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CLOTHING AND THE SOCIAL SELF:
AN ANALYSIS AND CATEGORIZATION

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ABSTRACT

As the fashion industry continues to embrace fashion blogs and other social media, the social nature of fashion is more and more evident. Two important questions, then, are brought to light: what exactly is the self that consumers and fashion-followers are trying to express, and with whom do they want to connect? This thesis tries to answer these questions by studying social identity and construct theory, self-extension theory, and relationship form theory and relating them to each other. The researcher hypothesizes that consumers tend to express themselves as one social identity – family member, intimate society member, or society at-large member – depending on whom most influences their life and fashion choices and with whom they most wish to communicate through their clothing.

With ethnographic and auto-ethnographic research, she also shows that the more intimate the dominant social identity, the more a consumer feels that clothing is intertwined with his or her social identity and the more he or she is committed to brands, and the relationships that consumers form with particular brands often resemble their dominant social identities. It seems that clothing may have much more to do with social identities rather than the individual – instead of “we are what we wear”, perhaps we wear who we know. Finally, the researcher suggests that marketers segment their customers according to the different social identities and tailor their promotional efforts towards each group in order to encourage greater commitment. She names these groups Family Fashionistas (those with family identities), Friendly Stylistas (those with intimate society identities), and Society Sartorialists (those with society at-large identities).
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INTRODUCTION

“It’s all about self-expression,” declares Scott Schuman (2009), one of the first street-style photographers and bloggers, in his recently published anthology. Blogs have transformed the social media and marketing world by giving individuals a way to express their voices and giving countless others a way to seek out information and inspiration. As of 2006, nearly 40 percent of U.S. Internet users read blogs and nearly 10 percent wrote them (Gillin 2007); also as of 2006, the number of fashion blogs in existence hung around 2,000,000 (Fashion blog, 2010); and these numbers only continue to grow. More importantly, the marketing community and the fashion industry have recognized the tremendous influence that blogs have over consumers and over the fashion world. Holgate (2010) recently noted in an article for Vogue that designers have become aware “that bloggers can do the one thing everyone wants to do these days: connect. The industry has watched as ever more rapid technological developments have radically changed how you make contact with people” (p. 518).

The growth of fashion blogs highlights the fact that fashion is social in nature and brings up two important questions: what exactly is the self that consumers and fashion-followers are trying to express, and with whom do they want to connect? This thesis tries to answer these questions by studying social identity and construct theory, self-extension theory as propagated by Belk (1988), and relationship form theory as propagated by Fournier (1998) and relating them to each other. I hypothesize that consumers tend to express themselves as one social identity, depending on whom most influences their life and fashion choices and with whom they most wish to communicate through their clothing, and that the relationships that consumers form with their clothing are similar to those social identities. I support these ideas with ethnographic and auto-ethnographic research, followed by a deep analysis.
CONCEPTUAL FOUNDATIONS

For years, anthropologists have looked to objects to tell us about their possessors, but Belk (1988) first presented a variety of evidence to support the idea that our “possessions are a major contributor to and reflection of our identities” (p. 139). He describes the extended self as the ensemble of possessions, places, and people that contribute to an individual’s idea of self-concept (p. 140). These possessions, places, and people “act as reminders and confirmers of our identities” and help us communicate to other people about who we think we are or who we want to be (p. 141). In addition, individuals may wish to be reminded of their past or to identify with a person “to which we believe a desirable set of traits or values adheres” (p. 149) through their possessions. Belk and other researchers also contend that some objects – in particular those that come in contact with the human body, like clothing – are more central to the self-concept than others (p. 151-152).

Belk briefly touches on the idea of multiple levels of self construct, including individual, family, community, and group; in other words, ranging from the individual to the collective concept of self (p. 152). Other researchers have identified these constructs as individuals, family members, and members of a society, culture, or the world at large (Hines & Quinn 2007, Jenkins 1996); or as actual self (how a person currently perceives of him or herself), ideal self (how a person wants to perceive of him or herself), and social self (how a person believes that others will perceive of him or her) (Banister & Hogg 2007). Belk mentions that personal possessions like clothing can help define an individual sense of self, and he briefly acknowledges that symbols – for example: brands, hair and clothing styles, tattoos, etcetera – can help identify group membership (p. 153). However, because clothing comes in such close contact with the human body, it must have more to do with the internal constructs of the self instead of just indicating that the wearer of the clothing belongs to an external social group. Clothing could help define the part of the self that has to do with other people: the most influential people in consumers’ lives and in their sartorial choices. In fact, consumers consider certain people as part of their own self
constructs, they learn about themselves and about fashion from those people, and they reach out to those people through their clothing. This idea is supported by Bateson (as cited by Belk 1988), who observes,

Your identity, your self, depends upon the people and things that compose your associations. And perhaps even more important, your knowledge of yourself and your development as a person are both predicated on those same associations. (p. 156)

Similarly, Barthes (2004) writes, “Clothing concerns all of the human person ... as well as the relationships of the body to society” (p. 96).

Speaking of society, the strict boundaries between individual, family, community, and society have loosened as social media have recently grown. Thompson (1995) distinguishes face-to-face interaction, the purposeful kind of communication in which two individuals engage in person, from mediated interaction, which involves the use of a medium like paper or the Internet in order to connect two individuals who are remote in space and/or in time (p. 83). Thirdly, he describes mediated quasi-interaction as the kinds of social relations established by the media of mass communication as monological or one-way mediated interaction produced for an indefinite range of recipients (p. 84); however, social media like blogs constitute a new kind of interaction in which the content is produced for an indefinite range of recipients but dialogical communication is possible and even encouraged. For example, blog readers can leave comments on individual permalinks or posts and establish a reciprocal, mediated relationship with the blog writer. This shift from monological to dialogical communication creates new kinds of intimate relationships; it divides society into one part that is at-large or non-reciprocal and helps to establish cultural norms and another part with which individuals can interact almost as if they were friends.

That first part, society at-large, has traditionally played an important role in fashion. Although clothing has always served a utility function - protecting humans against the elements, proclaiming
modesty, and making daily life more comfortable – it more notably has been used to seduce the opposite sex and to establish a social hierarchy (Barnard 1996; Lurie 1981). In other words, clothing may distinguish gender; marital, occupational, and/or socioeconomic status; it may identify group membership; or it may help to communicate to others about our identities. As Lurie (1981) describes,

To choose clothes, either in a store or at home, is to define and describe ourselves ... such choices usually give us some information, even if it is only equivalent to the statement “I don’t give a damn what I look today.” (p. 5)

However, clothing is not only used to communicate about oneself but also to make sense of the world and the people with whom individuals are trying to communicate (Barnard 1996). The meaning behind one’s sartorial choices is the result of negotiation between the wearer, the designer of the clothes, and other people – be those friends, family, the new blog-driven intimate society, or spectators in greater society – who see the wearer in his or her clothes; therefore, that meaning may operate externally with society, or internally with the self (Barnard 1996; Elliott & Wattanasuwan 1998).

