Reinvigorating Identity: Applying Burkean Identity and Social Identity Theory to Analysis of
Identity Formation

By

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Abstract:

Identity is widely utilized in a variety of ongoing discussions in the composition and rhetoric field. I propose a conception of identity that allows analysis of identity formation, particularly intentional creation or alteration of identities. I will draw upon Burke's description of identification and social identity theory from sociology to define and provide tools for analyzing the intentional shaping of identity in a construction safety training program. The first key finding that I take from this analysis is that aspects of an identity can be encouraged to be adopted by a target group if they are incorporated into the prototype of membership through constant messaging, in this case through daily communication about safety and leadership policies encouraging constant feedback about safety. The second is that identity formation must be influenced by an appropriate symbol of authority, in this case local leadership of the small workgroup and appeals to individual wellbeing.

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Introduction

Identification in the Burkean sense is a collection of associations that an individual will make with the objects, people, and groups of people around them. In other words, identification is mostly extrinsic to a human, measured or observed as a collection of the things with which that human surrounds themself. Identification describes a process by which someone will develop their sense of self by forming attachments to meaningful symbols, followed by forming attachments to other people who share the same identifications. That collection of attachments with meaningful symbols and with other people is the identity that an individual forms. In other words, I am describing identity as an individual's internalized conception of self while identification might be best described as the process through which that self is formed and then subsequently shapes future actions and identity formation.

This suggests that identification can be used as a rhetorical tactic to both align a rhetor's message with the audience's personal identities. Thus, in Burke's own terms, "If, in the opinion of a given audience, a certain kind of conduct is admirable, then a speaker might persuade the audience by using ideas and images that identify his cause with that kind of conduct" (*A Rhetoric of Motives* 55). In so doing, the rhetor will align their message with the values that the audience considers integral, which will enable that message to become part of that value system and itself a symbol that the audience identifies with.

This conception of identity as rhetorical is simultaneously in tune with conceptions of social identity popular in the fields of psychology, sociology, and anthropology and out of tune with those fields. These fields do agree with Burke that an individual is shaped and defined by the groups they are members of, but the concept of social identity is often described in a manner that highlights group identities and how individuals fit into that group identity, whereas Burke's

conception allows for description of the individual's self as part of that group, within the group context as well as when the individual is alone or in an entirely separate social situation. I suggest that social identity theory from sociology adds an understanding of how groups function, while Burke's theory offers an understanding of how individuals join and then internalize the values of those groups through identification.

The field of composition and rhetoric can benefit from clarifying its conception of identity and using that conception to analyze ongoing conversations that revolve around identity. Among those potential conversations that could benefit are scholarship surrounding publics and counterpublics, students' identities as writers, inclusivity in the composition classroom and in the university at large, and generally the study of marginalization of various social groups. Burkean identification adds to these discussions a better understanding of the factors that contribute to identity formation with these groups or within these contexts by providing tools for analyzing and discussing the influences on individuals' identifications. Burke is particularly concerned with the nature of identity as it relates to persuasion in terms of both how it acts rhetorically and also how it is shaped rhetorically. To reinvigorate and expand upon Burke's conception of identification, I propose combining Burke's understanding of identification with the current discussions of social identity in the fields of psychology and sociology to provide this conception of identity for compositionists and rhetoricians. Burke personalizes social identity, while the modern descriptions of social identity provide analysis of how these social identities are formed and disbanded, interact with other social identities, and change over time.

This thesis begins with a deeper description of Burkean identification and how scholars are currently using this theory in the sphere of composition and rhetoric. Following this, I will expand on social identity in order to then explain how the two conceptions can work together

with each other. In the next section of this thesis, I will then move on to provide an example of how this Burkean/social identity combination will facilitate discussions of identity formation by examining safety education practices of one construction company. I have chosen to display the results of Burkean analysis by looking at a construction company because of existing research in the construction safety field that emphasizes workplace culture and worker identity as factors in safe behavior, which piqued my interest in how companies in this field are intentionally forming identities that contribute to safe workplace behavior. Burke's emphasis on the persuasive nature of identification led me to believe it would be particularly insightful as a lens through which to view this type of intentional identity creation. Finally, I will provide some suggestions for other areas that could benefit from being examined through this lens of Burkean social identity.

Burke

Description/Definition

At its most basic, Burke's theory of identification is a theory that the human is defined through social and external factors with which the individual aligns themselves. In *Attitudes Toward History*, he even summarizes his position by writing that ""identification" is hardly other than a name for the *function of sociality*" (266-267). In aligning identification with social positions and relationships, Burke makes a move towards understanding identity as a reaction to the complex cultural and economic milieu in which the individual resides.

Identification is not only a tool for describing how individual identity forms, though; it is equally used to describe how identity drives interpersonal interaction. As Diane Davis puts it, "Identification, or what Burke also calls "con-substantiation," is both the mode by which individual existents establish a sense of identity and the mode by which they establish a relation to one another" (126). These relations to one another have strong rhetorical power for Burke,

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who claims in *A Rhetoric of Motives* that "Only those voices from without are effective which can speak in the language of a voice within" (39) and that "You persuade a man only insofar as you can talk his language by speech, gesture, tonality, order, image, attitude, idea, identifying your ways with his" (55). The result of this conception is that persuasion is best accomplished through an appeal to the identity of the audience by aligning your message with the ideas you know the audience identifies themselves with.

Identification as Motivation

The concept of identity as described by Kenneth Burke is inspired by (yet also partially a critical answer to) psychoanalytic and Freudian conceptions of motivation. In *Permanence and Change,* Burke regards psychoanalysis as a philosophical interpretation of motives rather than a scientific analysis of the mind when he asks his reader "to remember that there are various theories of psycho-analytic interpretation, in violent disagreement with one another" (20). Each group of psycho-analysts would accuse psycho-analysts of other schools --and more broadly anyone who does not adhere to their way of thinking—of self-deception. He goes on to provide the example of the Marxian psycho-analyst who would consider a Freudian explanation of "sexual rationalizations and individualistic neuroses" as false rationalizations of the true economic motives and class struggle (20). Of course, the Freudian scholar would consider the Marxian interpretation equally false, according to their own orientation, a term used by Burke to describe broad worldviews and ways of interpreting reality. However, Burke argues that each of these orientations, as well as many others, are simultaneously correct, or at least not engaging in self deception as the psycho-analysts might accuse them of. Despite the fact that someone's explanation of their actions might be different from the psycho-analyst, "to explain one's

conduct by the vocabulary of motives current among one's group is about as self-deceptive as giving the area of a field in the accepted terms of measurement" (21).

Identification comes into play as an alternative method for viewing and interpreting human motives. Rather than asking people to describe what motivates them or even attempting to do so as an outside observer, the philosopher or the rhetorician or the scientist can instead look at the groups and ideas with which an individual aligns themselves. That will then enable the observer to analyze their actions and the causes thereof by looking at the "vocabulary of motives" they or their group typically utilize to explain why that group would choose to identify with a certain belief or symbol.

Returning to Burke's claim that "Only those voices from without are effective which can speak in the language of a voice within" (39), this idea ultimately proposes that the ultimate purpose of any rhetorical action is to find a preexisting identification that the audience holds and align the message with that identification utilizing that individual or group's "vocabulary of motives" with the ultimate goal being the audience adopting the rhetor's message as a new identification.

