



**Balance Between Engaged and Disengaged:
Being in This World but Not of It** (Title Style)

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Roundtable: Human Resource Development

Abstract

In the spirit of human flourishing, six participants' perceptions of social identity and the role of spirituality and self-transformation within the context of the U.S. culture were examined using Tajfel's (1978) social identity theory. Following Dean and Newton's (2022) resetting and returning to the drawing board method, social identity theory's application in the U.S. culture as a composite of 50 states over the past four decades was examined in relation to reliance on (a) belonging, (b) self-esteem, and (c) pride in establishing and sustaining social identity. The national culture analysis referencing key events from the 1980s, 1990s, and the first and second decades of the new millennium was examined. Since the U.S. culture functions within the global dynamic impacted by technology, the answers to four research questions were expected to provide data to inform whether technology supports sustaining moral traits or is a hindrance. Wreczycki's (2019) working definition of national culture as a repository of values binding citizens as a nation and rights and obligations was referenced to analyze traits and behaviors. Wreczycki's (2021) sustainable social value model was used to examine selfhood sustainability. Jesus' values derived from Matthew 5:3-12 extracted by Winston (2002) and Wreczycki were referenced as a benchmark to assess how participants' traits derived from content and themes compared. Robbins' (1996) sociorhetorical interpretation was used to move toward what it means to balance being engaged and disengaged – to be in this world but not of it. The John 14:27 pericope was analyzed exegetically to explain the concept of self-awareness and self-transformation using Lancaster and Palframan's (2009) position that spirituality plays a noteworthy role in personal growth based on (a) openness to transcendent power, (b) self-acceptance, and (c) elevation above ego's constructs.

Keywords: self-awareness, self-transformation, social identity, spirituality

Five decades ago, Tajfel (1978) published social identity theory grounded in deriving the sense of self-esteem from a group to which a person belongs. This implies that a person's self-concept (Knowles et al., 2015; Wreczycki, 2021) would be subject to group dynamics, which Arrow et al. (2000) defined as (a) internal, (b) external, and (c) contextual. Knowles et al. (2015) referred to self-concept as taking responsibility for one's own decisions and life. Wreczycki (2021) expanded self-concept to encompass the ability to forecast the implications of (a) emotions, (b) feelings, (c) thoughts about emotions and feelings, (d) words spoken and written, and (e) actions taken to create sustainable social value for all.

Literature Review

Half a century has passed since Tajfel (1978) developed social identity theory. During the 1980s of the Reagan administration, face-to-face contacts, landline telephone, printed newspapers, and television were predominant communication mediums (Beschloss, 2007). The 1990s marked the onset of globalization and relocating production lines from the U. S. to lower labor-cost markets and necessitated efficient supply chains to bring finished goods back to the domestic market (Rhode & Toniolo, 2006). In the middle of the decade, slow-speed telephone landline-based Internet and 2G digital cellular telephone arrived. The onset of the new millennium amplified the growing reliance on quickly evolving technology and the potential threats of being disconnected from it due to digital complications (Casani & Wilson, 1996). The second decade of the 21st century marked the election of the first African American president via the use of social media as a substitute communication and connection medium (Obama, 2018).

Social Identity Theory

Social identity theory emerged with Tajfel (1978) positing the importance of belonging to a group to derive from it a sense of (a) identity, (b) pride, and (c) self-esteem. Tajfel and Turner (1979) expanded the theory within the context of intergroup dynamics. Additionally, group internal and external conflicts were researched from the perspective of social identity. Stets and Burke (2000) equated social identity with self-awareness. Wreczycki (2021) used self-awareness as the first pillar of the sustainable social value model and a consciousness-based knowledge of selfhood based on conceptual processing of (a) emotions, (b) feelings, and (c) thoughts for emotional maturity.

National Culture, Values and Behaviors

Wreczycki (2019) interpreted national culture as a repository of moral principles, rights, and obligations of citizens and a restraining system to result in moral choices. Hofstede (1983), Williamson (2000), and Duong et al. (2017) defined national culture as (a) artifacts, (b) beliefs, (c) customs, (d) rituals, and (e) rules that govern citizens through national institutions. Yanow (2000) posited that individuals usually do not verbally discuss beliefs and values with others but hope that their behaviors inform others of the underlying moral principles. While Yanow pointed at a relation between beliefs, behaviors, and consequences, Wreczycki emphasized that values (a) stem from beliefs, (b) are repositied in an individual's moral character, (c) inform behavioral outcomes, and (d) carry social consequences.

