

*Adaptation and Identity Construction in a New Environment:  
The Case of CEU Students*

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## **Abstract**

In my thesis I approach adaptation problems from the perspectives of identity constructions. Believing that every adaptation or socialization is a reconstruction of self I try to prove that adaptation processes are contingent upon the objective conditions and determined, to a large extent, by the past experiences of human. Since the past experiences of people are not same, the adaptation process might also run in different ways for different individuals. The self as being the only source for the individual's social action, tends to reconstruct itself to such a level as it is only allowed by the content of the self, and by the objective conditions, which might provide different reconstruction "alternatives" for the self.

Since my research data are pure qualitative, it does not allow me to table them; therefore, I try to analyze the adaptation problems on cases of two individuals whom I chose from my twenty seven interviewees due to their specific adaptation problems. I chose Asian interviewees (mostly) due to their cultural backgrounds and diversity, which I thought would be interesting case for the study of adaptation problems.

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## Introduction

Shankar, a 26 year old student from India studying at Central European University describes himself as a very traditional person, the one who defines his culture as Hinduism and who performs *puja*<sup>1</sup> every morning. As a reasonable person, he says that he has to adapt to his new environment, the university and its students, which is the more difficult because this is the first time he is abroad. He says for him learning about ethics and people's manners is very important in his adjustment to the new environment and as an active student, in the autumn, in his last semester, he went to a retreat party with his classmates and there for the first time in his life he tried beef, which, is strictly forbidden in Hinduism where cows are sacred animals. He has also developed the habit of drinking a beer since he came to Europe and, again as a reasonable person, he acknowledges that he has to give up this habit because he is going back home in a month where it is not common in India to see drinking people.

This simple case made me ask “Why does a person who defines himself as traditional and religious, begin to contradict himself?”, *Does the self change when it shifts or moves from one structure to another?* or *Do the characteristics of the self depend on structure under which self is located?*

I will try to answer these questions in my thesis. Such problems of self are discussed in studies of identity theory in sociology. One of the major proponents of the sociological problem of self was George Herbert Mead, who, in his book *Mind, Self and Society* ([1934] 1967) developed the idea that the self is a social product that created in constant social interactions with others. In a simpler way, “Society shapes self shapes social behavior” (Stryker and Burke 2000:285). Another prominent sociologist Erving Goffman in his books such as *Asylums* ([1961] 1991), and *Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (1959) proved the idea that self actually dwells in social interactions and changes according to different social

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<sup>1</sup> Religious chanting.

interactions. More recently based on the concepts of Mead, Sheldon Stryker and Peter J. Burke have developed their own concepts of identity theory. Their theoretical framework is known as *structural symbolic interactionism* (Stryker 1980), in literatures “whose goal is to understand and explain *how social structures affect self* and *how self affects social behaviors*” [my emphasis] (Stryker and Burke 2000:285). A key concept that makes this theoretical framework sociological is a view that the self is tied to certain social structures which in turn always influence the self. Serpe views this “relationship between self and social structure as central to a developing an understanding of social action” (1987:44). He (1987) further asserts that

...the structure of self is assumed to be relatively stable over time as a consequence of the stability of social relationships. ...[C]hanges in the structure of self are related directly to the person's movement within the social structure, either by choice or by force of circumstances, including normal life course changes (...). Thus, the theory presumes both relative constancy in the structure of the self, given absence of the movement within the social structure, and relative change in the structure of the self, given such movements. (P. 44)

Though these are the basic concepts of structural symbolic interactionist theory, there are some weaknesses that should be pointed out at first hand. First, putting the self directly dependent on structure makes the above theory mechanistic and deterministic not allowing to concentrate on human agency; second, the theory does not suggest anything about the characteristics of structure in which the self is located, which I think important, if social structure somehow influences the self, if not determining it. In a similar manner structural symbolic interactionist theory does not discuss much about what happens when the self leaves one structure and moves to another, in other words, its intermediate state between structures and its next absorption to another structure.

The other theoretician in identity theory Burke developed a self-verification theory which did not put so much emphasis on social structures (Hogg, Terry, and White 1995; Stryker and Burke 2000). He has developed the idea of *identity standard*, a shared meaning and expectations by others with which an individual is supposed to match his behavior as an

occupant of certain role(s). Here, role is a “set of expectations prescribing behavior that is considered appropriate *by others*” [my emphasis] (Hogg et al. 1995:257). Shankar’s case that we discussed above was in contradiction with his identity standard that he was supposed to follow.

Hogg (1995) brings Stryker’s postulate that “we have distinct components of self, called role identities, for each of the role positions in society that we occupy” (p. 256). For example, a person’s role identities may reveal that she might be a mother, a student or a daughter, and a social worker.

Others respond to a person in terms of his or her role identities. These responses, in turn, form the basis for developing a sense of self-meaning and self-definition. (Hogg et al. 1995:256-257)

A successful role performance matching the identity standard causes a positive feeling, and unsuccessful performance of a role must cause negative feelings according to the postulates of Burke. Hogg (1995) puts in his paper that

Satisfactory enactment of roles not only confirms and validates a person’s status as a role member, but also reflects positively on self-evaluation. The perception that one is enacting a role satisfactorily should enhance feelings of self-esteem... (P. 257)

In the opposite case, poor role performance causes negative emotions, even, as Hogg (1995) says, “may engender doubts about one’s self worth” (p. 257). An individual might perform his or her role successfully in any case, but what if he or she does not like his or her role identity? In this case I do not think successful role performance will enhance the self-esteem or positive self-evaluation, since he or she does not like what (who) he or she is.

Overall, in my thesis I intend to discuss the problem of the effect of social structure on the self (and related social behavior), as Hogg (1995) says “the prediction of behavior requires an analysis of the relationship between *self* and *social structure*” [my emphasis] (p. 257), and the problem of identity construction. I have noticed from my previous observations that when an individual moves from one social structure to another the *effect* of his previous

social structure (be it family or school, or job) has certain impacts on his “next move” into the “new” structure i.e. on the individual’s (next) identity construction in the new environment.

Thus, as an argument, I hypothesize in my thesis that when the self moves from one structure to another it reconstructs itself anew to adjust to its new structure. Probably, the perception of this reconstruction of the self is what we call adaptation. So far there does not seem to be any researches that approach the social adaptation problem from the identity construction point of view.

To test my hypothesis, that the effect of previous social structure has a certain impact on the self in the next structure, I collected data sample from 27 individuals mostly studying at CEU and came from different countries. Main data collection was carried out through interviews. Also I used Kuhn’s Twenty Statement Test (TST) to compare the self-definitions of my respondents with their sayings and behaviors. This test served as a supplementary method to my interviews. The sample and methodology issues will be discussed separately later.