Individuality

Diane Davis identifies a contradiction in the Burkean conception of identity, though. This focus on external identification suggests that the self is only a collection of identifications, but there must also be "—as the condition for identification—a subject or ego who knows itself as and through its representations" (Davis 127). By analyzing Burke's writing, Davis reaches the conclusion that Burke firmly believes in a distinguishable "self," particularly in terms of biological separateness of individuals (128,130). This conception of a separate self draws on Freudian theory, which was a heavy influence on Burke. Freud describes the self as an outcome

of separation and distinction between the individual from the things around it, starting with realizations of physical separateness as babies (Davis 134-135). The Freudian conception essentially suggests that the "base self" is a result of dis-identification, or dissociation, with surrounding stimuli, people, and groups, and that "base self" is then the being that will form identifications with other "base selves." Social groups have common elements, but each individual is still able to have some degree of individuality.

In questioning Burke's conception of the self, Davis exposes one flaw in thinking of identification as solely connections between likeminded people. In summary of why she thinks that it is important to recognize Freud's conception of the self as a dissociated individual, Davis suggests that "It's only in the failure of identification, each time, that "I" am opened to the other as other and get the chance to experience something like responsibility for the other that exceeds (and conflicts with) my narcissistic passions" (144). Having a multiplicity of views, opinions, and people allows for broader perspectives as well as acknowledgement of and responsibility for the fact that social inequalities might arise and must be addressed.

Simply accepting that dissociation creates separate individuals, though, does not reconcile the separation of the individual with their social identity that is a collection of external identifications. Although Ann Branaman does not explicitly discuss individuality's impact on identification, her thinking would suggest that individuals differ in terms of the orientations (a concept explored further in this thesis) that they hold, which in turn drives them to identify with different groups and ideas. Even within a group, different individuals can have certain identifications outside of that group that they do not share, creating a certain sense of individuality.

This explains the results of differences in personal identity but leaves the origins of the differences largely unexplored. To explain those origins, we return to Davis, who struggles to conceptualize the self in Burkean terms, coming to the conclusion that Freudian descriptions of dissociation seem to offer an acceptable explanation of how a separate self is formed; throughout our lives, we see physical and symbolic reasons to separate ourselves from other groups, people, and ideas, which creates our individual identities. This leaves the question of how the Freudian dissociative individuality functions when put in the same body as a socially defined identity. To address that question, Crable utilizes Mead's description of the self, which separates human self identities into the me ("the internalization of the social function" (Deschamp and Devos 2)) and the I ("a more personal component" (Deschamp and Devos 2)) in order to describe a "'private' and 'public' self" (Crable 2). This description of the self allows for the identifications that an individual holds to form the me –an individual within a group who defines the group while also being defined by it—while the I can be thought of as a collection of dissociations—providing a unique individual capable of providing insights and various perspectives to a group.

Questions of individuality and dissociation are not central to my analysis in the later sections of this writing, but it is important to understand how the individual identity differs from the identifications that the individual holds. When I begin to examine how the construction company I am looking at asks its employees to identify themselves with their constructed safe worker identity, the employees will be asked to unlearn certain orientations, such as the emphasis of production over safety, perceptions of supervisor alignment with company needs over worker needs, or inappropriate methods for discipline and training. Those orientations can discourage identification with the safe work behaviors that the company I examined wanted to emphasize.

In this next section, I present three methods for using Burkean identification as an analytical tool. Later in this thesis, when I am examining how a construction company attempts to encourage safe working practices, I will show how the application of these tools can contribute to better understanding of identities, how they function, and how they are created.

To help further examine how identifications are formed and what their consequences are, I will draw on Ann Branaman's discussion of Burkean identification to describe three related key terms: orientations, frames of reference, and symbols of authority.

Branaman draws on Burke to define orientation as "a sense of relationships, set of beliefs, or worldview by which humans chart future conduct," (446). I would add to this basic definition, though, Burke's emphasis on orientations as changing and fluid in response to changes in environment, as well as the ability for orientations to be built upon false assumptions and false relationships, "as when the chickens, conditioned to the bell as a food-sign, came running when they were being assembled for punishment [by the same bell]" (*Permanence and Change* 21-23). Orientations mold all human choice and action by shaping what we believe will have pleasurable or nonpleasurable outcomes based on past experiences and conjecture about the future; thus, humans will make choices about with what or with whom they want to identify based on their orientations.

Frames of acceptance describes the attitudes humans hold towards symbols of authority, particularly in terms of choosing to accept or reject them (Branaman 446). Burke provides the example of Aquinas's acceptance of socioeconomic classes as "punishment for the fall of man," while Marx rejected that orientation and instead accepted "the *need of eliminating classes"* (*Attitudes Toward History* 20-21). These frames of acceptance rely on the identifications that an

individual holds to take shape, but they then also alter the identifications that an individual might adopt in the future. Aquinas's acceptance of classes was shaped by his identification with the church and its doctrines, but that acceptance of class would likely also have caused Aquinas to identify with the bourgeoise (or perhaps the passive proletariat) rather than identifying with the position of the dissident or the radical that Marx might have identified with. With both authors, the choice to accept or reject class structures shaped the identifications they would hold even in vastly different sociohistorical contexts.

Symbols of authority are simultaneously easier to define yet harder to give a definition that stems directly from Burke. Burke generally uses the term in exactly the sense that the name implies; symbols of authority are the linguistic, iconic, or other representations that represent institutions holding power. Governments, theologies, and economic structures can all be symbols of authority, but of course in a more local sense the people, objects, and materials that represent these sources of authority would be the symbols of authority with which an individual would most often interact. These symbols are filtered through an individual's frame of acceptance to determine which are followed and which are ignored, and that individual will form a system of orientations around and including that symbol and the values it espouses.

As an example, Burke provides Mandeville's "Fable of the Bees." In this book, Mandeville discusses the ways that modern economic virtues (in a time period where capitalism as we currently know it was taking shape) made personal ambition "the major virtue" due to his opinion that it would lead to production of "an abundance of commodities whereby the whole community would profit" (*Attitudes Toward History* 24). This is in conflict with the Church's views on ambition, which decried personal ambition as a major vice, a character flaw. In this case, the two potential symbols of authority are market values and capitalism or the Church. To

accept either symbol was to accept the orientation towards personal ambition that that symbol espoused. An individual who accepts the church will accept the orientation that personal ambition is a sin and leads to harmful consequences, while an individual who holds the values of capitalism over their religious beliefs would instead accept the orientation that ambition leads to greater personal and societal benefit.

These three terms combined form the first of my three aforementioned methods of analysis: locating the symbols of authority and frames of acceptance that an identification encourages and relies on, then examining the orientations that result as well as their effects. Any discussion of identity or identification can utilize these terms to help describe how a social group or other external factors are shaping the identifications that an individual might form, and these terms also help to analyze the ways that an individual's identity will shape their future actions.

A second method for using the Burkean conception of identitfication is its application in social critique. Branaman provides a discussion of the potential for use of Burkean identification as a critical and transformative tool. Burke "assumes that humans have some basic psycho-biological needs … from which they can be alienated, and which can serve as a motivational basis for critique of faulty orientational patterns" (Branaman 447-448). This suggests that to transform a group of people or a society, one must be conscious of the existing orientations, particularly orientations that are harmful to the people who identify with them. Once these faulty orientations have been located, strategies for beginning to change them can be implemented. However, "Since orientational patterns are self-perpetuating structures, effective challenge must involve a strategy of appeal to them" (Branaman 448). Solving a social issue begins with locating a fault in orientation that is held by members of a given community, and then the

solution to that problem must appeal to that orientational schema even as it attempts to subvert it. This understanding can be applied in analyses of past or current attempts to address social issues.

