Yours, Mine, and Ours:  
How Families Constitute and Manage Collective Identity Bundles  
(Working title)

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“Who are we?” Consumer researchers demonstrate an enduring interest in identity studies and suggest that in response to the opening question, processes of having, doing, and being interrelate (Belk 1988). Although a few studies address collective “we” questions (c.f. Kates 2004; Muniz and O’Guinn 2001; Schouten and McAlexander 1995; Thompson and Troester 2002), a large proportion of consumer research explores individual identity projects (c.f. Arnould and Thompson 2005 review; Mick and Buhl 1992). In this paper, I not only want to study collective “we” identities, but am interested in a very important collectivity that guides consumer behavior: the family. Specifically, the purpose of this study is to uncover whether and how consumption activities contribute to families’ collective, relational, and individual identity construction and management processes.

“Family identity is the family’s subjective sense of its own continuity over time, its present situation, and its character. It is the gestalt of qualities and attributes that make it a particular family and that differentiate it from other families” (Bennett, Wolin, and McAvity 1988; p. 212). Despite its customary treatment as a unified construct, family identity draws from a history of shared interaction among relational units within the family. Relational units, such as parent-child, couple, or siblings construct unique identities, discourses, rituals, symbols, and experiences that they enact as complementary, overlapping and competing consumption practices. As such, family identity is not simply a collection of individual identities, nor does it reside in the minds of individuals. Rather, family identity represents a co-constructed collective identity that exists in action (Blumer 1969) and may diverge from the individual and relational identities of its members.
As a phenomenon that faces growing challenges, family identity presents increasingly relevant and salient problems. At least three trends bring collective identity projects to the forefront. First, postmodern identity fragmentation, when identity plurality is allowed and celebrated (Firat and Venkatesh 1995; Smart and Neale 1999), challenges collective identity construction. Postmodern views claim limitless possibilities for identity and characterize individuals’ interpersonal networks as fragmented and disposable (Firat and Venkatesh 1995). Although I hesitate to fully embrace postmodern views of identity as existing without anchors (instead, I believe identity exists in our interactions, including our shared history), I agree that identity is more flexible now than in past periods of time. The postmodern view poses specific problems for constructing collective identities. How can we construct collective identity if identity is not anchored by history or bound by interpersonal networks? Claims of identity fragmentation expose the need for consumer researchers to study the ebbs and flows of identity, especially as collective identity shifts in association with relational and individual identities, to learn about how families use marketplace resources to manage these tensions.

Second, the evolving diversity of family forms challenges collective identity projects. Families such as those described as blended, divorced, single-parent, and co-parenting from separate households sometimes result in family separation in both time and space, challenging their ability to construct collective identities. In other cases, families strive to construct collective identity in the absence of existing representations. For example, although some claim metanarratives no longer exist due to fragmentation (Firat and Venkatesh 1995), families representing gay, multi-generational, or international adoption still receive relatively little attention in mass media compared with other family forms. Both as individuals and as families, we understand who we are in relation to others, comparing ourselves to those around us and to
ideological and normative constructions of self and family (Hirsch 1997). Adopting a social constructionist perspective, dominant social discourses influence self-construction and the stories we tell about the self (Callero 2003), and one dominant social discourse reflects the canonical forms of family, those being the generally accepted visions of family in a particular culture (Bochner, Ellis, and Tillmann-Healy 2000). Thus, these families must construct alternative narratives about family to make sense of who they are as a family.

Third, within a common living space, the privatization of family possessions offers evidence of isolation that challenges collective enactments. For example, in many homes, family members have their own televisions, computers, cell phones, and other personal technologies that encourage individual interaction at the expense of collective interaction. Consumer researchers acknowledge the paradox presented by technology and suggest it leads both to assimilation and isolation effects (Mick and Fournier 1998), transforming family interaction in ways that reconstitute family relationships while simultaneously limiting collective practices. Further, overbooked families spend much time engaging in separate activities such as work, after-school activities, music lessons, or sports, leaving less time for families to spend together in the household. In this way, family identity enactment spills out of the household as families find ways to interact more frequently in the car, on the sidelines, or on family trips, for example.

Each of the trends discussed above represents direct challenges to families’ collective identity practices and demonstrates the importance of studying collective identity construction and management processes. Families seek ways to both construct a coherent sense of collective identity and to partition out relational and individual identities of family members.

Marketplace resources are central to identity construction and management processes (Ahuvia 2005; Murray 2002; Oswald 1999; Schau and Gilly 2003; Thompson and Hirschman
1995; Thompson and Tambyah 1999; Tian and Belk 2005). For example, brands “serve as powerful repositories of meaning purposively and differentially employed in the substantiation, creation, and (re)production of concepts of self (p. 365)…Brands cohere into systems that consumers create not only to aid in living, but also to give meaning to their lives. Put simply, consumers do not choose brands, they choose lives” (Fournier 1998, p. 367). Increasingly, consumers are choosing lives that make it challenging to engage in collective identity practices. As sharing household boundaries is less common than ever before, families must construct identities across space and time through enabling marketplace resources for staging collective experiences at a distance (e.g. internet, cell phones, digital media, and commutes).

Families also differ in how they deploy marketplace resources to achieve identity goals and in the effects these resources might have on collective identity practices. Based on the experiences of study participants, “the family is not a natural unit that simply exists, but one defined by common action. Families watch TV, camp, travel, eat and talk together. The devices that facilitate that action or talk—phones, networked computers, pagers, answering machines—take on a serious purpose for these people” (English-Lueck 2002, p. 17). For some families, these devices fragmented families into smaller groups and individuals, while in other families, these same devices provided opportunities to do things together and connected families to one another and to their extended families.

Thus, as consumers use marketplace products and services in identity practices, these resources act as central props in the fundamental enterprise of relatedness (Gergen 1996). Given the salience of collective identity management practices and the centrality of marketplace resources, I seek to address the following research question in this study.

RQ1: How do families use marketplace resources to constitute family, relational, and individual identities within the family?
Although mostly focused on identity tensions within individuals, consumer studies reveal that marketplace resources offer solutions for managing identity tensions (c.f. Ahuvia 2005; Murray 2002; Oswald 1999; Schau and Gilly 2003; Thompson and Hirschman 1995; Thompson and Tambyah 1999; Tian and Belk 2005). I provide a section dedicated to specific strategies consumers use to manage tensions in the next chapter, so I will refrain from detailed elaboration here. However, a few examples to frame the discussion include demarcating, compromising, or synthesizing identities (Ahuvia 2005); adapting consumption patterns and attaching more significance to experiences and products that affirm the desired identity (Thompson and Tambyah 1999); appropriating cultural discourses and interpreting them in ways that impose coherence or resolve paradoxes in consumers’ own narratives of personal history (Thompson and Haytko 1997); displaying or concealing possessions in the workplace to demarcate boundaries between home self and work self (Tian and Belk 2005); demonstrating code switching behaviors to move between cultural identities (Oswald 1999); and integrating different aspects of the self into a coherent whole by telling multiple stories about one’s past (Escalas and Bettman 2000).

With regard to collective identity, management scholars conceptualized a framework of potential organizational responses to multiple collective identities: compartmentalization, deletion, integration, and aggregation (Pratt and Foreman 2000). However, this framework has not received empirical attention. Despite the noteworthy contributions these studies make to understanding individual consumers’ strategies for managing identity tensions, consumer researchers have virtually no understanding of how collectivities manage the bundles of identities that coexist in families. These identity bundles include the collective identity of the family, relational identities of smaller collectivities within the family (such as siblings, parent-child dyads, couple dyads, and others), and individual identities of family members.
Considering individual consumers’ strategies may provide a foundation for uncovering how families use consumption to manage identity bundles. For example, think about Escalas and Bettman’s (2000) finding that consumers tell different stories to illustrate diverse aspects of their identities and extend this idea to a context of family identity enactments. Within one family consumption experience, we might see the interplay of collective, relational, and individual identity performances. Escalas and Bettman’s (2000) findings drive us to consider how the unfolding of multiple decisions within that single context might reflect many different identities of the family, with some decisions foregrounding relational identities and others emphasizing the collective identity, for example. When investigating multi-bundle identity management, at least three additional concepts should be considered: 1) member agreement about the family’s collective identity, 2) commitment by one or more family members to specific shared identity performances, and 3) synergy and discord among family, relational, and individual identity bundles. These concepts are discussed in more detail in chapter 2 and explicitly defined in the appendix. With my second research question, I explore families’ identity management strategies.

RQ2: How do families use these and other consumption strategies to manage identity bundles?

RQ2a: How do families’ consumption strategies affect and how are they affected by member agreement among family members?

RQ2b: How do families’ consumption strategies affect and how are they affected by commitment to specific shared identity performances?

RQ2c: How do families’ consumption strategies affect and how are they affected by synergy and discord among identity bundles?

EXPECTED CONTRIBUTIONS

I expect the results of this study to extend two theoretical foundations of consumer research: identity studies and family decision-making research. Next, I will briefly summarize
my expected contributions before offering a detailed outline of relevant identity literature in the next chapter.