In first half of my thesis I will discuss the detailed theoretical concepts that will be used to interpret my empirical findings which I discuss in the second half of my thesis. For my interpretation I took the concepts of Mead and Goffman as my theoretical framework in which I tried to ground my analysis and used identity theories of Stryker, Burke and others.

Thesis consists of Introduction, Methodology, Empirical Research and Data sections, and three Chapters. Chapter 1 discusses the necessary theoretical concepts that give an explanatory capacity to my analysis. Here I will discuss two identity theories that emphasize the two different aspects of self. One theory belongs to Stryker who accentuates the importance of the external social structure for the structure of self and its change, and the other theory belongs to Burke who emphasizes the internal dynamics of self rather than external social structures. Chapter 2 and 3 are empirical parts that dedicated to show the

validity of my hypothesis. These chapters analyze two cases that attracted my attention most during my fieldwork. At the same time I also intend to include the criticism of identity theories of Burke and Stryker in places where their theories could not provide me with satisfactory explanations. I will bring other fruitful concepts (such as of Bourdieu's) that could give explanations to my other findings and cover the flaws of the identity theories of Burke and Stryker. Thesis ends with the conclusion where I tried to summarize my findings.

## *Methodology*

For my empirical research I used two methods: interview and test. The primary method was interview and test was applied as a secondary method.

I conducted open interviews that lasted usually for one hour for each individual. The interview began with "warm-up" questions asking general things about the respondents' or interviewees' (cultural) backgrounds and habits etc. After spending five to ten minutes like this I began to inquire about specific facts related with my thesis question, including past and present individual experiences that connected with adaptation problems in their life. Other reason of choosing interview was due to the specifics of my theoretical framework, as Shott (1979) states:

...independent variables do not automatically influence dependent variables. Instead, their impact is mediated by *interpretation* and *definition*, which are not just intervening variables but "formative or creative process[es] in [their] own right" [my emphasis]. (P. 1321; see Blumer 1969:135)

This principle, I think, suits my theoretical framework that is in harmony with the symbolic interactionist school developed by Mead, Goffman, Stryker and Burke in their relative identity theories. Thus, my interviews were relatively open and allowed the interviewees to interpret themselves.

My second method was Kuhn's Twenty Statement Test (TST), a test that is designed to check the self-definitions of the people. This test is used mostly in social psychology. In



my thesis this test intends to reveal the general self-definitions of the people, to see general characteristics of their selves. It was administered mostly after interviews. The test is very simple; I just have to ask the respondents to define themselves by writing down twenty sentences beginning with “I am”. For example, “I am a student, I am friendly or I am a religious person” etc.

### *Empirical Research and Data*

In total, I have collected data from 27 individuals. I made the initial contacts with my respondents personally before the interviews. They all agreed to have interviews and 26 out of 27 agreed to take TSTs. The concise personal data of the respondents are given in Table 1 on next page.

In general, most of my respondents were from Asia. Since it was my aim to study the effect of the social structure on self and its related social behavior, I chose specifically individuals that came from particular different cultures from different regions. Also I interviewed a few European respondents because of their backgrounds such as being Muslim living in Europe or Roma.

I already mentioned that I chose two profiles of different individuals for my analysis. However, reader might think why I am discarding the rest of the interviews? I did not discard, I chose two particular profiles that reflected specific cases of adaptations that allowed me to conceptualize my thoughts and interpret the data.

The first profile belongs to Eshita, a 27 year old female Indian respondent. I chose this respondent particularly because of her family background and life story, which seemed to me interesting. This profile gives the example of structural theory of self that developed by Stryker.

The second profile belongs to Bator, a 24 year old student came from Mongolia. His case is similar to Eshita's case, but the puzzling point will fall on his internal dynamics, rather than on social structures. In other words, this profile gives the example of Burke's theory and, along with it, comes my criticism of identity theories of Burke and Stryker.

To respect the privacy of my respondents, I did not include their real names and departments or locations of their jobs. Only countries of origin, sex, age are mentioned in the thesis.

**Table 1. The categorized details of all respondents that agreed for interviews.**

Regions	Specific parts	Countries	Sex	Age	Numbers	Place of study/work
Asia	North Eastern Asia	<i>Mongolia</i>	female, male (6)	22 18-24	7	CEU (5), Cornivus University Budapest (2)
	South Asia	<i>Bangladesh</i> <i>India</i> <i>Nepal</i>	female female (2), male (3) female	24 27, 30 25-26 26	6	CEU
	South Eastern Asia	<i>Cambodia</i> <i>China</i> <i>Philippines</i> <i>Vietnam</i>	male female male female	22 29 36 26	4	CEU
	Middle East	<i>Egypt</i> <i>Palestine</i>	male male	43 31	2	Budapest CEU
	Caucasia	<i>Georgia</i>	male	23	1	CEU
<b>Total for Asia</b>					<b>20</b>	
<b>Africa</b>		<i>Cameroon</i> <i>Ethiopia</i> <i>Nigeria</i>	female male male	26 29 31	3	CEU
<b>Europe</b>	East Europe	<i>Kosovo</i> <i>Romania</i> <i>Serbia</i> <i>Ukraine</i>	male female female female	27 25 28 24	4	CEU
<b>Total</b>			<b>male 17, female 10</b>		<b>27</b>	

*Note:* In this table some geographical classifications might seem incorrect, for example putting together Egypt and Palestine as Middle Eastern countries despite the fact that Egypt is in North Africa. This is because I emphasized my respondents' ethnic origins, cultural and linguistic affiliations more than locations.

# Chapter 1: Reflections on Identity

In this section we will discuss two interrelated, nevertheless independent theories developed by two prominent theoreticians: Stryker and Burke. Also where I consider necessary I will touch on other relevant scientists' works.

The term identity was first defined by Erik Erikson in 1956 as “a persistent sameness in oneself (self-sameness)” (Erikson 1960:38). However, this term did not refer to sociology, but to psychology by designating the staged development of a person that begins with infancy and lasts till mature age.

For me, one of the most reflexive sociological theories of self was the theory of Mead before Erikson in 1930s, which further developed by his student Herbert Blumer who coined the term *symbolic interactionism*, the school of thought that became the touchstone of the identity theories of Stryker and Burke.

## 1.1 Structural Theory of Self and Identity Control Theory

The root predicate of identity theory is a postulate of *self-objectification* of an individual, the ability to “involve the self as an object to itself” (Rosenberg 1988:549). In other words, an ability of “I” to become “me” to itself.

