into a downward spiral. Sean's turning point experience as an on-the-job injury changed his identity, his behavior, and his roles as worker, husband, father, provider, and colleague. Sean's turning point experience was exacerbated by subsequent events compounding the negative effects of his turning point injury. Rose repudiated everything about her previous life; her turning point of college attendance was an awakening to a new world of her own making, a turning away from her previous "freakish" existence.

Thus empirical evidence from QSTA participant expressions of consequential change suggests that compliance with the classical definition of turning points is variable. Some iconic, quintessential turning points include all dimensions of the concept as outlined by the classical formulation. Other turning point experiences do not. In addition, there is evidence that elements of change in worldview and changes to the self are part of some turning point experiences. Significantly, every narrative mentioned in this chapter included a change to self or change to identity; in some cases both. Andrew experienced a changed sense of self as a result of his military experience. Michael became a "totally different person" because of immigration. Mary changed her identity when she became a mother and as a result of her religious conversion. Although Patrick reports a constant sense of self, he expressed an identity change as a result of immigration. Winston, Amelia, Mark and Molly express identity changes due to immigration as well. Corey expresses a change to identity with his military experience. Piper no longer sees herself as "ghetto". Sean expresses a constant sense of self yet a changed identity because of his on-the-job injury. Jaimie's identity changed as she experienced problems in mental health. Nathan now sees himself as unsuccessful as a result of his choice to work rather

than go to college and play football. Maureen's identity change was expressed when her son was born. And Rose no longer sees herself as "freakish". These findings support changes to identity as a leading element of the classical definition of turning point.

As a result of the variation in elements of the classical turning point definition expressed in narratives of consequent change by the QSTA participants it is reasonable to consider developing the concept turning point as an ideal type; an ideal type with a leading feature of identity change. In this way experiences would not simply be ruled out or ruled in as turning points, but could instead be identified as turning points by degree of compliance with the ideal type elements. This allows comparisons with the ideal type but also with other turning point experiences that includes the same and different elements of the ideal type.

Chapter Seven
Turning Points and Social Contexts

Introduction

We have thus far explored experiences of the QSTA participants of changes in their lives assessing them against the elements and emphases of the classical definition of turning points as articulated by Strauss (1959), Elder et al (2004), Mortimer (Lecture 2005), and Shanahan and Macmillan (2008). Having discussed the ways less consequential experiences compare to the classical turning point definition (Chapter Five), and the ways more consequential experiences are expressed and experienced (Chapter Six), I will now turn to the subject of social contexts. In this chapter, I look to the broader patterns of social life where experiences consistent with elements of the turning point definition occur. The following theme codes are contained in the category, Turning Points and Social Contexts:

Category: Turning Points and Social Contexts
Theme Code: Identity and Immigration Stories
Theme Code: Turning Points and Education
Theme Code: Turning Points and Occupation
Theme Code: Turning Points and Religious Experiences
Theme Code: Turning Points and the Military

<u>Identity and Immigration Stories</u>

Many of the excerpts and experiences noted here have been presented in other chapters as well, particularly the section in Chapter Six regarding turning points and changes in identity. In studying identity changes as elemental to the definition of turning points, it became apparent very quickly that immigration stories made up a large portion of the theme code identity. In many ways identity change and immigration emerged

together in the data; and the question of "Who am I now?" was in large part answered by "Becoming an American".

It is clear that the experience of immigration is often consistent with many elements of the classical conception of turning points, in particular the defining element of identity change. In many ways, the immigration experience also reflected changes in opportunities, changed direction, changes in behavior, subjective and objective changes, as well as widespread changes in multiple trajectories.

Winston from New York, as we have seen in Chapters Five and Six, expresses an immigration experience that is consistent with the elements of the classical definition of turning points. Winston was born in Moldova, a place he describes then and now as "cronyist, semi-Communist, semi-mafia run state" (2069). Moldova was and is "stagnant, like a pond" (2070).

Winston immigrated to the United States from Moldova when he was twelve years old. Winston gained his United States citizenship about two years prior to the interview. And as we have seen, Winston identifies himself as integrating himself into the American fabric, as more American than anything else. But Winston's story is also one of great opportunities, opportunities that likely changed the direction of his life, opportunities that likely were not available in a "stagnant pond", in Moldova. He has gone to high school and college in the United States; achieving a Bachelor of Arts Degree in International Affairs. This international interest is a theme running through many of his comments and experiences: Winston has lived in Ghana as part of an exchange program, visited Europe and Eastern Europe extensively and also spent time in Israel. His interview is filled with knowledgeable comments on world politics and human rights issues; he has particular

interests in conflict resolution and democratization processes. As part of his educational experience he worked with a Washington D.C. think tank doing research and some writing. Winston plans to continue his education gaining a MA and attending Law School and perhaps working for a Ph.D. Certainly Winston is very accomplished and without a doubt engaged in world affairs; however, if he had not left Moldova it is unlikely these opportunities and accomplishments would have been possible.

Molly's (ANNY 12) experiences likewise include those of identity change and increased opportunities with immigration to America. Molly immigrated to America from Ukraine when she was 12 or 13 years old; she is now a United States citizen. We have seen from Chapter Six that she identifies herself as an American, and further that immigration has increased her opportunities greatly. Molly tells us that her immigration has given her a whole new set of choices, from college attendance to faculty relationships, to fellowships and programs. This is drastically different than the lives her friends are living in Ukraine (ANNY 12 Molly 0839 – 0848),

Molly: *I just went and saw some of my friends. I didn't like it particularly much and I would never go back again. It was a very sad – a lot of them were very promising students in school and they wound up not doing anything because they didn't have the money and some girls were already having babies and they were seventeen and it was very sad. I didn't do anything and I just – it was just very sad, that's all I can say*

Molly tells us that she cannot imagine living in Ukraine again, that it is too "horrible" to imagine. Like Winston, Molly expresses her experience of immigration in terms of changed identity and increased opportunities.

Michael (ANNY 5) from New York, expresses great change as a result of immigration, despite financial hardships, although he cannot identify this great change as

good or bad nor does he report structural or objective aspects of increased opportunities (ANNY 5 Michael 2370 – 2389),

Interviewer: *Looking back, do you wish something had been different about the way you grew up?*
Michael: *I would say that the attitude my parents – tell me the kind of stuff they teach me, I wish it was different. I mean, when I grew up here, my family didn't have much money, so their attitude towards things was kind of different, and the kind of stuff we did was kind of different than let's say, like – have more money, middle class, have a regular income.*
Interviewer: *Sort of immigrating to the United States*
Michael: *Yeah I: was really hard on the family: Yes, especially.*
Interviewer: *Do you think that they should have stayed in China – that you should have stayed in China?*
Michael: *I mean, I can't, there's no way to see how my life would be, so I would say, definitely my life would have been different – I'd be a totally different person, but I don't have any regret on it or don't know if it would be better or not, so I can't really say.*

Michael as we have noted, came to the United States as a child from China with his parents. He is currently taking college classes part time in computer science and working full time as a field technician for a wireless telephone company. Michael has also served in the Army Reserves. Whether these represent increased opportunities for Michael he cannot say; simply that his life in America has made him "a totally different person", and although he doesn't elaborate on this identity change, it does reflect the element of identity change in the classically defined concept turning point.

Mark from New York (ANNY9) immigrated to America from Russia when he was eleven or twelve years old. He is 35 years old and currently working in two insurance companies while going to school at night to gain his insurance license. He plans to own an insurance company offering various kinds of insurance to clients. He attended technical school for several years but left when he had an opportunity to partner in a medical office with a friend. We have seen in Chapter Six that Mark identifies himself as

an American. Interestingly, while Mark does not comment on opportunities gained through immigration for himself, he does note that his mother feels she would have had more opportunities living in the U.S. all of her life instead of living in the Soviet Union where her opportunities were limited by being Jewish (1005).

We have seen in Chapter Six that the experience of immigration often includes several elements of the turning point as classically defined: it is an abrupt experience that brings about changes in identity, behavior, and widespread change in multiple trajectories. By looking more closely at the social context of immigration, it is clear that the objective element of a new opportunity structure is also present for many. Participants of the QSTA express immigration experiences as involving new educational opportunities, new relationships, new behaviors, new directions as well as significant changes to identity.

Turning Points and Education

It is clear from the experiences of the QSTA participants that education and educational choices often constitute turning points. As noted, educational opportunities are often part of immigration experiences for the participants of the QSTA. Yet for others, educational opportunities lost carry the elements of the classically defined turning point experience.

Considering once again Andrew's experience (Chapter 6) we have seen that the loss of an opportunity for a university education turned him towards military enlistment. Andrew's military service is consistent with the classically defined turning point in terms of abrupt event, identity change, subjective and objective changes, changes in widespread trajectories and also additional elements of change to self, and change in worldview. I have suggested that Andrew's Navy career can be seen as a recovery from the loss of a

university education. Andrew tells us that had he stayed in community college, had he gained a four year degree, he would not have joined the military and his life would have been completely different.

Nathan's (Michigan) missed opportunity of going to college and playing football has sent his life into a downward spiral (Chapter Six). This experience is for Nathan consistent with all elements of the classically defined turning point. Due to family pressure, instead of going to college, Nathan went to work. From this point, his life went in a different direction, spiraling downward to an existence of factory work, credit problems, regrets, lack of relationships, to a place where Nathan believes there is no turning back.

When Piper (New York) is asked if there is anything different about the way she grew up, she talks about wishing she had worked harder and gained acceptance into an Ivy League college. Although Piper says she has no regrets, she does tell us that having attended an Ivy League school would have affected her whole life (ANNY 6 Piper 2204-2214),

Interviewer*: Looking back, do you wish you something had been different about the way you grew up?*
Piper: *No – I feel – I wish I had gone to like probably an Ivy League school and have applied myself more. I could have been a stockbroker or something now. I don't think you know how important college is when you're there. You think oh, I'm getting higher learning. You don't think – "This is going to affect the rest of m y life." That's about the only thing I wish I would have done differently, but I don't think I have regrets.*

In her interview Piper tells us that she went to an all female Catholic high school and that she attended college; but it isn't clear from the narrative what kind of college she attended or where, nor do we know from the narrative whether or not she received a

degree. It is telling that Piper doesn't mention these details. She is currently working at a university as an administrative manager. Piper has been working full time at the University for four years and has been promoted several times; having started as a secretary, advanced to an administrative assistant, and finally to her current position as administrative manager. She reports that her work is enjoyable but not too challenging and that her salary is sufficient but only for the moment. Piper's notion of success seems to be tied up in her idea of an Ivy League education. Her high school failed to emphasize the importance of college choice and GPA in terms of future success. Piper thought that all she needed to be successful was a college diploma, but now she seems convinced otherwise. Educational choice for Piper contains some elements of the classical definition of turning points; it has changed her behavior and her direction in life. As to the key element of identity transformation, it is not clearly expressed, although Piper says she could have been a "stockbroker or something now".

Turning Points and Occupation

Occupational changes and concerns are no doubt part of the transition to adulthood, but the experiences of the QSTA participants do not necessarily contain the elements of classically defined turning points, particularly the emphasis on subjective aspects and changes to identity. Angela (New York) is currently living with her mother having gone back to school as a result of a "reality check" in her occupational journey (ANNY 1 Angela 2680-2710),

Interviewer: *What even or events had the biggest impact on the choices or plans you have made for your life?*
Angela: *(pause) I think it was like a point in time, I just kind of had a reality check, I was working at three jobs, but I wasn't – it was like I was workin' not happy – I was getting money and stuff but it's like I wasn't making any real progress. It's like everything that I could do on the job, each one of the jobs, I had already done. You know, and it's like no other place to go. That's when I saw I need something more. This is, No*

I can't be doing this – I need more than this, and I think at that point in time, when I was working for seven, eighteen fifty looked real nice and I needed something to get me at eighteen fifty. I thought, Burger King and all that, I have to find something else to do, and I'm gonna get me there.
Interviewer: *So if you had seen a clear progression, you probably wouldn't have gone back to school. Is that what you're saying?*
Angela: *Probably wouldn't have even left. That's basically what happened, 'cause for that time, when I got out of high school and I got jobs, I kept making moves. Like at Burger King for like three years – when I started out cleaning tables and when I left there, I quit, and I was doing a manager's job but I wasn't making a manager's money and they weren't trying to get me a manager's money and it was like ok, then, bye. And I touched a little bit of everything and it's only so far you can go in a job. If you got a career, you can just keep going, keep going, but in a job, you can get but so far and you be stuck. That's it.*

At this point in time, Angela is taking a two year course in Electronic Computer Technology and when completed (in three weeks time from the interview date), she will have earned an Associate's Degree. She is contemplating returning to school for an additional two years in Technical Management, and combined with her Associates Degree, this would earn Angela a Bachelors Degree. She has plans to work in the computer industry. Angela's occupational experience has fostered changes in behavior and in work and educational trajectories. Yet she does not express identity change, changes to the self, an acute change event, or subjective changes. It would be difficult to define Angela's experience as consistent or inconsistent with the classical definition of turning points. Angela's occupational experience contains changes in behavior and in multiple trajectories but it does not emphasize characteristics of subjective changes including changes to the self and identity.