**Identity Studies**

In contrast to much consumer research that studies identity from a social identity theory or identification perspective, I adopt a relational view of identity that directs attention to identities residing in co-constructed *relations* that exist in *action*, not in the minds of individuals (Blumer 1969). For example, unique relational identities are constituted in special traditions such as sisters getting together for a monthly brunch, mother-daughter outings to the bookstore, or couples cooking their annual anniversary dinner together. Rather than examining consumption behavior of individuals or of collectivities, relational theory allows us to examine the space “in between,” reframing our focal units of consumer analysis away from individual internal measures to highlight communicative practices, including communicative relationships through symbolic consumption, as constitutive of relational and collective identity (Baxter 2004; Bennett et al. 1988; Carbaugh 1996; Curasi et al. 2004b; Sandel 2002; Whitchurch and Dickson 1999; Wood 2000). In addition, this project extends consumer culture theory research on individual and collective identity projects. Specifically, I propose a theoretical framework for investigating the interplay of the multiple relational bundles that coexist in families. This study outlines how families use the marketplace as a resource both for constructing relational identities and for managing competing and overlapping identity bundles within contemporary American families. Table 1 summarized my expected contributions to identity studies.
Table 1: Summary of Expected Contributions to Consumer Identity Research

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Current Approach</th>
<th>Relational Approach</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>▪ Unit of analysis: individual or collective (typically measured as dyads)</td>
<td>▪ Unit of analysis: multiple family bundles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ Multiple selves (role theory) and managing identity tensions within individuals</td>
<td>▪ Views products/brands as resources for co-constructing relational identities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ Identification (how individuals identify with brand communities, subcultures, and other groups)</td>
<td>▪ Explores the interplay among individual, relational, and family identities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>▪ Adopts a relational view of identity, focusing on how overlapping identity bundles pattern consumption behaviors</td>
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Family Decision Making

Although the proposed study seeks to explain collective identity construction and management processes, the relational view of identity, and this study in particular, has potential implications for studies of family decision making. As such, I will discuss how the outcomes of the study might advance theoretical contributions in this domain.

By focusing on individuals as the unit of analysis, identification theories fall short of explaining decision choices of collectivities. Why do we make different choices as a “we” than any of us would make individually? Studies of family decision-making disregard collective identity tensions, and instead, emphasize how individuals influence other family members (Belch et al. 1985; Corfman and Lehmann 1987; Cotte and Wood 2004; Filiatrault and Ritchie 1980; Moore et al. 2002; Palan and Wilkes 1997; Qualls 1982); allocate resources within a family (Commuri and Gentry 2005); represent family as aspects of their extended selves (Tian and Belk 2005); or alter their individual decision making practices to reflect concerns for family (Aaker and Lee 2001; Hamilton and Biehal 2005). That is, the focus of family decision-making research is most often on individuals. In addition, despite the accumulation of research that suggests we
construct and continuously revise identity in our consumption choices, consumer researchers have not explored how families constitute collective or relational identities in decision-making.

For example, traditional family decision-making research (cited above) would answer research questions such as how do I, as an individual family member, behave as part of this family? How do I accomplish my goals or get my way in group decisions? Which individual family members have more influence over decision-making and/or allocation of resources within the household? What is my role in the family decision-making process? How does priming an interdependent self (such as me as part of my family) change my consumption choices or behavior? However, if we shift our frame of reference even slightly from studying my place in the “we” to studying our co-constituted “us,” we open the field up for a new set of questions related to family decision-making research.

Adopting a multi-bundle relational perspective of family identity management changes the way we study family decision-making in two ways. First, in contrast to research on individual goals situated socially, my proposed framework highlights co-constructed relational goals such as accessing and activating spaces and technologies to shape and stage family experiences. This view highlights goals of producing family identity and managing overlapping identities as opposed to goals of relative influence. Second, a relational perspective alters the primary unit of analysis, moving from the individual or the household to relational units in action. In this sense, households, products, technologies, and brands are nested within relational bundles. Thus, the kinds of research questions we would expect to emerge from this relational view include how does who we are, as a family, shape our consumption choices? How do we accomplish our goals in group decisions? Under what conditions do we highlight particular
relational identities when determining how to allocate family resources? How do we use marketplace resources (e.g. brands, products, or services) to produce relational identities?

Studies of family decision making have either examined general family characteristics (John 1999) or specific dyadic units (Commuri and Gentry 2000, 2005), without examining the various relational units within and including the family as the proposed framework intends. Based on this framework, researchers studying family decision-making would begin by examining the interplay of reciprocal bundles of identities within the family.

Although families do make decisions that accommodate individual and other relational-unit identities, I propose that certain decisions are bounded by their centrality to family identity enactment and are less subject to who wins and loses and myriad conflict-resolution processes. Some categories of decisions made within a family are better construed as co-constituted enactments of family identity than negotiated joint decisions. For example, the oft-articulated purpose of family vacations is to stage a collective experience that serves the goals of producing family (DeVault 2000). To analyze this in terms of relative influence completely misses that the choice turns around the intention to constitute the group as a family. In other words, the relational view suggests that consumption decisions are not about what to purchase, but how to produce relational identities. Further, a goal of producing or “doing” family suggests that we should move away from studying decision-making processes in and of themselves, and instead, examine identity construction and management processes that highlight the insertion of consumption decisions into collectivities and relationships. The proposed relational model of family identity enactment suggests a whole different set of variables for examination. For example, it emphasizes whether and how collective vacation decisions such as where to go and what to do are synergistic with individual and relational identities of the family. In some
families, going on a camping trip might be a choice that all family members and subgroups would make independently because all members and groups define themselves as outdoorsy. Whereas in other families, when identity enactments are not so synergistic, some groups of family members might decide to go on a camping trip while other groups of family members may perhaps define themselves as more cosmopolitan and prefer spending time shopping. This model also considers the extent to which a family has a shared vision of what kinds of vacations enact family and the range of substitutable vacation options that would serve family identity goals. In addition, it assesses how prominently producing or reinforcing family identity will figure into the choice. For example, families may use vacations to strengthen particular relational units within the family such as father-son relational identities or child-grandparent relational identities. Finally, this framework directs our attention to commitment to certain identity performances. For many families, traditions drive family decisions and thus, bound identity enactment choices.

Another limitation of family decision-making research is that it tends to focus on household decision making, rather than the ebb and flow of family members into and out of the household (DeVault 2003) that shift relational identity needs. The very idea of family topples out of households—family is not constrained by that structure. For example, blended and divorced families enact family identity outside of the parameters of a household, sometimes vacationing together, connecting through technologies, and constructing novel rituals. In addition, many family identity rituals are constructed around and derive their meaning from the ebbs and flows of family in out and of social spaces. For instance, social dramas get highlighted as a tool for enforcing the boundary between family and public; collective narratives knit family members dispersed in space and time into a cohesive identity; everyday interactions also bring this coming
together and moving apart to the forefront. Because in traditional family decision-making research household and family are often equated, a narrow definition of family is imposed that is consistent with traditional family life cycle models, but inconsistent with the relational bundles that characterize contemporary family life. Also, because these are equated, we have not considered the household as a particular consequential structure around which families ebb and flow. Families use a household in the same way that they might use other marketplace resources (telephone, computer, dining room table, or RV), as a tool for co-constituting collective experiences. In some families, households may be very important, whereas in other families collective experiences mostly may be constructed outside the household. In contrast to previous research, this study has implications for the coming together and moving apart of families beyond household boundaries, concentrating on actions that produce family identity rather than on consumption decisions devoid of relational goals.

**Managerial Implications**

This study not only relates to improving families’ lives, but it also addresses problems facing organizations, especially those that offer contexts for producing family experiences. The “we” goals, practices and discourses that comprise daily family life may be disparate from the “me” goals highlighted in consumer research (Coupland 2005). Despite this, we rarely examine how the goal of “being a family” trumps individual consumption preferences and practices (Curasi et al 2004b; DeVault 2000; Miller 1998). When making consumption choices, families draw on bundles of identities, and attending to this multiplicity of collectivities should change managerial focus from whom to target (based on relative influence) to how to facilitate families in staging collective experiences (DeVault 2003). Thus, this research may have implications for
how producers of consumption contexts (i.e. service providers) might co-produce family experiences in ways that facilitate relational identity management.

In chapter 2, first, I will review relevant literature across disciplines to define family identity. Second, I will summarize my grounding in identity theories. Third, I will outline a relational framework of family identity management and discuss how it differs from previous research. In chapter 3, I propose appropriate methods for this study that account for overlapping identity bundles. Chapters 4 and 5 will reflect my findings and explain implications of the study for both families and service providers. In addition, I offer an appendix that includes definitions of central constructs, the interview protocol/consent forms, and examples of coding procedures as a reference for readers.
Chapter 2: Theoretical Foundations

IDENTITY STUDIES

Collective Identity

Research examines collective identity for brand communities (Algesheimer, Dholakia, and Herrmann 2005; Muniz and O’Guinn 2001), consumption micro-cultures (Sirsi, Ward, and Reingen 1996), subcultures (Holt 1995), and non-brand-focused communities (Belk and Costa 1998; Kates 2004; Kozinets 2002). These studies, at least in part, address how communities coalesce around actions that reflect their collective identities. Unlike subcultures that voluntarily organize around consumption activities (Schouten and McAlexander 1995), families rely on social and kinship ties. However, in both cases, consumption serves as a resource for producing identities.

A smaller body of consumer research investigates family identity. Families engage in consumption practices to re-establish a sense of family following divorce (Bates and Gentry 1994), ensure continuity of family identity across generations (Curasi et al. 2004a; Moisio et al. 2005), and represent family as an aspect of one’s extended self (Belk 1988; Tian and Belk 2002). However, the construct has received little systematic definition and elaboration, despite consequential implications for consumer studies. As such, in the next section, I examine literature across disciplines to advance a detailed definition of family identity for use in a consumer setting.

What is Family Identity?

Implicit and explicit references to family identity appear in marketing (Bates and Gentry 1994; Belk 1988; Curasi et al. 2004a; Moisio et al. 2005), sociology (Bielby and Bielby 1989), communication studies (Braithwaite, Baxter, and Harper 1998; Galvin 2003; Koenig Kellas...
families’ identities are multiple, contextual, and reshaped over time. In addition, I adopt the following formal definition, “Family identity is the family’s subjective sense of its own continuity over time, its present situation, and its character. It is the gestalt of qualities and attributes that make it a particular family and that differentiate it from other families” (Bennett, Wolin, and McAvity 1988; p. 212). Although each family has a distinctive bundle of identities, regardless of how varied families are in the actions used to define themselves, particular identity components are shared across families: structure, generational orientation, and character.