The theory developed by Stryker emphasizes the importance of social settings or structures that can have a direct effect on person's self, as Serpe (1987) clarifies:

[T]he structure of self is assumed to be relatively stable over time as a consequence of the stability of social relationships. It is further assumed that changes in the structure of self are related directly to the person's movement within the social structure, either by choice or by force of circumstances, including normal life course changes. (P. 44)

Thus, the stability in self depends on the stability of the social structure. However, the identity theory developed by Burke, though it recognized the importance of social structures, emphasized the internal dynamics of self.

Burke's model consists of four main components:

The *identity standard* [my emphasis], or the set of (culturally prescribed) meanings held by the individual which define his or her role identity in a situation; the person's perceptions of meanings within the situation, matched to the dimensions of meaning in the identity standard; the comparator or the mechanism that compares the perceived situational meanings with those held in the identity standard; and the individual's behavior or activity, which is a function of the difference between perceptions and standard. (Stryker and Burke 2000:287)

In Burke's theory the individual as a role occupant has to demonstrate a behavior congruent with his identity standard. For example, individual as a student has to meet the school standards or expectations which exist as an identity standard for him (wearing uniforms or bowing to teachers if student meets them etc). Not only culturally prescribed meanings, but also self-generated meanings also can serve as identity standards. For Burke (2004) "identity standard serves as a reference with which persons compare their perceptions of self-relevant meanings in the interactive situation. ... [And] when the perceptions match the meanings in the standard, people are doing "just fine" (p. 5). However, when there is a disturbance that disconfirms one's identity, person acts to match the self relevant situational meanings with the meanings of the identity standard. This is what Burke calls a self-verification process.

[Self-verification] is accomplished by altering the current situation or by seeking and creating new situations in which perceived self-relevant meanings match those of the identity standard. (Stryker and Burke 2000:288)

For example, if a rumor spreads referring to a person who is regarded by his colleagues at work as honest and generous that he is mean and exploiting the public office, then that person will do anything to deny this rumor and bring evidence that he is not that kind of person.

According to Stryker and Burke this event that behavior changes the situation to match the self-relevant meanings with meanings held in the identity standard shows the fact

of goal-directedness of behavior and agency of the individual. Besides, emotion plays a certain role in the identity-verification processes.

Emotion reflects the degree of congruence between the meanings of one's identity in the situation and the meanings held in the identity standard. Continuous congruence (identity verification) registers positive emotion; incongruence, or lack of identity verification that cannot be handled automatically within the self-regulatory system, registers negative emotion. (Stets 2005:39)

Burke and others (2003) approve that "emotions both stimulate and respond to cognition and, as a result; they are a component of actors' *"definition of situation"* [my emphasis]" (p. 136). In the above case where a person became victim of a rumor, what if that person could not change the situation or verify his identity (honest and generous)?

For structural symbolic interactionist school self is a multifaceted construct that has multiple components called identities or role identities. Identities are meanings that people attach to themselves as persons, or as occupants of roles (Burke 2004). The words "identity" and "role" are usually used in combination as "role identity" in literatures.

Stryker and Burke (2000) believe that persons live their lives in relatively small networks "through roles that support their participation in such networks" (p. 285).

The probability of entering into the concrete (and discrete) social networks in which persons live their lives is influenced by larger social structures in which those networks are embedded. That is, social structures outside given social networks act as boundaries affecting the probability that persons will enter those networks. (Stryker and Burke 2000:285)

Roles or role identities are found usually with their counter-roles such as "student" and "teacher" or "husband" or "wife" etc. Apart from their structural accentuations role identities are *reflexive* and *symbolic* (Burke and Reitzes 1991; Hogg et al. 1995). Role identities as social constructs acquire self-meanings only in social interactions and can serve as reference points for assessment of their behaviors or of others; this is their reflexivity. Hogg (1995) states that

Others respond to a person in terms of his or her role identities. These responses, in turn, form the basis for developing a sense of *self-meaning* and *self-definition* [my emphasis]. (P. 257)

At the same time role identities call up “in one person the same responses as are called in others” (Burke and Reitzes 1991:242); this is their strength of being symbolic. Being symbolic and reflexive role identities find their functional meanings in social reality. However, can we assume that all behaviors are role related? I think, no.

Guiot (1977) asserts that the perceiver sees the other *qua* performer and *qua* person and “out-of-role behavior emerges because personality *overrides* [my emphasis] role expectations and, consequently, conveys information about the other’s personal characteristics” (p. 695). Goffman also brought a similar concept called “role distance” when the performer has a resistance or disaffection towards his role. Guiot (1977) clarifies that,

In this case, the other may be viewed as actively withdrawing from the self-image [identity standard] which is available for anyone entering the position in question. For instance, the other’s behavior might be perceived as reflecting his attachment or commitment to another role, and out-of-role behavior would then appear as in-role behavior (PP. 695-696).

Theoreticians of identity researches, including Stryker and Burke, postulate that identities within self are organized in a hierarchical manner known as identity salience. Identity salience is a “probability that an identity will be invoked across a variety of situations, or alternatively across a person in a given situation” (Stryker and Burke 2000:286), or as Hogg and others say (1995) “the likelihood that identity will be invoked in diverse situation” (p. 257). In other words, a certain identity that is more self-relevant tends to be played out more frequently than others. Identity salience is like a “pyramid” constructed hierarchically, identity located on the top of the salience more self-defining than identities located near the bottom.

Hogg and his colleagues (1995) suggest that “salience of particular identity will be determined by the person’s *commitment* [my emphasis] to that role” (p. 258). Commitment is

a “degree to which the individual’s relationships to particular others are dependent on being a given kind of person” (Stryker and Stratham 1985:345), in other words, person’s relationship towards others dependent on particular identity that individual possesses and “commitment is measurable by the costs of losing meaningful relations to others, should the identity be forgone”, thus “commitment shapes identity salience shapes role choice behavior” (Stryker and Burke 2000:286).

Stryker says losing of meaningful relations to others can be serious even can damage the person’s self-concept or self-meaning. He (1980) distinguishes two types of commitments:

1). interactional commitment, reflecting the number of roles associated with a particular identity (the extensivity of commitment), and 2) affective commitment, referring to the importance of the relationships associated with the identity – in other words, the level of affect associated with potential loss of these social relationships (the intensivity of commitment). ... [In other words], in terms of network relationships, the more fully a person’s important social relationships are based on occupancy of a particular identity, in comparison with other identities, the more salient that identity will be. Similarly, the larger the number of persons included in such a set of social relationships, the more salient the identity (Hogg et al. 1995:258; Stryker and Serpe 1982).