One more potential application that arises from Burke's identification is methods for appealing to the other. As Bryan Crable describes, "Our identities are thus guaranteed, after a fashion, by the participation of others in the creation and maintenance of a symbolic framework" (10). Social groups are formed through the cooperation of multiple individuals, and those individuals cooperate because of seemingly shared identifications. Crable goes on to share three tactics for appealing to the other, which could be seen as an individual appealing to another individual or a group appealing to an individual outside of the group. The first tactic is sympathy, whereby a rhetor is able to align their goals with the goals of another, whether through shared identifications, shared needs, or other means (14-15). The second is antithesis, which involves eliciting cooperation from the other by invoking a shared threat, whether that be a third human party or a natural threat (such as a natural disaster or a lack of vital resources) (15). The third tactic is terminology, a term describing the imposition of the rhetor's vocabulary on the other to elicit their cooperation. Crable draws on Burke to give an example of the tactic of terminology as a husband who interacts with his wife with "a perverse, and even morbid blandness" (qtd in Crable 16); he describes this blandness to his wife as loving treatment, and when she accepts the description of his treatment as loving, she reinforces his identity as a loving husband in his eyes and her own. These tactics can be used in analysis of group identities to determine how those identities are shared and spread.

Social Identity

Sociological research on identity contributes to the above theoretical discussions of individuality within a highly social conception of identity, as well as provides some insight into

the roles of individuals within groups and how groups form and function. Although the below

readings do not encompass the entire field of sociology, the authors cited discuss identity as

consisting of both a social and personal component, a social identity and personal identity as

most articles label them. This description is most often traced back to social identity theory,

which was developed primarily by Henri Tajfel and John Turner in the mid to late 1970s. Social

identity theory proposes "that we actually hold two identities (more correctly, one identity with

two opposite poles), a personal identity … and a social identity derived from our membership in

groups" (Worchel 55). Turner wrote that social identity theory "considers that individuals

structure their perception of themselves and others by means of abstract social categories, that

they internalize these categories as aspects of their self-concepts, and that social-cognitive

processes relating to these forms of self-conception produce group behavior" (16). This is

reminiscent of the conclusions that authors studying Burke have reached regarding the role of

personal identity. Scholars interested in social identity theory, though, tend to emphasize

investigations into the interrelationship of these two poles of an identity, rather than developing

conclusions for scholars in the field of composition and rhetoric that would enhance analysis of

groups we want to study.

Social identity theorists suggest that the individual identity is both formed by the groups

they are members of and also formed in a way that helps the individual function within groups.

Some descriptions suggest a similar interrelationship between social and personal identity as

proposed by Burkean thought, as exemplified by descriptions like Carmencita Serino's:

"belonging to particular social groups is in general a deep-rooted aspect of persons' identity, a

real 'way of being,' which also affects the ways in which all social knowledges are filtered and

reconstructed" (25). Another echo of the conclusions I reach above regarding identification as

marking similarities and individual identity as marking dissociations comes from Deschamp and Devos, who claim that "Social identity refers to a feeling of similarity to (some) others; personal identity refers to a feeling of difference in relation to the same others" (3). These similarities (and others I don't explore here, see also Deschamp and Devos, Doise, Serino, Jarymowicz, and Stets and Burke) suggest to me that for scholars of composition and rhetoric who are interested in conceptions of Burkean identity, social identity theory offers a framework that has received more study with which to align our perspectives. I do not, however, suggest a wholesale abandonment of Burkean identity in favor of social identity theory because Burkean identity is framed in terminology and in ways of thinking (orientations) that promote using identity as a tool for studying the rhetorical impacts of identity as well as the impacts of rhetorical messages on identity.

Moving forward into discussion of some potential takeaways from social identity theory, one of the first is in its revelation of group identity in the role of individual self-image. Multiple authors in the field draw upon Turner and Tajfel to discuss the need for a positive self-image, which is often sought by achieving positive relationships within groups; when the individual fits in with the group and perceives their ingroup in a positive light, they also can improve their perceived self image (as examples, Bar-Tal 93; Serino 24; Deschamp and Devos 5). This is typically referred to as self-categorization theory. In this theory, following group norms and adhering to the expectations of the group gives a positive image of self. Stephen Worchel even provides a discussion of how "A threat to one aspect of the identity can lead a person to focus on and attempt to repair that identity. Individuals who have suffered threats to their social being, such as being fired from a job or going through a divorce, seek social support networks to reaffirm their social identity" (56). Thus we can see the importance of maintaining a positive self

identity; individuals will seek to replace any lost aspects of their self conception by joining alternative groups that can offer a similar positive self image.

Another key component of social identity theory is the treatment of ingroup and outgroup interactions. Intergroup and intragroup interactions have different purposes; "Intimate interactions, for example, enhance the salience of our personal identity, while interacting with people from other identifiable groups may make our social identity salient" (Worchel 55). Turner links interpersonal (intragroup) interaction with personal identity, while he claims that intergroup interaction shapes social identity and how individuals enact their identities as group members (20).

Intragroup interactions define the characteristics that will impact the identities of individual members, in particular through forming shared group beliefs. Group beliefs are the "convictions that group members (a) are aware that they share, and (b) consider as defining their "groupness"" (Bar-Tal 94). Intragroup interactions form group norms, values, goals, and ideologies, each of which are components of group beliefs, according to Daniel Bar-Tal (96-101). These beliefs or the individual components of them are ways of thinking with which an individual must identify themself in order to maintain membership of the group. Any group must first form a fundamental group belief that indicates the existence of the group through beliefs such as "'We act interdependently,' ... 'We have the same goal,' ... 'We accept the same ideology,' and others" (Bar-Tal 103). As time goes on, more group beliefs will typically be formed, as well as common norms and goals established (Bar-Tal 106-107). Examining these group beliefs and the norms, values, goals, and ideologies that simultaneously result from while shaping them can provide scholars a tool for studying how groups form, how the members will

come together to make decisions and take action, and how the choices and thoughts of individual members are affected by their group membership.

Another way that intragroup interactions shape identity is through establishing a prototypical member. The concept of prototypes was created by Rosch to describe the phenomenon where an item can be seen to fit or not to fit in a category based on its similarity or dissimilarity to a prototype (Oakes, Haslam, and Turner 75). This concept naturally led to a conception of categories as having varying levels of inclusiveness, such as "'dalmation,' 'dog,' 'animal,' 'living thing'" (75). As one example of how prototypes change analysis of group membership, Oakes, Haslam, and Turner compare the older conception of group "belongingness" as being derived from interpersonal attraction with a newer conception of depersonalized social attraction that is rooted in self-categorization theory (83). Depersonalized social attraction relies on members' "liking of each other as group members" with *prototypicality* being the factor "that defines the extent to which individuals are or are not group members" (Oakes, Haslam, and Turner 84). This leads to the conclusions that categorization according to the prototypical member determines an individual's status as ingroup or outgroup with a specific social group, and that the individual will choose to align themself with that prototype if they seek to attain or maintain membership (Oakes, Haslam, and Turner 76-78). I see potential in this theory for scholars to attempt to describe the prototypical member of a group in order to better understand the identifications that the group is asking its members to adopt.