Structure indicates “who is in and who is out, both now and in the past” (Bennett et al. 1988, p. 213). This component reflects not only the boundaries of family membership, but also the hierarchy and roles of family members. “At a structural level, families have undergone major changes in organization, permanency, roles and size” (Daly 2001, p. 2). These changes impact both the numbers, sizes, types and assortments of identity bundles that comprise family life and the numbers, sizes, types and assortments of enactments that constitute these bundles. Researchers demonstrate that structure is negotiated and instantiated through consumption activities. For instance, boundaries are reflected in Wallendorf and Arnould’s (1991) theme of extensiveness of inclusion in Thanksgiving Day family rituals, in which the family members included in the celebration varies from year to year. Similarly, Bates and Gentry (1994) give examples of family portraits taken following divorce that marks changes in boundaries of family membership.

Generational orientation describes the beliefs and recollections about past history of family identity and depicts the reflective quality of families—that is “the extent to which a
family understands its present condition as a part of a continuum over time,” preserving identity from generation to generation (Bennett et al. 1988, p. 214). Limited consumer research demonstrates that this component is recognized and valued among some portion of contemporary North American households and linked to consumption patterns and possessions (Curasi et al 2004a; Moisio et al. 2005). For instance, generations of family are linked together through consumption rituals such as viewing family photographs and storytelling that anchor a family to its past (Wallendorf and Arnould 1991); cherished possessions become inalienable wealth in families (Curasi et al. 2004b); and intergenerational influences may help establish brand equity (Moore et al. 2002). Families may differ with regard to attachment to family traditions from their past or in their commitment to incorporating new generations of family into these collective identity practices.

Family character is a third component of family identity that captures the day-to-day characteristics of family life (Bennett et al. 1988; Bolea 2000). Within the context of consumption research, family character descriptors might be eclectic with families giving differential definitional weight to shared activities (e.g. we’re a Green Bay Packers family), shared traits (e.g. we all laugh the same way), similar temperaments (e.g. we’re all impatient), common tastes (e.g. we all love the same genre music), common values (e.g. we’re a patriotic family), and so on. In particular, extensive prior research links consumer values to consumption attitudes, behavior, and activities (c.f. Burroughs and Rindfleisch 1997; Kahle, Beatty, and Homer 1986; Richins and Dawson 1992). Scholars studying collectivities also agree that values are central to defining identity (Melewar 2003). Consumer researchers have not explored how the complex enactment of family character informs and directs consumption activities.
Collective-Individual Identity Interplay

In general, researchers treat family identity as a unified construct, without dealing with the complexities of multiple relational and individual identities. Although consumer researchers have not studied the collective identity bundles that comprise families, both individual and collective identity are the focus of a burgeoning array of consumer culture theory research (Arnould and Thompson 2005). Previous research examining the relationship between individual and collective identities most often contributes to understanding how individual members identify with and experience communities and how collectivities contribute to individual identity projects (Belk and Costa 1998; Celsi, Rose, and Leigh 1993; Firat and Venkatesh 1995; Kozinets 2001, 2002; Schouten and McAlexander 1995; Sirsi, Ward, and Reingen 1996). Studies of identification dominate investigations of individual-collective identity interplay, particularly within the last decade. Specifically, this stream of research reveals how individual member identification with focal groups such as subcultures (Kates 2002; Schouten and McAlexander 1995), microcultures (Thompson and Troester 2002), organizations (Bhattacharya and Elsbach 2002; Bhattacharya and Sen 2003; Stahl 1964), and nations (Combes et al. 2001; Dunn 1976; Lantz et al. 2002) relates to identity construction processes.

Identification studies draw largely on social identity theory. Social identity is a psychological construct defined as "that part of an individual’s self-concept which derives from his knowledge of his membership in a social group (or groups) together with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership" (Tajfel 1981, p.225). Thus, in much research, we study the individual as a social self, where collective identity is implicitly housed or located in the individual’s knowledge of membership in certain groups. This reduces collectivities and relationships to elements of the individual self.
Researchers explain a variety of phenomena using social identity theory including the meanings of fashion brands (Auty and Elliott 1998; Elliott and Wattanasuwan 1998), material possession attachment (Kleine and Baker 2004), peer influence (Auty and Elliott 2001), posthumous identity construction (Bonsu and Belk 2003), donating activity (Bhattacharya, Rao, and Glynn 1995), attitudes toward brands (Auty and Elliott 1998), brand choice (Auty and Elliott 2001; Burgess and Harris 1999), and member identification based on organizational and product characteristics (Bhattacharya et al. 1995). Although these studies reveal much about consumption outcomes related to individual identification with a group, social identity theory does not provide a framework or language for studying identity at relational or collective levels.

**Managing Identity Interplay**

*Multiple Individual Identity Interplay.* As my study examines the interplay of individual, relational, and collective identity, I review relevant research addressing identity management. Related consumer research almost solely considers individual identity tensions. Scholars commonly believe that the self is multi-dimensional, resulting in studies that explore the multiple, diverse, and sometimes competing aspects of identity (Sirgy 1982). For example, consumer researchers operationalize identity using concepts of a core and extended self (Belk 1988), drawing on situational selves based on role theory perspectives (Kleine and Kernan 1991), investigating comparisons of real, actual, and ideal selves (Dolich 1969; Landon 1974; Malhotra 1981), priming independent versus interdependent selves to predict various outcomes (Aaker and Lee 2001; Mandel 2003), and exploring fragmented and multiple identities of postmodern consumers (Firat and Venkatesh 1995). For instance, Mick and Demoss (1990) recognize that self-gifts represent messages between the multiple selves within each of us.
This multiplicity of selves raises questions about tensions among competing identities. Despite the recognition of identity fragmentation, empirical research demonstrates that individuals strive for a coherent sense of self (Ahuvia 2005; Murray 2002; Arnould and Price 2000; Thompson and Hirschman 1995). Further, consumers actively manage multiple identities through consumption practices (c.f. Ahuvia 2005; Murray 2002; Oswald 1999; Thompson and Hirschman 1995; Thompson and Tambyah 1999; Tian and Belk 2005). Specifically, consumers construct coherent consumer identity narratives in stories about loved possessions using three strategies: demarcating, compromising, and synthesizing (Ahuvia 2005). Based on a set of depth interviews about consumers’ loved possessions, Ahuvia (2005) found participants’ discourses evidenced identity conflicts (e.g. among lifestyle identities such as musician versus business woman). In turn, loved collections offered a potential solution to identity conflicts, as the objects could assert both ends of the contradiction simultaneously (Ahuvia 2005). To create a coherent self narrative, participants demonstrated three strategies: 1) demarcating refers to endorsing one identity over another by claiming love for objects that reinforce a particular identity and rejecting objects that reinforce a different identity; 2) compromising refers to finding a middle ground between two identities; and 3) synthesizing refers to novel approaches to identity management that sometimes result in a new identity and “occurs when an object or consumption activity successfully combines the previously conflicting aspects of the consumer’s identity” (Ahuvia 2005, p. 181). In a related study, immigrant family members use goods to move between one cultural identity and another. As the immigrants straddle the boundaries of two cultures and manage overlapping identities, they move in and out of diverse roles and cultural frames (Oswald 1999). Oswald outlines code switching behavior (i.e. language, food preparation, and dress) that allows one to move between cultures depending upon the situation. Similarly,
expatriate professionals explore the use of consumption to manage identity tensions and conflicts, striving to enact a cosmopolitan identity while preserving ties to home and seeking communal affiliation (Bardhi 2004; Thompson and Tambyah 1999). These authors examine identity projects from a poststructuralist perspective, which suggests that identity is constituted within ideological systems. Findings reveal often conflicting consumer meanings and goals in the quest for cosmopolitan identity, specifically suggesting tensions between meanings of travel and dwelling (Thompson and Tambyah 1999). Finally, employees demarcate the home-work boundary by deciding what aspects of their individual identity to display in the workplace (Tian and Belk 2005). Although much of the research linking identity management to consumption focuses on individual identity, some of these same processes may be central to managing interplay among and between collective, relational, and individual identities as well.

Multiple Collective Identity Interplay. Despite a lack of attention in consumer research, organizational scholars shed some light on the management of multiple collective identities. For instance, Pratt and Foreman (2000) introduce a framework for classifying management responses using identity plurality (referring to the number of identities maintained) and identity synergy (referring to the relationships among the identities). Specifically, Pratt and Foreman (2000) conceptualize four categories of response strategies: compartmentalization, aggregation, deletion, and integration. In this conceptual paper, the authors outline propositions to demarcate the conditions under which each of the response strategies is appropriate, including support by the stakeholders of the existing identities, resource constraints and compatibility, and interdependence or diffusion of the identities within the organization.

Although research on identity interplay offers support for the assumption that consumers use marketplace resources to manage identity within individuals or collectivities, previous
research does not investigate processes of identity management \textit{across} different conceptual groupings of identity. In the following section, I introduce a relational model of family identity management that highlights interplay among bundles of identities. I selected the term “bundles,” rather than the more common conception of identity “levels” to de-emphasize a hierarchical structure. Using this language, relational identities of siblings, for instance, exist beside and not within the collective identity of the family. Although these bundles may, and often do, overlap with one another, separation—the potential for identity bundles to be distinguished from one another—is central to this framework. Figure 1 offers a visual depiction of the difference between traditional views of nested identities comprised of levels and the proposed relational view of identity bundles.

\textbf{Figure 1. View of Identity Levels versus Identity Bundles}

A primary benefit of this reconceptualization is that it forces scholars to move beyond the notion of the individual as embedded within other levels of identities (as assumed in social identity
theories, systems theories, and Belk’s (1988) view of the extended self), and instead, consider how these identities relate to one another, directing attention to synergy and discord in ways that were not possible in embedded structures.

Our current theories are inadequate for thinking about managing multiple and diverse identity bundles. Central to this relational theoretical lens is a move away from individual to relational identities, goals, and enactments as the focal units for analysis (Gergen 1996). Rather than viewing families as collections of individuals, my proposed model views families as a collectivity that is further comprised of bundles of relationships each with distinctive identities, discourses, rituals, symbols, and experiences that are enacted as complementary, overlapping, and competing consumption practices.