As I understood these are the commitments that arise due to the occupancy of particular roles under given social structures, even there is a role distance.

Thus, we have discussed the stable conditions of self located under the stable social structures. In the following part we will discuss problems of identity change.

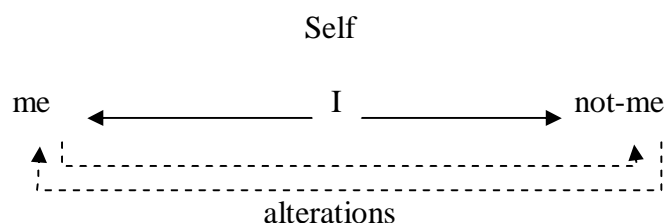
## 1.2 Identity Change

Founder of symbolic interactionism Mead ([1934] 1967) postulated that self is composed of two parts: “I” and “me” ([Self = I + me]). “I” is the active part that always responds, and “me” is self-meaning or sense of self that individual acquires from social interactions with others. Mead calls “me” as an “organized set of attitudes of others”. Mead ([1934] 1967) in his book *Mind, Self and Society* brings an example of the child that develops a sense of self in his early ages by playing simple games where the child takes roles of “mother”, “policeman”, or “fireman” etc. Then the child plays organized games with other

children, where the child learns the rules that structure the game and takes the attitudes of other children playing the game together. The third level gives him attitudes of the generalized other or significant others, where “the attitude of the generalized other is the attitude of the whole community” (Mead 1934:154). These attitudes of others constitute the “me”. “I” receives and responds with those attitudes it acquired from others.

Although Mead’s ideas were revolutionary, there is one significant fact that should be mentioned explicitly. In reality if we have “me” with which we *identify ourselves* then, there must be also “not-me” with which we *dis-identify* ourselves. A colleague of Burke, McCall (Burke et al. 2003) criticizes Mead’s concept of self (self = “I” + “me”) for lacking this aspect of self that could be easily seen in reality when individuals define themselves as someone who they are NOT, rather than who they ARE. For example, individual may define himself as “I am a father” or “I am not a grandfather”. The first self-definition answers the question “Who am I?”; second one “Who am I NOT?”.

### Illustration 1. The alteration of the self.



This periodical alteration of self into “me” and “not-me” is consistent with the traditional symbolic interactionism view that self is a process, not a given thing.

Being different from Stryker, Burke (2004) mentions two sources of identity change: exogenous and endogenous, and puts forward several hypotheses explaining such identity changes. Exogenous source of change results from “the location of the identities in the larger social structures and from the changes in the flows of resources through that structure” (Burke 2004:13). Therefore “stability and change in identities are often a consequence of



connectedness of identities within the social structure and distribution of resources (power) across the structure” (Burke 2004:13). The resource that has been mentioned here is not just material resources, but anything, symbolic and nonsymbolic resources, that can sustain us or our interactions. Burke (2004) says that to be self verified means that “signs and symbols [or resources] are brought to configurations provided by identity standards” (p. 8).

Burke (2004) comes up with several hypotheses of identity changes that belong to exogenous sources. The most obvious or common condition of identity change might occur “when someone has the power to define or redefine the meanings and expectations associated with a particular role or group” (p. 12). Another condition might occur between lower and higher-status persons, as Burke (2004) claims, when “lower-status person simply adjusts to what the higher-status person says” (p. 12) without any coercion or force. Third factor that changes identity is innovation as Burke (2004) states. For example, finding a “new way, a resourceful way to accomplish an important part of a role (thus verifying one’s own identity more easily) may change the expectations associated with the role” (Burke 2004:12). Endogenous source is directly related with the self-verification process. Burke (2004) says that if “perceptions cannot be controlled to match the identity standard, the identity standard will change (slowly) to match the perceptions ... [and] one reason for the lack of verification (which is a source of endogenous change) may exist in the structural position or in changes in the structural position of the identity in question” (p. 13).

However, Burke (2006) in his later research, states that identity changes are changes of meanings that held in the identity standards which define who we are.

Insofar as persons make the same responses to stimuli (similar strength of response along the same dimension), the meaning is shared and the stimulus is a significant symbol. Shared meaning allows communication as well as shared understanding and expectations. Measuring self-meaning thus involves measuring the strength of a person’s responses to the self along the relevant dimension. (P. 82)

Thus Burke (2006) identifies two ways of identity change: a change in strength of the responses along a given dimension (for example, as Burke gives, how “task-oriented” one is as a leader), and a change in dimension that relevant to identity (for example, changing what it means to be a leader from the considering the levels of “task-orientation” to considering the level of “dominance”).

Burke now accentuates concept of identity standard more than a behavior that reduces discrepancies. Reason is

The standard also adjusts continuously so as to reduce discrepancies as they occur by moving toward the current perceptions. Standards adjust at a much slower rate, however; thus, in the normal course of events, we may not notice that the standard has adjusted at all. Yet, when our behavior, for some reason, does not reduce the discrepancy, or when we are prevented from countering the disturbance so as to change our perceptions, the standard will continue over time to change toward the perceptions until the error signal [discrepancy] is reduced to zero – that is, until our perceptions match the changed standard. (2006:84)

The other identity change, as Burke says, is related with multiple role identities activated together and have related meanings with each other. For example, if a woman has wife and gender identity that might have contradicting meanings with each other<sup>2</sup>, then she acts so as to find a non-contradictory point, a “compromise” point Burke says, in her both identities so her behavior can verify both her identities at the same time without a contradiction. However, since there is a concept of commitment, “the more highly committed identity may change less than that to which the commitment is smaller... [and overall] ...the difference between these sources of change [problems of identity-verification and contradictory multiple identities] lies in the source of the conflict of meanings” (Burke 2006:85).

Key point relevant to our research comes with the following statements about these two mechanisms of identity change:

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<sup>2</sup> Burke says that her gender identity might imply that as a woman she must be independent and strong, but as a wife she should let her husband lead the family thus implying that she can be commanded by her husband.

The first is the slow change that occurs as the meanings in the identity standard shift to be more like the self-relevant meanings that are perceived in the situation. This is an adaptive response that allows individuals to fit into new situations and cultures where the meanings are different. It can be viewed as a socialization effect that might occur as individuals take on new roles and memberships.