Angela's "reality check" is similar to Patrick's (New York) occupational epiphany discussed in Chapter Six. Patrick was involved in theater but when he had a singular experience in college, he decided "then and there" that theater would be his career (ANNY 13 Patrick 2283-2305),

Interviewer: *Have there been any events that have had a really impact on your life that you could say Yes. This really really changed.*
Patrick: *Really changed. Let's see. (pause) Wow. Like looking back, I'm trying to think what stands out a lot. Oh, one thing was during the Student Cultural Show in my senior year of college. What happened was it was sponsored by it was like a Very social Chinese group, like Chinese Association, it's a social group but they had no – and the Asian kids were a source of mockery for all of us so my theater group, we basically – they contacted me to do a skit as part of the show, and when I ended up like doing this farce of the whole kind of cliquey nature of the group that was sponsoring us, and it turned out to be extremely successful, and the Loved it and it was then and there I knew that I wanted to go into theater because – just because having that power to be a subversive at the same time – being subversive and for people to think but not for them to like Hate you for doing that, and creatively I got such an overwhelming response out of that, I knew that was for me. That was definitely what I wanted to do.*

Patrick's decision was to become a playwright; thus he has not changed his behavior to something totally different, nor as noted previously, has he changed his sense of identity or sense of self. Instead, the success of his skit accentuated his interests in theater and strongly affected his occupational aspirations, but his experience cannot be characterized as a turning point as classically understood.

Turning Points and Religious Experiences

The domain of turning points and religious experiences brings us back to the conversion of Mary (Michigan). We have seen Mary's religious experience detailed in Chapter Five as an example of an acute turning point event, and in Chapter Six as an iconic expression of a turning point replete with all elements as included in the classical conception.

Mary describes her early religious life in this way; she says she was an atheist (ANNY 15 Mary 1230 – 1239),

Interviewer: *Was it important to your grandmother? Did she talk to you about it or?*
Mary: *She wanted me to believe 'cuz I was atheist so she wanted me to believe. She was very hurt that I didn't' believe and that I had so many questions, and. I was just so angry at … it wasn't really I was angry at God, I was angry at not knowing. You know. Because I thought that I, because my brother was too. My brother burned a Bible, my mother was going to have him committed. And I mean it was both of us were so … and I don't know if it was angry because anger was totally out on God because of our parents or why but. I just didn't believe, at all. I thought church was a social occasion. You know I didn't think that you were going to learn anything."*

This is markedly different from the way Mary now describes herself after having experienced a religious transformation. Mary tells us that she feels physically different, that her heart feels light. She is no longer angry or depressed, she no longer uses foul language or loses her temper, and she is very aware of sin, of right and wrong. Mary continues to talk about how important this experience was for her, so much so that she wants her children to participate in the religious life, and further, that she thinks religion is something everyone should experience (ANMI 15 Mary 1292 - 1310),

Interviewer*: … Do you think religion will be important in your children's lives?*
Mary: *If I have anything to do with it it will be. I'm hoping.*
Interviewer*: Are they involved now?*
Mary: *They go to, but they don't want to. It's just been like I said, since a year ago May. But umm … they … they have to go to Sunday service and they have to go to family night on Wednesday nights. I don't make them. I'm trying to get my oldest one involved because she's, she don't really have a lot of friends. She has friends in school but come the summer she don't have no friends. She don't have … and I kinda would like her to be going, to these functions at … at church because they're kids that have morals. There are kids that are being brought up in, you know the way I want my children to be brought up so. I'm hoping.*
Interviewer: *Anything else that you think is important? In religion?*
Mary: *I think everybody should have it. I really do. I think this, this day and age when you've got judges saying that. To take the God out of the Pledge of Allegiance, that's just disgusting. And it's on our money, in God we Trust. We're looking at it right on the money too. It's … I just think that the world is so screwed up right now. And it's like their day's coming and they better hush up.*

Mary's experience fits with a conversion rather than an alternation. She has turned from an atheist to a believer in no uncertain terms. Furthermore, Mary is extending this experience to her children and expresses a wish that everyone embrace religion as she has.

Turning Points and the Military

The theme code of military experiences as turning points has been discussed previously in many different contexts. Certainly they are among the post powerful turning point experiences discussed by participants of the QSTA. Many of the participants experienced military service as a totally different world, something of a shock; others turned towards the military experience as though seeking significant change in their lives; still others speak to the military as having significant effects on behavior and identity. We will explore the stories of Andrew, Corey, and Michael in more detail.

In meeting the elements of the classically defined turning point concept, we can see that both Andrew's and Corey's military experiences have been powerful in scope and fit the concept definition. Andrew's (ANMI 14) military experience meets all elements of the classically defined turning point as discussed in Chapter Six. He has said it is unlikely he would have joined the Navy if he'd been able to have his wish of attending university away from home. As you may recall, Andrew enlisted in the Navy after completing some community college while living with his parents in his hometown. Andrew's military experience has had far reaching effects. Being in the Navy brought him to a totally new world, literally serving on Crete, and figuratively in his approach to life. He has experienced ethnic diversity, new relationships, and changes to his existing relationships. Andrew has experienced a change in identity and indeed a change in self,

along with behavioral changes. The significance of Andrew's experience is underscored by his frequent references to military experiences when asked questions involving other contexts; it is as if he relates everything in his life to the Navy experience.

Corey's military experience has been discussed in Chapter Six in terms of behavioral changes (never oversleeping and becoming more disciplined), physical changes (a more muscular appearance recognizable to friends and family), as well as identity change as expressed by his inability to change from active duty identity to reservist identity. Not only is Corey's experience consistent with the elements of the classically defined turning point, it was also an experience that like Andrew, Corey sought out,

***Interviewer**: Why did you join?*
***Corey**: Why?*
***Interviewer**: Why, yeah.*
***Corey:** 'Cause I was bored.*
***Interviewer**: Is that why? You were bored and wanted to go?*
***Corey:** I was bored of this area. I wanted to do something new, be in a new country or state or something. Do something new with my life.*

But there is still much more to Corey's story; the extent of Corey's experience was dramatic – turning Corey from a lieutenant of war as a gang member to a sergeant in the United States Army (ANNY 14 Corey 1925 - 2003),

***Interviewer:** And that got you out of here in – I've been reading over your interview before, you were part of the familia, right? Is that part of it, too, of what I'm hearing? It kind of got you out of here?*

Immediately Corey begins to express how much the military changed him, taking him away from his gang life into a new life of military service,

***Corey:** Well, once it got me, when I went into the military, yeah, it did make my mind like, not focus on those gang members, on all the hoodlum stuff that I used to do. It just had me focused just to do what I still set on how I was already taught. So I didn't really*

care about the gangs or anything. Even though, to this day I might run into maybe two or three of them. But they know I don't deal with them. But to this day they always tell me, they always still have my back, if I have any problems.

Interestingly, Corey's former "familia" still see him as part of the gang, but in Corey's case, this objective aspect does not change his subjective understanding of himself, it isn't who he is anymore, their fights aren't his fights anymore,

Interviewer: *Right, you're still family.*
Corey: *Yeah, 'cause they still consider me family. But, they know that if I see them in a jam, like in a fight or something and it's like say two guys versus like seven guys and if those two are having the fight I know them and they were part of the family I was in, they know off the bat I'll jump in. I won't let them get fucked up, after they already told me they will always have mine. You know, I can't disrespect them like that. So, that's like mainly the only thing, but once I came out of the military, to this day, I don't really rejoin up with the gangs, I don't have meetings with them. Even though once in a blue, they run into me and they're like "oh you know, this is going on." And I'll be like -*
Interviewer: *they keep you up to date on it, but it's not you.*
Corey: *Yeah, they keep me updated. Yeah, it ain't me anymore. 'Cause they'll tell me, and I'll be like "You're telling me this why?" I'll tell them, and I'll tell them to their face. I'll be like, and you're telling me this why? "You was one of our lieutenants and this and that. I just want to keep you informed." "What you guys have going on, keep it to yourselves." 'Cause you wouldn't want me telling you, "Oh look, we're gonna have a war with this country" It ain't like you can help me with it. You know? So, keep your personal gang fights out of my way. You know, now if you see me in trouble, yeah, you can help me if you want.*
Interviewer: *But that's different, that's trouble.*
Corey: *Yeah. But - No, but for them war is trouble. Like, if they're about to start a war with the bloods, that's – "Oh, look we're gonna have a war with this." They'll be like "Oh, we're gonna have a war right now with the bloods, 'cause the bloods just slashed up one of the lieutenants from our clan." And I'll be like "You're telling me this why? I'm not part of the clan anymore. I can't help you in this. This is your personal matter." I'll be like "Now, if I see you in trouble on your own, you know, getting jumped or getting picked on by a crew, then of course I'll jump in 'cause you're my family." Same vice-versa. You know, you tell me that. But they know how I run. Once I get in, like, if I get into my own beef, I take care of my own stuff. They can be there to have my back, but they know, if I'm having a fight, I tell everybody who's around me, do not jump in. 'Cause if you jump in I'm hitting you. I did not tell you to help me. I'll tell you just watch my back. Now, if you see me fighting somebody, and you see somebody else come in to try to hit me, then you got the green light. Go in, have fun. Take out their guy that's gonna get me, while I take out his friend. So then, that's the only way. But if you try to just jump in, out of your own will, I'll hit you. "Cause it ain't your fight to get into.*

Thus Corey expresses significant changes as a result of his military experience; an experience that meets the elements of a turning point classically defined. In addition to the physical, behavioral, and identity changes noted previously, Corey's military enlistment has knifed him off from gang life; and describes his new identity. Corey no longer sees himself as he did before; he doesn't see himself as part of the gang, the familia – and importantly, neither do they.

In talking about his military work, Corey's words belie a passion for his new world, a passion that was not in evidence in any of his other comments (ANNY 14 Corey 1628 – 1635),

*Corey: I want to be there, knowing what you gotta do. How we take out the person, how we take out the group. I don't want to be in the ba*ck *going, "OK, we gotta put up a house here, for the guys that are at war." I'd rather be at the war having fun, taking out the enemy. Protecting this country. But I'm in the army. Let's see, my rank is E4, which is specialist.*

Regardless of what Corey is doing now in his life, it seems evident that his sense of self, identity, behavior, are all still tied to the Army.

On the other hand Michael's (New York) military experience is very different from Andrew's and Corey's experiences; Michael's experience does not reflect the classical elements of the turning point definition. As noted earlier Michael immigrated to the United States as a small child with his parents; he was born in China but doesn't remember much at all about living there. Michael says he and his sister are pretty much "Americanized" and although he doesn't elaborate he tells us that his life would be completely different, that he would be a totally different person had the family stayed in China. Michael is living with his parents and extended family in Brooklyn, New York, working full time and taking college classes part time on the G.I. Bill. He seems to feel a

responsibility to his family; he feels he is helping out by living with them as they don't speak much English. Michael's military experience is in the Army Reserves, training in South Carolina and Texas. Michael notes that he enjoyed work in the military, especially the teamwork involved, that he still keeps in touch with friends he made in the military.

For Michael, military life was something of a shock, but at the end of the day, is "like a regular job" (ANNY 5 Michael 0730 – 0750),

***Interviewer**: What was your life like?*
***Michael:** My life was a regular life, you know.*
***Interviewer**: I mean in the Army. I don't know much about the Army.*
***Michael:** It was, when I was there, it was – you've got to listen to orders all the time. You've got to always be on time. I used to sleep until 2:00 on Sundays. I had to wake up at 4:30 in the morning and do push ups. It's a definite shock, because everything you do there – they tell you what to do. And that's just part of the training. After that, everything seems like a regular job. The only difference is you're wearing a uniform.*
***Interviewer:** So you show up to work?*
***Michael:** Yeah.*
***Interviewer:** and it's like-*
***Michael:** There's things to do for that day. In the beginning, they're hard on you. They yell at you, scream at you, but that's just part of the training. Once you got through that, it's like a regular job.*

Thus the military was for Michael just like a regular job, except for wearing a uniform. His next comments suggest that Michael's military experience does not contain the classical elements of the turning point definition (ANNY 5 Michael 0793 – 0815),

***Interviewer:** So what was it like to come home after you'd been in basic training for three or four months?*
***Michael:** It was kind of funny because you see people running to catch a bus (panting sounds)(laugh)Come on. I'm not breaking a sweat. It's just like – you see people shivering in the cold, (talk over)*
***Interviewer:** How about with your family? Did it change the relation to your family?*
***Michael:** Not much. I'm still the same guy.*
***Interviewer**: Really? You weren't like -*
***Michael:** No, not with my parents. The reason I keep my life separate. In the military I do what I have to but I'm back home,*
***Interviewer:** You started sleeping in*

Michael: *Yeah, back to it all. And I keep the two lives separate. There are people in the military who are out in the civilian world, they wear their Army jacket, something. I'm back in the civilian world, I wear sneakers.*
Interviewer: *How come? Why is it important to you to keep it separate?*
Michael: *It's just - I see no need for that since I'm not working there. That's just the way I am. I see no sense in mixing the two.*

Michael does not talk about military life as changed identity, changed behaviors, changed direction, changed relationships – we don't see any of the classical elements of a turning point. To the contrary, Michael is the same person, is the same with his family, but curiously keeps his military and his civilian lives separate, as if two components of the same person.