RELATIONAL MODEL OF FAMILY IDENTITY MANAGEMENT

Communication Forms and Symbols

The social context of family life shapes and limits families’ collective identities that are constituted and enacted through the interaction of various communication forms and symbols. Families constitute, revise, reinforce, and pass on identity in the performance of family rituals (Baxter and Braithwaite 2002; Bennett et al. 1988; Bolea 2000; Bossard and Boll 1950; Imber-Black, Roberts, and Whiting 1988; Wolin and Bennett 1984), narratives (Bennett et al. 1988; Bolea 2000; Bochner, Ellis, and Tillman-Healy 2000; Langellier and Peterson 1993; Sillars 1995; Stone 1988), social dramas (Carbaugh 1996; Chatzidakis et al. 2004; Turner 1980), everyday interactions (Baxter 2004; Whitchurch and Dickson 1999; Wood 2000), and intergenerational transfers (Bolea 2000; Curasi et al. 2004b; Moisio et al. 2005).
Families’ lived experiences commonly reflect these as overlapping and mutually reinforcing forms of enactment that jointly constitute family identities. By shifting the lens to a relational view of families, we expose how families enact an array of forms to constitute both collective and relational identities. This highlights the seepage among and between the different forms and the priority of various forms within family life. Consider a family that defines itself as adventurous and spontaneous. This family may go sky diving together as part of an annual ritual, repeatedly tell stories about their adventures, and pass from generation to generation the pin used to open their great-grandfather’s parachute on his first jump. Examining forms jointly reveals how they work together (and could potentially contradict one another) to inform the family’s identity, thus blurring the lines between enactment forms.

Consumers’ purchase, consumption, and disposal of products, brands, possessions and even services/places serve as symbolic resources for family identity enactment. Objects are treasured as powerful symbols of family and not merely individual identity (Curasi et al. 2004b). Shared consumption symbols serve multiple functions in that they contain memories or feelings that link us to our sense of past (Belk 1991; Curasi et al. 2004b); verify important moments of personal history through semiotic principles of indexicality (Grayson and Shulman 2000); act as transitional objects (Belk 1992; Mehta and Belk 1991; Myers 1985; Noble and Walker 1997); express the material values of their owners (Richins 1994); define group membership (Belk 1988; Grubb and Grathwohl 1967); act as tie-signs that communicate relational identity (Goffman 1971); offer a means both to integrate and differentiate one from others (Wallendorf and Arnould 1988); and communicatively portray different aspects of identity (Kleine et al. 1995). Individuals, relational groupings, and family units distinguish whether and how
possessions symbolize their identities. Although previous literature suggests that consumption symbols are embedded in communication forms, this boundary is fluid and permeable.

Moderators Related to Family, Relational, and Individual Identity Interplay

In this section, I propose three concepts that moderate how families manage identity based on previous empirical studies (Epp and Arnould 2006; Epp and Grossbart 2006; Epp and Price 2006b). These moderators acknowledge the complexity of a collective construct that incorporates multiple identities residing in collectivities, smaller groups within the collectivities, and individuals. Within this interplay, I explore how families use marketplace resources to manage identity enactment processes. Any discussion of interfaces among identities must be bound by conditions that specify which identities are considered, at what point in time, and under what circumstances. Thus, for clarity and transparency, it is important to name the claimants, targets, and intended audience of identity and designate the time period to which the research refers (i.e. present, past, or future identity) (Pratt and Foreman 2000). For example, we could investigate family members’ (claimants’) descriptions of the siblings’ identity (target) being presented to other tourists (audience) on a trip to Disneyland (circumstance/time period).

Member Agreement. Bagozzi (2000) introduces the notion of agreement in conceptions of collective-level constructs by distinguishing between group intentions and individual intention directed toward group action. He posits that individuals can have we-intentions that are not shared by the other parties involved. Although collective enactments certainly shape individual members’ articulations about the collectivity, family members may differ in their descriptions of what constitutes the family’s collective or relational identities and whether and how those collective identities are linked to consumption symbols. How do individual family members
describe their family to others? To what extent do these descriptions match those of other family members? I contend the level of agreement among family members will influence family identity enactment. Interestingly, Stone (1988) builds the following argument: “Usually this familial identity is not articulated or often said out loud, although the fact is that just about any given family member will, if questioned, define what it means to be a member of the family in ways that are at least roughly consistent with what other family members would say” (p. 34). This suggests that individual family members should both share and be able to articulate similar descriptions of collective identities. However, I would expect variation across families in the degree of agreement among family members about collective and relational identities. Agreement may moderate how families employ consumption activities to manage identity. For instance, a family with low member agreement might alternate more between representations of the family in selecting consumption activities or restrict collective enactment to a minimal set of agreed upon representations.

Commitment to Shared Identity Performances. Family members also may vary in their commitment to maintaining certain enactments of family identity. For example, kinkeepers may be especially important to endurance of forms and symbols of family identity enactment (Curasi et al. 2004a). What we do not know is whether and how the commitment of one family member to a particular collective enactment can compensate for the lack of commitment of other family members. However, it seems likely that different family members or collectivities may demonstrate commitment to competing identity enactments. In this case, some family members may feel they are primarily recipients of a designed and produced family enactment, such as a family-generated expectation to participate in sports, that is at odds with other relational identity enactments. Research across disciplines indicates that families display different levels of
attachment to both family narratives and rituals (Bennett et al. 1988; Bossard and Boll 1950; Braithwaite et al. 1998; Cheal 1988; Roberts 1988; Wolin and Bennett 1984). Thus, it is reasonable to speculate that some shared identity performances are up for negotiation, while others are not.

**Synergy and Discord among Individual, Relational, and Familial Identities.** Another moderator of family identity enactment is the compatibility of individual family members’ identities with collective performances of family identity (or with each member’s enactments, activities, and discourses related to identity). As different interactions of the collectivity often do not include all members of the family, smaller collectivities develop relational identities based on their own history of shared experiences. Here I observe how enactments of individual and relational identities of family members correspond with and depart from enactments of collective identities. My assumption is not that family, relational, and individual identities will ever be static or in balance. Rather, tensions among these diverse identities are constantly in flux and family members and collectivities may employ consumption activities to construct, differentiate, or reform these identities. Imagine the merging of enactments when a blended family is formed. Stepsons who were not previously interested in sports may become fanatics about baseball to establish a relational identity with their stepfather. This activity gives them a common language and new shared interaction that re-frames who they are as a collectivity.

Synergy among individual, relational, and family identity may lead to a variety of outcomes related to family identity enactment. For instance, an examination of synergy among identity bundles might reveal that families whose identity bundles almost completely overlap will enact identity in much the same way whether individually, in small groups, or as a collective. Similarly, an examination of discord among identity bundles would clarify under what
conditions families highlight collective identity over individual identity. Further, consumer researchers and service providers need to understand when one relational identity (father-daughter) takes precedence over another (couple). In addition, if little synergy exists among identities, we might see constraints in our choices for enacting family. For example, if family members believe in the importance of family dinners, but the spouses do not like to go out to eat and one child believes the family should not eat processed foods, the family’s choices for how to carry out that collective enactment are constricted. Family identity is negotiated within and among the individual and relational identities of family members as well. Families with children interested in music, for instance, may propose buying annual passes to the local symphony, but the image of a “musical family” may be alien to some family members.

Based upon the practical challenges to collective identity enactment outlined in chapter 1 that highlight the importance of this study and the gaps I exposed in our theories of identity, I propose the following two research questions:

RQ1: How do families use marketplace resources to constitute family, relational, and individual identities within the family?

RQ2: How do families use these and other consumption strategies to manage identity bundles?

RQ2a: How do families’ consumption strategies affect and how are they affected by *member agreement* among family members?

RQ2b: How do families’ consumption strategies affect and how are they affected by *commitment to specific shared identity performances*?

RQ2c: How do families’ consumption strategies affect and how are they affected by *synergy and discord among identity bundles*?
Chapter 3: METHOD

In this chapter, I will outline my research approach for the study including the rationale and description of the substantive context, participants, data collection, and analysis. Much thought was given to each of the decisions reflected in this section, with a goal of achieving “methodological congruence” in which the purpose, research questions, and method flow logically from one another and present a cohesive whole (Morse and Richards 2002).

Overall approach and rationale

Two conditions led to my selection of grounded theory as the most appropriate approach for this study. First, as previously discussed, inadequate theories exist to explain the management of multiple and overlapping collective identity projects in consumer research. Second, my central research questions focus on the processes of identity construction and management, and a grounded theory approach is particularly suited to investigate process-based research questions (Creswell 2006). Grounded in various sources of data from previous empirical studies (Epp and Arnould 2006; Epp and Grossbart 2006; Epp and Price 2005, 2006b; Thompson et al. 2006), I have been working to develop a relational model of family identity management. However, a grounded theory approach is iterative in nature and requires continually collecting data, comparing categories, and revising interpretations until the process is understood (Sayre 2001). Currently, we still have much to learn about the consumption-based antecedents, strategies, intervening conditions, and consequences of family identity management. Thus, I view this study as an additional step toward this goal.

Consistent with a grounded theory approach, this study excludes a priori themes (Creswell 2006) and adopts an emergent design, allowing for shifts in the data collection process after entering the field (Creswell 2006; Wallendorf and Belk 1989). Grounded theory falls
squarely in the interpretive research tradition. Thus, in addition to advocating an emergent design, I adhere to many other aspects of this perspective. For example, I will strive to present a holistic account of the identity management process that incorporates multiple perspectives and voices (Bochner 2002; Creswell 2006). Further, the interpretive tradition views the researcher as an instrument (McCracken 1988; Sayre 2001). Thus, throughout the process, I will make known my own assumptions and work to detail how my background and worldview affects the study. Given the inductive approach to research employed in grounded theory, it is appropriate to take up the tenants of a hermeneutic approach, which calls for part-to-whole and whole-to-part interpretations (Thompson, Pollio and Locander 1994).