Moreover, Markus and Nurius (as cited by Elliott & Wattanasuwan 1998) suggest that an individual is free to create any variety of possible selves, yet the pool of possible selves derives from the categories made salient by the individual’s particular socio-cultural and historical context and from the models, images, and symbols provided by the media and by the individual’s immediate social experiences. (p. 132)

In other words, consumers construct the world in a particular way because of the people and media with whom they interact and from whom they learn, and they come to understand their own identities and how to communicate who they are from those people and media (Gergen 2009). Or, to be more concise, the development of self identity is inseparable from the development of social identity (Elliott & Wattanasuwan 1998, Jenkins 2004). Therefore, what people express about themselves through their clothing must be inseparable from whom they learned the most information about fashion or from
whom they were inspired, and the extended individual self must be inseparable from the extended social self.

Fournier (1998) also did a considerable amount of research regarding the relationships that consumers have with products and with brands and how those relationships reflect life themes or issues. She even suggests that consumers’ clothing – or, more particularly, their clothing brands – may morph into people themselves and that consumers develop relationships with them much like they would develop relationships with people; for example, Fournier describes how her informants established committed partnerships, best friendships, or secret affairs, among other relationship forms, with certain products or brands (see Appendix A). In addition, marketers and consumers often talk about brands as if they were people and associate brands with spokespeople or characters, and the relationships that consumers form with those brands may form or reinforce their self constructs (p.345) or help them to resolve life themes (p. 346).

Similar to how Fournier suggested that you can have different kinds of relationships with different products, and similar to how Belk suggested that you can project different levels or constructs of self with different products, I suggest that, with regard to clothing, an individual can express different selves or social identities, but he or she tends to lean one way dependent on the most influential social group in his or her fashion world.
ETHNOGRAPHY

I conducted ethnographic studies with three female students¹ at the Pennsylvania State University in State College, Pennsylvania who demonstrated different dominant social identities. Kelly, a 21-year-old Marketing major, was influenced by society and generally expressed herself as a society member at large; Carine, a 22-year-old Psychology major, was influenced by her friends and society and generally expressed herself as an more intimate society member; and Taylor, a 22-year-old Nursing major, was influenced by her family and close friends and generally expressed herself as a family member. Only females were studied because of their greater participation in and opportunities for creativity with fashion, and age range was restricted in order to focus on the different social constructs, sources of influence, and means of self-expression. I discuss these limitations further in the conclusion, but I did choose informants from different academic disciplines in order to represent a wider range of consumers. Also, although each informant tended to lean in one direction, it is important to note that different situations may lead consumers to express multiple social identities.

All three women were interviewed in depth about style and fashion, clothing brands, and shopping and consumption habits. They also talked about their extracurricular activities, concerns, goals, social relationships, and use of social media. All questions were open-ended, and I would occasionally veer off course from the script in order to dig deeper into areas of interest. The informants also went shopping with me, guided me through a tour of their wardrobes, and introduced me to close friends for further research. I spent approximately 12 hours with each informant and her friends, for a total of 36 hours.

The contents of the research are interpreted below, by describing both the personal and social contexts that define each informant’s world and by describing how a particular social group

¹The names of the informants, along with those of their friends, have been changed for the sake of privacy.
influences and defines each informant’s self-extension or personal expression through clothing, as well as the relationships that each informant forms with clothing brands.

KELLY

Kelly is a 21-year-old female from Gibsonia, Pennsylvania. She will graduate in May 2010 with a bachelor of science in Marketing and a minor in Art History. She plans to work for Dick’s Sporting Goods as an Assistant Buyer, but hopes to one day work for an advertising firm. She describes herself as outgoing, creative, responsible, and driven, and her friends agree that success at school and in life are incredibly important to her. “I get the planning, organizing, busy side of me from my mom, and I get the business-minded, practical, leader side of me from my dad,” she says. Kelly also values her friends; “I think I’m a good friend … I think that comes across more than other sides of me.” When she is not busy with work or with friends, Kelly loves to read and to shop.

In fact, fashion is now very important to Kelly. Having been forced to wear a uniform for 12 years as a Catholic school student and volleyball player, she became much more aware of fashion throughout her college career and now tries to keep up with trends. “I’m not trying to be like everyone else, but I’m just more aware. It’s a bigger deal here [at Penn State].” She subscribes to InStyle, Glamour, Marie Claire, and Vogue magazines and will occasionally buy Elle at a bookstore or supermarket. She has established a pattern for “studying” each issue: at first, she will quickly skim through the magazine, but she will return to it at least two more times, folding or ripping out pages that have images or products that inspire her or peek her desire to buy. She also reads E! Online (www.eonline.com), a celebrity news site, and The Sartorialist (www.thesartorialist.blogspot.com), a popular street-style fashion photography blog, for information and inspiration. “The pictures [on The Sartorialist] are the best because they are taken all over the world of people walking on the street or found in a café, wearing their normal clothing but portraying an interesting sense of style,” she says. She points out that she is attracted to a lot of the
layered looks on the site, and she has been inspired to buy tank tops that she can easily incorporate with cardigans and other tops. Besides looking at photographs, Kelly also likes to observe her peers’ sartorial choices in the Business Building at University Park, but at the end of the day she says that the people that most influence what she wears and buys are the “Fashion World”: the people who write for and edit magazines and, on occasion, celebrities.

As previously mentioned, Kelly loves to shop. The state of the economy has not affected her habits, and if she really wants an item, she will “find a way” to get around the cost; however, she almost exclusively shops at off-price retailers like TJ Maxx, and she never shops online because she prefers to see clothes in person, to touch and try them on. Despite having ripped out pages from magazines with images of products she would like to buy, Kelly seems to forget about her wish list when she shops. Instead, she peruses for familiar brands like MK by Michael Kors, Tahari, and BCBG. On a recent shopping trip to TJ Maxx, for example, Kelly fingered a MK by Michael Kors jacket and purchased a pair of sequined Tahari heels. She also tried on a beret but quickly laughed, “I can’t pull this off, so I’ll just let it go.” When asked why she thought so, she could not answer.