... The second mechanism is also adaptive response in which two identities that share some common dimension(s) of meaning in their standards become more like each other in their settings on that dimension when they are activated together. (Burke 2006:92-93)

If we indeed say that these identity change mechanisms are adaptive responses to certain conditions, then, they come closer to my hypothesis that in new environment or social settings we construct new identities, and perception of this could be called an adaptation. However, Burke emphasizes this as an effect of socialization, but I would say, since we often move from one social setting to another, it is more related with re-socializations rather than socializations. Re-socialization is a “re-training” of individual mentally and emotionally to be able to operate in new environment, usually discarding some of his behaviors and acquiring new ones if he has to. Adaptation is conscious or unconscious modification of behaviors of individual or collective in adjustment to new environment (Webster’s Electronic Dictionary and Thesaurus 1992). Interesting thing is that there is almost no difference in definitions of adaptation and re-socialization. Besides, professor Direnzo (1977) adds that “socialization is not possible without culturation, and neither can occur without maturation” (p. 266), and regarding the culturation, Direnzo (1977) argues that there are two forms of culturation: enculturation (culturation of neonate) and acculturation (transmission of a secondary culture).

John W. Berry (1994) states that

Acculturation is also an individual-level phenomenon, requiring individual members of both the larger society and the various acculturating groups to *engage in new behaviors, and to work out new forms of relationships in their lives* [my emphasis]. (P. 211)

Thus, I do not think, that adaptation, re-socialization and acculturation differ from each other much. I argue reconstruction of self could be regarded, from any given point, as an adaptation or (re-) socialization or acculturation. Now, let us approach to real life cases which

collect all these phenomena under a single concept, which we just mentioned, reconstruction of self.

## Chapter 2: Case Analysis One: Structural Theory of Self and Adaptation

Adhering to the concept of reconstruction of self, in the second and third chapters, I will bring two profiles of two individuals with whom I worked closer during my fieldwork, and who provided me with more valuable information than my other respondents.

- *Profile 1.* Eshita, Indian, female, 27
- *Profile 2.* Bator, Mongolian, male, 24

For our convenience, for each profile, I will introduce first the TST, and then, will bring the autobiography of the person. After these parts, we will proceed to the discussions of the each profile.

### 2.1 Profile One: Eshita's Case

Eshita is a female student from India studying at CEU. I chose her autobiography because her complicated life story revealed a quite complicated problem of self. Table 2 introduces TST, the general characteristics of Eshita's self.

**Table 2. Eshita's TST results**

	Self-definitions	Evaluations		
		<i>neutral</i>	<i>positive</i>	<i>negative</i>
1	I am Eshita	<input type="checkbox"/>		
2	I am a student	<input type="checkbox"/>		
3	I am Indian	<input type="checkbox"/>		
4	I am Hindu	<input type="checkbox"/>		
5	I am a good cook		+	
6	I am studying [...] science	<input type="checkbox"/>		
7	I am sad			-
8	I am fed up with people			-
9	I am tired of doing things I do not want to			-
10	I am living in India	<input type="checkbox"/>		

11	I am creative		+	
12	I hate myself			-
		<b>total</b>		
		<b>6</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>4</b>

*Note:* Evaluations such as *neutral*, *positive*, and *negative* are my classifications used to distinguish the self-definitions. For our analysis *positive* and *negative* values are important, since I establish the characteristics of the self by analyzing them.

Out of the twenty statements she marked down the twelve self-definitions. Self-definitions exhibiting negative self-evaluations, as Table 2 reveals, I think, show negative self-esteem of the person. According to our identity theory (of Burke) negative emotions arise because of a mismatch of the person's identity standard and self-relevant situational meanings. As it will be seen later, Eshita is not able to undo negative feedbacks that come from others. This fact, as our identity theory suggests, will be causing a persistent discrepancy in her identity.

As for the positive emotions or self-definitions, Stets (2005) says that positive feedbacks serve as self-enhancement tool for a person causing his or her identity standard to shift to a new elevated level.

## 2.2 Eshita's Autobiography

In general, as she says during the interview, rules of her family dictate her and her family relations as well. She is very religious person as she claims. Her family is a very traditional. In family, the dominant figure is her father. He is very conservative. For instance, he did not allow his daughter (Eshita) to go out, to talk to males; to laugh and even did not let her study. If she had to go to somewhere, her father accompanied her and picked her up at places where she left. As Eshita says, her father is very possessive.

No matter how her father resisted, she fought with her father to study. Eventually, she was allowed to go to school, but not to the university she wanted to go, but to a different

college. She wanted to study bioscience, but forced by her father to finish a home science. She says “had no choice!” and [eventually] “had to finish environmental science master”. Still, her father was not keen to let her study. Only her brother, who was living and working in Britain, used to take her out of this “shell”.

In Budapest, for a person who has not been exposed to an alien environment, it was cultural and emotional shock! She was alone and had neither experience nor capability to handle the new situation. She explains that her “Individuality was not developed much, had no notion of “who I am”, [and] (always) did things for someone else!”. Soon she met a girl, Indian, in Budapest. A new girl was very individualistic, and overcame Eshita; Eshita says “I began to do things for her!”.

As a consequence of her new situation, she went to severe depression. She says “It was a contradiction of what I expected! Contradiction of identity!”. She went to psychologists, but, they, she says, did not understand “me”!

When she got back from Greece after finishing her business trip, she fell into stress even more. Her brother got married and her family was not satisfied with this event and her father began to accuse her that she is going to do the same thing that her brother did, going to marry someone else and leave the family etc!<sup>3</sup> After a fight on the phone with her father, Eshita took all the pills that psychologist prescribed for her; she ended up in hospital. When she went to Sweden as a part of her studies, her trip was also a disaster.

She says that “Problem was from home!”, the dominance of her father! However, she wanted to go back [to India], probably, because of her mother, who has suffered a lot as she adds. Nevertheless her mother says, as Eshita narrates, “because of *me* she did not divorce her husband [the father of Eshita]! She blames me for [...everything]!”<sup>4</sup>. Eshita says “I

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<sup>3</sup> “...you are killing me! I will commit a suicide! and you will be responsible for this!” was a typical shout of Eshita’s father.

<sup>4</sup> “They say they are sacrificing everything for *me* (and that she should be happy)... I am the one who’s blamed!”.

cannot be two person at the same time; they should accept me in either this way or that way!” and “they make me feel [that] I am the worst!”. After coming to CEU she says “I have changed into other person!” – I got stronger, [CEU] gave me different perspectives of life!”.