**Context**

When selecting a context for this study, I limited my options to those that offered an interesting substantive case of the phenomenon of theoretical interest; focused on a consumption experience; allowed for variation among families; demonstrated practicality for sampling; and exhibited relevance to both families and service providers. The context of family vacations meets each of these conditions. Specifically, this context reflects the management of multiple identity projects in a consumption milieu bounded in a particular time and space. Family leisure helps families develop a sense of family identity (Shaw and Dawson 2001) and staging collective experiences serves the goals of producing family identity (DeVault 2000; Shaw and Dawson 2001). Further, family vacations offer a useful context to illustrate the difference between traditional decision-making research and the proposed relational framework for understanding consumption choices. Explicitly, previous research in the family vacation context focuses almost entirely on relative influence strategies (Filiatrault and Ritchie 1980; Litvin, Xu, and Kang 2004; Su et al. 2003).
To illustrate, Filiatrault and Ritchie (1980) examined the relative influence of household decision-making units in a vacation context. Despite that by examining a series of sub-decisions and breaking the analysis into families (husband, wife, children) and couples (husbands and wives only) this study moves toward examining groupings within families, it still focuses on individual influence within these decision-making units. Specifically, Filiatrault and Ritchie (1980) conclude that, in general, husbands were more dominant than wives and children in sub-decisions when the family was the unit of analysis; similarly, husbands were more dominant in the sub-decisions when the couple was the unit of analysis, although to a lesser extent than in the family-level analysis. To demonstrate how my study differs from this one, rather than examining dominance within the decision process, role structure, agreement on influence, stability of influence, dimensions of decision roles, and the importance of children, my study would examine collective identity construction and management patterns that shift the focus away from relative influence and toward family and couple identity projects by examining identity goals, enactments and discourses that would shape sub-decisions in the vacation context.

Families indicate that traveling with their families has become more important over recent years (71% strongly agree) and suggest that traveling gives time-poor families much needed time to bond (80% strongly agree) (Gardyn 2001). According to a family travel survey conducted by Avis, spending quality time together is the primary reason families take vacations (Avis 2002). Thus, this is a context in which the explicit intention of taking a family vacation is often to enact or produce family relationships. This goal of “doing” family is especially important given the challenges to family identity discussed previously.

Family vacations represent an increasingly relevant context for service providers as well. According to the Travel Industry Association of America, “Travel and tourism generates $1.3
trillion in economic activity in the U.S. every year.” Recently, providers have noticed an increase in some overlooked niches in the family travel market including grandparent/grandchild, multigenerational, single-parent, and gay/lesbian family travel. To accommodate these families, hotels, airlines and other service providers have started adapting their offerings (Gardyn 2001). Given that vacation destinations reflect a consumption context precisely about staging collective family consumption experiences, it seems an ideal context for this study.

Finally, the family vacation context affords a potentially high level of variability. Based on the trends noted above related to the variety of family travel experiences, I would expect differences across families in identity management processes and relational goals of vacations. In addition to sample variability, this context allows for the collection of multiple types of data. For instance, jointly-told family stories, family photo albums, vacation artifacts/keepsakes, journals, and participant observation would allow for triangulation across data sets to inform the analysis and establish confirmability (Wallendorf and Belk 1989).

Participants

_Type of sampling plan._ Researchers employing a grounded theory approach typically use theoretical sampling, a form of purposeful sampling, by choosing cases that can “purposefully inform an understanding of the research problem” (Creswell 2006, p. 248). For my study, the most important criterion for selecting study participants is that the family must have participated in identity management processes. However, this criterion is too broad to direct participant selection usefully, as some would contend that all families who interact with one another would qualify. To provide boundaries on the sampling frame, I have developed a few conditions for participation in the study. Qualified participants must 1) have taken a family vacation within the last two years, excluding those to visit other family members; 2) be willing to share stories about
their experience; and 3) consist of at least three members. The purposes of these conditions are to
guard against difficulty in reconstructing the experience, bound the data by excluding other types
of family interaction that may occur outside the vacation context, ensure that families can recall
stories related to the experience, and include multiple identity bundles for investigation,
respectively.

Despite the potential simplification afforded by studying only one family form, it stands
to reason that families may demonstrate diverse and complex goals for managing family identity
based, in part, on family structure. Thus, to capture this variability, I will not limit the study to
any particular family form, and instead, will seek cases that highlight this variability (i.e. blended
families, single-parent families, divorced families, multigenerational families, etc.). This
characteristic of the sampling plan ensures maximum variation (Miles and Huberman 1994). In
addition, this diversity will serve to confirm or disconfirm the conditions under which the model
being developed holds (Creswell 2006). With regard to the practical issue of locating informants,
I will begin by networking to locate willing participants (Sayre 2001). Specifically, I intend to
utilize travel agents and others who work with families to plan vacations on a regular basis and
to post recruitment fliers. Following an initial group of informants, I will use snowballing
techniques to find additional families that meet my criteria and will further inform the research.

Units of analysis. In consumer research, empirical studies of family decision-making
largely account for spousal (Davis, Hoch, and Ragsdale 1986; Ferber and Lee 1974; Park 1982;
Su et al. 2003) or parent-child interaction (Isler, Popper, and Ward 1987; Palan and Wilkes
1997). Further, empirical studies of collectivities, across disciplines, rarely move beyond the
dyadic level of analysis (for an exception, see Belch, Belch, and Ceresino 1985). As such, a need
to expand beyond this level of analysis in consumer research on collectivities exists and merits
further attention. To study collective identities requires collecting data from multiple members of the collectivity. Even researchers who elected to collect triadic family data highlight the importance and call for the collection of data from the entire family (Koenig Kellas 2005). Thus, the primary unit of analysis for this study is the family. The data collection procedure, discussed in the next section, will produce both family-level data as well as afford the ability to analyze smaller units such as relational dyads, triads, and individual family members. Based on the complexity of my phenomenon of interest, my focus on multiple units of analysis is essential. For example, although family identity is a system-level construct, following Anderson and Sabatelli (1992), one of the best ways to understand the family unit or system as a whole is to assess multiple dyads within the family as the unit of analysis. Focusing on multiple dyads within the family presents the diverse perspectives of family members and offers a more complete understanding of the family unit (Curasi et al. 2004b). My proposed study will move family decision research beyond the dyadic unit of analysis by collecting data from multiple family members.

As an important point of clarification, I adopt a broad definition of family: “networks of people who share their lives over long periods of time bound by ties of marriage, blood, or commitment, legal or otherwise, who consider themselves as family and who share a significant history and anticipated future of functioning in a family relationship” (Galvin, Bylund, and Brommel 2004, p. 6). This definition recognizes that family is socially constructed and culturally contingent (McGoldrick and Giordano 1996; Stone 2001) and acknowledges the diversity of membership assortments that comprise families such as blended, single-parent, gay, parenting from separate households, polygamous, elective, and multi-generational or extended
familial networks (Carsten 2004). Rather than relying on researcher-imposed definitions of family, participants in the study will identify who they consider family in this context.

Sample size. As the number of families interviewed depends on when theoretical saturation occurs (Creswell 2006; Glaser and Strauss 1967), I will not offer a definitive sample size at this time. However, a general rule of thumb suggests 20 to 30 participants (families in this study) to establish saturation, but this number varies across studies (Creswell 2006).

Data Collection Procedures

Following much research conducted to date regarding family identity, I will use open-ended depth interviewing techniques that incorporate family narratives (cf. Bolea, 2000; Wolin, Bennett and Jacobs, 1988). My intent is to generate both collective and relational narratives in order to gain an emic understanding of the complexity of family identity from multiple perspectives and to explore the lived experiences of informants (Curasi et al. 2004; Wallendorf and Arnould 1991). As open-ended questions are likely to elicit narratives (Riessman 1993) and to generate details and examples necessary for understanding context (Bylund 2003), interviews offer an appropriate method for this study.

Justification of method. I have selected family stories as my primary data source for many reasons. First, we build, understand, and produce our family identities through the communicative construction of family narratives (Bennett et al. 1988; Bolea 2000; Bochner et al. 2000; Kleine et al. 1995; Langellier and Peterson 1993; Schouten 1991; Sillars 1995; Stone 1988). Consumer researchers link consumption narratives to identity projects of both individuals (Ahuvia 2005; Escalas and Bettman 2000; Thompson 1996, 1997; Thompson and Tambyah 1999) and collectivities (Arnould and Price 1993; Curasi et al. 2004b; Kozinets et al. 2005; Thompson and Arsel 2004). Further, narratives help us deal with the contradictions we encounter.
in social life (Bochner 2002) and, specifically, aid in managing identity tensions (Ahuvia 2005). Recent work explores consumer narrative content and structure to help consumers make sense of their experiences with brands and products and construct a coherent life story (Ahuvia 2005; Escalas and Bettman 2000; Kleine et al. 1995). Taken together, these studies provide support for the value of analyzing consumption stories, but do not examine tensions among identity bundles.

Encouraging joint storytelling allows me to focus on family identity construction in process, one of the central functions of narrative (Koenig Kellas 2005). This view is important because it highlights narratives as constructive, not just representative (Escalas and Bettman 2000), performative, not just performance (Langellier and Peterson 2004), and affecting, not just reflecting identity (Bochner 2002). Family stories are never complete—“We are always in conversation with them” (Stone 1988, p. 8).