On an earlier visit, Kelly went through her closet and dressers, which are impeccably organized by color and style but crowded; “This closet is only a third of the size of my closet at home ... it’s impossible!” she says. Nearly half of her clothing is black; her favorite items are two black open cardigans from LOFT and Express and a brown MK by Michael Kors cowl-neck, long-sleeve top. She refuses to wear white and rarely wears color, although she insists she is trying to branch out. She just bought a printed kimono top by BCBG but has yet to wear it; at a later interview, she admitted that she was wearing less and less pattern and adopting “a simpler approach” towards dressing. Again, she could not pinpoint why she was so attracted to black or long-sleeved tops and so averse to color and pattern, but when further provoked, she mentioned her weight and busy schedule. She says,
I’ve gained a lot of weight recently, and I get really frustrated by it. I often end up just throwing something on in the morning ... I don’t like [that I do] it, but I do. I’ve stopped worrying about cuteness. I wear more sweats ... it depends on how much time I have, too.

Kelly seems stressed by her busy schedule and has little effort left to think about what to wear.

Kelly tends to keeps items “for a while”, hoping that she will fit into old favorites again. When she cleans out her closet, she gives her discards to younger neighbors, Plato’s Closet, or Goodwill. She has tired of wearing blazers, button-down shirts, and suits for her countless business functions, and she is attracted to the simplicity and the ease of wearing black stretchy pants and, as previously mentioned, layered looks. She would like to try skinny jeans or the baggy, boyfriend look, but does not feel like she can because of her weight and lack of time. She also repeats that phrase, “I can’t pull it off”, when talking about complicated outfits, and describes her style as simple and classic. Her friends agree, using the words classic, age-appropriate, conservative, and professional to describe Kelly’s style, but they also mentioned the words fun and trendy.

CARINE

Carine is a 22-year-old female from State College, Pennsylvania. She will graduate in May 2010 with a bachelor of arts in Psychology and a bachelor of arts in International Studies. She recently applied to AmeriCorps and has considered entering an accelerated nursing program, and this summer she will work as an intern for The Second Mile. She describes herself as sociable, considerate, thoughtful, and hard-working. She loves to spend time her friends and insists that her relationships with other people are her most important possessions; her friends, in turn, agree that they enjoy simply spending time together and note that living in the moment and making educated decisions for her future happiness are
important characteristics of Carine’s lifestyle. She spends her free time with friends, practicing yoga, or watching “guilty” television shows like “Gossip Girl” and “Grey’s Anatomy”.

Style is an undercurrent in Carine’s life. Three of her close friends considered careers in fashion, and she says that “Fashion is moderately important to me. I like to wear things that are cute and current, but I don’t spend too much time thinking about it, I don’t look at magazines or anything.” When asked, she has trouble identifying brands that she is particularly fond of or aware of, but she does like to shop and enjoys finding her own personal style, which her friends currently describe as sophisticated, thought-out, and put-together. Her earliest memories of fashion come from elementary school, when girls made her feel self-conscious by making fun of her outfit in fourth grade and when she felt “excited and cool” to be one of the first girls in fifth grade to buy platform sneakers. Now, Carine finds inspiration from television shows; catalogs from Urban Outfitters, Anthropologie, and J Crew and their respective websites; icons like Audrey Hepburn; and other people. In particular, she mentions her friends Diane (a student at the Pratt Institute) and Anna (a student at the University of Vermont) and her mother. “I get ideas from [my friends], share opinions with them, they cue me into what is cute. As my relationships with my friends change, so does what I like,” she explains, “and my Mom, well, she always has an opinion and she buys my clothes, so she at least affects how much I can buy”. Carine also acknowledges the importance of her friends in her daily life. “I’m just a people person!” she exclaims. “My friends are my peer group, who I spend my time with, and their opinions matter to me … I look to [them] for approval.” She stays in touch and shares photos with such friends through Facebook, and she will sometimes take note of what her friends are wearing in their pictures for inspiration.

When shopping, Carine says, “I pick clothes based on what I like, what looks good on me, what looks good with my complexion. If I look good, I’m more confident.” She always has her wish list in mind – on a recent shopping trip in downtown State College, for example, she was looking for a black coat – but she also admits that she can be quite impulsive. At the boutique Access, she notices the shape and
the pockets of a black coat before admiring the “delicate, bohemian detailing” of a nearby sweater. She does not seem to be aware of brands at all and instead pays attention to particular details. On her way out of the store, she talks about how she loves Blair Waldorf’s style on *Gossip Girl*, but she does not feel like she can wear similar things here; “It's too much for a casual college town.”

Similarly, when going through her closet, Carine mentioned the precious bow print and ruffled collar on a sweater, the neon pink color of a mini skirt, and the open back on a top and only mentioned brand names when probed. She counts among her signature items a short-sleeved, mustard yellow jersey jacket from Anthropologie and a beige cardigan. Twice a year, she feels overwhelmed or bored by her closet and cleans it out; she usually keeps individual items for three years and then takes her discards to a Society of St. Vincent de Paul donation box. She describes the experience as refreshing, and she hopes the clothes that she buys to then fill up her closet express that she is cute and fun, creative, and put-together.

TAYLOR

Taylor is a 22-year-old female. She was born in Texas but has also lived in California, Indonesia, Florida, Australia, Switzerland, and Kazakhstan because of her father’s job transfers. Because flying “home” to Perth, Australia where her parents currently live is not a cheap option, she sometimes retreats to her aunt’s house in Montrose, Pennsylvania or her grandparents’ house in Allentown, Pennsylvania. She will graduate in May 2010 with a bachelor of science in Nursing, and she will begin her career at Hershey Hospital, hoping to one day be a pediatric nurse. She describes herself as protective, creative, and outgoing, and she loves to scrapbook and stay active.

Taylor attended boarding school in Switzerland and Kazakhstan before coming to the Pennsylvania State University in State College, Pennsylvania, so she has only seen her parents two or
three times a year for the last eight years. Essentially, she has been on her own since she started high school and has restructured her definition of family to include her closest friends:

I would be devastated to lose a friend. You create friendships – you’re not forced into those relationships like you are with family – but really, my friends have become my family because I moved so much. And my family, I guess we’re different because I’ve been on my own for so long, it’s like we’re already on that mutual, friendship sort-of level.

In addition, Taylor feels like she has had to act like a mother figure to her younger brother. Her male friends have nicknamed her “Mom” because she has a tendency to take care of them, and they believe strongly that they can rely on Taylor for help or an honest opinion. Taylor’s friends also agree that family and friends are the things that Taylor deems most important in her life.