### *2.3 Discussion*

This autobiography shows how deep a self could be embedded in social setting. Eshita’s self was embedded in the social setting so deep that she has been depersonalized, which makes reconstruction of (individual) self difficult. This means, according to our conception, adaptation will not run easy. Depersonalization is a process that makes the self as an embodiment of in-group prototype, rather than a unique individual (Hogg et al. 1995; Stets and Burke 2000). Stets and Burke (2000) say that

Activation of a social identity is sufficient to result in depersonalization. In this process, the person perceives normative aspects of group membership in the prototype and then acts in accordance with those norms. (PP. 231-232)

The simplest example of depersonalization is when “I” becomes “we”, when we join various groups; “I” becomes insignificant or even “lost”. Stryker and Burke (2000) clarifies that

[E]ach role or set of roles is embedded in one or more of a variety of groups that provide context for the meanings and expectations associated with the role. .... The structure or connectedness of the roles and grouping provides the first level of social structures’ impact on identities. (P. 289)

However, Eshita even could not find a “compromise” point for her contradicting multiple identities (“student” and “daughter”). Her commitment to her “daughter” identity dragged her too much to one direction that there is no room left for the construction of other identities. This brings us to another interesting problem, to problem of choice.

I argue that if social structure provides the identity with opportunity of free choice behaviors, then it allows a possibility for a person identity not to be diminished radically, as



Eshita's person identity was diminished. In other words, possibility of manifestation of agency is determined by the availability of the choices provided by the social structures. Stryker and Burke (2000) bring an interesting fact, by summarizing from the research done by Serpe and Stryker [1987], saying that

... Entering the university, students seek new relationships by joining organizations that provide opportunities to behave in accord with highly salient identities held before entrance. When they succeed in doing so, their self-structures remain stable; changes in the salience of their identities occur when they are *unable* to find or use such opportunities. (PP. 286-287)

Ranging from rigid to less rigid structures, agency of self varies, and what we are calling agency might be a social construct contingent on the characteristics of the identities. Choice is a constraint that social structure imposes upon an individual, and depending on such choices, self or agency is reconstructed.

Eshita describes her condition at CEU as "I have changed into other person! – I got stronger, [CEU] gave me different perspectives of life!". Unlike her former identity, this new identity, I think, allows her opportunities to engage in different activities and other alternative role-related behavior of her choice. Serpe (1987) implies in his research, that identities represent "differential levels of social constraints" and change is possible "in those identities in which choice is structurally possible" (p. 46, p. 53).

From different angle, I argue that commitment is a type of social control that meant to reproduce the social structures. In case of Eshita, her change at CEU, I think, could be regarded as a result of decrease of social control. During my fieldwork I encountered several cases that could be regarded as results of decrease of social controls. For example, Shankar who ate beef, where cow is a sacred animal in Hinduism, or a respondent who have tried a premarital sex when he came to Europe, which in his culture it is strictly forbidden (Egypt).

Clearly, social structure has an impact on identity. Identities bring with them a set of expectations which structure the development of interactional patterns with others. These interactional patterns affect the self-structure as it develops by ordering the set of identities

which comprise the self-structure. Individuals may exercise “choice” to the extent that it is possible in the social structural context. (Serpe 1987:53)

Overall, I wanted to show with this profile a fact that structure of self could be shaped by the external structure, and being contingent on this fact, reconstruction of self (adaptation, socialization, and acculturation) runs in varied patterns. After two months, when Eshita went back home, I administered TST again hoping for some positive changes in her. In the next chapter along with our second profile we will approach Eshita’s case again.

## Chapter 3: Case Analysis Two: Internal Dynamics of Self and Adaptation

In this chapter we will approach adaptation problems from the perspectives of self-verification theory of Burke, which deals with internal dynamics of the self. At the same I will bring my criticisms of identity theories of Burke and Stryker, and will try to cover the faults of their identity theories with alternative explanations which I regard the suitable ones.

### 3.1 Profile Two: Bator's Case

Same as in previous profile, I will begin with TST (see Table 3) then will introduce the autobiography of the respondent and its analysis.

Table 3 shows that Bator has more positive self-evaluations which make me assume that he has a high self-esteem. Unlike negative emotions, positive emotions implicate different assumptions; however, highly positive self-image might also imply other negatives such as ambitions.

**Table 3. Bator's TST results**

	Self-definitions	Evaluations		
		<i>neutral</i>	<i>positive</i>	<i>negative</i>
1	I am strict	□		
2	I am loyal		+	
3	I am serious		+	
4	I am responsible		+	
5	I am a person who likes science		+	
6	I respect others		+	
7	I am a person with a sense of honor and self-respect		+	
8	I am academically responsible student or at		+	

	least try to be so always			
9	I do not forgive betrayals			-
10	I am altruistic		+	
11	I am not stupid		+	
12	I do not trust people (so easily)			-
13	I am not arrogant		+	
14	I try to help people		+	
15	If I find it out I don't interact with useless people	□		
16	People say I am always in hurry			-
17	Those who get close to me say I am a good guy		+	
18	I am a person with a high moral, and feel happy when I do things I like		+	
19	If I hate I can hate forever!			-
20	Those who are close to me say that I am sensitive			-
			<b>total</b>	
		<b>2</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>5</b>

### 3.2 Autobiography of Bator

Bator began his autobiography with emphasis on his previous educational background that had tremendous effect on him. His first difficulty in adaptation was his absorption into a “new”, different educational system of CEU, which is not analogous to educational system of the country where he is from. The main problem came when he just could not verify his former identity that he held when he was studying in Mongolia. As Bator puts it, he was the best student in his former school, a student graduated with honor and awards. In general, he is a person with a high self-esteem and he found it uneasy to lose his status in a totally different environment. Virtually all his later efforts were a struggle to maintain or enhance his self-view.

Main problem for him was, as he puts it, why a self that functioned fully properly in previous educational system became dysfunctional in different educational system? Thus, he implicitly or explicitly searched for a way that can maintain his previous identity.

As an academically responsible student, education plays very important role in his life as Bator says. Educational system of Mongolia is based on model of former Soviet Union, though the coursework in higher education schools was transformed into credit hours like of American education system. Unlike American system, in Mongolia students are relatively passive and roles of professors are very high and intervening. They base their classes virtually on giving lectures through their own collected materials and methods of evaluations vary from professors to professors. Evaluations usually consist of examinations (tests or questions) of written and oral forms; and there is no institution of writing essays or take-home exams. Practically such notions do not exist, Bator says. In educations, theory and practice is strictly separated and education itself goes through a scheme “General to Concrete”, which, as he clarifies, means coursework begins with broad scientific branches (philosophy, history etc) and only later touches specific subdivisions (such as sociology of law or philosophy of anthropology). Case study is only a recent phenomenon. Students are evaluated on basis of their “objective scientific” characters and by their scope of knowledge.