Stages of data collection. I envision at least two phases of data collection for this study: eliciting collective narratives and follow-up questions with subgroups and individual family members about experiences that may differ from those of the family. Interviews will take place in participants’ homes in order to facilitate auto-driving techniques (McCracken 1989) and will likely last from one to two hours. Prior to the interview, I will discuss the purpose of the study with the family and give them a copy of the consent forms to review. Consent forms for adults, youth ages 13-18, and children ages 7-12 are provided in the Appendix. At the time of the interview, I will re-read the consent form to the participants and give them an opportunity to ask questions. In addition, I will obtain permission to videotape/audiotape the interviews to allow for detailed analysis and to capture the nonverbal interaction of family members. Prior to the start of the interview, family members will provide some basic demographic information by filling out the form in the Appendix. The family also will be asked to gather any photos,
keepsakes, or other materials they typically would use in telling the story. At the completion of the interview, I will ask for permission to photograph artifacts obtained by the family while on vacation that emerge as central to their stories.

When developing the interview guide, I used the funnel method to create questions (Gordon, 1980; McCracken, 1989), beginning with “grand-tour” questions and followed by more specific questions in the form of prompts, with a general objective of allowing informants to “tell their own story in their own terms” (McCracken, 1989, p. 34). I will begin the interview by encouraging the family to share collectively the story of their most recent family vacation. During the initial telling, I will provide nonverbal responses (e.g. nodding) to promote talk, but I will not ask questions in order to encourage the most natural telling (Markham Shaw 1997). After the family finishes telling the story, I will probe for more detail to gain a complete understanding of the experience such as who attended; what goals did families have for the vacation; how were decisions made; how was this vacation similar/different from other family experiences; and so on. Follow-up questions will also incorporate auto-driving techniques, a form of photo elicitation, by showing vacation photos, recordings, and/or other memorabilia of family vacations to the families and asking them to give accounts or discuss the contents (Denzin and Lincoln 2005; Heisley and Levy 1991; McCracken 1989). A complete interview guide is provided in the Appendix. In addition to asking about the most recent family vacation, I will ask families to select a story to tell about a family vacation that best describes the character of the family (who they are, what the family is like), and compare that vacation with the most recent one, if these reflect different vacations. In addition, I will ask families to describe how these vacations are similar to and different from their other family activities. My intent is to uncover
both the specific details of the vacation and context and the glosses families use to describe typical experiences (McCracken 1988; Sayre 2001; Spradley 1979).

After the family interview, I will conduct follow-up interviews with appropriate relational units or individuals within the family. The goal of the second interview is to learn more about how family vacations are experienced differently by groupings or individuals within the family. This portion of the interviewing task will involve my judgment about important viewpoints that are not sufficiently represented in the family interview. Collecting family, relational, and individual stories is important because this method uncovers both collective identities and interplay. Specifically, joint/collective storytelling is an appropriate method for determining how identities are co-constructed and differentiated, as it reveals family dynamics and communication processes. This interview procedure also allows for the collection of other types of data to record family vacation experiences. Researchers advocate gathering stories using multiple types of information such as journal/diary, photos/memory boxes, and other social artifacts (Clandinin and Connelly 2000).

**Ethical considerations.** Despite the benefits of potentially rich data yielded from this method, collecting jointly-told family stories does not come without risk. Unlike in other group interviewing contexts, families remain in contact following the completion of the study (Stoltman and Gentry 1992). In addition, given the difficulty in determining which questions or topics will generate conflict or hostility for a particular family (Stoltman and Gentry 1992), any study involving group interviews with family members should include a thoughtful discussion of how to guard against causing harm to the family. After consulting with many resources, including researchers who have conducted family interviews, I have compiled the following guidelines to prepare myself for dealing with these issues and to minimize the risk to families.
participating in this study. First, my procedures will be subject to approval by the Institutional Review Board at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln to protect the informants (Creswell 2006; Stoltman and Gentry 1992). Part of this process requires obtaining informed consent, maintaining confidentiality, and ensuring the family members of their anonymity. In addition, I will explain the purpose of the study clearly and without deception (Creswell 2006).

In some respects, my framing of the interview questions (e.g. recall your “best” vacation) helps to minimize the likelihood of stirring major conflicts. However, I also offer families the opportunity to opt out of answering any question that makes them uncomfortable and allow them to discontinue the interview at any time. In the event that conflicts do arise among family members, I will attempt to diffuse the situation and, in extreme cases, I will “direct participants to qualified professional assistance” (Stoltman and Gentry 1992, p. 260) through the university’s counseling center. In order to facilitate group discussion and maintain family dynamics, I will avoid taking sides or forming judgments during the family interviews (Stoltman and Gentry 1992).

As a researcher who has conducted interviews with families in various contexts (such as studies of home furnishings and identity disruption as a result of loss of possessions in a natural disaster), I take seriously issues related to damaging family relations. These previous experiences give me a realistic view of the potential situations that may arise in a group interview setting and contribute to my ability to respond both ethically and responsibly. However, as it is difficult to anticipate all possible outcomes, I will continue to discuss potential strategies with other family researchers, conduct pre-study interviews to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the current interview script, and maintain methodological notes about potentially vulnerable situations.
Data Analysis Procedures

Reissman (1993) argues that analysis of narratives can attend to three functions of language: 1) ideational, referring to the content or what is said; 2) interpersonal, examining the role of the relationship among speakers such as in joint storytelling; and 3) textual, referring to structure, syntax, and semantics. “Meaning is conveyed at all three levels” (Reissman 1993, p. 21). Adopting this perspective, my analysis will consist of an examination of content as well as narrative structure and will employ multiple levels of analysis including within family and across families. Coding procedures and examples are provided in the Appendix. In this study, “narrative is understood as a spoken or written text giving an account of an event/action or series of events/actions, chronologically connected” (Czarniawska 2004, p. 17).

Analysis of content. When examining interview and narrative content, I will use an inductive approach to coding. Prior to beginning any analysis, I will read through each interview transcript to gain a holistic perspective of each family (Braithwaite 1997: Sayre 2001) and write memos in the margins (Huberman and Miles 1994). Following grounded theory procedures (Strauss and Corbin 1990), my analysis will begin with open coding to reduce the data into meaningful segments. During this process, I will perform the constant comparative method, in which data are used to create emergent categories and then subsequent data are compared to the existing categories for similarity or difference. I will construct new themes in the case of differences (Glaser and Strauss 1967). This approach attends to the principle that researchers seek to find theory to match the data (LeCompte and Goetz 1982). To assist in coding procedures, I intend to use the NVivo software program. Next, I will perform axial coding procedures to examine interconnections among the categories and relationships with the central phenomenon (Strauss and Corbin 1990, 1998). Here, I will focus on examining antecedents,
strategies, contextual and intervening conditions, and consequences of family identity management processes (Creswell 2006). Finally, I will engage in selective coding procedures to assemble a story that describes the relationships found in the data. This type of analysis is an ongoing, iterative process that requires moving back and forth between theory and data (Spiggle 1994).

In addition to this inductive approach, I also will code for identity statements related to family, smaller collectivities, and individuals by adapting an existing coding schema (Koenig Kellas 2005) and allowing for additional emergent categories during analysis. Identity statements are defined as “any statements made during the telling of the story that somehow described or evaluated…roles, characteristics, personality traits, likes or dislikes, and abilities of the family” (Koenig Kellas 2005, p. 376). Specifically, I will code for family identity statements (e.g. “we are a family that loves to be outside”), selves-in-family identity statements (“Although our family loves the water, I just watched and sat on the beach, while the other three [family members] decided that they were going to take surfing lessons”), coalition identity statements (e.g. “we [couple] don’t judge each other”), other-coalition identity statements (e.g. “the girls are easy going and laid back”), other-individual identity statements (e.g. “he likes to watch sports”), and self-individual identity statements (“I’m an adventurous person”). Categorizing identity statements in this way will allow me to examine collective, relational, and individual identity projects and look within these codes to analyze goals and consumption activities related to these identities. Further, I can look across codes to examine how families use consumption to manage tensions among these various identities. This portion of the analysis will aid in addressing my first research question how do families use marketplace resources to manage family, relational, and individual identities? In addition, the axial and selective coding procedures described above
attend to my second and third research questions by identifying intervening conditions and strategies related to family identity management.

*Analysis of structure.* As narrative structure is rarely examined in consumer research (Escalas and Bettman 2000; for exception see Stern 1995; Stern, Thompson, and Arnould 1998), this study will contribute to an increasingly important area of work by focusing on the interaction behaviors of families during a storytelling episode. Paying attention to how the story is jointly told also helps us understand the management among family, relational, and individual identities (Koenig Kellas 2005), supplementing the content analysis used to address my first research question. Further, a few fundamentals of narrative structure including quality, genre, evaluative slope, and story elements have been linked to determining how central a particular narrative is to consumers’ goals and self concepts (Escalas and Bettman 2000).

In this study, I will analyze narrative structure in several ways. First, because of my interest in understanding identity management, I will code narratives for the degree to which a family presents itself as a unit or units (e.g. using “we” statements) versus as individuals (e.g. using “I” statements) (Burr 1990; Buehlman et al. 1996; Koenig Kellas 2005; Sayre 2001). Adapted from Buehlman and Gottman’s (1996) Oral History Interview, Koenig Kellas (2005) created the following coding schema for rating we-ness versus separateness for family-level data: (1) ‘‘Family members emphasize ‘we’ as opposed to ‘he/she’ or ‘I’;’’ (2) ‘‘Family members seem to present themselves as a collective more than as individuals; Characters are presented as a family unit more than as individual and separate in the story;’’ and (3) ‘‘The family emphasizes similar values, beliefs, and goals in the story’’ (Buehlman and Gottman 1996, p. 19; Koenig Kellas 2005, p. 375). In addition to these elements, I intend to assess the degree of we-ness using an interactional rating system developed by Koenig Kellas and Trees (2006) specifically for
analyzing joint storytelling processes that includes the following dimensions: engagement, turn-taking, perspective-taking, and coherence.