As far as clothing goes, Taylor says that style is pretty important to her because looking good makes her feel better about herself. She likes to look put-together, and one of her friends described Taylor’s style that way, but Taylor does not think that she has much of a personal style. Also, she fears that her clothes may attract too much attention, give the wrong impression, or upset her conservative boyfriend Marc – “I don’t want to be the one that girls will look at and say, “Oh look at what she’s wearing” – so she has often worn what she describes as plain clothing. She favors classic American brands like The Gap and J Crew, blues and purples, and long-sleeved tops, which “cover me up and make me feel more comfortable I guess.” She was first attracted to The Gap and J Crew because her cousins shopped there; when living abroad, she liked to shop at H&M; and now she looks to advertisements, the websites of Victoria’s Secret, J Crew, and Lucy, and her friend Jessica for fashion inspiration. Jessica, who describes Taylor’s style as colorful, playful and feminine, “is really the one who pushes me” to try new things and to be more adventurous with her clothing.
On a recent shopping trip, for example, she swore that she never wears red but purchased a red hat from aerie by American Eagle upon the insistence of her roommates. On separate occasions, she and her friends mentioned that they often try on clothes together and ask each other for honest opinions. One friend called Taylor a perfectionist; “She likes to see the item from every angle and takes a little bit of time to make a decision about it. One time when she was shopping alone, she even sent me a picture text with her wearing a shirt from Express in their dressing room, asking me what my thoughts were on it.”

Later into the research, she purchased two floral, ruffled dresses from Express. “I’m really into pattern now, the bohemian thing, ruffles ... I want my signature item, my style, to be like this,” she says as she pulls out one of the dresses from her closet. “Floral, flirty, the Express girl ... I’m just tired of plain stuff. Maybe because my life is changing, or I’m more comfortable with myself, I’m willing to take more risks.” She then laughs as she remembers her father, who has been known to push the envelope by wearing Mambo shirts and antlers to office parties. “He is my best friend,” she smiles.

Taylor’s closet and drawers are crowded, even messy, with clothing. She hoards, she says, because she feels guilty for having spent the money and wonders if she will ever lose weight or wish she still had the things she gave away. Also, “it makes me sad to let things go. Every few years, every time I move, my fashion changes because I’m with new people, and I like to hold onto my clothes because I feel like I’ll forget about the past if I get rid of them.” On average, she keeps individual items for at least four years, and many of her pieces date back to high school, but she tries to donate three or four items to the Salvation Army or friends every six months.
AUTO-ETHNOGRAPHY

As Gergen (2009) notes, “Auto-ethnography ... enables scholars to share directly their experiences in ways that they may be useful to others” (p. 73). With this in mind, I intend to describe myself like I described the aforementioned ethnographic studies, noting my own personal and social contexts and trying to infer how particular social groups influence my clothing choices.

I am a 22-year-old female who was born outside of Chicago, Illinois and grew up south of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. I will graduate from the Pennsylvania State University in May 2010 with a bachelor of science in Marketing, a bachelor of science in Spanish, a minor in International Studies, and honors. I am currently applying for jobs in fashion merchandising and public relations, although my dream job would be to host a television show on HGTV or the Travel Network. I describe myself as independent, smart, and passionate, and I love to dance, practice yoga, and read when I have the chance.

Style is incredibly important to me; I am writing my thesis about self expression, after all. I spent the majority of my childhood at school in Catholic school uniforms, at the dance studio in black leotards and opaque pink tights, or at the kitchen table with crayons in hand; I thought that I was going to be a ballerina or an artist. Later I considered a career in architecture, and now I am pursuing a career that relates to fashion and design. I read to keep up with the goings-on of the industries that I am pursuing as well as to seek inspiration for my own outfits and purchases. I spend hours a day reading fashion blogs like The Sartorialist (www.thesartorialist.com), Garance Doré (www.garancedore.fr), Fashionista (www.fashionista.com) and Refinery 29 (www.pipeline.refinery29.com), among many others. I am particularly attracted to street-style photography and montages of items that share a common thread like pattern, color, or inspiration. I also subscribe to Lucky and Vogue magazines and visit their websites daily; other fashion-related websites that I frequent include, as of late, the online outposts of J Crew, Free People, Urban Outfitters and the Gap, the click-only store Shopbop.com, and Style.com.
Because I visit those websites so often, I would say that I “window-shop” every day, and I prefer to shop online because of the seemingly infinite merchandise assortment at my fingertips. On the other hand, I also love to shop in stores in order to get a better idea of fit and quality and to get some exercise. I almost always shop on my own. Sometimes I think that that habit is simply representative of my independent personality, and other times I think that I want to make things easier for everybody, because I either take my time or, conversely, move fast as if I was on a mission. If I do bring a companion, it is usually my mother. I keep a wish-list of specific items or general ideas and I try to stick to that list in order to curb my spending. Recently, I have been seeking clothing that is more streamlined or sophisticated and in neutral colors – that is, clothing that still work when I get a full-time job and that will easily transition from day to night.

I try to keep my closet and drawers organized by clothing type – pants with pants, sweaters with sweaters, et cetera – and by color. I also find myself constantly wanting to clean out my closet in order to streamline my options and style, and I strive to donate between 10 and 20 items a year to Goodwill, a Society of St. Vincent de Paul donation box, or friends or family in need.

In general, I would describe my own style as gamine, artsy, and thoughtful. However, I am a bit of a chameleon when it comes to clothing; when I get ready, I have a particular idea or persona in my mind and try to build an outfit around that idea or persona. My closest friends describe my style as bold, colorful, unique yet refined. My closet matches their description fairly well; I try to keep it organized by color and function, and it is full of color, especially blue. To pick signature items or favorites is so difficult, but today I love my dark skinny jeans from the Gap; a black and white leopard-print, eco-friendly silk tank dress from one of Target’s Go International collaborations (with Rogan); a silver silk t-shirt from J Crew; and a black Free People top with a lavender lace back.

Besides fashion, my family and friends, my health, and learning are important to me. I love spending time with my family, even though I do not think that we are extremely close. Many of my
family members and I have had health scares, so I always try to take care of myself; I eat well (aside from my daily dessert), I exercise, and I meditate. I value my education and I love to travel. I hope for the best in my future but try to live in the moment.
ANALYSIS

The researcher’s observations and conversations with the informants – Kelly, Carine, and Taylor – and with herself suggest that individuals tend to focus on one social identity when they dress themselves. To refresh the reader, social identity refers to how a person comes to perceive of him or herself and comes to view the world because of the influence of others.