What made Bator worry most was an uncertainty about what others were expecting from him in his new environment, such as in what way he should act to call up a particular response, or how does he know that he is being liked or disliked by others; in general, how to communicate with others? He himself did not want to lose his previous self-meaning that provided him with a high self-esteem. However, since he had no experience about his new educational system, he began to fail (as he regards) to meet his previous identity standards. He began to have lower grades and this began to cause moral and psychological damage to his self-view; he began to doubt in his capability of learning. He says “Somebody might think

that it is not a big deal, but for me it is a serious matter and it hurts me!”. He falls into stress (however, he did not want to confess it to himself as I noticed). As a responsibly committed student he began to search ways that could bring his previous identity back to normal level. He was afraid that opinions of others about him could remain “bad” forever. Problem got worse, when he just could not catch up his self-view as time passed, and opinions about him remained unchanged.

He then isolated himself and began to contemplate on matters that he was experiencing. He thought, as he describes, that being a student where he was from and where he is now is probably a different matter, not a same thing!. Therefore, he began to ponder his situation to redefine the meaning of his self. Due to the persistent failure of his self-verification, he says, that his self-worth degraded, giving him sense of ineffectiveness, and filled him with shame, making him incompetent. For a person who never “lost” in his life, such problems had a real impact on his self-view. Besides, his family culture and tradition also affected him, since his parents, for example, his father had only once “B” in his life as Bator stresses.

To solve his problem somehow, Bator tried to change his self-concept by discarding some of his “attributes” such as his ambitions and became more pragmatic. This is followed with a change of view about his environment and others. He says that change of mentality was hard for him, because he had to change his endowments. Although he was looking for an optimum, this did not solve his self relevant problems completely. He says he could not change the “impressions” about him. He says he was so ashamed of himself, and once said to me “If my religion did not forbid me, I would kill myself, instead of falling into such a disgrace!”.

As I understood he was not failing his academic duties, but a discrepancy in his self was causing damage to his self and to his self-esteem, making him go into depression and pessimism.

In general, Bator tried to act in his new environment with a self that he brought from his previous social structure. However, it did not work, but he wanted to maintain his self-esteem, and began to look for alternative ways to maintain it. Again it did not run as he expected. Reason that he could not cover the discrepancy was, as he says, a lack of experience; he did not know what others exactly expected from him, and if he had to change fully, he needed more time.

### *3.3 Discussion*

In Bator's case, rather than being dependent on certain social ties we are having a commitment that arises when person persistently tries to reduce the discrepancy between his identity standards and self-relevant situational meanings.

The uncertainty problems of expectations and communications were also mentioned by my other respondents, and these uncertainty problems are discussed neither by Burke's theory nor by Stryker's theory. The only explanation that I found was that person acquires identity standard by being socialized into roles. In very broad sense, we can say that Bator does not know the shared meanings and that is why he cannot communicate. However, it does not provide us suitable explanations. Judging my own experience and other weighty facts that I encountered in my fieldwork, I would say that this uncertainty problem is more than just the shared meanings.

Therefore, I wish to refer to a deeper concept, a concept that related with a situated, prelinguistic, embodied knowledge that gives intelligibility to human action. It is the knowledge that human acquires by being brought up in particular culture. A knowledge that is

embodied, not articulated in languages. One of the many concepts that deal with the embodied knowledge is Bourdieu's (1968) habitus:

A system of lasting, transposable dispositions which, integrating past experiences, functions at every moment as a matrix of *perceptions, appreciations, and actions* and makes possible the achievement of infinitely diversified tasks, thanks to analogical transfers of schemes permitting the solution of similarly shaped problems (P. XX).

or

Systems of durable, transposable dispositions, *structured structures* predisposed to function as *structuring structures*, that is, as principles which generate and organize practices and representations that can be objectively adapted to their outcomes without presupposing a conscious aiming at ends or an express mastery of the *operations* necessary in order to attain them. Objectively 'regulated' and 'regular' without being in any way the product of obedience to rules, they can be collectively orchestrated without being the product of the organizing action of a conductor (Bourdieu 1990:53).

In a simpler definition, habitus is a set of dispositions that person acquires or develops in responses to the objective structures and it changes or becomes rich during person's experiences of various fields or institutions. It is fluid and flexible, not purely objective nor phenomenologically subjective. It is a "*generative dynamic structure* that adapts and accommodates itself to *another* dynamic mesolevel structure composed primarily of other actors, situated practices and durable institutions (fields)" (Lizardo 2004:5). It guides and navigates person's choices or actions. Bourdieu (1984) says schemes of habitus work "below the level of consciousness and language, beyond the reach of introspective scrutiny or control by the will" (p. 466). It (habitus) gives the intelligibility, not necessarily the meaning. It is a present past that perpetuates itself into the future and tends to manifest itself in analogous situations or structures and practices.

This is what Bator did at first when he came to CEU. Dispositions of his former habitus led him to act and perceive his new educational structure at the level of his former habitus, and led him to failure. His sense of self degraded to never ever seen before level and damaged his self-esteem tremendously. Since in our thesis, I have



argued that adaptation is reconstruction of self, I think, it can be referred also as a change of habitus.

Let us stop on problem of self-esteem for a while. Burke says that concept of self-esteem has three implications in identity theory: first, high self-esteem acts as an outcome of identity verification; second, it works as a buffer or resource against negative experiences when identity verification process fails; third, self-esteem works as a motive for people to maintain or establish (select) relationships as to verify their identities (Stets and Burke forthcoming).

Why Bator persisted to keep his self-esteem? First, because it is positive, it gives positive values to his self. Second, in Bourdieu's sense, it is directly related with his habitus (his family culture, his self-view). He did not want to lose his self-esteem.

From our identity theory (of Burke) we know that when individual cannot deny the self-relevant feedback i.e. reduce the discrepancy that exists between identity standard and situational meanings, person's identity standard gradually falls to meet the situational meanings. However, for Bator if his identity standard changes like this it could cause a devastating damage to his self-esteem. Since he could not accept this, he began to search for another way to solve his problem. He began to think about his problematic situation repeatedly and began to *redefine* the meaning of his situation (new school, new standard, no experience etc).

He modified the meaning of his problem by a cognitive strategy, so that it could, somehow, "answer" to his self-concept. Here, we are encountering another kind of adaptive response, different from the direct change of identity standard that tends to meet the situational meanings. By changing the meaning of his problem, I think, Bator finds some congruence within his self-perceptions without losing his self-esteem completely.