Second, in response to my primary research question regarding identity management, a useful way to understand how consumption fits into consumers’ identity projects is to analyze the role of consumption by breaking the consumption stories down into narrative elements and evaluating how central consumption is to the plot of the story (Escalas and Bettman 2000). Thus, I will code each story by examining a simple five element plot structure (characters, setting, problem, actions, and resolution) to determine how consumption is presented in each story (Ollerenshaw and Creswell 2002; Yussen and Ozcan 1996), especially in relation to achieving an identity-related goal. For instance, when highlighting a relational identity of siblings, consumption may serve only as a backdrop, or it may be foregrounded as a central instrument to achieving a goal (resolution). To accomplish this analysis, following Escalas and Bettman (2000), I will compare across story plots to determine the following: whether or not identity goals are mentioned, what role (if any) consumption played in achieving (or not) these goals, and whether the goals are linked to individual, relational, or family identity projects. In order to address the subparts of research question 2 that assume a reciprocal relationship between identity and consumption, I will also code for how consumption affects identity.

**Trustworthiness: Assessing Quality**

Hirschman (1986) developed four criteria for assessing humanistic inquiry: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. In this study, I will establish credibility in several ways. First, by engaging in rigorous data collection, using multiple sources of data, and spending sufficient time in the field, I will ensure quality data (Creswell 2006). Second, employing validation strategies such as triangulation across data sources and member checks
with participants serves to achieve verisimilitude, a realistic portrayal that resonates with participants (Arnould and Epp 2006; Wallendorf and Belk 1989). Third, the study will demonstrate trustworthiness by depicting multiple voices and perspectives (Sayre 2001). Fourth, establishing rapport and trust with the informant increases the integrity of the research (Wallendorf and Belk 1989). Specifically, to establish rapport, I will explain my purpose and begin interviews with non-threatening questions to relieve apprehension about the interview process (McCracken 1988; Spradley 1979; Whyte 1982). Finally, I will search for and include negative evidence regarding the categories to ensure the categories developed reflect the participant’s responses (Arnould and Epp 2006; Bulmer 1979; Wallendorf and Belk 1989).

Although transferability is likely to be limited, purposive sampling across a diversity of family forms and types of vacations offers evidence of potential transferability within the parameters of the study (Arnould and Epp 2006). Conducting interviews in a natural setting such as participants’ homes increases ecological validity as well. To demonstrate the dependability of the research, I will report inter-coder reliability. In addition, interviewing multiple family members aids in establishing dependability (Arnould and Epp 2006). On the issue of confirmability, I will attempt to bracket out my own assumptions during analysis by revealing my background, assumptions, and culture and assessing how these direct my analysis. In addition, it is important to provide detail about the procedures and steps used in conducting the data analysis and interpretation in order to allow others to retrace my analysis. Thus, in order to achieve both of these objectives, I will keep a journal detailing both theoretical and methodological notes throughout the research process (Thompson, Stern, and Arnould 1998).
APPENDIX

CONSTRUCT DEFINITIONS

**Family Identity:** “the family’s subjective sense of its own continuity over time, its present situation, and its character. It is the gestalt of qualities and attributes that make it a particular family and that differentiate it from other families” (Bennett et al. 1988, p. 212)

- **Structure:** indicates not only the boundaries of family membership, but also the hierarchy and roles of family members
- **Generational Orientation:** understands the family as part of a continuum over time (i.e. consider past and future generations)
- **Character:** the family’s shared characteristics or personality such as common activities, tastes, and values

**Relational Identity:** a subgroup’s subjective sense of its own continuity over time, its present situation, and its character. The qualities and attributes that make it a particular subgroup and that differentiate it from other subgroups (adapted from Bennett et al. 1988)

**Member Agreement:** the extent to which individual family members’ descriptions of their perceptions of the family match or deviate from those of other family members (Stone 1988)

**Commitment to Shared Identity Performances:** A mindset that increases the likelihood that an individual will maintain group enactments (adapted from Allen and Meyer 1990)

**Synergy among Individual, Relational, and Family Identities:** whether and how individual family members’ identities are consistent with the family’s collective identity (Epp and Arnould 2006; Stone 1988)

**Family:** “networks of people who share their lives over long periods of time bound by ties of marriage, blood, or commitment, legal or otherwise, who consider themselves as family and who share a significant history and anticipated future of functioning in a family relationship” (Galvin, Bylund, and Brommel 2004, p. 6).

**Narrative:** “a spoken or written text giving an account of an event/action or series of events/actions, chronologically connected” (Czarniawska 2004, p. 17).

**Identity statements:** “any statements made during the telling of the story that somehow described or evaluated…roles, characteristics, personality traits, likes or dislikes, and abilities of the family, [relational units, or individuals]” (Koenig Kellas 2005, p. 376).
FAMILY INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

My name is Amber Epp. I am a doctoral student in the College of Business Administration at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln conducting research on family consumption (purchasing) behavior. Specifically, I will be talking with you about your family vacations.

I pre-contacted you and arranged to meet with all of you so that I would have a chance to hear about your family experience. At that time, I also asked you to gather together photos from your vacation, if available, that would help you remember details of your vacations.

This interview will take about an hour, but I would also like the opportunity to follow up with some of you about your particular experiences. If it is convenient, I may follow up immediately following our talk with all of you today, or if more convenient, I will reschedule to talk with you later. In this interview, I will ask questions about your family vacation and about your family interaction and decision-making.

[The interviewer will re-confirm informed consent with the participants.]

Thank you. In order for me to be able to pay careful attention to what you are saying and for later analysis, I will be videotape recording the interview. Your names and identities will not be linked in any way to any of the information you provide today. Only myself, my advisor, and a transcriptionist will hear/watch the tape in order to prepare a written transcript to help us with our research. Would that be okay with you? (Make sure everyone has agreed).

Yes □ (everyone agrees)

No □

I want to remind you that any of you may refuse to answer a question or stop participation at any time during the interview. Your responses will be held in confidence.

If you would like access to the results of the study, please let me know and I will be happy to provide you a copy once the study is complete.

If you have any questions regarding this project, feel free to contact me at aepp@unlserve.unl.edu, 402-472-0612.

------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Interview Protocol

1. Tell me about your most recent family vacation.
After the family has finished telling the story, probe for the following details if not already discussed by someone in the family.

- When did you go on vacation? How did you plan?
- Where do you go?
- How long did your vacation last?
- What family members were there? Did anyone besides your family go?
- Can you show me the photos you took while on vacation?
- Have you visited this destination as a family before? (If yes follow up with questions about the importance of this destination to the family: are there traditions associated with going to this destination, are there certain things the family always includes in their visits.)
- Do you think you will do this again?
- What regrets, if any, do you have about this vacation?
- How did your family change, if at all, because of this vacation? Explain.

2. **Tell me MORE about your family’s initial decision to go on vacation. (Try not to repeat questions they already talked about in telling their story!)**

- What prompted you to take a family vacation?
- What goals, if any, did you have for the vacation?
- How did the decision to go on vacation come about?
- How did the decision to go on this particular vacation come about?
- How did your family decide which activities to do (and who would participate)?
- What kinds of constraints did you face, if any? (i.e. scheduling, finances, other family members’ ideas about where to go, etc.)
- Did anyone express reluctance to go along on this vacation? Explain.

3. **What aspects, if any, of this vacation reflected your family (the way your family interacts together and activities your family likes)?**

- If I went on vacation with your family what might I learn about what makes your family different from other families?
- What other activities does your family do that are similar to this vacation?
- What other activities does your family do that are dissimilar to this vacation?
- If you were to select one part of the vacation that reflects well the character of your family what would it be? (explain)

4. **What aspects, if any, of this vacation reflected the identity of individual family members? (Discuss)**

- For each member of the family ask “How about you personally, what parts of the vacation reflect you in particular?”
- What might you add or change about your family’s version of this vacation story, if anything, to better represent your own experiences?

5. **What aspects, if any, of this vacation reflected the identity of groups of family members, but did not include the whole family? In other words, were there aspects of your**
vacation that were not really about the whole family, but were more about certain family members or groups of family members? (if asked, such as the children or adults)

a. Were there activities during your vacation that only some members participated in (while others did something else)? Explain, elaborate

6. How does this vacation compare with the best family vacation that you can recall?

a. As a family, what vacation do you think of as the best? (check for level of agreement, e.g. ”How about you? Do you think that was the best, or was there a different one that you personally liked better?”)

b. What made this vacation best?

c. When was this best vacation? Do you think you could take a best vacation again as a family?

d. In what important ways, if any, has your family changed since this best vacation?

e. (if different than the most recent one), What made this vacation different from the best one?

7. Can you tell me about an object(s), if any, you brought back from your vacation that is/are special to your family? (Prompt with auto-driving techniques—show me the object (if possible).

a. Tell me about this object.

b. How did you get it?

c. How does your family use or display it?

d. How does this compare with objects brought back from previous vacations?

8. What else would be helpful for me to know to understand your story? What didn’t I ask about that you feel is important?

Thank you very much for your help!
Family Informant Profile  
Family Vacations, Fall 2006

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**Who Participated in the Family Vacation Interview?**

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**Under 18 years old:**

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Child 5: Gender □ male □ female Age: ________ Grade:__________
Family Role: ______________ Interests: __________

Who participated in the vacation but not the family Interview?

Adult 1: Gender □ male □ female Age: ________ Occupation: __________
Marital Status: □ Single □ Divorced □ Widowed □ Married Family Role*: ________

Adult 2: Gender □ male □ female Age: ________ Occupation: __________
Marital Status: □ Single □ Divorced □ Widowed □ Married Family Role: ________

Adult 3: Gender □ male □ female Age: ________ Occupation: __________
Marital Status: □ Single □ Divorced □ Widowed □ Married Family Role: ________

Under 18 years old:
Child 1: Gender □ male □ female Age: ________ Grade:__________
Family Role: ______________ Interests: __________

Child 2: Gender □ male □ female Age: ________ Grade:__________
Family Role: ______________ Interests: __________

Child 3: Gender □ male □ female Age: ________ Grade:__________
Family Role: ______________ Interests: __________

Who is considered part of the family but wasn’t included in the interview or the vacation?