SOCIAL CONSTRUCTS

Although Kelly cites the importance of her family and friends in her daily life, it is evident that her interactions with society at-large more significantly influence her style. Having been disconnected from the fashion world in her youth, Kelly’s driven nature encouraged her to immediately reach out to it instead of her family or new friends for fashion advice at the beginning of her college career. She organizes her study of fashion much like she organizes her school schedule, skimming and scanning through magazines and blogs and making note of seemingly important or inspirational ideas. In addition, Kelly relies on what society tells her about quality; she recognizes brand names more than the other informants and seeks them out because of what those brands have previously signaled to her.

When it comes to the things that Kelly already owns, she relies on social norms to dictate how she dresses instead of exploring a more intimate or individual sense of style or self expression. As a business student, Kelly often dresses in blazers and suits, adopting “the costume that is deliberately chosen on the advice of others in order to deceive the beholder” – that is, the business professional (Lurie 1981 p. 26). She describes her new wardrobe as yet another uniform of black, simple clothing, which she wears as a form or relief or disguise from the scrutiny that she feels her weight may bring (Lurie 1981 p.19).

Carine also relies on society for information about fashion and inspiration, but in a different or more intimate way than Kelly does. In other words, Carine relies on the more intimate version of society
– her friends and acquaintances – that she personally interacts with on a daily basis as opposed to the external society on which Kelly tends to rely. However, it is interesting to note that Carine rarely interacts with social media but instead relies on traditional media – for example, television programs and the occasional magazine – for additional information.

The importance of Carine’s friends in her daily life and fashion life is apparent. She studies psychology, the study of the human mind, and she prefers to spend her free time with her friends, who she even describes as her most special “possessions”. Carine first became aware of fashion among her peers in elementary school, and as she traveled through adolescence into young adulthood, her closest friends got her more involved in fashion. Although Carine does not acknowledge brands per se, she tends to gravitate towards those brands or stores that her friends admire or that seem to reflect the unique, hip, and delicate nature of her friends’ styles and demeanors.

Taylor’s relationship with clothing and its connection to her relationship with her family is perhaps the most apparent of the research. As previously mentioned, because Taylor has been apart from her immediate family for so long, Taylor’s definition of family incorporates her closest friends. Her friends and her younger brother see her as a mother figure, and she even dresses a bit like a “mom”, gravitating towards classic American brands like The Gap and J Crew. She also struggles between satisfying or associating herself with different family members. On one side is her boyfriend Marc, who prefers that she wears conservative cuts and simple patterns; on the other side are her best friend Jessica and her father, who inspire her to branch out into more playful and colorful clothes.

Also, because Taylor’s life and friendships have been so often interrupted by moving and change, she holds on tightly to her remaining relationships; similarly, she holds onto her clothing. This phenomenon recalls Belk’s (1988) ideas that possessions are a means of storing memories and that, when possessions are disposed of, consumers can feel a tremendous sense of loss as if they had lost a part of themselves. Taylor feels “sad” when she has to let go of her clothing, even if things are no longer
practical or do not fit; this recalls Fournier’s (1998) committed partnership, in which consumers form a long-term union high in love and a commitment to stay together despite adverse circumstances (see Appendix A).

Lastly, I demonstrate patterns similar to those demonstrated by Carine, meaning that I rely on a more intimate version of society for sartorial information and inspiration and seek to communicate with those sources in return; however, my tendency does reflect the growth of social media and the changing definition of society, while Carine’s does not. The way I have described my style incorporates vocabulary that is more common in conversations about fashion; my interest in J Crew mirrors the industry’s current obsession with the brand; and perhaps even more than expressing a style, I wish to say through my clothing that I appreciate the fashion industry and want to be a part of it.

SOCIAL IDENTITIES AND THE DEGREE OF EXTENDED SELF

Intriguingly, the research also seems to reveal a relationship between the dominant social identity and the degree of extended self: the more intimate the dominant social identity, the more the informant feels that clothing is intertwined with her social identity.

For instance, the patterns of product disposition and disuse displayed by the informants show that those who gather information and inspiration from their families, like Taylor, are much more attached to their clothing than those who gather information and inspiration from society, like Carine, Kelly, and me. Taylor’s clothing seems “to form an anchor for our identities that reduces our fear that these identities will somehow be washed away” (Belk 1988 p. 159); just as Taylor does not want to lose her family, Taylor does not want to lose her self construct. However, at key life stages and rites of passage like school graduations, the unextended selves grow “in strength and extent so that the buffer of extended self becomes less necessary” (p. 159), and so Taylor – and, in fact, all the informants – have warmed up to the idea of getting rid of clothing. Carine and I also tend to shed items of clothing when
they no longer fit with our ideal versions of our selves or our social identities, which change as our intimate versions of society and their views on fashion change – in Carine’s case, when friends adapt their style, and in my case, when fashion blogs announce new trends, for example. Similarly, Kelly keeps things in the hope that she will eventually fit back into the clothing and, therefore, into society’s norms.

Also of importance is to what or whom the informants give their clothing once they decide to dispose of it. Taylor gives her clothing to her friends, who essentially are her family, or to the Salvation Army, which is related to her family in the sense that Taylor and her closest friends go to church together every Sunday; both of these examples show that Taylor wants to keep her clothing as close to herself as possible and again indicate that she considers her clothing an integral part of her extended self or social identity. In addition, Taylor feels sad when she gives away her clothing, as one might grieve and mourn the death of a loved one (Belk 1987). Similarly, Carine gives the majority of her clothing to a Society of St. Vincent de Paul donation box, limiting the distribution of her clothing – and, essentially, her self – to local areas and to Catholics, a denomination to which she and many of her friends belong. She expresses that she often feels good, like she is gaining a fresh start, when she donates her clothes; this also reflects the idea that Carine is a self-described people person and loves to make new acquaintances and deepen her established relationships. Kelly and I, on the other hand, give our clothing to neighbors, family members, acquaintances and charities like Goodwill and the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, distributing our clothing and our selves to a much greater degree. I feel the same way that Carine does about giving away clothing, while Kelly describes her experience as more of a relief, highlighting the fact that she is not that attached to her clothing or considers it an integral part of her extended self. Kelly is also the only informant who sells some of her clothing (to Plato’s Closet), thereby disposing of her clothing to society.