Intergroup interactions instead form the group identity by determining criteria for inclusion and exclusion, as well as solidifying the identifications that members hold. While intergroup studies encompass a rich and diverse field of inquiries, representative works involve explorations into power relations between groups (Deschamps; Ng; Marques, Páez, and

Abrams); social attribution theory which highlights the ways that group membership creates "group-serving biases" (Hewstone and Jaspars; Moya; Drigotas, Insko, and Schopler); legitimacy/illegitimacy of intergroup relations (Caddick); the impacts of intergroup relations on self-perception (Brown and Ross; Bourhis and Hill); and intergroup conflict (Cairns; Capozza, Bonaldo, and Maggio; Louche). These groupings of authors into broad subject headings is somewhat reductionist, but I am choosing to gloss over the research on intergroup interaction quickly because my research does not focus on the ways that the group I studied interacts with other groups, instead focusing on intragroup interactions and creation of group identity. Intergroup interactions is a significant area of study in the field of social identity theory, and I think future analyses of identity could focus heavily on intergroup reaction, but I will keep my discussion of the subject brief.

One final note from social identity theory that I would like to briefly mention is the discussion of group creation and development. Groups can be seen going through certain stages of development. As Stephen Worchel noted, a group begins by forming a strong group identity, moves into focusing on group productivity, then into individuating between individual members and their roles, and finally into a decay stage where the group loses members and returns to its central purpose as "marginal members" leave (58-62). In another focus, any group begins by narrowly defining its purposes and the requirements for membership. Then, the group will expand to absorb new members and will more freely interact with other groups until the decay stage begins, where many members might leave and distance is created with outgroups. These stages are cyclical, and any given group will move from the first identification stage to the decay stage and back again multiple times in its life cycle (Worchel 58). Similar to the ideas of

intergroup interactions, this is not a focus of my research, but I strongly believe that it could be valuable for other studies of identity.

Identity Research in the Field of Construction

I have chosen to apply these conceptions of identity to the field of construction and specifically safety in that field because of two main factors: my personal interest and experience in the construction community, and existing trends in the field to study safety in terms of culture and identity. This existing trend of viewing construction sites and companies from social perspectives, specifically with worker identities in mind, leads me to believe that it could be a fruitful area to apply my own conceptions of identity because it can build off of preexisting conceptions of how workplace cultures and identities are formed and enacted. The Burkean perspective will be particularly relevant in this context because of its focus on intentional and persuasive use of identity to enact behavioral response, specifically safe workplace behaviors. I intend to use my observation of safety training in a construction management firm to provide my personal example of how analysis can be performed on the creation and enactment of identity from Burkean and social identity theory perspectives. Before doing so, I will present a summary of some ways that the existing scholarship in construction safety utilize identity.

Conversations of safety culture have existed in the field since the 1980s, largely linked to research performed by organizations linked to safety in nuclear energy fields as a response to the Chernobyl disaster (Choudhry, Fang, and Mohamed 207). The research in that field gained traction and spread to discussions of safety in a wider context, spreading the idea of safety culture from the nuclear field to most contexts where discussions of safety take place. Safety culture is described as "the product of individual and group values, attitudes perceptions, competencies, and patterns of behavior that determine the commitment to and the style and

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proficiency of an organization's health and safety management" (qtd in Choudhry, Fang, and

Mohamed 207). This description highlights the interaction of the individual and the group to

create this culture as well as focus on individual behavior and organizational commitment. As

Choudhry, Fang, and Mohamed move forward, they propose that the employee's contribution to

the safety culture is to practice safe behavior (208). The organization, then, has the role to

encourage that behavior through displaying management commitment (209), controlling

environmental and situational hazards through jobsite-specific safety plans (210), and measuring

employee safety behavior for the purpose of evaluating and improving the safety culture (209-

210).

     As the field has continued to study safety culture, multiple authors draw upon social

identity theory to examine the workplace norms of employees. One interesting finding is the

multiple levels at which workers form identifications. Andersen et al. found that at large

construction sites, identifications formed more readily at the crew level rather than the

organization level, and in some situations identifications are more easily formed with the level of

the trade or the profession rather than a more local identification with the organization or the

crew (648). Löwstedt and Räisänen had a similar observation that many workers seem to identify

more closely with the trade than with their organization, even going so far as to marginalize

"colleagues with non-traditional (non-preferred) professional backgrounds" (1103). Choi, Ahn,

and Lee (2017) drew the same conclusion regarding the prevalence of identification with local

workgroups or broad trades, but they added a category of identification even lower than the

organization, the project (7).

     Löwstedt and Räisänen discuss how identification with the trade level leads at the

workgroup level to marginalization of workers who do not share that identity as strongly. The

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ingroup identifies with characteristics such as productivity focus, shared personality traits, and experience/background knowledge of the construction industry (1101), which lead to the creation of an outgroup-within that was subject to a "pull-push movement [which] could also be understood as rhetorical performance to undermine the outsiders while underpinning Alpha's uniqueness" (1102). This pull-push describes pressure to adopt the shared identifications of the group with a stigmatization of the individuals that resist. Although Löwstedt and Räisänen suggest this is a practice that will cause the industry to become insular and closed to new ideas (which is likely true), I see this as a mechanism for propagating group norms which can encourage safety practices; if at least some of the shared identifications are encouraging safe behaviors, this insularity is serving as a protective action.

Additionally, recognizing the high reliance on trade-level identification can help to design safety training plans and materials. Andersen et al. remind their readers that recognizing "the realities in which safety programs are seeking to operate" helps the programs to be more effective (648). Choi, Ahn, and Lee (2017) found, "the salience of social identification with a group moderates the influence that the group's norms have on personal standards regarding safety behavior in construction workers" (10). This may not seem to be a groundbreaking statement, but it is backed by their quantitative findings, and from it we can draw the conclusion that appeals to the most salient identifications (trade-level and workgroup-level) will be most effective in encouraging safety behavior.

Worker perceptions of the organization's safety policies and of management perceptions on those policies also matter. In many cases, employees will perceive safety rules as "meaningless and annoying," leading them to break those rules and potentially engage in unsafe behavior (Andersen et al. 649). These types of perceptions are most common in situations where

the rules "made it difficult for a crew to achieve its goals" (Andersen et al. 649). Andersen et al. suggest incorporating employees into the creation and implementation of safety plans on their jobsites to avoid this, potentially by having regular toolbox talks (a common term in the industry for informal discussions, particularly ones related to safety) (649). Choi, Ahn, and Lee (2016) add to this discussion of perceptions the fact that employee perceptions of management norms have a large impact on their safety behavior (10). Stricter enforcement of norms leads to employees more frequently exhibiting positive behavior. Additionally, when some workers in a workgroup ignore management norms, it becomes more likely that other members of the group will also ignore those norms (Choi, Ahn, and Lee 2016, 10). This is a case of the local workgroup identification overtaking organizational identification, but it is also new in the fact that it provides a specific example and suggests an organizational method for encouraging greater organizational identification: stricter managerial enforcement, or at least convincing employees that there is stricter managerial enforcement.