Adults/ Relationship to family: _____________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________

Children/Relationship to family: _____________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________
*Family role should be interpreted broadly to include the relationship to the family or specific family members such as “Youngest daughter’s best friend”
ADULT INFORMED CONSENT FORM

How Families Constitute and Manage Collective Identity Bundles in Vacation Experiences

This is a research project that explores how family (or groups of family members) influence decisions related to family vacations. You are invited to participate in this study because we feel that your contributions about your family experiences will help us to understand family consumption behavior.

Participation in this study will require no longer than one hour of your time. The procedure will be an open-ended interview conducted in your home or in a private location convenient to, and determined by, you. With your permission, the researcher will videotape the interview, for analysis purposes only. The data are being collected in one stage; however, the researcher may contact you for clarifications in case such clarifications are required. You are free to not offer any clarifications should you decline to do so.

Although there are no direct benefits to you from participating in this study, you may find sharing how family activities have shaped your sense of family provides a greater understanding of your own family and experience. The only risk associated with participating in the study is that you may recall experiences with family members which may have been difficult or which have had a negative influence. In the event of problems resulting from participation, please contact the UNL Psychological center at (402) 472-2351. Although you will be responsible for counseling fees, the UNL Psychological Consultation Center offers counseling on a sliding scale.

Any information obtained during this study that could identify you will be kept strictly confidential. Only the principal and secondary researcher will have access to this data. The principal researcher will transcribe the audiotape of the interview. All written records, audiotapes, and videotapes will be securely stored in a file cabinet drawer inside a secure office. Once the study is completed, the audio and videotapes will be erased. The data may be used in published research or presented at professional conferences, but identity of participants will not be revealed. All participants’ names will be given in pseudonyms in order to ensure confidentiality.

There will be no compensation for participating in this research.

Do not hesitate to ask any questions about the study either before participating or during the time that you are participating. We would also be happy to share the findings of this study with you after the research is complete. Please direct any such requests to Amber Epp at UNL. Contact information is provided below. If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant that have not been answered by the investigator or to report any concerns about the study, you may contact the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Institutional Review Board, telephone (402) 472-6965.

You are free to decide not to participate in this study or to withdraw at any time without adversely affecting your relationship with the investigators or the University of Nebraska. Your decision will not result in any loss or benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

You are voluntarily making a decision whether or not to participate in this research study. Your signature certifies that you have decided to participate having read and understood the information presented. You will be given a copy of this consent form to keep.

Check if you agree to be audiotaped and videotaped during the interview.

Signature of Research Participant
Amber Epp, Ph.D. candidate, Principal Investigator
Linda L. Price, Ph.D., Faculty Advisor

Date
Office: (402) 472-0612
Office: (520) 626-3061
PARENTAL INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Reflecting Family: Home Furnishings as Consumption Symbols of Family Identity

You are invited to permit your child to participate in this research study. The following information is provided in order to help you to make an informed decision whether or not to allow your child to participate. If you have any questions please do not hesitate to ask.

Your child is invited to participate in this study because we feel that your child’s contributions about your family experiences will help us to understand family consumption behavior. The purpose of this research project is to explore how family impacts purchasing behavior related to the home. Your child will also be asked if he/she is willing to participate.

This study will take approximately one hour of your child’s time. This study will be conducted in your home, and you are welcome to be present during the interview. The procedure will be an open-ended interview conducted in your home or in a private location convenient to, and determined by, you. With your permission, the researcher will take photographs of your home and furnishings only. Your child will not be photographed, and photographs will not be linked in any way to your child’s identity. Your child can choose to not answer any specific question(s). The data are being collected in one stage; however, the researcher may contact your child for clarifications in case such clarifications are required. Your child is free to not offer any clarifications should he/she decline to do so.

Although there are no direct benefits to your child from participating in this study, he/she may find sharing how family activities have shaped his/her sense of family provides a greater understanding of his/her own family and experience. The only risk associated with participating in the study is that you may recall experiences with family members which may have been difficult or which have had a negative influence. In the event of problems resulting from participation, please contact the UNL Psychological center at (402) 472-2351. Although you will be responsible for counseling fees, the UNL Psychological Consultation Center offers counseling on a sliding scale.

Any information obtained during this study which could identify your child will be kept strictly confidential. The audiotapes will be kept in a locked file in the investigator’s office until the completion of the study and then will be erased. The data may be used in published research or presented at professional conferences, but identity of your child will be kept confidential.

Your child’s rights as a research participant have been explained to you. If you have any additional questions about the study, please contact me at 472-0612. If you have any questions about your child’s rights as a research participant that have not been answered by the investigator or to report any concerns about the study, you may contact the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Institutional Review Board (UNL IRB), telephone (402) 472-6965.

You are free to decide not to enroll your child in this study or to withdraw your child at any time without adversely affecting their or your relationship with the investigator or the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Your decision will not result in any loss of benefits to which your child is otherwise entitled.

YOU ARE VOLUNTARILY MAKING A DECISION WHETHER OR NOT TO ALLOW YOUR CHILD TO PARTICIPATE IN THE RESEARCH STUDY. YOUR SIGNATURE CERTIFIES THAT YOU HAVE DECIDED TO ALLOW YOUR CHILD TO PARTICIPATE HAVING READ AND UNDERSTOOD THE INFORMATION PRESENTED. YOU WILL BE GIVEN A COPY OF THIS CONSENT FORM TO KEEP.
IN MY JUDGEMENT THE PARENT/LEGAL GUARDIAN IS VOLUNTARILY AND KNOWINGLY GIVING INFORMED CONSENT AND POSSESSES THE LEGAL CAPACITY TO GIVE INFORMED CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS RESEARCH STUDY.

IDENTIFICATION OF INVESTIGATORS
Amber Epp, Ph.D. candidate, Principal Investigator
Faculty Advisor
Office: (402) 472-0612
YOUTH ASSENT FORM

How Families Constitute and Manage Collective Identity Bundles in Vacation Experiences

We would like to invite you to take part in this study. We are asking you because we feel that your talking with us about your family vacation experiences will help us better understand family behavior.

This research will take you no more than one hour to do. In this study we will try to learn more about how your family makes decisions about vacation activities and experiences. The procedure will be an interview in which we will ask you some questions about your and your family’s most recent and best vacations. We will also ask some questions about what activities your family does together and separately while on vacation. We may contact you for clarifications at a later date. You are free to not offer any clarifications should you decline to do so.

Although there are no direct benefits to you from participating in this study, you may find sharing how family activities have shaped your sense of family provides a greater understanding of your own family and experience. The only risk associated with participating in the study is that you may recall experiences with family members which may have been difficult or which have had a negative influence.

Your responses will be strictly confidential. There will be no way for us to know which responses belong to you or someone else. We may publish a summary of everybody’s responses or present such a summary at a scientific meeting, but your identity and your responses would be totally confidential.

We will also ask your parents for their permission for you to do this study. Please talk this over with them before you decide whether or not to participate. You may choose to not answer any question(s), and you may ask for the audio-tape and video recorder to be shut off at any time. You are free to leave at any time if you do not feel comfortable.

If you have any questions at any time, please ask one of the researchers.

IF YOU SIGN THIS FORM IT MEANS THAT YOU HAVE DECIDED TO PARTICIPATE AND HAVE READ EVERYTHING THAT IS ON THIS FORM. YOU AND YOUR PARENTS WILL BE GIVEN A COPY OF THIS FORM TO KEEP.

__________________________________                                       _________________
Signature of Participant       Date

__________________________________      _________________
Signature of Investigator      Date

INVESTIGATORS

Amber M. Epp       Office: 472-0612
Faculty Advisor
DATA CODING PROCEDURES

Identity statement categories and examples:
- Family identity statements (e.g. “we are a family that loves to be outside”)
- Selves-in-family identity statements (“Although our family loves the water, I just watched and sat on the beach, while the other three [family members] decided that they were going to take surfing lessons”)
- Coalition (Relational) identity statements (e.g. “we [couple] don’t judge each other”)
- Other-coalition identity statements (e.g. “the girls are easy going and laid back”)
- Other-individual identity statements (e.g. “he likes to watch sports”)
- Self-individual identity statements (“I’m an adventurous person”)
- Additional emergent categories

Within identity statement codes: examine collective, relational, and individual identity projects and analyze goals and consumption activities related to these identities. Across identity statement codes: examine how families use consumption to manage tensions among these various identities.

Degree of “we-ness”
- Coding schema for rating we-ness versus separateness for family-level data (Buehlman and Gottman 1996, p. 19; Koenig Kellas 2005, p. 375):
  1. “Family members emphasize ‘we’ as opposed to ‘he/she’ or ‘I’”
  2. “Family members seem to present themselves as a collective more than as individuals; Characters are presented as a family unit more than as individual and separate in the story”
  3. “The family emphasizes similar values, beliefs, and goals in the story”
- Interactional rating system for analyzing joint storytelling processes (Koenig Kellas and Trees 2006):
  - Engagement: involvement in storytelling and warmth of interaction (i.e. smiles, laughter, affection)
  - Turn-taking: dynamics and distribution of turns
  - Perspective-taking: attentiveness to others’ perspectives and confirmation of perspectives
  - Coherence: organization and integration

Role of consumption
- Code each story by examining a simple five element plot structure
  - Characters
  - Setting
  - Problem
  - Actions
  - Resolution
♦ Determine how consumption is presented in each story (Escalas and Bettman 2000; Ollerenshaw and Creswell 2002; Yussen and Ozcan 1996) (i.e. part of the setting, central to the resolution, etc.)

♦ Compare across story plots to determine the following (Escalas and Bettman 2000):
  - whether or not identity goals are mentioned
  - what role (if any) consumption played in achieving (or not) these goals
  - whether the goals are linked to individual, relational, or family identity projects
REFERENCES


Smart, Carol and Bren Neale (1999), *Family Fragments?* Malden, Massachusetts; Blackwell Publishers Ltd.