To an extent, the way that the informants store and care for their clothing also shows the link between dominant social identity and the extended self. Kelly has the most organized closet of the all
informants. She perfectly folds or hangs up each item of clothing and arranges her collection by color; everything clearly has its own place. One might say that this arrangement resembles the merchandising found in a retail store or a showroom, or one might describe this strict organization as systematic or cold, reflecting the fact that Kelly learns about fashion from society and distances her self construct from her clothing choices. I try to take great care of my clothing, washing each item according to its given instructions and showing that I value my clothing like I values myself. Also, Carine and I both try to keep our closets in order but do not stress about it to quite the same extent as Kelly does, indicating that we are more comfortable with ourselves and with our clothing. Lastly, Taylor tosses her clothing around and feels comfortable with it no matter how it is organized, much like a person feels fine when they look their worst in front of family members.

SOCIAL IDENTITIES AND RELATIONSHIP FORMS

Similar to how the research suggests that the intimacy of the social identity and the degree of the extended self are positively correlated, the research also seems to indicate that the intimacy of the social identity and the relationship form are positively correlated.

In order to help the reader conceptualize this correlation, many of the relationship forms described below are organized on a scatter plot in Appendix B. The horizontal axis of the plot – Relationship Form – ranges from involuntary, uncommitted, negative relationships (negative numbers) to voluntary, committed, positive relationships (positive numbers). The vertical axis – Social Identity – ranges from family (negative numbers) to society (positive numbers), although it is important to note that identification with family is not considered “negative” and identification with society is not considered “positive”; rather, “negative” seeks to convey the smaller scale or the intimacy of the family and “positive” seeks to convey the grander scale of society. Therefore, the upper left quadrant includes those relationship forms with brands that are less committed and inspired or even imposed by
relationships with society; the upper right quadrant includes those relationship forms with brands that are more committed and inspired by relationships with society; the lower right quadrant includes those relationship forms with brands that are more committed and inspired by relationships with family members; and the lower left quadrant includes those relationships forms that are less committed and inspired or even demanded by relationships with family members.

The specific numerical values assigned to each example are arbitrary. However, averages were loosely calculated in order to help the reader visualize how each informant tends toward one social identity and/or relationship form over another. For more detailed information about each kind of relationship form as originally defined by Fournier (1998), please see Appendix A.

The plot also includes three additional points: in the upper right quadrant, “Social Sartorialist” and “Friendly Stylista” and, in the lower right quadrant, “Family Fashionista”. These labels represent the three tendencies demonstrated by the informants; a Social Sartorialist is a person like Kelly who gathers information and inspiration from and aspires to be like society at-large, a Friendly Stylista is a person like Carine or myself who looks to a more intimate version of society or some friends and acquaintances for stylistic direction, and a Family Fashionista is a person like Taylor who identifies herself most with her family. These points lay in the right quadrants because, ideally, companies want their customers to feel committed to and positive about their brands, and the analysis below suggests that companies could segment their customers according to the three tendencies in order to make the customers more committed to their brands.

Fournier might classify Taylor’s relationship with Express as a best friendship: a “Voluntary union ... characterized by revelation of true self, honesty, and intimacy” (see Appendix A). Although Taylor has not always worn Express, she has expressed an intention to commit to the brand and to associate her style, her self, and her social identity with it. In Appendix B, Taylor’s best friendship with Express appears in the lower right quadrant, far along the horizontal axis (indicating that the relationship is voluntary,
committed, and positive in Taylor’s view) and midway down the vertical axis (indicating that it is stimulated by people who lie between immediate family and intimate society – that is, her closest friends). Her relationships with brands like the Gap and J Crew might be described as marriages of convenience, a “Long-term, committed relationship precipitated by environmental influence versus deliberate choice,” or as committed partnerships, a “Long-term, voluntarily imposed, socially supported union ... and a commitment to stay together despite adverse circumstances” (see Appendix A). Taylor was first convinced to wear these brands by her cousins – the relationships may even have begun as kinships, “Nonvoluntary union[s] with lineage ties” (see Appendix A) – but she continues to wear these brands, despite the many changes in her life, because she perceives them to be of high quality and because of her boyfriend Marc’s conservative influence. These examples also appear in the lower right quadrant of the chart in Appendix B, though not quite as far along the horizontal axis (showing that she feels strongly about these brands but not as strongly as she does about Express) and further down the vertical axis (showing that these relationships were stimulated by her immediate family members).

Committed partnerships, marriages of convenience, kinships, and best friendships suggest very intimate, familial relationships with clothing and reflect the importance of Taylor’s family in her self-expression. In fact, her average lies in the lower left quadrant, quite close to the Family Fashionista label. Taylor’s relationship with H&M, on the other hand, may be called a compartmentalized friendship, a “Highly specialized, situationally confined, enduring friendships characterized by lower intimacy than other friendship forms but higher socioemotional rewards and interdependence” (see Appendix A), because that relationship was confined to her life abroad and the cultures with which she interacted in those foreign countries. This relationship is plotted in the upper right quadrant of the chart in Appendix B, showing that Taylor is committed to the brand, although less committed than she is to other brands, and that she is driven to it by society. Indeed, she is less committed to H&M because her relationship with that brand does not reflect her social identity as a family member.
Similarly, Fournier might classify Carine’s relationships with Urban Outfitters and Anthropologie as best friendships – they appear close to or in the lower right quadrant on the chart in Appendix B, indicating that she is rather committed to these brands and that her close friends stimulate these relationships – but her other relationships with typically unnamed brands may be classified as courtships, “Interim relationship state on the road to committed partnership contract” (see Appendix A). For instance, Carine is looking for and testing out brands like J Crew that make her style seem more professional and adult, and she often stresses the importance of quality and detail as if she were looking for a potential life-partner; the researcher plotted this example between the upper left and right quadrants in Appendix B as it is inspired by society and on the way to becoming a committed relationship. Others still may be identified as flings, “Short-term, time-bounded engagements of high emotional reward, but devoid of commitment and reciprocity demands,” or as casual friends/buddies, “Friendship low in affect and intimacy, characterized by infrequent or sporadic engagement, and few expectations for reciprocity or reward” (see Appendix A). For example, Carine has admitted that she often buys items on impulse, does not recognize many brand names, and occasionally regrets purchases. In addition, the fact that Carine feels like she cannot be Blair Waldorf indicates that she must resort to other items or brands as in compartmentalized friendships or avoidance-driven relationships, “Union[s] precipitated by desire to move away from prior or available partner, as opposed to attraction to chosen partner per se” (see Appendix A). The collective “unnamed brands” are plotted in the upper left quadrant in Appendix B, then, because Carine shows no real commitment to these brands. She is attracted to them because of more distant societal influences like professional dress norms or because she acts on impulse instead of considering her usual resources or social identity: her friends and her intimate version society. In sum, compartmentalized friendships, avoidance driven relationships, flings, casual friends/buddies, courtships and best friendships are generally less intimate relationship forms than those demonstrated by Taylor and reflect the fact that Carine has a less intimate social identity.
Indeed, her average lies along the same latitude as the Friendly Stylista, but it is apparent that Carine is less committed to her brand capsule. However, if companies could remind her of her social identity, they could encourage more commitment from Carine.