Again, this overview of the research from the field, much like my brief gloss of social identity theory, does not do justice to the wide variety of research in the field or the depth of knowledge that exists in the subjects that I have touched on, but I have included some ideas that I will use in my own analysis, particularly the various levels of identification that workers experience and how the perceptions of organizational policies regarding safety affect behavior.

Methods

In order to apply the principles of Burkean identification in an analysis of the creation and enactment of a real world identity, I decided to observe the safety training procedures of a construction management company. This company has about 3,000 employees and is dedicated to electrical planning, engineering, design, and installation. Electrical work is a relatively

dangerous subfield in the already somewhat dangerous field of construction, yet this company has a comparatively high safety record (to be discussed in detail later).

I contacted the company's national director of safety training for a company that was highly recommended as having an excellent safety record and asked him if I could talk to him about their safety program. After speaking with him, we decided that it would work well for both of us if I observed their one day training seminar for new site managers.

This was an eight hour training session entirely focused on safety, specifically instructing these individuals in how to address safety in their new leadership positions. The national director of safety training (which I will refer to by the pseudonym Ron from here on) holds a master's degree in education, and he reported to me that he designed the day's training session. This session included a PowerPoint presentation and accompanying lectures broken up by multiple activities performed by the training participants, such as analyses of safety conditions in photos, practicing filling out documents related to training and evaluating employees, and group discussions of the subject matter.

I observed and participated in the training session, answering questions and performing all group activities that the employees did. In doing this, I was able to receive a first-hand look at how the training is perceived by the employees, and I built some rapport with certain employees that I was able to speak with informally during breaks, during activities, and at the end of the day. I had a short opportunity to do a question and answer session with the entire group, asking a question and accepting any answers that came out. The answers to the large group questions may have been somewhat limited as employees might have felt uncomfortable voicing anything they perceived as negative about the company's safety practices in this environment, although I did receive some comments that could be perceived as critical of the program.

I also had an opportunity to interview Ron during a lunch break. Again, his answers may be skewed towards giving a positive evaluation of the company. During this interview, Ron did give me permission to use his name and the company's name (which I will refer to as simply The Company from here on), but I am still choosing to omit those to be entirely sure that no negative or positive evaluation might impact the company as well as to ensure that no sensitive information about their employees or their practices could be made public.

Finally, I also received an assortment of documents from Ron that included the handouts employees received during the training, his documentation as the leader of the safety training (including a copy of the PowerPoint with his private notes and some of his sources material), some examples of the types of safety-related documents that employees might interact with on a daily basis, and examples of the types of daily/weekly/monthly safety-related communications the company produces and distributes to employees and other stakeholders.

I did not seek IRB approval or exemption for this study, because I am not seeking to publish it.

There are some limitations to this study. One is that I am not seeing the enactment of the safety identity of the employees. Although I could have asked Ron to allow me to observe a jobsite in action, I felt that observing the training gave me a wealth of valuable, if different, information. Another limitation is the small sample in terms of only interacting with roughly thirty employees from the company and for a relatively short period of time. Interacting with more employees could have provided me with a wider variety of perspectives on how the company does or does not encourage internalization of safe work practices. A third limitation is that the population was entirely male, again limiting the number of perspectives I could receive.

Before I discuss my research, I want to emphasize again that my data will not allow for discussion of worker identities being enacted in the field or the efficacy of this training in altering workplace conditions. I am instead providing an analysis of the training methods I observed through the theoretical lens of Burkean identification and social identity theory in order to better describe what a rhetorician might identify about their training practices. The main takeaways for my reader will be how a clearer conception of identity better displays the ways that identities are formed and the ways that identities motivate individuals.

Results

In this section, I will use the concepts discussed above drawn from scholarship about Burkean identification, social identity theory, and social identity in construction to analyze the safety training practices of The Company and some aspects of how it encourages and discourages employees to identify with safety based on the materials I collected and the employees that I talked to.

Safety History

The Company was chosen because it had a relatively good safety record. I wanted to view a company that had a successful safety record because I felt that it would provide more opportunities to view the ways that the company shaped worker identities.

As evidence of this claim that the company has a good safety record, Ron told me that the company has an EMR rating of .53. EMR, or experience modification rate, is essentially a rating system used by insurance companies to determine premiums, and it is based on number of worker's compensation claims in the previous three years; less than 1.0 (the industry average) signifies reduction in premiums, while more than 1.0 signifies increased premiums, and Lockton's (the insurance company The Company uses) lowest rating is a .44. This means that

The company has had very few accidents resulting in worker's compensation claims over the last three years compared to other companies. Another piece of evidence is the TRIR, or total recordable incident rate, of 1.42 compared to the construction industry's average of 7.1 (Safety check, Inc.). This measurement signifies the number of incidents that must be reported to OSHA as compared to number of hours worked.

One final measure of the company's safety is its singular fatality in 2010. Although any number of fatalities is too many, they do happen in the industry. Industry rates are currently at 10.1 fatalities per 100,000 workers and has remained close to ten since 2007 (Jones), which with this company having roughly 3,000 employees, one fatality in a decade would essentially equal out to about 3.33 per 100,000 workers, a third of industry average. Again, although any is too many, one death in a decade for a company of this size suggests that its safety training and the safety behaviors of its workers are relatively successful.

Training Session

The training session primarily fostered identification at the crew level. First, we went around the room and each stated reasons why we want to be safe. Multiple common themes emerged, such as wanting to go home safely to family, wanting to reach retirement age, not wanting to lose time off work, and not wanting to harm a coworker because of their own actions. This emphasized the crew-level reasons for safety, which is sometimes ignored in training in favor of organizational reasons (lost productivity and lost profit because of accidents). Hearing and seeing colleagues share these crew-level reasons for safety helps individuals to identify with the group value of safe behavior, and identifying with that concept more saliently will of course help them to encourage those practices within their employees in their supervisory roles. As a final result of this activity, the participants were exposed to the tactic of eliciting sympathy that

Crable discussed. Through the shared goals that were brought to the surface in this activity, each member of the group was made to identify with the group and to identify with the theoretical safe worker identity more strongly than they might have before. Simultaneously, antithesis can be seen here as the dangers of unsafe work practice are being established as a shared threat for the supervisors and their crew members rather than a threat to any one individual.

The second task was an icebreaker activity. In groups, we had to rate fifteen items in order of importance for survival if we were shipwrecked. Of course, much like in teaching a class at a university, this activity was intended to perform basic functions of letting participants get to know each other in their small groups, but it also fulfilled the purpose of creating a shared group identity for the class as a whole. As the "correct" answers were called out by Ron, individuals were called to argue and a conclusion was reached that the individual knowledge and skills of each group could alter what would be most important. This set up the group's shared identity by forming the fundamental belief that they are a group. This activity also formed the shared belief that they were both receivers of knowledge and creators of knowledge: the training session was going to give them knowledge about how to encourage safe work behavior in their employees, but it also required them to think about and share their past experiences of what a supervisor can do to encourage safe behavior.

To follow up on this thinking about the supervisor's role in safety, we moved into a group discussion of exactly that topic. One topic that came out of this that I found highly relevant to social identity is the discussion that the supervisor sets the example for safe work practices. The supervisor enacts the prototypical identity of the group, and it is typically expected for employees to do their best to emulate whatever behaviors they practice. However, some participants brought up the fact that employees always have the right to refuse to follow a bad or

unsafe example. This displays that although they try to form a physical prototype, to embody the prototype in the form of an actual person acting as exemplar, the prototype is actually a metaphysical ideal that cannot be perfectly embodied in one person. Seemingly, employees feel empowered (or at least these specific future supervisors claimed they felt empowered) to dissociate from one person's interpretation of the stereotype in favor of behaviors they feel align better with the group's beliefs; this is enabled by the fact that The Company has helped its employees to form group norms that emphasize safety over obedience or productivity.