Summary

Evidence on social contexts and turning points is limited in this study, but insights can be gathered from the experiences as expressed by the participants of the QSTA. I had originally expected theme codes on gender, race, and place but curiously there were no expressions or experiences in these social contexts from the participants, thus I eliminated these theme codes from the final discussions. Experiences of the QSTA participants were categorized into theme codes reflecting social contexts: namely immigration, education, occupation, religion, and military life.

Immigration appears to be a powerful experience, one that often constitutes a turning point as classically defined. In addition to changes in identity, new behaviors, new directions, the experience of immigration often confers new opportunity structures for individuals. Participants of the QSTA expressed in particular new educational opportunities they believe would not have been possible or even imaginable in their countries of origin.

Education is an important aspect of the transition to adulthood and certainly was reflected in the experiences of the QSTA participants. Based on the expressions of the QSTA participants, educational choices may likely constitute turning points as they did for Andrew and for Nathan, exhibiting elements of identity transformation, behavioral changes, subjective and objective changes, as well as changes in widespread trajectories. Educational choices appear a bit as forks in the road from which individuals may divert to new vistas, may slide downhill, or may settle for a path of least resistance. For Andrew, not attending University pointed him towards military enlistment and a completely new life. Nathan's choice of factory work over college and football seems a moment from which his life diminished in many aspects. Piper's educational choice was not the Ivy League choice she wishes she'd made, perhaps limiting her ability achieve in the occupational arena.

Interestingly in the occupational domain, changes expressed by the QSTA participants did not meet the expected elements of the classically defined turning point, or perhaps not the emphases on subjective aspects. Angela's frustrations with low paying, low mobility jobs was a powerful force in her life containing behavioral elements and changes in trajectories, but not identity change or changes in the self. This frustration was for her a "reality check" and moved her towards an Associate's Degree and career possibilities in computer technology. Patrick's decision to become a playwright although dramatic was the accentuation of his earlier interests and participation in theater.

Mary's religious turning point experience was consistent with conversion rather than alternation. Discussed in earlier chapters as well (Chapters Five and Six), Mary's conversion exhibits all of the elements of the classically defined turning point.

Although military experiences can be powerfully expressed, consistent with the turning point definition, this is not always the case. For Andrew and Corey, military life was expressed as encompassing identity change, behavioral change, change in direction, subjective and objective change, and widespread change in multiple trajectories. Andrew moved away from a life similar to his siblings to one full of new experiences and relationships. Corey moved away from gang life to military life. Yet, Michael sees himself as essentially unchanged, as the same person, doing a job like any other job, military work distinguishable only by the wearing of a uniform. Andrew and Corey describe experiences consistent with the classically defined turning point; Michael does not.

Thus the evidence is suggestive on turning points and social contexts given the experiences of the QSTA participants. Turning points may arise in any social context, particularly those of immigration, education, religion, and military domains. More work must be done to understand turning point experiences in the occupational arena.

Turning point or change experiences were not discussed by QSTA participants in areas of race, gender, and place. This perplexing finding was surprising. I expected gender identity to be expressed in change experiences of the QSTA participants. But this was not the case. As noted earlier (See Chapter Four, Theme Code Descriptions), perhaps experiences of coming out as gay or lesbian are more gradual and thus less acutely consequential for those experiencing them than for family and friends.

With regard to race, there were questions on skintone and ethnicity asked in the interview schedule. Responses generally indicated that these aspects of identity did not help or hinder participants. There were no comments suggesting race or ethnicity was

relevant to change experiences. The only entry in this theme code was from Patrick (ANNY 13), who had an interesting comment on racial identity. Patrick, whose parents emigrated from China, tells the interviewer that he does have blue contacts and he did lighten his hair to blonde for awhile and then on to blue. But Patrick mentions this only in passing, these adjustments to his appearance are not connected or related to any form of change, consequential or otherwise. As relative constants in life experience, race and ethnicity do not appear to be directly involved in turning point experiences.

The QSTA participants, in their comments relevant to change experiences, did not refer directly to place. However, it cannot be missed that all expressions of change experiences have come from two regions, New York or Michigan. This was something I did not notice while coding, but only in the analysis and writing stages. Unlike Minnesota and Iowa, the New York site included large numbers of immigrants. The New York study sample was originally drawn to include a broad range of second-generation youth along with comparable native born whites, African Americans, and Puerto Ricans (Rumbaut et al 2007). In the subsample for the present study, 40% of participants were foreign born, having come to the United States as children. This percentage was higher than in any of the other subsamples: only 15% of those in the Minnesota subsample were foreign born having immigrated to the United States; there were no foreign born participants in subsamples of Michigan or Iowa who came to the United States as children. With immigration being a likely context for turning points (six of the 18 turning point experiences identified in the present study were a direct result of immigration), it is not surprising that the New York subsample presented turning point experiences; nor was it surprising that the Minnesota and Iowa subsamples did not

present turning point experiences. Age may also be a pertinent consideration. The Michigan subsample contained the largest proportion of participants (85%), who were aged 30-32; in contrast, Iowa had 10% of its participants, New York had 20% of its participants, and Minnesota had 10% of its participants aged 30-32. Michigan respondents simply had a larger span of time to experience, and to reflect upon, turning point experiences. In any event, contexts of gender, race and place should most certainly be studied further.

Chapter Eight
Summary and Conclusion
Suggestions for Further Study
An Ideal Type Turning Point
Key Contributions

Aaron Larson, Former Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, Dr. Jane Goodall, and many of the participants of the QSTA would likely attest to the experience of turning points in life. Turning points are, as first coined by Strauss, critical events to which we can say, "I am not the same person as I was, as I used to be" (Strauss 1959:93). Considering Strauss' formulation and the elaborations of others, for the purposes of this analysis, the classical conception of turning points is understood to be: an abrupt event engendering transformations to the self and identity, behavioral change, subjective and objective changes, meaningfulness, and widespread changes in multiple trajectories (Strauss 1959, Elder et al. 1986, 2004, Mortimer Lecture 2005, Shanahan and Macmillan 2008). Emphasized along with these elements are subjective changes, changes to the self, and changes to identity (Strauss 1959, Shanahan and Macmillan 2008). My approach to the study of the QSTA narratives has been informed by existing literature and theory on turning points yet guided by a method of grounded theory. In other words, I have been aware of previous formulations and elements of turning points, explicitly incorporating them into the analysis as the "classical definition of turning points" while remaining open to new formulations and elements of turning points that arose in the data. In this way, I have examined the narratives of the QSTA participants to address the following research questions with reference to the classical formulation:

1. How do young adults talk about change?

2. What are the central characteristics of turning points in subjective experience? How are these characteristics similar to and different from the current classical definition of turning points?
3. In what ways are turning points expressed in social contexts?
4. How can the concept of turning point be developed as an ideal type for use in future empirical studies?

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

How Do Young Adults Talk About Change?
Differentiating Consequential from Less Consequential Experiences of change

When young adults talk about change, they include a variety of experiences ranging from the less consequential to the more consequential. Experiences consistent with the classically defined turning point were talked about differently by QSTA participants than other, less consequential experiences of change. Transitions were expressed as accentuations, often in terms of increasing responsibility and increasing maturity in the contexts of parenthood, adulthood, and aging. Expressions of change as transitions also reflected inconsistencies, movements back and forth, and ambivalence unlike the clear change in direction in a classically defined turning point experience. Stressful events were expressed by the participants of the QSTA without producing significant changes in their lives. For some stress was accepted, they moved along without a wrinkle; for others stressful events served to underscore a sense of already existing priorities and behaviors. Significant events were largely accepted without creating additional changes; for QSTA participant Winston, significant events were seen as part and parcel of an existing movement toward goal achievement. In some instances, QSTA participants described simple lifestyle changes, changes in habits, and changes in interests. While some of these less consequential changes included behavioral changes, they did not exhibit the

widespread changes in multiple trajectories, indications of meaningfulness or of significance. In all cases these expressions of less consequential change lacked the often theoretically emphasized characteristic of turning points, change in identity. This finding can be seen to support identity change, changes in the self and subjective changes as leading features of an ideal type turning point.

What are the Central Characteristics of Turning Points in Subjective Experience? How are these characteristics similar to and different from the classical definition of turning points?

Participants in the QSTA report experiences of change consistent with the classical definition of turning points in both abrupt, discrete forms and in more gradual forms of process. In looking carefully at the process oriented changes, it appears that these more gradual processes are often actually subsequent to discrete and singular, if not abrupt events. Experiences of abrupt change were particularly evident in social contexts of military experience, immigration, and religious conversion. Participants recognized experiences of change as both acute experiences and experiences of processes triggered by discrete events. This kind of experience is reminiscent of Strauss' typology of turning points in which the first type is a gradual, almost unconscious experience of change (Strauss 1959). In Strauss' formulation, the change experience is recognized when a milestone or event occurs which forces the person to recognize the extent of the change. The QSTA data suggest otherwise; in the experiences reported by the QSTA participants a discrete event occurs first, fostering subsequent gradual and sometimes unacknowledged processes of change. Thus, even when turning points appear to be gradual processes, they likely began with discrete, more abrupt events. This finding is

consistent with the classically defined turning point as an abrupt, discrete event and with reports in the literature suggesting that military service (Elder 1986), immigration (Jasso 2004), and religious experiences (Travisano1981) may be experienced as turning points. Experiences and expressions of change by participants in the QSTA were in many ways consistent with the classical definition of turning points, including in all cases the emphasized feature of identity change at the very least and often the other elements, or combinations of the other elements, as well. Theoretically this is no surprise, indeed identity formation provides the backdrop against which the very concept of turning point is developed. Turning point experiences may be likened to Ericksonian developmental crises resulting in newly synthesized identities for individuals; identities ranging from the more continuous as emphasized by Erickson (1959b) to the completely different. Classically included elements of meaningfulness, behavioral change, subjective and objective changes, changes to the self and widespread change in multiple trajectories were sometimes present in the participants' expressions of consequential change, and sometimes these elements were not. But change in identity was always present in expressions of consequential change.

There was evidence in the reported experiences of the QSTA participants that change experiences consistent with classically defined turning points were meaningful. This sense of meaning was communicated in a number of ways: among them the reporting of a turning point experienced by someone else, uncharacteristic speech patterns in telling about a turning point experience, symbolic references to experiences consistent with turning points as classically defined, continuing references to a classically defined turning point experience in response to various questions in other contexts. Still, the degree to

which experiences consistent with the classical definition were meaningful varied to some extent. At one end of the spectrum, turning point experiences were cloaked in symbolic, sacred significance and could be seen as organizing features of life. At the other end of the spectrum, a turning point could be met with ambivalence and a practical orientation in accepting life changes as somewhat inevitable. Thus there is empirical support for the element of meaningfulness to be included in the conceptualization of a turning point, although not as a necessary feature.

Objective elements as specified by the classical conception of turning point were also present in expressions of consequential change by the QSTA participants. Objective elements were expressed by physical change, behavioral change, and changes in relationships. Objective elements were seen to underscore the more subjective element of identity change through the enactment of the looking glass self (Cooley 1902): when others noticed objective changes they reinforced identity change in the eyes of the participants. Empirical evidence from the QSTA participants confirms the presence of objective elements in experiences of consequential change. Objective elements appear to be useful components of turning point experiences. This is a difficult area to assess empirically, however it is theoretically clear that reflexivity is at the heart of identity and the self. Indeed according to Mead (1934) human awareness of self and others emerges only in interaction. Self, seen as both subject and object, is possible only when we can take on the role of another and see ourselves from the other's point of view. In this way it may be that not only are objective elements useful components of turning point experiences, they may be necessary determinants of turning point experiences involving changes to the sense of self.

Subjective elements of the concept turning point are central features of the classical definition. Identity change has been emphasized theoretically and established empirically as a preeminent aspect of consequential change. Thus it is supported as a leading feature of the turning point concept. The clearest expressions of identity change among the QSTA participants arose in the context of immigration, when participants took on a new, American identity. As with the more objective elements, these identity changes were often noticed by others, reflected back through the looking glass self as articulated by Cooley (1902) and reinforced for those experiencing the transformation. This experience is also consistent with Strauss' (1959) notion that we identify ourselves on the basis of self appraisals but also on the basis of appraisals of others; identity is a product of the masks we wear and the reflections we see in the mirrors of others.