I also get my sartorial information and inspiration from a less intimate social identity than family but a more intimate social identity than society, and my brand relationship forms reflect that tendency. My relationships with Free People, the Gap, and J Crew may all be described as best friendships because they make up many of my signature items and, in my opinion, reveal my “true self”; Free People is near the border and far along the horizontal axis in the lower right quadrant, the Gap is on the border between the lower and upper right quadrants and midway along the axis, and J Crew is higher in the upper right quadrant and far along the horizontal axis, representing the degree to which I am committed to each brand and who – close friends and family or some version of society – inspires those friendships. Other brands in my closet may be classified as courtships, flings, or compartmentalized friendships; examples would include a great number of brands that were purchased for the purpose of attaining a job in the fashion industry or brands that appear only once or twice in my closet; for example, Target GO International is plotted in the upper left quadrant of the chart in Appendix B to demonstrate my lack of commitment to the brand and my being influenced by greater society to buy items from that brand. If, however, the brand were to remind me of my social identity, I would be more inclined to think positively about and buy more from the brand. Currently, my average nears the Friendly Stylista, as well.

Lastly, Fournier may distinguish Kelly’s relationships with MK by Michael Kors and BCBG as committed partnerships – they both appear in the upper right quadrant – but many other items in her closet may be called enslavements, a “Nonvoluntary union … [that] Involves negative feelings but persists because of circumstances”, or arranged marriages, a “Nonvoluntary union imposed by preferences of third party. Intended for long-term, exclusive commitment, although at low levels of affective attachment” (see Appendix A). Kelly feels like she has to wear certain items or colors
(especially black) because of her weight and because she is a business student, or more generally said, because of what society dictates. For example, she is committed to her black cardigan from the LOFT, which appears in Appendix B in the upper right quadrant but further to the left on the horizontal axis (like an arranged marriage), showing that she is committed to the brand, but not necessarily affectionate towards it, and driven towards it by society; on the other hand, her T-shirts and Business Wear appear in the upper left quadrant, suggesting that the relationship is not voluntary and that Kelly harbors some resentment towards those items. Kelly also constantly exclaims “I can’t pull that off”, suggesting avoidance-driven relationships with other brands or particular articles of clothing. For the most part, these relationships forms suggest a much less intimate social identity. Indeed, Kelly’s average lies along the same latitude as the Social Sartorialist, but she is clearly not as committed to her brand capsule as companies would like. Unlike the other informants however, Kelly’s average is pulled left not because of influence outside of her social identity, but because she feels negatively about her self or that she does not match up with her ideal social identity. Kelly must resolve those issues before she (and companies) can address commitment.

In closing this analysis, it is important to acknowledge that the relationships that the researcher has described between the informants, their most-worn brands, and their social identities are tidy ones. In fact, no plot points lie in the lower left quadrant where uncommitted or involuntary relationships driven by families or close friends would fall; however, I believe this is only a coincidence of the limited brand capsule discussed with each informant. Informants only discussed a few brands with the researcher, although some outliers (like Taylor’s relationship with H&M, Carine’s relationship with the Unnamed Brands, Kelly’s relationship with her T-shirts and Business Wear, and my relationship with Target GO International) are included. The outliers are neither good nor bad; rather, they show that consumers interact with many, many brands and do not always fall into a certain category of construct. However, the assertions made here are that, when seeking information and inspiration about clothing
and wanting to express themselves through their clothing, the informants tend to veer towards one social identity orientation; the more intimate the social identity, the more committed the consumers are to particular brands; and the relationships that the informants have with other people and social media are more important than or more central to their self constructs when it comes to extending oneself through and building relationships with clothing. In other words, social identities seem to be much more important than individual constructs, surprisingly, with relation to clothing. Transferability of these interpretations to a greater portfolio of brands and to different life settings remains a question for consideration in future research.
DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

As the fashion industry continues to embrace fashion blogs and other social media, the social nature of fashion is more and more evident and significant. Therefore, this thesis was used to build upon the research first put forth by consumer behavior theorists like Belk (1988) and Fournier (1998). It more closely connects these theories to the ideas of the social identity and construct theorists, and it describes how society has become much more intimate yet complex as social media grows. Through ethnographic and auto-ethnographic research, then, it shows that personal expression through clothing reflects how consumers most strongly socially construct themselves – as family members or as society members to varying degrees – and consumers gather information about fashion from sources that reflect their social identities (that is, families or society). In addition, the more intimate the dominant social identity, the more a consumer feels that clothing is intertwined with his or her social identity and the more he or she is committed to brands, and the relationships that consumers form with particular brands often resemble their dominant social identities. Relating the ethnographic findings to the writings of Belk and Fournier in particular shows the immense power of the social identity as opposed to the individual with regard to clothing. In fact, the role the individual construct plays in consumers’ fashion choices seems to be surprisingly minimized, while the role society plays seems to be much greater.

As the blogosphere continues to grow and as social media continue to change, the ways in which consumers interact with society also continue to change. Therefore, one possible extension of this research is a more concentrated look at the influence blogs and other social media have on consumers’ clothing or other product choices. A deeper examination of the way clothing is disposed of or disused and the way that it is stored also deserves merit. Because the upper left quadrant of the chart in Appendix B includes very few plot points, and because the lower left quadrant has none, a closer study of how brands that consumers feel less positively about, involuntarily engage with, or even avoid relate
to their extended selves and social identities would be particularly intriguing. Reaching out to males and to females in other age groups would also push this research forward, given that one of the limitations of this study was that the informants were all female and around the same age. Other limitations include the limited brand capsule for each informant and only talking to close friends instead of also reaching out to family members and/or acquaintances.