Another role of the supervisor that came up in the discussion is their role in holding employees accountable for safety, reporting incidents or near misses to The Company, and reinforcing positive behavior. Each of these tasks works to form orientations in workers' minds that encourage safe work practices, whether by associating unsafe behavior with reprimands or other punishment, by making visible the effects of accidents that happen and thus connecting unsafe behavior with danger and fear, or by linking praise and reward with safe behavior. In acknowledging this role, the supervisors in training are recognizing their status as symbols of authority and the way that the employees they lead will react to them. This made visible the facts that there are some strategies that will be more or less likely to be accepted and that their actions can be both positive and negative influences in employees identifying with orientations that encourage safe behaviors.

Ensuring that employees read the daily safety bulletin, leading toolbox talks and filling out group reports on them, performing ORMs, and performing safety audits are all aspects of being a supervisor that were discussed and practiced during the training. The daily safety

bulletin, toolbox talks, and ORMs[1] align with Andersen et al.'s suggestion to incorporate

employee discussion and feedback into safety practice, and this training helps to equip

supervisors to lead those toolbox talks and to encourage workers to read the bulletins and ask

questions or make comments in response to them (as a side note, the bulletins are not required

reading, and multiple participants expressed that they do not read them). All of this reading,

writing, and talking about safety solidifies in employee minds that it is a major concern for the

organization, and individuals within the crews that properly utilize these aspects of the safety

program should be more likely to motivate employees to identify themselves with the safe

worker identity. This also establishes a shared terminology, following Crable's discussion of

methods for appealing to the other. The methods of discussing safety in these documents and

meetings is shared with the employees, and they are encouraged to also adopt the same terms for

describing safe work practices and thus (theoretically) adopt them in physical practice as well.

The safety audits are documents that supervisors will fill out to evaluate unsafe situations,

internally report them, and then devise and implement a solution. Some participants suggested to

me that in the past, they have changed their behaviors because of safety audits filed by a

supervisor regarding their own actions. They claimed to have taken the suggestions of the

supervisor to solve the safety issue. What is interesting, though, is that workers report that these

safety audits provide an opportunity to discuss the safety concerns as a crew. Rather than just

being fixed, the issue is brought up at the next toolbox talk without intentions to blame or punish

but rather simply to ensure that the whole group is aware of what the issue was and how it was

fixed to prevent it from reoccurring.

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[1] ORM stands for operational risk management, and when employees referred to them, they were referring to meetings where they would discuss the safety tasks needed for the specific day's work. They are very similar to toolbox talks but often require embodied responses from employees such as writing down responses and seemed to take place in smaller groups.

These documents and meetings are another example of something that fulfills Andersen et al.'s suggestion of bringing issues up in setting where they can be discussed and solved at the crew level rather than the organizational level, which I argue allows for workers to better internalize the importance of the issue when it is presented in the frame of their crew's safety rather than a mandate from someone in a position of authority. The authority at the crew level is more widely accepted (or at least seen as more relevant due to its embodied and personal nature) by employees than the organization level, and as such strategies like this that emphasize the need and desire for safety from other crew members and from the crew's supervisor allows employees to link this safety to a more immediate symbol of authority. Of course, this is also a method for establishing the group beliefs, as described by Bar-Tal. As Bar-Tal describes, group beliefs will be formed through shared social experience, and through these bulletins and toolbox talks, The Company is able to provide shared work experiences that lead to development of shared beliefs that include upholding the importance of safe work behavior.

The supervisors were encouraged to interact with employees in ways that promoted personal connection. The training made suggestions like providing praise and criticism in person rather than written reports, starting large meetings or individual discussions with a positive statement and ending with a positive statement, and using "I" statements and "because" statements. These suggestions emphasize the interpersonal connection of the supervisor and employee, again reinforcing the local level of identification that multiple scholars recognized as important in encouraging safe behavior, but it also encourages the sympathetic appeal that Crable discussed. By humanizing themselves and always interacting with the workers in a personal manner, they create the shared identity from which to launch rhetorical action when corrections are needed. They were also told to show concern for employees' safety, set clear expectations,

observe behavior daily, provide timely feedback with performance evaluations, listen to concerns and problems from employees, document discussions about safety, and follow up on those documents with coaching.

Accident investigations and incident review meetings seem to fulfill the purpose of displaying the organizational commitment to safety. Obviously they also fulfill purposes within the organization of identifying and correcting problems, but the interesting part to me is that Ron's instruction on these job duties emphasized that they not only enforce the policies but also show to employees that the policies are considered an important aspect of the workplace culture. Again, this returns to Choi, Ahn, and Lee's (2016) observation that at least some of what matters is simply that employees perceive that the management considers safety important and will act upon it. On another level, this enforcement establishes what orientations the relevant symbols of authority (in this case, The Company as an organization and the supervisors) value. Through this enforcement, it is established that the reigning authorities want workers to accept the belief that safe work practices are important, and rejection of that belief will see consequences.

Perhaps the most interesting aspect of identity from this theoretical perspective is that the workers on job sites make transitions from a blue hard hat to a white hard hat after they have shown that they "buy in" to the company philosophy. The blue hard hat signifies that an employee is new, and any employee still in a blue hard hat should have a mentor on site that they can go to with questions or problems. In implementation, it seems that something about this strategy is ineffective because some participants in the training claimed they never received a mentor or rarely interacted with their mentor, but in theory this seems like it should be an effective strategy for imparting group norms to new employees. The white hard hat, on the other hand, quite literally signifies that the wearer "accept[s] the same ideology," (Bar-Tal 103) as the

other workers in the company. The color change indicates an acceptance of the group beliefs that the company wants its employees to hold, and then acts as a visible reminder to the wearer and to others that they identify with those values. In addition to this visual representation of the identifications the wearer must hold, this hat acts as a symbol of authority. It is a constant reminder of the company's endorsement of safe work behaviors; through wearing it, the wearer shows their acceptance of that orientation.

As one final note on intergroup interactions, there is evidence of this group adopting some conflicting attitudes towards other groups. One of the two outgroups that were mentioned was OSHA, the organization that oversees safety in many industries and that sets and enforces regulations pertaining to workplace safety. Ron, in his discussion of how employees should react to OSHA appearing first and foremost told the new supervisors that they should be cooperative and friendly any time they meet an OSHA inspector. This is of course a message that supports the intragroup belief that safety is important and that safe work behaviors need to be observed; however, some of the discussion following this initial statement felt rather oppositional, for example Ron telling a story of how he chooses to take any citation he receives to court and how he once chose the location he took a citation to court to inconvenience the inspector that would have to drive there. Similar sentiments were expressed by multiple participants in the training. The initial statement might tell employees that they should associate OSHA with positive safety outcomes, but the general discussion suggested that most members of the discussion hold negative orientations towards the inspector, associating it with inconvenience, risk to the company, and a symbol of authority that the group does not accept. .

The other outgroup that was discussed was other contractors who employees of The Company might share space with on a job site. This relationship followed the opposite pattern.