Changes to the self may be implicated in changes to identity but are most certainly more elusive to observe. Consider Rossan's trifecta of identity composed of "subidentites" (roles), "generalized traits" (characteristics enacted through roles), and "core" (profound sense of self) (1987: 304). Rossan suggests that changes to subidentities are more frequent than changes to generalized traits and much more frequent than changes to the core. Theoretically the self is thought to be a collaborative process arising and changing in interaction (Blumer 1969, Cooley 1902, Fine 1981, Goffman 1959a, Mead 1934, Strauss 1959). Experiences of the QSTA support this notion; identity changes were seen in all experiences of consequential change, while changes to the self were less frequent. Some participants expressed a consistent sense of self in the face of great changes, while others expressed the self as completely transformed, and still others do not talk about the sense of self at all. This may be due to

the limitations of the QSTA as a secondary data source. And yet, the spirit of Strauss' turning point conceptualization implicates a change to the sense of self. More research is called for in this area to gain greater understanding of how the self and changes to the self are involved in turning points. But the experiences of the QSTA participants, both in terms of subjective changes and with reference to quintessential turning points, suggest that changes to the self are at least sometimes empirical elements of classically defined turning point experiences.

An additional finding, namely a change in worldview, was present in some of the turning point experiences expressed by the QSTA participants. This is an interesting insight, and can be seen as a potential addition to the concept of turning point. Mead (1934) and Blumer (1969) both consider the self something very special; we give the self significance and we attach meaning to the self. Furthermore, we act in the world through the self. Thus the self is implicated in changes to worldview as well as symbolic ordering or structuring of social life. It may be theorized that as turning points create changes to the self, they may also create changes in worldview and structuring of social life for individuals.

There were experiences of consequential change expressed by participants of the QSTA that exuded a symbolic significance. In part this symbolic significance reflects the element of meaningfulness; but for some participants it was expressed as an organizing feature of their lives akin to a sacred object. This expression of a turning point as sacred object deserves more study and attention for possible inclusion in the turning point ideal type.

Widespread changes in multiple trajectories were evident in many of the QSTA participants' experiences of consequential change; change that was consistent with the classically defined turning point. In seeing turning points as loss and recovery, as missed opportunities and downward spirals, as exacerbations and repudiations, it was clear that turning point experiences create changes in many areas of life. In some cases relationships were replaced through turning point experiences. For others ethnicity was regained. Changes to structures of opportunity are fascinating aspects of turning points as noted by Shanahan and Macmillan (2008). For participants in the QSTA there were new opportunities for some, created for example by the turning point of immigration, missed opportunities turned some participants towards a totally different path, and others started down a slippery slope. Participants shared experiences of turning points that exacerbated issues in many other aspects of life, such as work and family. Indeed, turning points were experienced so strongly as to be seen as repudiations of earlier stages, earlier identities, earlier selves, behaviors, and relationships. The empirical evidence of the QSTA narratives supports the notion that there are widespread effects of turning point experiences in multiple trajectories, and that often, these effects included changes in opportunity structures.

Finally, the experiences of the QSTA participants included, what can only be called quintessential turning points. These experiences contained all specified elements and emphases of the classical definition of the concept. These quintessential or iconic turning point experiences attest to the relevance of each aspect of the classical definition: abrupt experiences, with identity change, changes in the self, behavioral change, meaningfulness

or significance, objective and subjective changes, and widespread changes to multiple trajectories.

Thus, the empirical evidence from the QSTA narratives on subjective experiences of change suggests that turning point experiences are more abrupt than gradual, and that these discrete, recognizable events are followed by significant consequences. There is support in the empirical experiences of the QSTA participants for the contention that identity transformation is a necessary component of turning point experiences. Elements of meaningfulness, behavioral change, objective and subjective changes, changes to the sense of self, and widespread changes in multiple trajectories were sometimes present in the narratives on consequential change and sometimes not present in the narratives of the QSTA participants on consequential change. Additional elements were discovered in the narratives as well. Empirical support for change in worldview and symbolic significance of turning points arose in the narratives of QSTA participants as they expressed their experiences of change. These new elements are considered fruitful discoveries to be investigated more thoroughly in future studies.

In What Ways Are Turning Points Expressed in Social Contexts?

Empirical evidence addressing social contexts of turning points was limited but insightful. Turning point experiences were expressed in the domains of immigration, education, military experience, and religious conversion. In the occupational domain, QSTA participants did not always express their experiences as involving identity change thus, these experiences were inconsistent with turning points as classically defined. Finally, although it was expected that consequential changes would be experienced in domains of race, gender, and place, this was not the case. A plausible explanation is that

qualities such as race and gender are generally constant; thus, it is difficult to conceive of change occurring in these domains. Concerning place, there was a curious silence in the data: there were no turning points expressed by Minnesota or Iowa participants. Domains in which turning points were experienced (immigration, education, military service, religious conversions) are perhaps more vulnerable to exigencies of social life and are thus less constant than domains of gender, race, and place.

Who Reports Turning Points? Who Doesn't Report Turning Points? Relevant Comparisons: New York, Michigan, Minnesota, and Iowa

While not definitive, a general understanding of participants who reported turning points and those who did not report turning points may be insightful in providing perspective on turning points. Approximately 19 turning point experiences consistent with the classical formulation were expressed by 16 participants. Of these 16 participants, eight were men and eight were women. Ten participants who experienced turning points were from New York and six were from Michigan. There were two turning points experienced in the context of military service; one in a religious context; two having to do with the missed opportunity of college/university attendance; six turning point experiences were related to immigration; two turning point experiences were a result of the September 11 terrorist attack on the World Trade Center in New York; two involved becoming a mother; one was a result of a changed relationship; one the result of an on-the-job injury; one connected to mental illness; and one turning point experience involved going to college. Thus, turning point experiences were reported by participants in the New York and Michigan subsamples, were equally likely for men as for women, and were most frequent in the context of immigration.

Further comparison of participants who reported turning points and those who did not on demographic variables does not provide a great yield in terms of meaningful patterns. Concerning immigration, New York participants who reported turning points were more likely to be immigrants than those in the Michigan subsample: four of the ten New Yorkers who reported turning points were immigrants; in fact, there were no immigrants in the Michigan subsample at all. Still there were turning points reported by Michigan participants. There were no immigrants in Iowa and few in Minnesota yet in neither subsample did participants report turning point experiences. Turning point experiences were expressed slightly more often by immigrants, but were certainly expressed by native born participants as well.

Concerning age, New Yorkers who expressed experiences of turning points were young: eight of the ten who reported turning points were younger than 26; while the Michigan reporters were older: one participant was between the ages of 27 and 29; five participants were aged 30 to 32. In contrast to both New York and Michigan, the Minnesota participants were primarily aged 27 to 29 (90%). In Iowa, 50% of participants were under age 27. Thus Iowa, like New York had many young participants but unlike New York, did not include participants who reported turning points. Minnesota was different in terms of participant age from both New York and Michigan yet did not include participants who reported turning points. Thus, there is no pattern discernible with regard to turning points and age in the subsamples of the present study.

Regarding race/ethnicity, the New York turning point reporters were racially/ethnically diverse; yet so were the participants in the Minnesota subsample. New York participants reported turning points; Minnesotans did not report turning points.

Both Michigan turning point reporters and the participants of the Iowa subsample are overwhelmingly white in terms of race/ethnicity. In Michigan participants reported turning points; in Iowa they did not report turning points. Thus, there is no pattern that arose in the context of race/ethnicity and the reporting or non-reporting of turning points.

Socioeconomic status did not appear to affect the reporting of turning points either. More New York reporters of turning points identified as working, middle, and upper classes; while Michigan reporters were more likely to identify as working class, working poor, or poor. Thus members of all socioeconomic statuses appear to report turning points. In Minnesota participants of the subsample were primarily middle class (60%) and in this more closely resembled the New York turning point reporters; yet no participants in the Minnesota subsample reported turning points. Participants in the Iowa subsample resembled the Michigan turning point reporters more closely in terms of class yet did not report turning points. Once again, there is no clear pattern in terms of socioeconomic status and the reporting or non-reporting of turning points.

It must be remembered that the demographic data was not always complete for each subsample or each individual. Generally speaking it appears that both males and females expressed experiences of turning points; as did younger and older participants; majority and minority participants; those who identified as lower, middle and upper classes; and further married and single participants with and without children; participants who received and did not receive government assistance; those who worked full time and part time (See Appendices Table Six: Demographic Detail on New York and Michigan Participants Reporting Turning Points). However, it was also the case that demographic patterns were not discernible between those who reported turning points in New York

and Michigan, and participants who did not report turning points from the Minnesota and Iowa subsamples. While the New Yorkers in the subsample may be more prone to turning point experiences due to their high rates of immigration, I conclude that demographic variation cannot fully explain the differences in turning point experiences, at least for these relatively small and highly selected samples.

However it must be noted from the data presented in Chapter Four, that Minnesota and Iowa subsamples are comprised of a relatively stable group of participants. They were largely well educated, white and native born. Most were working full time and had never received government assistance. For the most part, participants in Minnesota and Iowa were working to middle class and were engaged in family relationships, but the Minnesotans were more likely to have children than Iowa participants. It is possible that because the subsamples for the present study are fairly small (20 participants per sample), they simply may not include participants who experienced turning points. But it is also possible that this kind of demographic combination represents a rather privileged status and may to some extent be unique; and further, may protect against the great upheavals of turning points. More specifically, higher socioeconomic status, educational attainment, full time work, white ethnicity, native born status, relative youth, and family relationships may work together to prevent turning point experiences.

Finally, because the subsamples for the present study were randomly selected and appear close in composition to the subsamples of the broader QSTA, I would not expect many differences between the subsamples for the present study and those of the QSTA on turning point experiences expressed by participants (See Tables Chapter Four). In this

way, subsamples for the present study may be considered generalizable to the subsamples for the broader QSTA.

Suggestions for Future Studies

How Can the Concept Turning Point Be Developed as an Ideal Type for Future Studies?

Strauss (1959) has offered much to the study of turning points; in addition to his definition of the concept, he provides a typology of turning points as well (See pp 36-37). This typology includes eight turning point types beginning with (1) gradual, unnoticed type change; (2) a type of turning point created and directed by prophets; (3) a type of turning point that is expected and institutionalized; (4) turning points typified by proclamation; (5) ceremonial type turning points; (6) turning points which arise from new, unexpected roles; (7) turning points resulting from the betrayal by role models; and (8) a type of turning point which occurs as a result of a broader betrayal by events or social circumstances. Among the 19 turning point experiences identified in the present study, several could be categorized in Strauss' typology. While this typology is useful in some respects, an ideal type turning point affords precise comparison of elements across cases and across categories of change.

Given the variable presence of elements of the classical definition of turning point in expressions of consequential change by the participants of the QSTA, I propose that an ideal type construction would be useful for analyses of turning point experiences. Support for identity change as a leading feature is found both theoretically and empirically. Theoretically, Strauss' first conceptualization of the turning point involved identity change. In addition, Shanahan and Macmillan (2008) emphasize subjective changes over others. Empirically, in all cases of consequential change by the participants

of the QSTA, changes in identity or in the sense of self was present. Elements of meaningfulness, behavioral change, objective and subjective changes, changes to the self, and widespread changes in multiple trajectories were also present in the data and thus constitute aspects of the ideal type. There are two potential additions to the ideal type turning point discovered in the narratives of the QSTA participants. First, in some cases, the turning point experience took on an element of symbolic significance akin to a Durkheimian sacred object and this was seen to be an organizing feature of subsequent experiences. Secondly, there was empirical evidence that some participants changed worldviews as part of the turning point experience. With additional study, these components may prove to be useful aspects of the ideal type turning point.

In addition, turning points may be understood as existing on a continuum of change. This may be a very useful characterization with ordinary change (such as changes in habits and behaviors) at one end, transitions in the middle, and forms of the ideal type turning point from there culminating with the quintessential turning point at the other end. This characterization would allow us to capture several useful comparisons. The intensity of change experiences could be compared along the continuum of change from change in habits to quintessential turning point experiences. In addition, elements of change experiences identified in this study could be compared with elements of other change experiences to observe patterns that may arise. Finally, change experiences could be compared with the ideal type turning point in terms of composition and intensity level.

Suggestions for Future Studies

Investigations into the concept of turning points are rich and fascinating. I have several suggestions for further study. It would be helpful to investigate social contexts and social groups more thoroughly. Gaining empirical data on turning points in various contexts and in various social groups could yield insightful comparisons across domains and among individuals. Secondly, there were insights gathered in my investigation concerning turning points and self efficacy, turning points mitigated by race, gender, socioeconomic status, and social capital, psychological openness to turning points, and turning points as something sought. Regarding turning points and self efficacy, there were narratives I read that seemed to express a kind of defeatism in the face of change. Alternatively, there were narratives I read that seemed to express an optimism that embraced changes in life. While these expressions could not be tied directly to self efficacy, they did lead me to question whether or not there is some connection. I also noted that some narratives were almost idealizations of life, while others expressed little or no stability at all. This encouraged me to question whether or not there are certain factors that protect against shattering, monumental changes in life. For example, are those in positions of power, privilege, and prestige less likely to be transformed by changes in life? This is another fruitful area for exploration of turning points. Another question for future study involves a more psychological aspect of openness; are some people more or less open to change? We have seen by the experiences of the QSTA participants that some people tend to embrace change; perhaps some may also resist change. Finally, some QSTA participants actually sought out changes; in particular both Andrew and Corey purposefully sought military enlistment as changes in their lives. This is a way of seeking new opportunities, an aspect of turning points highlighted by

Shanahan and Macmillan (2008). This connection between turning points and new opportunities is an important area for future research as well.