Sustainable Social Value Model

Wreczycki (2021) proposed that social value can be created, shared, and sustained based on the linear and mutually dependent pillars of (a) self-awareness, (b) emotional maturity, (c) emotional sovereignty, (d) self-concept, (e) deliberate ascent of free will to abide in God, and (f) moral choices informing behavioral outcomes with social consequences. While Konopaske et al. (2017) interpreted self-awareness as consciousness-based knowledge of (a) emotions, (b) feelings, (c) motives, (d) desires, (e) thoughts, and (f) acts that carry social implications, Wreczycki (2021) extrapolated self-awareness to encompass introspection of emotions and feelings to use in the conceptual and rational process of validating the artifacts of self-reflection against values stored in the moral character. While Cherry (2024) referred to self-awareness as the psychological state and the focus of attention, Wreczycki pointed at (a) emotions, (b) feelings, (c) thoughts, (d) words spoken and written, and (e) actions taken as coalescing the state of selfhood. Wreczycki posited that stable emotions as energy in motion are necessary for emotional maturity and sovereignty to lead to self-concept, which Knowles et al. (2015) described as taking responsibility for one's decisions and actions within the social context. Wreczycki went a step further, positing that the ability to assess the social implications of emotionally driven self-awareness while making decisions with social implications serves as a steppingstone to the ascension of free will to abide in God to make moral decisions for sustainable social value.

Self-Transformation

Kemp (2015) proposed that a willful change of the foundational aspect of an individual's motivational structure constitutes a self-determined mind and heart endeavor. Wreczycki and Newton (2023) referred to this phenomenon as operating from the mind-heart axis. However, in cases of radical transformation, Kemp implied

that it happens to a person rather than the person initiating it. This conceptual position suggests that transformational grace is the subtle power behind a personal change.

Spirituality

Sheldrake (2007) posited that spirituality is what defines the current era. Jesus' traits derived from Matthew 5:3-12 point at the origin of the Way before it became known as Christianity. The Latin term *spiritualitas* was derived from the Greek term *pneuma*, depicting the breath of spirit through the flesh. Referencing 1 Corinthians 2:14-15, a spiritual person is one in whom the Spirit of God dwells. According to *Lectio Divina*, the achievement of a spiritual state starts from (a) *Lectio*, which is reading a scriptural verse with comprehension; (b) *Meditatio*, which is thinking about the verse read and applying its content to the reader's life; (c) *Oratio*, which is asking God for transformational grace; and (d) *Contemplatio*, which is dwelling in God's grace in silence allowing the verse to sink in for sustainability (Robertson, 2011).

Underhill (2002) posited that humans are vision-creating beings inspired by aspirations and goals that are beyond physical perfection and an expression of intellectual supremacy over other species that reveal spiritual fulfillment. Sheldrake (2007) proposed that spirituality transcends individualism on behalf of collectivism in everyday life. Wreczycki and Newton (2023) contended that spirituality is expressed through the traits of (a) courage, (b) authenticity, (c) transparency, and (d) self-compassion to be empathic toward others but with emotional and moral boundaries that create sustainable social value for all and serve as an effective modality against excessive individualism expressing itself as narcissism.

Jesus' Values Extracted from Matthew 5:3-12

Wreczycki (2021) qualitatively analyzed Matthew 5:3-12 and extracted values of (a) care, (b) cohesion, (c) commitment, (d) humility, (e) integrity, (f) joy, (g) mercy, (h) perseverance, (i) self-restraint, and (j) social justice. These values are consistent with Winston's (2000) qualitative analysis of the same pericope while referencing humility as effectively managing temptations of the false self. Winston pointed at *agapao* interpreted as moral love reflecting care for others or being "others-centered" (p. 9) – to do what is right at the appropriate time. Wreczycki extended this position in the sustainable social value model to bring the results of self-awareness, emotional maturity, and sovereignty to social context.

Jesus' Traits Within the Contemporary Context

According to Aissel (2005), selfhood as a conglomerate of the ego's expressions emanating the "true nature of a human being" (p. 285) is the representation of personhood and the keeper of autonomy and integrity independent from temptations of

the ego (Maslow, 2006). The ego defines a person as a finite entity (Doron & Parot, 1991). Selfhood emanates the person's whole identity also referred to as the essence (Jung, 2005). Selfhood as a composite of the infinite ego's reflections is endowed with authenticity and objectivity that its individual parts lack when considered separately. In the words of Robert Frost, the ego's reflections dance in a circle and suppose while the self sits in the middle and knows (Huntington, 2005).