Ron framed the discussion in fairly negative terms by bringing up other contractors as potential liabilities and groups that The Company should try to distance themselves from because of their unsafe work habits, and initially some participants voiced agreement with that idea, but through the discussion these other contractors provided a method for employees of The Company to increase their self image by perceiving their membership of a group that has superior safety practices as a positive reflection on themselves, which encourages them to see membership in the group and adoption of the group's beliefs in a more positive light (Serino 24). Assuming that the other contractors do indeed improve their safety records when working with The Company, this displays Crable's appeal of antithesis by uniting The company and other contractors against the shared threat of workplace accidents. The employees help the contractors to be more successful in achieving the shared goal of safety and also ensure their own safety by removing the risk of the contractors' unsafe work affecting them.

Documents

Of the documentation that I received, most of it was technical instructions in safe work practices, how to fill out safety-related forms, and descriptions of qualifications required for certain tasks (such as training or licenses). One thing that I discovered in multiple documents that is worth examining is an emphasis on shared responsibility for safety. For example, one document titled "OSHA Update" wrote a short description of the culture that it wanted to promote: "Together, we can create a culture where everyone assumes responsibility for not only themselves, but also their co-workers" that also emphasizes the need for a team to work safely and the fact that responsibility lies in The Company, managers, supervisors, co-workers, and "you." This call to collective action is a clear example of an attempt to elicit identification with the group in order to improve safety outcomes. Promoting safety as a shared goal for all parties

involved offers an attempt at drawing a sympathetic connection between employees and the larger corporate interests. This sympathetic appeal attempts to bridge the gap between potentially disparate groups by offering common goals and common reasons for those goals.

Beyond this and similar statements in some other documents, no pieces of writing that I examined made clear connections between employee identities and safety that I feel perform different functions from other topics I've discussed. Many of the identity formation techniques I examined above, such as the daily safety bulletins, toolbox talks, ORMs, and safety audits are actions that the supervisors were taught to perform in the training that contributed to the supervisors and the employees they supervised choosing to identify with the safe worker identity, but the documents themselves felt like they added very little to the adoption of the identity. In most of these cases, it was the performance of the action that brought the safe worker identity to the forefront and encouraged employees to adopt it, rather than the reading or writing that the employees did.

I would attribute this seeming disconnect between safety identity and written communication to two main reasons. First, I believe that the embodied nature of safety identities, e.g. its enactment through specific outward behavior and the physical bodily danger it addresses, lead this to be something more easily identified with in the embodied communicative act of oral communication. A written document does not form the same sympathetic appeal as a discussion held between the employees on a job site because it focuses on authority at the company level rather than local, crew-level reasons for safe work behavior that draw authority from the sympathetic modes of appeal used in training and in group formation on the jobsite.

The second reason is that most of the documents I viewed that were related to safety were quite specific to fulfilling a separate function, whether accident or near-miss reporting,

facilitating toolbox talks or other in-person discussions of safety, and the materials for the training I observed which were more of a backdrop to the oral discussion than content. Each of these documents served a specific purpose beyond instilling a safety identity. In most cases, the documents did facilitate other methods of identity creation by requiring performance, reaction, and thought about safe work practices and the importance thereof, but the documents themselves did little beyond enabling that performance. Perhaps more response to the workers' writing in the toolbox talks and ORMs would have changed my interpretation, and perhaps a greater focus within the documents on making a rhetorical appeal promoting safety (such as describing a prototype of safe behavior for specific work sites or during specific tasks and explaining why that prototype should be followed) might have also changed this.

Interview

The most interesting interview topic from the perspective of identity was Ron's statement that the company attempts to "coach more than police." Ron suggested that the coaching involved teaching safe work practices ahead of time, discussing those safe work practices before a crew starts a new work task, and supervisors quickly but kindly intervening in unsafe behaviors that they see. This would seem to follow Choi, Ahn, and Lee's (2016) suggestion to emphasize managerial perspectives towards safety in order to encourage safe behavior, because it expresses the genuine desire from management that safe behaviors are practiced. This is compared to a light slap on the wrist that can't effectively convey the importance of the managerial norm or a harsh punishment that Andersen et al. might claim alienates employees by enforcing a rule they don't perceive as valid because it isn't seen to be part of the crew-level identity when it is mandated by the organization. Safety practices are determined in toolbox talks that occur with

individuals at the crew level, and sometimes the supervisor will gently make what seems like an individual suggestion rather than enforcement of an organizationally mandated rule.

This also moves the apparent source of authority from the organization into the supervisors' hands. The symbol of authority is no longer the company's rulebook and its enforcement of the rules but is instead the relationship between the supervisor and the employee as a coaching relationship, which I would argue makes it more likely to fit within the employee's frames of acceptance as the need for safety is made more personal. To some degree, I think this is rooted in the widespread antithetical appeal in many industries between companies and their employees. Companies are often portrayed as a separate entity from their employees that have different, sometimes oppositional, goals to those employees. Many believe (often correctly) that companies do not have their employees' best interests at heart. This method of coaching acknowledges that and moves the supervisor-employee relationship out of the realm of the supervisor as corporate representative and into the role of fellow employee with more experience. From that positioning, the supervisor can make sympathetic appeals using their shared identity.

This shift of authority to the local level also allows for a more local prototype to be formed. The sympathetic appeal to shared experience and the reliance on interpersonal relationships as the symbol of authority allows for creation of a prototypical safe worker identity at the crew/worksite level. That prototype may be virtually indistinguishable from a prototype that would be created and promoted by the company, but unless it is seen as being created by the small group facing the dangers that the identity is meant to address, workers could consider that company-created identity as ineffective for their situation.

My analysis of this aspect of the job contributing to workers identifying with the safe worker prototype is one of few claims that I can back up with some statistical evidence. Ron told me in the interview that newly hired employees who had previously worked in other construction companies[2] caused 64% of the injuries in the company. After implementing a policy that paired new hires who had previous industry experience with a mentor from the company, this number was reduced to 24%. The mentor fulfills this function of coaching and actively promotes adoption of safe work behaviors as well as promoting the understanding that safety is important to both the company and the local workgroup. This reduction of injuries caused by mentoring seems to indicate that the mentor is able to encourage the new employee to identify with the company's and the workgroup's safety-related values and dissociate the newcomer from any identifications that they might have had that cause them to deprioritize safe work behaviors, such as orientations connecting unsafe behavior to increased productivity.

Group Question and Answer

The two questions that I asked the whole group that I think offer the most insight are "What do other companies do that you think discourage safe behavior?" and "What does The Company do that encourages safe behavior?" The first idea that came out in response to the first question was fear of being fired for refusing unsafe work. As mentioned before, The Company has strict policies allowing refusal of unsafe work, and the employees expressed on multiple occasions throughout the day that they felt comfortable doing so if they needed to. This response indicates to me that employee agency and employee confidence are both encouraged within The

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[2] I did not think to ask, though, what percentage of the company's employees fit this category. I also should have asked for clarification on what their definition of "new hire" was. I would suspect the new hire term applies to workers in either their first six months or first year with The Company was, but this is purely conjecture. At the time of writing this footnote, I am waiting for an answer to both of these questions.