But I believe the very first step for future study is further clarification of the turning point ideal type by studying consequential change experiences more specifically. One way to begin this process of clarification would be to interview participants who had experienced a random and significant change event. Events like natural disasters, accidents such as the collapse of the 35W Bridge in Minneapolis, MN are potential populations from which to sample. In choosing such events, the turning point experience would be restricted to those unexpected macrolevel events; such a sampling plan would not allow us to investigate microlevel choices or change experiences that constitute turning points for individuals. But in making this choice, one could optimize the information to be gained at the extreme end of the change continuum with the expectation that such change experiences might indeed lean towards the quintessential ideal type turning point. Another research option would be to conduct focus groups on experiences of change. Although this method is in some ways both constrained and opened up by the interactive process, focus groups provide an efficient way of gathering a great deal of information. A final methodological suggestion would be to interview participants selected at random on experiences of change. This final method would be time consuming and expensive but would afford great advantages across social groups, dimensions of difference, and characteristics. To avoid such costs and retain benefits, purposive sampling could be done to include a wide variety of participants across various domains.

Regardless of sampling method, my suggestion for the next steps involves gathering primary data specifically for the purposes of studying turning points. An interview schedule should be designed to ask questions on the turning point experience itself based on the empirically established elements of the ideal type turning point and theoretical contributions as well. Such questions would generally be open-ended with many specific follow ups and probes. Examples of initial open ended questions might include the following:

> How would you describe your experiences of change throughout your life?
> Tell me about your experiences with change.
> What kinds of changes have you experienced in your life?

Follow up questions and probes might include these types of questions:

> Which changes among those you have mentioned stick out in your mind? Why? What is it about these changes that make them different from others?
>
> Among the change experiences you have mentioned, which seemed most significant to you? Why? What was it about these experiences that made them more significant than others?
>
> Among the change experiences you have mentioned, which seemed least significant to you? Why? What was it about these experiences that made them less significant than others?
>
> How would you describe yourself before the change event and after? Why?
>
> How were significant changes different from other changes you have experienced in your life?
>
> Looking back, how would you describe this change experience as a symbol of your life? How would you say this change experience was especially significant or meaningful to you? How did it change you?

More specifically,

> In what ways was your behavior changed by this experience?
> In what ways was your identity changed by this experience?
> In what ways were your opportunities changed by this experience?

In what ways were other people affected by the changes you experienced?
In what ways was this change meaningful to you?
In what ways did you see your sense of self change?
In what ways did this change affect the way you see the world?
In what ways did this change bring about changes in other aspects of your life?

I would also include a set of questions specifically designed to uncover changes to the self which may occur in turning point experiences. For example, Wells and Stryker (1988) suggest the self is changed by alterations to commitments as structures of identity. Thus if commitments are substantially changed, change to the organization of the self will follow. A series of questions could be asked on whether change experiences affected commitments, how many commitments were affected, the duration of these effects, and how this may have changed the participant's sense of self. I am also quite interested in understanding something about the "authentic self"; my hypothesis is that turning points are experienced in the authentic aspect, the informing aspect of the self. Turner (1976) describes the self in terms of authenticity; that behaviors are seen as consistent or inconsistent with our authentic selves. Turner suggests our institutional and impulse foci coexist until moments of great change (Turner 1976). Turning points can be seen as moments of great change which transform the authentic self, not necessarily only in terms of institutional and impulse foci, but in broader terms of composition, in terms of who we believe ourselves to be. Specific questions on changes to the self might include:

How did this change affect your sense of self?
How deeply did this change experience affect who you believe yourself to be?
Would you describe any changes to your sense of self as temporary? Long-lasting?
How might you describe your sense of self before the change experience? After?

In closing, there is much to be learned in the continuing study of turning points. Use of an ideal type turning point, a continuum of change, and more specific studies will be important tools in further illumination of this fascinating concept, turning point.

Key Contributions of the Present Study

This study is part of the ongoing conversation between theory and empirical experience. I am grateful to the QSTA participants for sharing their experiences and the MacArthur Foundation Research Network for giving me the opportunity to learn about turning points in the transition to adulthood. Utilizing the QSTA narratives offered both advantages and disadvantages. In terms of disadvantages: generalizability is limited by the parameters of the original study samples; sometimes direct questions about turning points were asked, sometimes they were not asked; there is no independent assessment of behavioral changes; and the narratives are essentially self reports of change experiences given in retrospect. Relatedly, it must be noted that the present study utilized the QSTA as a secondary data source. Therefore, it was not gathered for purposes of the present study, but for the purposes of other studies. As a result, questions were not asked or probed in ways that might have been illuminating for my study on turning points. I had to rely on spontaneous comments about change that came about in the context of other questions. While spontaneous comments may indicate a high degree of salience to respondents, the absence of direct questions to all respondents limit and constrain the information about turning point experiences. It also renders the interpretations more insightful (than definitive), as they are dependent upon those questions that were asked and not asked, as well as relevant follow-ups and probes made or not made. In addition, the responses given are sometimes constrained by leading questions, misunderstandings,

and/or encouragement by the interviewers. Finally, it must be noted that individuals who have the most negative life experiences are also most likely to refuse to participate initially, or to drop out of longitudinal studies. Perhaps as a result, most of the reported experiences of turning points have a more positive tone. Thus, the use of the QSTA as secondary data must be taken into account when considering the findings and interpretations of the present study.

However, as part of the conversation between theory and the empirical world this study has made several contributions to existing understandings of turning points. As noted in Chapter Four, the QSTA provided tremendous breadth across domains, experiences, and places. In addition, the narratives are rich with description offering a deep understanding of participants' subjective experiences in the transition to adulthood, most certainly a pivotal moment in the life course. This study is broad in scope and includes participants with a wide range of backgrounds and experiences. In addition, given the variety of questions asked, I have been able to examine multiple types of changes in many social contexts. The present study of turning points considers change, while much of our intellectual efforts are aimed at studies of stability. A study of turning points allows us a glimpse into the black box of change; not only behavioral changes but also the more elusive changes in the self and identity. The present study is an attempt to isolate process and change; it is an effort to illuminate the connections between biography and history.

Methodological insights were gained in the reading and analysis of 80 narrative interviews conducted by scores of different interviewers. Examples of missteps, such as leading questions, guiding the participants' responses and offensive comments were

revealed in my analysis. Not only do these issues affect interpretations, they also provide insight on technical improvements in the conduct of qualitative interviews. In addition, with such great methodological information, the centrality of context, the importance of confidentiality, and the value of participants' stories were underscored.

I have been able to uncover new aspects of consequential change that have not received attention in the literature. My study revealed a temporal aspect to turning points; that what is sometimes considered a "processual" turning point is often the subsequent, recognizable processes of change set in motion by definable, discrete events. There are times when turning points are only recognizable by the processes that follow and not necessarily by the events that trigger turning points. It is therefore important to ask whether the processes of change would have happened without the triggering event. In the present study I have highlighted objective aspects of turning points as particularly important. When an individual is changed by a turning point experience, he/she often recognizes the change through enactment of the "looking glass self"; in other words, individuals become aware of the new ways others see them and thus recognize the changes they have experienced themselves. Additional insights from the present study include the potential connections between turning points and self- efficacy as well as SES as a mitigating factor or protection against the upheaval of turning point experiences. Empirical experiences of the QSTA participants led me to consider two new additions to the classical definition of turning points or ideal type formulation of turning points. There were moments in the QSTA participants' experiences that suggested a change in world view that followed turning point experiences and others where turning points took on a symbolic quality much like a sacred object. These new findings are suggestive and

bear follow-up in subsequent studies. This is the only study I am aware of to systematically compare empirical experiences of consequential change with theoretical definitions of the concept of turning point. Finally, I believe my suggestion for an ideal type turning point will render further studies more systematic and consistent.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

QSTA Interview Schedule
MacArthur Foundation Research Network
on the Transition to Adulthood and Public Policy

I. CURRENT HOUSEHOLD/LIVING ARRANGEMENT

1. Please tell me about your present living situation?
   - How long have you lived here? Who lives with you here? (number of persons and relationships)

2. And since you left high school, where have you lived and with whom? (when: approximate years?)

3. IF NOT LIVING WITH PARENT(S):
   - When did you move out of your parents' home? Why? How old were you then?
   - Tell me about leaving home? How did you feel about that? How often do you see your parents?

4. IF STILL LIVING WITH PARENT(S):
   - What has it been like/how have you felt about living with your parent(s) as an adult? What are the best/worst aspects? What are the main reasons you live with your parents now? Rent or own?
   - (PROBE: Financial reasons? Cost of housing? Family obligations? Mutual support?)
   - Do you plan to live with them for a while, or would you like to move out?
   - (If left original community as well as parents' home, could probe why they left their community)

5. Did you ever worry about your living arrangements?
   (e.g., were you ever without a home or did not have a place to stay? or trouble with who you were living with?) What happened? What did you do about that? Did you ever have to return home/live with family or friends? What was/is that like?

6. Would you like to stay here or would you rather live elsewhere?
   - What would make you leave? What sorts of places would you consider moving to?
   - What things keep you here? What would you miss most if you left? What would you be happiest to get away from? *(PROBE for sense of home / sense of belonging)*

7. Tell me about your community/neighborhood *(or principal place where you live, if group quarters).*

- What is it like to live here (best/worst things)?
- How did you come to live here? Why did you choose this place/neighborhood?
- What are the people like? Are you close to your neighbors? Can you count on them?
- Are you near family? Who?
- Do you feel safe? Is crime a problem? Is alcohol or drug abuse a problem?
- Do you make use of schools, churches, recreation, entertainment, medical facilities, shopping, child care, or other services in the area? Can people your age find affordable housing in this area?
- How would you compare your community/neighborhood to others nearby?
- Is your community/neighborhood getting better or worse? How?

8. Did you grow up here? If not, can you describe where you grew up? How is it different or similar?
   - What were the best/worst things about where you grew up?
   - Why did you leave the community/neighborhood you grew up in? Do you ever want to move back home/to your old neighborhood? Why?
   - What place feels most like "home" to you?
   - [IF PARENTS ARE FOREIGN-BORN:] What *country* feels most like "home" to you? Why?

II. FAMILY OF ORIGIN

9. Tell me about the family you grew up in.
   - What was it like growing up? Best/worst parts about it? What did your parents want for you? *(in terms of education, work, who to marry, family, hopes for your future)* Has this affected you? *(e.g., have they influenced the way you would like to raise your children?)* How?
   - How close was your family? How did everyone get along? How did your parents get along *(discuss divorce here)*? Who were you closest too? Who did you get along with least? How did you get along with your siblings/step-siblings/extended family?
   - Did other family members/friends live with you when you were growing up?
   - What were the best parts about your family growing up?
   - What kinds of problems/struggles did your family have?
   - Can you remember any specific *high* or *low* point in your family story as you were growing up?

10. Are both of your parents still alive? Step-parent?
    (Discuss parental loss here; when did parent die?)
    - What was/is their level of education? What did/do they do for a living?
    - What was their financial situation like when you were growing up? Did it change over time?

 How much did/do your mother/father work? How did their work impact your life growing up? Who took care of you while they worked? What would you change about how you were raised?

11. Describe your current relationship with your parents *(as applicable)*?
 How often do you see them/talk to them? What do you talk to them about? Do you seek their advice on major decisions? Do they help you out in any ways? do you help them?
 How has your relationship with your parents changed over time/since you've become an adult?

12. Tell me about your siblings.
 How many brothers and sisters do you have? What are their ages? *(Any step-siblings?)*
 What are their education levels, work situations, marital status, number of children *(as apply)*?
 How often do you see them/talk to them? What do you talk to them about? Do you seek their advice on major decisions? Do they help you out in any ways? do you help them?
 How has your relationship with your siblings changed over the years/since you've been adults?

13. Could you tell me about any other family members or people in your life that you talk with regularly and that you depend on for help or support, or that you help and support? How have relationships with other family members changed over the years? *(e.g., grandparents, uncles, aunts, cousins?)*

14. Do any of them live nearby? *[PROBE for kind, intensity and frequency of support.]*

15. What do you expect/hope for in your relationships with your family *(of origin)* in the future?

16. Did any of your parents/grandparents/great-grandparents immigrate to the United States? Who?
 What countries did they come from?
 When did they come to the United States *[‘the mainland' for Puerto Rican respondents]*?
 Do you think your family's history and cultural heritage—national origin, ethnicity, ancestry, or religion—influenced the way you were raised? In what way? Does it differ from other families?