The current research, however, still has implications for those interested in fashion or product and brand relationships in general, consumer behavior theorists, and marketers. Because the research demonstrates that consumers tend to base their sartorial decisions on the influence and inspiration of either their families, their intimate versions of society, or society at-large, I believe that fashion companies and marketers could divide consumers into those three identities and find out to which tendency their target customers belong. Then, they can tailor their advertising and promotional efforts to reach those customers. For instance, if a company realizes that most of its customers are family-oriented – I call them Family Fashionistas – it could create stories and images about families and close friends in their advertising, catalogs, and websites and rely on word-of-mouth, a very personal and trustworthy form of communication, for additional promotion. Likewise, if a company realizes that most of its customers look to more intimate versions of society for inspiration and information – I call them Friendly Stylistas – its advertising, catalogs, and websites could feature what looks like groups of friends or similar, approachable people, and it could focus additional promotional energy on social media. Lastly, if a company realizes that most of its customers are inspired and informed by society at-large – I call them Social Sartorialists – it could rely on images of single models for its advertising, catalogs, and websites, and use traditional media like magazines and television programs to reach those customers. By constructing their marketing efforts like the very people their customers look to for information and inspiration, the brands and companies become trustworthy sources and will therefore encourage greater commitment from their customers. All in all, the relationship between clothing and the social
self has much to offer the marketing community and fashion industry, and it will be exciting to watch
the relationship grow and change as the world in which it operates also grows and changes.
REFERENCES


## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX A

### TABLE 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Relationship form</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Case examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arranged marriages</td>
<td>Nonvoluntary union imposed by preferences of third party, intended for long-term, exclusive commitment, although at low levels of affective attachment.</td>
<td>Karen's adoption of her ex-husband's preferred brands (e.g., Mop 'n Glo, Palmolive, Helman's); Jean's use of Murphy's Oil soap as per manufacturer recommendation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Casual friends/buddies</td>
<td>Friendship low in affect and intimacy, characterized by infrequent or sporadic engagement, and few expectations for reciprocity or reward.</td>
<td>Karen and her household cleaning brands.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marriages of convenience</td>
<td>Long-term, committed relationship precipitated by environmental influence versus deliberate choice, and governed by satisfying rules.</td>
<td>Vicki's switch to southern regional Friend's Baked Beans brand from favored B&amp;M brand left behind in the northeast.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Committed partnerships</td>
<td>Long-term, voluntarily imposed, socially supported union high in love, intimacy, trust, and a commitment to stay together despite adverse circumstances. Adherence to exclusivity rules expected.</td>
<td>Jean and virtually all her cooking, cleaning, and household appliance brands: Karen and Gatorade.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best friendships</td>
<td>Voluntary union based on reciprocity principle, the endurance of which is ensured through continued provision of positive rewards. Characterized by revelation of true self, honesty, and intimacy. Congruity in partner images and personal interests common.</td>
<td>Karen and Reebok running shoes: Karen and Coke Classic; Vicki and Ivory.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compartmentalized friendships</td>
<td>Highly specialized, situationally confined, enduring friendships characterized by lower intimacy than other friendship forms but higher socio-emotional rewards and interdependence. Easy entry and exit attained.</td>
<td>Vicki and her stable of perfumes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kinships</td>
<td>Nonvoluntary union with lineage ties.</td>
<td>Vicki's brand preference for Tetley tea or Karen's for Barq's, Joy, and Miracle Whip, all of which were inherited from their mothers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rebounds/avoidance-driven relationships</td>
<td>Union precipitated by desire to move away from prior or available partner, as opposed to attraction to chosen partner per se.</td>
<td>Karen's use of Corin, Gateway, and Sucessa Ric.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Childhood friendships</td>
<td>Infrequently engaged, affectively laden relationship reminiscent of earlier times. Yields comfort and security of past self.</td>
<td>Vicki's Nestle's Quik and Friendly's ice cream; Jean's use of Estee Lauder, which evokes memories of her mother.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Courtships</td>
<td>Interim relationship state on the road to committed partnership contract.</td>
<td>Vicki and her Musk scent brands during initial trial period.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dependencies</td>
<td>Obsessive, highly emotional, selfish attractions cemented by feeling that the other is irreplaceable. Separation from other yields anxiety. High tolerance of other's transgressions results.</td>
<td>Karen and Mary Kay; Vicki and Soft'n Dry.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fings</td>
<td>Short-term, time-bounded engagements of high emotional reward, but devoid of commitment and reciprocity demands.</td>
<td>Vicki's trial size shampoo brands.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enmities</td>
<td>Intensely involving relationship characterized by negative affect and desire to avoid or inflict pain on the other.</td>
<td>Karen and her husband's brands, post-divorce; Karen and Diet Coke, Jean and her other-recommended-but-rejected brands (e.g., Jif peanut butter, Kohler stainless steel sink).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secret affairs</td>
<td>Highly emotive, privately held relationship considered risky if exposed to others.</td>
<td>Karen and the Tootsie Pops she sneaks at work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enslavements</td>
<td>Nonvoluntary union governed entirely by desires of the relationship partner. Involves negative feelings but persists because of circumstances.</td>
<td>Karen uses Southern Bell and Cubic Vision because she has no other choice.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX B

In the visual representation below, Taylor’s plot points are red; Carine’s plot points are yellow; my plot points are green; and Kelly’s plot points are blue. In addition, the plot points of the three segments derived from the informants’ tendencies – Family Fashionista, Friendly Stylista, and Social Sartorialist – are grey.

![SOCIAL IDENTITIES AND RELATIONSHIP FORMS](image-url)

- **T-shirts and Business Wear**
- **Target GO International**
- **Unnamed brands**
- **LOFT**
- **Average**
- **BCBG**
- **MK**
- **Social Sartorialist**
- **J Crew**
- **H&M**
- **F...
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EDUCATION

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**Bachelor of Science**: Spanish, The Pennsylvania State University, University Park, PA. May 2010.

ADDITIONAL RESEARCH

Department of Marketing, The Pennsylvania State University, University Park, PA. Wrote a new positioning statement and promotional strategy for The Village at Penn State, a life care retirement community. Spring 2008.

RELEVANT EXPERIENCE

American Eagle Outfitters, Inc., Pittsburgh, PA.

**aerie Ambassador**, University Park, PA. Build fan list on Facebook by sharing photos, videos, and links. Increase brand awareness by hosting events and giveaways. August 2009-Present.

Comcast, Pittsburgh, PA.

Victoria’s Secret, Bethel Park, PA.

Penn State Marketing Association, University Park, PA.
**Vice President of Productivity**. Increased membership by 35% and active participation by 13%. Supervised the Director of Sales and Fundraising. May 2008-December 2008.


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OTHER LEADERSHIP

Schreyer Honors College Student Mentor, March 2007-Present.
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Beta Gamma Sigma International Honor Society Member
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Schreyer Honors College Travel Grant
Division of Undergraduate Studies Award for Exploratory Students
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Peters Township High School Valedictorian