Speaking of strategies, according to Bourdieu's concept, strategy of strategizing is a specific orientation of practice. Bourdieu (1977) says that "structures constitutive of a particular type of environment" (p. 72) produce habitus and transformation of habitus results from the radical change of environment or from "pedagogic action" that alters the state of consciousness. In our case the cognitive strategy was closer to the latter, to the alteration of the state of consciousness.

I wish to repeat once again the reason of choosing Bourdieu's concept for our explanations. Theories of Burke and Stryker do not give fully flexible and content explanations as Bourdieu's theory does. Personally, I believe that it is the self that responds to the objective structures and develops particular dispositions (generated by objective conditions). Self contains the habitus and habitus is the structure and content of the self.

I could not fully explain with theories of Burke and Stryker why individuals who used to travel or came from multiethnic countries were adapting faster than other unlike individuals. Like an anthropologist develops a habitus during his fieldwork, these individuals probably also have developed certain habitus that tended to get reactivated in similar practices.

Another interesting finding was that almost all my respondents were mentioning that they were missing particular things or activities they used to do or experience. For example, my Egyptian respondent who lived in Greece for many years said that when he came to Budapest he did not find a sea!, my Cameroonian respondent says at home every morning she used to greet her neighbors according to her local customs; my Vietnamese (Cambodian, Philippine) respondent said Europeans have "cold look", they do not smile "often".

I encountered many times such sayings in my fieldwork and thought that these are irrelevant data. However, after reflecting the research done by Walker (2007), who

emphasized the importance of place in identity formations, I concluded that those “irrelevant” data do have their certain roles in identity constructions.

Reason is, as Walker approves, that human is not exactly a centralized entity, rather, it is a decentralized being in whose identity constitution *Human* and *Non-human Others* play their roles. In other words, all those matters that have been internalized into the being of self constitute the self itself. For example, for a Mongolian who thinks of horse as an extension of man, it is not easy to imagine his agency without it.

However, these *Human and Non-human Other* constitutive parts begin to miss in their identities when people change their places. I think, according to the objective conditions people reconstruct themselves and acquire new dispositions pre-adapted to the situations.

Theories of Burke and Stryker could not explain such phenomenon of places and left out some of my data irrelevant. It seems people, indeed, adapt according to the objective conditions they are facing and generate particular dispositions according to the demands of the conditions. Individual tends to reach, particularly, *that* self which tends to be determined, if I am not wrong, by his habitus. However, depending on the character of the self (habitus) and possibilities of the objective structure, self might acquire new characteristics that might give him or her new self-meanings. If self is a process, then, I think, we constantly adapt and reconstruct ourselves (according to the objective conditions and characteristics of our selves) with our constantly alternating self-meanings.

And at the end, one more word about strategy. Jenkins (see 1992:72), who have studied Bourdieu’s theory profoundly, says that notion of strategizing (since actors have goals) is also designed to look for the source of the practice in the experience of actors’ own reality. If maintaining a certain identity is also a practice, then it requires a source for its realization.

After two months, when Eshita graduated and returned home, I asked her to take TST again to see whether any positive change took place in her or not. However, the test showed more negative self-evaluations than her first test did, leaving no room for optimism (see Table 4).

**Table 4. Results of TST retaken by Eshita two months after her graduation of CEU.**

	Self-definitions	Evaluations		
		<i>neutral</i>	<i>positive</i>	<i>negative</i>
1	I am fair		+	
2	I am artistic		+	
3	I am fat			-
4	I am not beautiful			-
5	I am tensed			-
6	I am directionless			-
7	I am lost			-
8	I am frustrated			-
9	I am fed up			-
10	I am worried			-
11	I am confused			-
12	I am a good cook		+	
13	I am a failure			-
14	I am unconfident			-
15	I am helpful		+	
16	I am irritated			-
17	I am searching for my aim in life			-
18	I am fed up with people			-
19	I am fed up with relations			-
20	I am fed up with life			-
		<b>total</b>		
		<b>0</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>16</b>

She explains “I feel all these things because after coming back home, I have not been given the *appreciation* which I deserve. As well as people are saying that this much of studies [at CEU] are a waste etc”. In this situation, I think her identity that she wanted to have had no

resourceful condition for its sustenance and self-verification failed again causing much despair in her once again.

## *Conclusion*

In my thesis I approached adaptation problems from identity construction perspectives, arguing that adaptation is the reconstruction of self. To explain this process, I adhered to two principle identity theories developed by Burke and Stryker. However, their theories could not provide me with expected explanations and began to reveal their weaknesses already in middle of my fieldwork and analysis. In fact, the data and findings that I found in my fieldwork turned out to be much larger than the scope of their overpsychologized theories, and required different explanations. It seems not every human interaction is symbolic or expressed in representations and not every our action comes out formulated. The most dangerous thing that researcher might face during his research, by choosing inappropriate theories, is that even very important research data could turn out be irrelevant and might be lost. To avoid such dangers I had to choose different theoretical conceptualizations and reproached my initial approaches. Let me summarize my findings very briefly.

To the certain extent structure of self is shaped by the external structures and change in external structures can call a related change in the structure of self. However, to say that self will be reproducing external structures constantly like this, I think, is a fallacy. If we keep to such an argument we will not find a room for a notion of agency. Therefore, interaction of self and structure involve both an agency and the objective condition.

Actor develops his (or her) dispositions in response to objective or determining structures and these dispositions will remain as only source of his further actions and practices in different environment. Depending on the characters of his self or his habitus, actor's adaptation runs along its "predisposed" course. However, this process could be influenced by the objective conditions as well. In this case, according to the possibilities and impossibilities of objective conditions new dispositions can be generated in individual that are pre-adapted to

the objective conditions. Individual might experience this in the form “choice” that social structures provide for him so that he could verify his particular identity. If he cannot, then, his identity might experience a change. This is the main process of adaptation. I want to avoid terms such as “adapted” or “criteria of adaptations”. Reason is that, I personally believe, that we constantly adapt and re-adapt in our everyday lives from moment to moment. Therefore, the success of adaptation, I think, will be determined by the actor’s definitions and interpretations of his situations.

Another important notion, apart from habitus, is a place. It seems self is not a centralized being, but rather decentralized being, that composed of various, phenomenologically different experiences that give meanings to person’s identity. When person objectively changes his place, his Human and Non-human constituting parts begin to miss in his identity, involving a change in his self-meanings. Again depending on the objective conditions result of the reconstruction of self will be different from situation to situations.

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