17. [IF EITHER THE RESPONDENT OR ONE PARENT WAS BORN IN ANOTHER COUNTRY:]
 How was it like for you to grow up in an immigrant family?
 Did it create much of a generation gap between parents and children? How so?

 What have been the most positive and negative things about it?
 How have those experiences influenced your adult life? Your identity?

III. RELATIONSHIPS

Now I would like to catch up on your personal relationships.

18. Are you now… *(never married) (engaged) (married) (living with someone) (separated) (divorced) (widowed)*? Is this correct? *(Probe: If change in status, why?)*
 [IF NEVER MARRIED]:
Are you currently seeing someone steadily? *(If YES, treat as PARTNERED in questions below.)*
 [IF EVER SEPARATED, DIVORCED, OR WIDOWED:]
How long did the relationship last? When did it end? Why?
Are you currently seeing someone steadily? *(If YES, treat as PARTNERED in questions below.)*

19. [IF NOT NOW PARTNERED *(whether never married or formerly married)*:]
Would you like to have a steady relationship, or not?
[IF YES]: What kind of things would you look for in a relationship? Ideally, what kind of person
would you like to commit to/marry? When would you like that to happen?
[IF NO]: Why not? What has dating been like? How would you feel if you never got married or find a life partner? (OR if R does not want to get married:) Why do you prefer not to marry?

20. [IF PARTNERED *(whether currently married, cohabiting, engaged, or seeing someone steadily):*]
Tell me about your significant other/boyfriend/girlfriend/husband/wife/partner.
 What is your partner's *(first)* name?
 What is his/her ethnicity/race/religion?
 His/her highest year of education completed? Type of work/job?
 How long have you known each other? Where did you meet?
 How would you describe your relationship? What do you like *most* about it? And *least* like?

21. [IF MARRIED OR LIVE TOGETHER:]
 How did you decide to get married/move in together?
 How long have you been (married/living together)?
 In what ways is your relationship like your other past relationships? In what ways is it not?
 In what ways is your relationship like your parents' marriage? In what ways is it not?

22. Did your mother or father expect you to marry or date a certain type of person?

Did they say you should or shouldn't marry or date a person of your own ethnic/racial/cultural/religious background? What was important for them about these issues? Why?

23. And how do YOU feel about these issues? (i.e., of the importance of your partner's ethnicity-race religion-culture being the same as or different than yours in long-term intimate relationships?)
 Have you ever dated someone who was not of your same ethnic/racial/religious/cultural background?
 What is the ethnicity of the people you've dated?

24. What kinds of pressure did you ever feel to have—or not to have—children? From whom?

25. How many children would you *like* to have, if any?
 And how many do you realistically *expect* to have? By when?

IV. CHILDREN

26. Do you have any children now?
[If NO, ask question 2 and then SKIP to next section; if YES, ask questions 3 to 11 below.]

[IF NO CHILDREN, *ask question 2 and then SKIP to next section*:]

27. What do you think about having children?
 What are your hopes and fears about being a parent?
 How do you think having a child will affect your life?

[IF YES, *ask questions 3 to 11 below:*] Tell me about your children:

28. How many children do you have?
 Boy(s), girl(s)? What are their ages? In what year(s) were they born?
 How old were *you* when your first child was born?

29. How do you plan to raise your children?
 Is it different to how you were raised? Would you raise them the same as your parents did?
 How do you teach your kids about their ethnicity/ancestry? What language do you use at home?
 Do you go to church or become more involved in religious activities because of the children?

30. What is your relationship like with your children?
 How much *time* do you spend with them each week?
 What kinds of things do you do with/for them?

 What are they like? What are their interests? What are they involved in? How do they get along?
 Have they affected your relationship with their other parent/your partner? How?

31. Who is the primary caretaker of your children? Do the children live with you?
 Who else helps to take care of your children? What do they do to help?
 Who, if anyone, are the other adults that are playing a role in your children's development?
 What happens when your child gets sick? How does your childcare or school respond?

32. In what ways are you involved with your children's school or day care? What do you do?

33. What was going on in your life when you found out you were going to be a parent?

34. How did having a child change your life? Did it change your plans? Did it make things better/worse?
 Have your priorities changed?
 How do you balance child-rearing and work?
 Does your work suffer because of childcare commitments?
 How does balancing work and caring for children affect your own physical and mental health?

35. What would help you balance family and work better?
PROBE: In terms of help with childcare? In terms of job benefits or scheduling? of health care?

36. What would your life be like now if you had never had children?
 What are your hopes and fears about being a parent?

V. EDUCATION

37. Have you been to school at all since high school? Where, when?

38. What is your current highest level of education? What degrees or diplomas have you have earned?

39. Are you currently in school?
 [IF YES:] What school are you currently attending? Full- or part-time?
 [IF NO:] What school(s) did you attend? For how long? Full- or part-time? Do you have any plans to go back to school? *[include any vocational schools or training centers]*

A. HIGH SCHOOL EXPERIENCES

40. Tell me about your high school?
 What kind of high school? What was it like to go there (what were the best/worst things)?
 When did you graduate?

41. [IF DROPPED OUT:] Did you leave your high school at any time? When? For how long?
 Why? What was going on in your life when you dropped out?
 Did you return to school or work on a GED? When?
[IF NO:] Why not? Have you thought about going back? Considered taking the GED?

42. Tell me about your friends in high school?
 Were there groups of students who hung out together? How did that work? To what group did you belong? Are you still in touch with friends from high school? How are they doing?

43. Tell me about the kinds of activities you were involved in while you were in high school?
PROBE: Sports, clubs, other school-based groups? Any special programs?
 What did you do exactly? Why were you involved/not involved?

44. How successful would you say you were academically in high school?
 What were your best/worst courses? Your favorite subjects?
 What do you think best explains your academic record in high school?

45. Did you have any problems in high school?
 Did you have problems with grades? Teachers?
 Were you picked on or teased? Was it hard to fit in?
 Were there problems at school with gangs? Fights? Drugs?
 Did you ever skip school? Why? Tell me about it?
 Were you ever suspended or expelled? What happened?

46. How helpful was your high school experience in terms of all that you've done since?
 What skills or abilities that you learned in high school have been beneficial to you?
 Were there any people, such as counselors, teachers or coaches that were most helpful to you?
 How well did your high school reading/writing courses prepare you for college or work?
 How could high school have better prepared or helped you… for college? work? adult life?

47. Looking back what is your overall impression about your high school experience?

B. POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION AND TRAINING

(Distinguish clearly 2- and 4-year colleges, vocational schools, professional schools, post-graduate training)

48. Tell me about the college/university/vocational school you attended, and the years you were there.
 Where did you go? When? What type of school was it? (community college? a 4-year college?)
 Describe the campus/school, the students, the instructors, the curriculum, the overall experience.

49. How did you decide to go there?
 What factors were important in helping you make that decision? *[Financial reasons? Location? Type of training? Major? Religious institution? Prestige? Community vs. four-year? Friends?]*
 What did your family think about you going to this school? Were they supportive? How?
 Were you able to receive financial assistance, scholarships, student loans?

50. Was that your dream school? If not, what was and why?
 Why did you not go to your dream school? What happened?
 To how many colleges did you apply? By how many were you accepted?
 Would you have gone to a different college/university if you had had more financial assistance?

51. What is/was you major or area of study? How did you settle on that major? Did you change majors?

52. What did/do you like most about your college/training institute? What did/do you like least?
 What were the most useful/least useful things about your college education/vocational training?

53. What were the main obstacles you encountered towards finishing your degree (or certificate)?
 How did you overcome the obstacles?

54. What degree did you earn? How long did it take you to get the diploma? How successful would you say you were academically in college? Did you graduate with honors?

55. What made it possible for you to finish college? What helped you/would have

helped you the most?

56. How did college/vocational training prepare you for full-time work? For your future career goals?
 Is there anything you could have done differently? How could colleges/universities/vocational institutes have helped you more or better prepared you? What would you change if you could?

57. How did college/vocational training help, influence, or change you in other ways?
PROBE: Did you make contacts there that have helped you since? Relationships? Values?

58. Looking back, what is your overall impression about your college experience/vocational training?

59. What are your future educational goals and plans (if any)?
 What is the highest degree or diploma you hope to earn? Where? By when?
 How realistic do you think are your chances of accomplishing your goals in the next 5 years?
 What stands in the way of your achieving those goals?
PROBE: Money worries, family responsibilities, balancing family and work, your health or abilities, not willing/able to move, motivation, attitudes, discrimination, other reasons?
 Do you have the financial resources or other support you need to achieve your educational goals?
PROBE: From what source(s)? Is there someone who can help you achieve your goals?

VI. WORK

60. Did you work in high school (and college if applicable)—could you describe those jobs to me?
 Why did you work? About how many hours a week did you work in those jobs?
 Did working while going to school hinder your education? Would you do it over again?

61. How many different *full-time* jobs have you had that lasted more than 6 months?
 How old were you when you got your *first* full-time job (over 35 hours/week)? When was that?
 Why did you leave your last job (whether part-time or full-time)? What kind of job was it?

62. Are you now… *(employed full-time) (employed part-time) (unemployed and looking for work) (unemployed and not looking for work) (attending school full-time and not working) (full-time homemaker and not working) (on*

maternity/parental leave) (disabled and not able to work) ?
Is this correct? (*PROBE: If change in status, ask:* What changed? When?)

63. [IF UNEMPLOYED AND NOT LOOKING FOR A JOB*: exclude full-time students or homemakers*]
 You said you have not held a steady job. What are you doing to get by? Is anyone helping you?
 Why do you think it has been hard for you to get a job? Is that why you're not looking for work?
 What would have to change in your life to make it possible for you to work?
PROBE: What keeps you from making that change?

64. [IF WORKING:] Tell me about the job you have now.
[IF NOT NOW WORKING: *ask the questions below of the* last job *R held*.]
 What sort of work do you do? What are your duties? Hours?
 How long have you been at your present job? (*or* at your last job, *if not now working*)

65. How did you get that job?
 Did you use contacts, friends, or a referral? Was it advertised?
 Did it take long to get it? What attracted you to it? What made the most difference in getting it?

66. What is it like to work there/for yourself? Are you satisfied with your work?
 What do you like *most* about your current job? What do you like *least*?
 What are the benefits? What *health* coverage do you have? How can you *move up* in your job?
 Are you satisfied with what you *earn*? Do you think it's fair? Is it enough to live on?
PROBE: Do you have other sources of income or resources? any financial support from family?
 Do you plan to stay in this job? For how long?

67. How well prepared did/do you feel for this job?
 In what ways did high school and/or college help you prepare for it?
 In what ways did previous work experience, or internships, help you prepare for it?
 What prepared you the most for it?

68. Tell me about your co-workers? What are they like? How do you get along with them?
 Do you socialize with people from work? How often? What kinds of things do you do?

69. What are the things you want most from your job [or, IF NOT WORKING: …from a job]?

PROBE: Salary, work satisfaction, less hours, benefits, responsibility, service to others?

70. Do you think of your work as a *career* or a *job*? Why?
 What/who has influenced your work/job choices/decisions? How?

71. Are there any jobs you would refuse to do? Why?

72. What is the lowest wage (or salary) that you would accept? Has that changed as you've gotten older?

73. What are your future work/job plans?
 Realistically, in terms of your work/career, where do you think you'll be in 5 to 10 years?

74. What do you hope for most in terms of your work?
 Ideally, what kind of job would you most want to have?
 What stands in the way of your getting that job? *[PROBE: Money worries, your age or abilities, lack of training, not willing/able to move, family obligations, motivation, discrimination, other?*]

VII. MILITARY

[*Ask the first question of all respondents; if NOT military, skip to next section, VIII; for those with MILITARY experience, continue asking questions 2 to 6*]

75. Have you ever thought about going into the military? Why or why not?
 Have any family members or close friends been in the military? Who? Which branch? When?
 Did you consider joining after September 11, 2001?
 Do you know about ROTC programs in college? Were you in ROTC in college?

76. How and when did you decide to go in the military?
 Which branch: Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines? Why that branch?
 Active duty or reserves? Why did you choose that?
 How did your family and friends react when you decided to join the military?

77. Tell me about your experiences in the military.
 Tell me about any tours of duty. Where have you been stationed? What was/is your rank?
 What kinds of training did/have you received? How well trained did/do you feel?
 What did you spend most of your time doing? Did you have Internet access?
 Did you receive any special commendations/awards?
 How did your expectations before joining compare with the reality?

78. What was the best part about being in the military? And the toughest part?
 What was the most challenging experience you had in the military?
 Have you enjoyed any of the benefits: PX/Commissary/healthcare/education?
 Did/do you feel that the pay was/is good?
 Did or will you get out/re-enlist? Why did you decide to get out/re-enlist?

79. How did/will your training help you in civilian life?
PROBE: Would you consider your training as unskilled, skilled, or highly skilled?