Company, and by encouraging those, the company can counteract individual instances of unsafe behavior by promoting the group belief that safety is the paramount concern. In a very similar vein, many employees claimed that other companies discourage spending or refuse to spend money on safety equipment and emphasize productivity at the cost of safety. In some of these companies, the employees could have wrong perceptions of the organizational goals, but local goals of supervisors or crews are emphasized because they are more present and can exert more pressure; in these instances, lack of managerial enforcement prevents many employees from identifying with the organizational values. In other companies, employees might be identifying with existing group beliefs at the organizational level that simply discourage safe work practice.

Multiple employees also expressed appreciation for the fact that the company clearly cares for safety and cares about the employees. Although the organizational level is weaker than the crew level or the trade level, both of which might be pushing against safe practices in a given environment, The Company has convinced employees that its group beliefs at the organizational level can and will provide a safe work environment. Employees claimed that The Company will buy any safety equipment they need, including things like larger harnesses or job-specific equipment, and The Company will provide safety training on any non-standard jobs. It could be easy to view the scholarship in the construction field and dismiss the organizational level of identification, but in this case, The Company has shown that through proper safety policies and enforcement of those policies, employees can be convinced to identify at the organization level.

Conclusion

This study has shown that when an identity is intentionally influenced, there are multiple strategies that the influencer can use to encourage adoption of the identifications that they want to foster. There are two findings that encompass most of the other ideas that I located in my

analysis: intentional formation of safety as an aspect of identity for workers in The Company and the use of local authority (crew-level and worksite-level leadership and group identity) instead of corporate authority.

As Bar-Tal describes, the first group belief that a group must share is simply the belief that they are indeed a group, and in my analysis of this safety training, I saw a great deal of the time spent on simply establishing the fact that safe work behavior is a group effort and in fact part of an identity. This is central because The Company has realized that safe work behavior is not a result of training in how to be safe (which is often more common sense than one might think) but is rather a result of adopting orientations towards safety that suggest it is valuable, which many other companies do nothing to encourage or even actively discourage--often accidentally. For example, to foster recognition of and identification with safe work behavior, the company has policies in place that start daily, weekly, and monthly discussions of safety, and there are visual elements that signify individuals who have proven a dedication to The Company's values, including safety.

Beyond that, the company instructed these supervisors to use a variety of methods to focus on the importance of safety at the crew level rather than the company level. This focus emphasized the source of the authority as coming from the local leadership and from group wellbeing at a worksite, which is more aligned with the frames of acceptance that many employees would hold. Discussions of safety are initiated at the local level and actively involve employees to develop job-specific safety plans for their daily tasks, which allows employees to see those plans being rooted in their own and their coworkers' best interests rather than being rooted in some unnecessary corporate policy. Supervisors are also taught coaching strategies that

highlight cooperative methods for achieving safe work behavior with the workers that they supervise rather than institutional reward and punishment schemes.

Future areas of study

As I've mentioned before, I perceive this framework to be useful in exploring further questions related to identity. I have used the concepts of Burkean identity and social identity theory to elucidate some concepts about how a specific identity is formed and enacted by looking at the methods one company uses to foster identification of its employees with each other, with the company, and with the value of safe work practices. There are some other fields that I think could benefit from this type of discussion.

Conceptions of social identity are already being used in the construction industry and scholarship in other industries. I suggest continuing this emphasis in those fields and reinvigorating it with the Burkean conception because the concept of identification can help to discuss how worker individuality interacts with their social identity in the workplace, how identifications act as motivators, and how a company can increase identification with the group identity that they want to build. Particularly this last point about intentional influence of identity could draw on Burke's conception of identity as a persuasive tool.

I also see questions of race, gender, and sexuality being better answered if we stop to better define the identifications commonly held by (or commonly perceived to be held by) members of those communities, how those identifications are formed and spread, and the ways that an individual can be both similar and dissimilar to the prototypical member of the groups to which they belong. Many scholars that study these topics are already looking at identity, but I often see the term being discussed in tacit and nebulous terms, where I think that a more clear analysis of what these groups ask their members to identify with and what identifications

outsiders of the group think the members hold would lead to increased productivity. For example, analysis of identity formation in these contexts could prompt productive discussion of individual identity within groups that are often stereotyped. Crable's methods for appealing to the other (synthesis, antithesis, and terminology) could benefit scholars interested in the communicative practices within or regarding marginalized groups. In developing these groups, what different identifications do they hold compared to other groups, and what effects do those identifications have on members and outsiders? How is the individual identity formed in response to other groups? Additionally, Branaman's use of Burkean identity for social critique would benefit this field as scholars identify the orientations held by or in relation to the groups they study and specifically attempt to locate false or negative orientations commonly held within or about a community.

Moving more specifically into composition and rhetoric, I would first look to questions of discourse communities. Scholars looking at discourse communities currently focus heavily on the communication that occurs within them. Burkean identity can look more clearly at how these communities form and how individuals are brought into the communities. Looking at how the group's values and beliefs are shared with new individuals and what symbols of authority are present would provide potentially meaningful information about these discourse communities and their communicative practices. I would also add that comparing the practices of intragroup communication to intergroup communication would provide a new perspective on these communities, particularly by allowing for analysis of how the different orientations or group beliefs held by the different communities.

Ongoing discussions of publics and counterpublics could benefit in a similar way. What identifications does a certain public ask its members to hold? What identifications are necessary

to successfully enter into discourse? How much room is there in the group to question and push against those identifications? Each of these might provide better understanding of how some publics or counterpublics are formed, how discourse is enabled and enacted within that community, and what effects the discourse has on the members and on other groups.

In a more traditional sense of the term rhetoric, identity can be applied to study political communications, advertising, or indeed any communication, particularly for examining persuasin in these sitautions. Many pieces of rhetoric attempt to not only address an existing audience but actually invoke a new audience (Ede and Lunsford), while we can also view things like political campaign ads to see the politician attempting to disguise himself as someone the audience can identify with. Advertisements try to appeal to various demographics. Analysis of the identities that advertisers target and sometimes create can provide insight.Scholars looking at all of these types of communication do already think about identity, but a more thorough tool for analyzing identity in these situations could lead to a better understanding of the tools being used to create and/or appeal to identities. That better understanding, in turn, can provide a platform for critique through analysis of the orientations that certain identities require or promote and identification of negative or harmful orientations, as Branaman describes.

As for the composition side of the field, writerly identities have become a popular topic of scholarship, and developing students' writerly identities in composition classes is a goal for many new instructors. What does a writerly identity consist of, though? We can better design assignments and courses for the purpose of building writerly identities if we expose the specific orientations that we ask students to adopt in identifying themselves as writers as well as strategies for bringing them into the ingroup of writers by revealing the prototype of the student writer, the workplace writer, the activist writer, or any other prototypes we might find valuable.

Through analysis of prototypes, we could aid students in adopting specific characteristics of a given writerly prototype, through which they could (hopefully) better understand the purposes and audiences of their writing and the strategies that writers use.

My suggestions for the topics above are all fairly broad and abstract because I am not an expert in any of those fields; even for an expert in those fields, the benefits of applying a different theoretical lens would not be clear until the lens is applied. I do think, though, that each of these fields would benefit because Burke intended for his thoughts about identification to reveal the persuasive nature of identity. Whether it is an intentional and conscious attempt to form or alter an identity, the success or failure of a message because of its (in)ability to appeal to an identification shared by a group, or a subconscious choice by individuals to adhere to the perceived prototype of an identity, the act of identifying is a result of persuasion and a persuasive act.

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