80. What would your life be like now if you hadn't gone into the military?

VIII. LEISURE AND TIME USE

81. How do you spend your free time? What do you do? With whom? How often?
 What television shows do you watch? What is your favorite TV show?
 How often do you read the newspapers? What sections of the paper do you read?
 Have you read any books recently? What kinds of books do you read?

82. How much of your free time do you spend with… your partner? Family? Friends? Alone?

83. How much of your free time is spent in organized activities? What kinds of organized activities?

84. If you had a free weekend, what do you think would be a really great way to spend it? Why?

IX. RELIGION

85. What role did religion/spirituality play in your parents' life? And in your upbringing?

86. When you were growing up, how important were/was:
 … religious values and beliefs?
 … being involved in religious congregations, groups, or activities?
 Has that changed over the years for you?

87. What role would you say religion/spirituality plays in your life *now*? How important is it?

88. How involved are you at present?
 How often do you attend religious services?
 Tell me about any church or religious groups or activities that you are involved with?

89. Do you think religion will be important in your children's lives? How so?

X. IDENTITY

90. What is your family's heritage/ethnic background? On your mother's side? your father's?

91. What do you call yourself, that is, how do you identify? What does it mean to you to say that you are … [ETHNIC]? (*e.g. of ethnicities: Mexican, Vietnamese, Jamaican, Filipino, Chinese, German, Irish, Puerto Rican, Hispanic, Asian American, African American, etc*.) Or that you are an American?
 How important is it for you to say that you are a … [ETHNIC]? An American?

92. [IF MIXED ANCESTRY:] Do you identify with one ethnicity more than the other? How so?
 Do you ever feel more one than the other? When?
 IF your spouse or partner is of a different ethnicity, how will your children self-identify?

93. Has your ethnic (or American) self-identity changed over time as you left high school, went to college, became an adult? How did it change? Do you sometimes use different ethnic or racial labels in different situations (*e.g., in filling out forms, with your friends, with family*)? Why?

94. When you were growing up were most of your friends from the same ethnic group? Tell me about any good friends you have had that are of different racial or ethnic groups.

95. When you were growing up in what ways did your parents teach you about your ancestral (ethnic) background and history?

96. What customs or traditions do you keep or practice from your background? *PROBE*: In what ways are these customs important to you? What about a non-English language?

97. Will you pass on these traditions to your own children? How?

XI. CIVIC ENGAGEMENT AND POLITICS

Now I want to ask you some questions about things you may do to help others or make your community (or the world) a better place to live.

98. Do you belong to any groups or clubs where you do things like that?
[*For example: civic and religious groups, volunteer work, student associations, a class at school, ethnic and cultural organizations, scouts, sports clubs, coaching or youth mentoring*]

99. How did you get involved in this/these organization(s)? [*PROBE*: Who asked you to get involved?]
 What do you like about being in this organization or group? What don't you like?
 What would you miss about the group if you couldn't be part of it anymore?
 Do you think volunteers can make a difference or does the government need to do something?

100. Now let's talk about *issues that really matter to you*. When you think about the world we live in, does something upset you or really make you angry? What? Can you tell me about it?
 Why do you feel that it's wrong or unjust?
 Do you ever talk to other people about that (like friends or family)? How do they feel?
 Have you ever thought about how you might change it? Have you tried? What did you do?
 Have you ever tried to contact a public official or community leader about it? Signed a petition?
 Have you ever participated in a demonstration, march, protest, boycott, or strike? What?

101. How do you feel about voting? [IF FOREIGN-BORN: Are you now a U.S. citizen?]
 [IF CITIZEN:] Are you registered to vote? [*PROBE*: If not, why not?]
 Are you registered with a political party? [*PROBE*: Which one? Why did you choose that one?]
 Did you vote in the presidential election between George Bush and Al Gore?
[If NO:] Why not?
[If YES:] What did you think of the election?
 Did you vote in the local elections last November? [*PROBE*: Why or why not?]

102. Did you ever work for a candidate or on an issue that was going to be on the ballot? What happened?

103. These days, a lot of people, especially young people, do not vote. Why do you think that is?

104. What things most concern people your age? What image do you think most people in the United States have about the generation of people your age today? Is that accurate? Why or why not?

XII. SEPTEMBER 11

105. Can you tell me how you personally responded to the September 11 attacks?

 Did you attend any memorial services or make donations for victims of September 11?
 Did the events make you feel more likely to volunteer for anything? What?
 Are you now more cautious about going places or more suspicious of some people around you?

106. What about how you feel about the country? Did you feel anger, or a sense of patriotism, or what?
PROBE: How did you show those things?

107. Do you feel any conflict between being American and coming from [R's national origin or ancestry]?
 Do you feel more or less American than you did before the attacks?
 Do you feel more or less [ETHNIC] than you did before the attacks?

108. What about how you feel about other people. Did September 11th change how you feel about Muslims or Arab immigrants? What do you think about the experiences of Arab-Americans or Muslim Americans since that day? Did it make you feel worried about attacks on immigrants?

109. Have you personally experienced any prejudice or discrimination related to September 11?

110. Some people feel that September 11 was a turning point for the country. What would you say the United States should learn as a country from the attacks?
PROBE: Is there anything you think the United States should be doing differently?

111. Did the events change how you think of the United States? Of the U.S. government? In light of what has happened, how do you view the future now?

XIII. JUSTICE SYSTEM

112. Tell me about any times you ever had to call the police. What happened?

113. What would make you call the police?
PROBE: Domestic violence, trouble with a neighbor, an emergency, etc.?

114. Have you ever been the victim of a crime? Of violence? Of property? [IF YES:] Tell me about that.
 What overall effect has it had on your life?
PROBE: For experience as a victim, experience negotiating the justice system.

115. Has anyone close to you been a victim of crime? What has been the effect on them?

116. Has anyone close to you ever been arrested or done time in prison? What was the

effect on them?

117. Have you ever had a run-in with the police? [IF YES:] What happened?
 Were you arrested? When?
 Are you or have you been on probation? When?
 Have you received community service, or been ordered to a mandated program?
 How did your life change after that event? How did people treat you afterwards?

118. Have you ever been to jail or prison? [IF YES:] Why? What happened?
 How long were you incarcerated? When?
 Did the experience change your life in any way? How?
 How did people treat you differently afterwards? Do they still?
 Tell me about what it's been like since you got out?
PROBE: For family, work, education, friends, opportunity, self-image, social networks.

119. Where would you be now if you hadn't gotten in trouble?

XIV. SUBJECTIVE AGING, SUCCESS, TURNING POINTS, AND HEALTH

120. Some people have the idea that young adults should achieve certain milestones in order: first finishing school, then getting a job, setting up their own home, getting married, and having children. Is that realistic? In your own life, how are you following this order? How about your friends? Your brothers/sisters?

121. In what ways do you wish you had done things in a different order? Or would you do it again the same way?

122. At what age did you start thinking of yourself as an adult? [*PROBE*: What led to that change?]

123. When did your parents start to consider you as an adult? What were the new rights or responsibilities associated with this change?

124. How do you feel about getting older? Are you looking forward to it? Why or why not?

125. How would you define "*success*" for someone your age? For yourself?
 Has your definition of success *changed* over time? How?
 What can most *help* one to achieve success, as you define it?
 What can most *hurt* one's chances to be successful?

126. Sometimes things happen that can make a big difference in people's lives. Can you talk a little bit…:

 …about the most important *good* thing that has happened in your life so far?
 …and what is the most important *bad* thing that has happened to you so far?
 Have any other events had a major impact on your life? In what way? What happened?

127. Are there any people that have had a major impact on your life? How did they influence you?

128. Any other important personal experiences or traits that you feel have helped you or that you have struggled with over the years?

129. And with regard to your health:
 How healthy do you feel? Do you think your health is the best it could be right now?
 Have you had any health difficulties? What, if anything, concerns you about your physical or mental health?
 Have you had any positive or negative experiences with the health care system along the way?
PROBE: What happened? Have these experiences changed your health practices or beliefs about the medical care system?
 [IF R DOES NOT HAVE HEALTH INSURANCE:] What do you do if you need medical care?

XV. THE FUTURE

130. What do you think life will be like for you over the next 5-10 years?

131. Summing up, what would help you the most to achieve your plans and hopes for the future?
What will be the main *obstacles* that can get in the way of your achieving them?

132. Is there anything else that I haven't asked about that you feel is important for me to know about your life, who you are, and where you're going? Anything you would like to stress?

Appendix B

Demographic Variable List
(With Values)

Arturo Baiocchi November 2006

Gender
0 Male
1 Female

Age
Entered in Years

Race
1 White
2 Black
3 Hispanic
4 SE Asian
5 Other Asian
6 Native American
7 Mixed
8 Other
-9 Missing

Married
0 Single
1 Yes
2 Cohabiting
3 Divorced/Single

Children Under 18
0 N/A
Enter Number of Children

Nativity: Born in United States
0 No
1 Yes
-9 Missing

Immigration Status
1 Foreign Born Came to U.S. as Adult (First Generation)
2 Foreign Born Child Came to U.S. as Child (1.5ers)
3 Born in the U.S. (Second Generation)
4 Third Generation or More
0 N/A
-9 Missing

Government Assistance
0 No
1 Yes in the Past
2 Yes Currently
-9 Missing

Employment Status
1 Full Time
2 Part Time
3 Unemployed/Laid Off
4 School Full Time
5 Homemaker
6 Disabled
7Maternity Leave
-9 Not Employed

Education Level Completed for Respondent
1 Elementary or Junior High
2 High School or GED
3 Technical or Vocational School
4 Associate Degree
5 Some College
6 Bachelor's Degree
7 Master's Degree
8 PhD or Professional Degree
-9 Missing

Respondent Occupation
1 Professional/Managerial
2 Administrative
3 Clerical
4 Sales
5 Service
6 Small Business
7 Farming
8 Production/Transport/Laborer
9 Military
10 Homemaker
11 Student
12 Unemployed
13 Computer Tech
-9 Missing

Economic Sector
1 Primary
2 Secondary
3 Ethnic Sector/Economy/Enclave
-9 Missing

(Note: Primary Sector includes high wages, good working conditions, opportunities to advance; Secondary Sector is made up of short term employment, little to no opportunity for advancement, wages determined by the market. Secondary sector jobs are low or unskilled, blue collar such as manual labor or white collar such as filing clerks; Ethnic Sector/Economy/ Enclave work consists of ethnic dominated jobs and businesses that fill a need in the economy. Examples include restaurants, nail salons. These ethnic businesses are part of the Secondary Sector.

Spousal Occupation
1 Professional/Managerial
2 Administrative
3 Clerical
4 Sales
5 Service
6 Small Business
7 Farming
8 Production/Transport/Laborer
9 Military
10 Homemaker
11 Student
12 Unemployed
-9 Missing

Parent's Education Level
1 Elementary or Junior High
2 High School or GED
3 Technical or Vocational School
4 Associate Degree
5 Some College
6 Bachelor's Degree
7 Master's Degree
8 PhD or Professional Degree
-9 Missing

Parent Occupation
1 Professional/Managerial
2 Administrative
3 Clerical
4 Sales
5 Service
6 Small Business
7 Farming
8 Production/Transport/Laborer
9 Military
10 Homemaker
11 Student
12 Unemployed
-9 Missing

Parent Economic Sector
1 Primary
2 Secondary
3 Ethnic Sector/Economy/Enclave
-9 Missing

Housing
0 Rent
1 Own Home
-9 Missing

Family Income
1 Under $5000
2 $5000 – 9,999
3 $10,000 – 14,999
4 $15,000 – 19,999
5 $20,000 – 29,999
6 $30,000 – 39,999
7 $40,000 - 49,999
8 $50,000 – 59,999
9 $60,000 – 69,999
10 $70,000 – 79,999
11 $80,000 – 89,999
12 $90,000 – 99,999
13 $100,000+

SES Attainment
1 Poor
2 Working Poor
3 Working Class
4 Middle Class
5 Upper Middle Class
-9 Missing

(Note: Poor characterized by government assistance, secondary sector employment, part time or infrequent work, participation in Ethnic Economy, frequent moves and economic hardship, single parent with children. Working Poor characterized by part time or full time work in Secondary Sector or Ethnic Economy, single parent with children. Working Class consists of participants who work full time in the Secondary Sector or Ethnic Economy or part time in the Primary Sector, full time students, workers in jobs not commensurate with some college or college degree, likely own homes. Middle Class participants work in primary sector jobs that match their educational attainment, own homes, could be full time students if parents are middle class or higher. Upper Middle Class or Higher participants own home, real estate, and other assets.

SES Origin
1 Poor
2 Working Poor
3 Working Class
4 Middle Class
5 Upper Middle Class
-9 Missing

Country of Origin for Immigrant Respondent or Origin for Immigrant Parents
0 N/A
1 Approximate Region Central America
2 Mexico
3 Nicaragua
4 Guatemala
5 West Indian
6 Cuba
7 Jamaica
8 Dominican Republic
9 Haiti
10 Approximate Region South-Latin America
11 Colombia
12 Brazil
13 Bolivia
14 Peru
15 Argentina

16 Ecuador
20 Approximate Region Western Europe
21 England
22 France
25 Approximate Region Nordic-Scandinavian Countries
26 Norway
27 Sweden
28 Denmark
29 Germany
30 Approximate Region Eastern Europe
31 Albania
32 Bosnia
33 Czech Republic
40 Approximate Region Central-Northern Asia
41 Russia
42 Kazakhstan
50 Approximate Region South Asia
51 Afghanistan
52 India
53 Pakistan
60 Approximate Region Middle East
61 Iran
62 Iraq
63 Israel
64 Palestine
65 Saudi Arabia
70 Approximate Region East
71 China
72 Hong Kong
73 Japan
74 South Korea
75 North Korea
80 Approximate Region South East Asia
81 Vietnam
82 Cambodia
83 Laos
84 Philippines
85 Thailand
90 Approximate Region Northern Africa
91 Sudan
92 Algeria
93 Libya
100 Approximate Region Central Africa
101 Republic of Congo
110 Approximate Region Western Africa
111 Nigeria

112 Senegal
120 Approximate Region Eastern Africa
121 Somali
122 Uganda

(Note: Numbers for values are not always sequential; there are missing numbers in the coding scheme)

Country of Origin for Mixed Immigrant Parent (Father's Origin Country)
0 N/A
1 Approximate Region Central America
2 Mexico
3 Nicaragua
4 Guatemala
5 West Indian
6 Cuba
7 Jamaica
8 Dominican Republic
9 Haiti
10 Approximate Region South-Latin America
11 Colombia
12 Brazil
13 Bolivia
14 Peru
15 Argentina
16 Ecuador
20 Approximate Region Western Europe
21 England
22 France
25 Approximate Region Nordic-Scandinavian Countries
26 Norway
27 Sweden
28 Denmark
29 Germany
30 Approximate Region Eastern Europe
31 Albania
32 Bosnia
33 Czech Republic
40 Approximate Region Central-Northern Asia
41 Russia
42 Kazakhstan
50 Approximate Region South Asia
51 Afghanistan
52 India
53 Pakistan
60 Approximate Region Middle East

61 Iran
62 Iraq
63 Israel
64 Palestine
65 Saudi Arabia
70 Approximate Region East
71 China
72 Hong Kong
73 Japan
74 South Korea
75 North Korea
80 Approximate Region South East Asia
81 Vietnam
82 Cambodia
83 Laos
84 Philippines
85 Thailand
90 Approximate Region Northern Africa
91 Sudan
92 Algeria
93 Libya
100 Approximate Region Central Africa
101 Republic of Congo
110 Approximate Region Western Africa
111 Nigeria
112 Senegal
120 Approximate Region Eastern Africa
121 Somali
122 Uganda

Respondent Primary Identity
-9 Missing
0 American
1 Approximate Region Central America
2 Mexico
3 Nicaragua
4 Guatemala
5 West Indian
6 Cuba
7 Jamaica
8 Dominican Republic
9 Haiti
10 Approximate Region South-Latin America
11 Colombia
12 Brazil
13 Bolivia

14 Peru
15 Argentina
16 Ecuador
20 Approximate Region Western Europe
21 England
22 France
25 Approximate Region Nordic-Scandinavian Countries
26 Norway
27 Sweden
28 Denmark
29 Germany
30 Approximate Region Eastern Europe
31 Albania
32 Bosnia
33 Czech Republic
40 Approximate Region Central-Northern Asia
41 Russia
42 Kazakhstan
50 Approximate Region South Asia
51 Afghanistan
52 India
53 Pakistan
60 Approximate Region Middle East
61 Iran
62 Iraq
63 Israel
64 Palestine
65 Saudi Arabia
70 Approximate Region East
71 China
72 Hong Kong
73 Japan
74 South Korea
75 North Korea
80 Approximate Region South East Asia
81 Vietnam
82 Cambodia
83 Laos
84 Philippines
85 Thailand
90 Approximate Region Northern Africa
91 Sudan
92 Algeria
93 Libya
100 Approximate Region Central Africa
101 Republic of Congo

110 Approximate Region Western Africa
111 Nigeria
112 Senegal
120 Approximate Region Eastern Africa
121 Somali
122 Uganda

2nd Mixed National Identity

-9 N/A Respondent has only one national identity
0 American
1 Approximate Region Central America
2 Mexico
3 Nicaragua
4 Guatemala
5 West Indian
6 Cuba
7 Jamaica
8 Dominican Republic
9 Haiti
10 Approximate Region South-Latin America
11 Colombia
12 Brazil
13 Bolivia
14 Peru
15 Argentina
16 Ecuador
20 Approximate Region Western Europe
21 England
22 France
25 Approximate Region Nordic-Scandinavian Countries
26 Norway
27 Sweden
28 Denmark
29 Germany
30 Approximate Region Eastern Europe
31 Albania
32 Bosnia
33 Czech Republic
40 Approximate Region Central-Northern Asia
41 Russia
42 Kazakhstan
50 Approximate Region South Asia
51 Afghanistan
52 India
53 Pakistan
60 Approximate Region Middle East

61 Iran
62 Iraq
63 Israel
64 Palestine
65 Saudi Arabia
70 Approximate Region East
71 China
72 Hong Kong
73 Japan
74 South Korea
75 North Korea
80 Approximate Region South East Asia
81 Vietnam
82 Cambodia
83 Laos
84 Philippines
85 Thailand
90 Approximate Region Northern Africa
91 Sudan
92 Algeria
93 Libya
100 Approximate Region Central Africa
101 Republic of Congo
110 Approximate Region Western Africa
111 Nigeria
112 Senegal
120 Approximate Region Eastern Africa
121 Somali
122 Uganda

Has Respondent Moved in the Last 5 Years

0 No, R has been in this location for several years
1 Yes, moved from one major site to another, state to state
2 Yes, moved from a rural to urban area
3 Yes, moved from urban to rural

Appendix C

Expanded Table of Demographic Variables by Site (Percent Distributions)

VARIABLE	LRS1 MN	Mac MN	LRS1 NY	Mac NY	LRS1 MI	Mac MI	LRS1 IA	Mac IA
GENDER								
Male	30	24.1	50	54.7	45	36	45	51.5
Female	70	75.9	50	45.3	55	64	55	48.5
Missing								
AGE								
Less than 27			60	44.6			60	48.5
27-29	90	85.2	15	21.9	15	8	30	27.8
30-32	10	14.8	20	18.8	85	92	10	22.7
33-41			5	14.9				
Missing								1
RACE								
White	65	64.8	40	23.4	85	84	100	96.9
Black	10	7.4	10	17.2	15	12		
Hispanic	5	1.9	15	25.8		2		
SE Asian	15	18.5						
Other Asian			30	28.1				
Native American	5	1.9						1
Mixed		3.7	5	0.8		2		2.1
Other				3.9				
Missing		1.9		.8				
MARRIED								
Single	20	22.2	70	65.6	25	30	50	37.1
Married	35	40.7	10	19.5	60	58	40	50.5
Cohabiting	25	24.1	15	10.9	5	4	10	7.2
Divorced/Separated	20	13	5	3.9	10	8		4.1
Missing								1

CHILDREN								
0	30	29.6	90	71.1	30	48	60	48.5
1	25	42.6	5	15.6	30	24	15	25.8
2	10	7.4	5	8.6	15	16	5	9.3
3	20	13		3.1	15	6	5	2.1
4	15	5.6		0.8	10	6		2.1
5-10		1.9		.8				1
Missing							15	11.3
IMMIGRATION STATUS								
Foreign Born/to US as Adult				0.8				
Foreign Born/to US as Child	15	18.5	40	30.5				
Born in US 2nd Gen			45	49.2		4		2.1
3rd Generation or More				2.3	90	62		1
Born in US Gen Status Unknown	85	81.5	15	14.1	10	34	95	95.9
Missing				3.1			5	1
EDUCATIONAL LEVEL								
Elementary or Junior High				7.8		2		3.1
HS or GED	15	18.5	10	6.3	15	20	5	11.3
Technical College	10	5.6		3.1	10	4		1
Associate's Degree	10	9.3	10	7.8		6	30	26.8
Some College	10	18.5	20	25.8	10	14	20	18.6
Bachelor's Degree	35	29.6	50	39.8	30	28	45	35.1
Master's Degree	5	5.6	5	4.7	5	2		1
PhD or Professional		3.7	5	3.1		6		2.1
Missing	15	9.3		1.6	30	18		1

EMPLOYMENT								
Full Time	50	55.6	70	74.2	60	64	65	70.1
Part Time	20	16.7	10	8.6	5	10	15	13.4
Unemployed/Laid Off			10	9.4	5	4	15	6.2
School Full Time			5	3.9	5	2	5	3.1
Homemaker	15	11.1		1.6	20	16		6.2
Disabled					5	4		
Maternity Leave								
Missing	15	16.7	5	2.3				1
OCCUPATION								
Professional			40	51.6	15	18	10	17.5
Administrative			5	6.3	10	6	5	2.1
Clerical			15	4.7	5	8	5	4.1
Sales			5	0.8	5	6		1
Services			5	10.9	15	18	25	23.7
Small Business			5	3.1	5	4		3.1
Production/Transport/Lab or				1.6	10	14	10	17.5
Military							5	3.1
Homemaker				2.3	20	16		8.2
Student			10	3.9	5	2	5	3.1
Unemployed			10	7.8	10	8	15	5.2
Computer Tech								
Farming							5	4.1
Missing	100	100	5	5.5			15	6.2
FAMILY INCOME								
Under 5000	5	3.7	10	5.5				
5000-9999	5	9.3		0.8				
10-14999		5.6		0.8				
15-19999	10	11.1	5	5.5				
20-29999	30	16.7	10	8.6	5	4		
30-39999	10	7.4	10	16.4	5	2		
40-49999	10	11.1	15	13.3				

50-59999	10	9.3	10	8.6				
60-69999	5	11.1	5	3.1				
70-79999	5	1.9	15	5.5				
80-89999		1.9		3.1				
90-99999		1.9			5	2		
100,000 +				2.3				
Missing	10	9.3	20	26.6	85	92	100	100
SES ATTAINMENT								
Poor	10	7.4	5	7	10	6	15	11.3
Working Poor	10	9.3	30	18.8	15	10	15	15.5
Working Class	20	31.5	20	34.4	35	34	40	50.5
Middle Class	60	44.4	35	30.5	30	38	25	18.6
Upper Mid Class or Higher		7.4	10	7.8	10	12		2.1
Missing				1.6			5	2.1
SES ORIGIN								
Poor				2.3		2		7.2
Working Poor			5	4.7	15	16	15	9.3
Working Class			20	19.5	60	46	45	61.9
Middle Class				9.4	25	32	30	13.3
Upper Mid Class +				0.8		4		2.1
Missing	100	100	75	63.3			10	6.2
GOVERNMENT ASSISTANCE								
No Gov Assistance	60	72.2	55	69.5	55	74	85	83.5
Past Welfare	5	1.9	10	7.8	15	2		5.2
Current Welfare	15	7.4	25	16.4		8	15	9.3
Missing	20	18.5	20	6.3	30	16		2.2

Nativity								
Born in the US (Yes)	85	81.5	60	65.6	100	100	95	99
Not Born in the US (No)	15	18.5	40	31.3				
Missing				3.1			5	1

Appendix D
Demographic Detail
New York and Michigan Participants Reporting Turning Points

Variable Frequencies in Raw Numbers	New York Subsample	Michigan Subsample
GENDER		
Male	5	3
Female	5	3
AGE 21-23	 3	
24-26	5	
27-29		1
30-32	1	5
33-35	1	
RACE		
White	4	6
African American	1	
Hispanic	3	
SE Asian		
Other Asian	2	
MARITAL STATUS		
Single	8	1

Married		5
Cohabiting	1	
Divorced/Single	1	
CHILDREN		
Yes		4
No	10	2
IMMIGRATION STATUS		
Came to U.S. as Adult		
Came to U.S. as Child	4	
Born in U.S.	6	6
GOVERNMENT ASSISTANCE		
No	6	4
Yes-Past	1	
Yes-Current	1	
EDUCATIONAL LEVEL		
HS/GED	1	1
Technical School		
Associate's Degree		
Some College	3	
Bachelor's Degree	5	2

Master's Degree		1
PhD or Professional Degree	1	
WORK		
Part Time	1	
Full Time	7	3
Student	1	
Unemployed	1	2
OCCUPATION Production/Trans/Laborer		1
Unemployed	1	2
Student	2	
Homemaker		1
Military		
Service	1	
Sales	1	1
Clerical	2	
Administrative	1	
Professional/Managerial	2	
FAMILY INCOME Less than $5000	1	
$15,000 – 29,999	2	
$30,000-39,999	2	
$40,000 – 49,999	1	

$50,000 – 59,999	1	
$60,000 – 69,999	1	
SES ATTAINED		
Poor		1
Working Poor	3	2
Working Class	4	3
Middle Class	1	
Upper Middle Class	1	