Terestchenko (2008) posited that human awareness of selfhood is reflected by the ability to act with consideration for others based on moral principles. Those who are unable to maintain steady awareness of selfhood may succumb to pressures from others in social environments demanding cultural conformity at the expense of preserving individuality and moral responsibility by assuming an inactive role in a social system. Hawkins (2005) proposed that moral principles dwell in a subtle realm of human consciousness. As intelligent species, humans experience honesty in the world as an organizing phenomenon central to the foundation of a civilization even though honesty is not independently present in the external world. True power emanates from self-awareness and consciousness, and what is experienced is a materialization of the subtle. Consciousness is consistent with what the world religious traditions refer to as dwelling in God, and science refers to the implicate order of everything that exists endowed with compassion (Bohm, 1985).

Issler (2012) explained that human beliefs are formed by repetitive thoughts and cannot be changed instantly by a heartfelt commitment of will at any time but can be transformed indirectly over time with God's grace. Issler identified five gaps that prevent humans from following Jesus:

1. The disconnected gap – synonymous with not regularly abiding in Jesus.
2. The distress gap – consistent with moments of emotional stress.
3. The dismissive gap – resistance to the truth.
4. The discrepancy gap – when professed values are not reflected deep in moral character.
5. The distracted gap – emerges due to the lifestyle drifting in the wrong direction.

Issler (2012) emphasized that Gaps 1 and 2 are the foundational ones and prevent humans from recognizing Gaps 3 through 5. Issler recommended four steps that can assist in making progress in the moral character "inner heart formation" or a "heart flow work" (p. 56): (a) awakening to the gaps, (b) admitting their existence with honesty, (c) asking for transformational grace to close them, and (d) acting on transformational grace with courage.

To illustrate Jesus' full spectrum of divinity and humanity, the values extracted from Matthew 5:3-12 were juxtaposed with traits from Luke 22:46 that tested moral character to its core. Since Jesus experienced emotional stress in Gethsemane, the reliance on core beliefs to sustain moral character, which is the source of individual thoughts and actions, must have existed to recover. The affective elements of moral character such as (a) attitudes, (b) desires, (c) disposition, and (d) feelings stem from cognitive elements such as (a) beliefs, (b) imagination, (c) internal dissonance, (d) knowledge, and (e) pre-theoretical aspects. To be divine, one must be extraordinarily human in effectively managing emotions. Issler (2012) posited that emotional stress can disturb the willing and doing axis of the human condition. In Luke 22:46, the trait of anguish, which reflects an extreme emotional stress and sorrow (i.e., a feeling of loss) are referenced as modalities through which a person can confront a trying situation and ask for transformational grace to recover. Emotional turbulence disturbs the sense of inner peace and the balance of the mind-heart axis. Philippians 4:6 encourages prayer for transformational grace to rise above emotional stress to maintain the connection between self-awareness and emotional sovereignty to rely on self-concept to ascend the free will to dwell in God to consider the collective social good before one's own.

Exegetical Analysis

The story of Christ being human and divine provided some points for guiding the research process. According to Sheehan (2008), Christ claimed the following traits: (a) being superior to all that was holy and good, (b) being God Himself, (c) being God the Lawgiver, (d) omnipotence, and (e) being the second person of the Trinity, God the Son. He also acted in a way that showed human traits. For example, John's Gospel states that the historical Christ, God the Son, intentionally became flesh. According to Pederson et al. (2015): "God became incarnate through the power of the Holy Spirit in the flesh of the human Jesus and, likewise, that God continues to become incarnate in our flesh and in the messy details of our lives" (p. 172). In other words, Christ revealed his humanity through the human act of biological birth. These themes appeared in an inner-repetitive texture analysis of the Gospels.

Inner Texture

Robbins (1996) stated that "inner texture concerns relationships among word-phrases and narrational patterns that produce argumentative and aesthetic patterns in texts" (p. 46). Word-phrases provide insights into an author's intended meanings regarding relationships between key phrases. Repetitive inner texture indicates an author's intention to emphasize key points that reveal a phenomenon about a (a) person, (b) place, (c) object, or (d) thing. For example, John began his Gospel by repeating the beginning of Genesis in his first chapter.

Another human aspect of Christ pertained to having a biological mother. Hahn (1999) wrote that Christ became man through a virgin birth that led to the veneration of Mary for all generations as recorded in Luke 1. In other words, although Christ possessed the divine traits, He entered the human world through human processes. Furthermore, Christ experienced the suffering associated

with human life. In the Gospels, He expressed sorrow and torturous pain during His moments of loss, abandonment, and physical affliction. The narratives repeated the emphasis on His pain caused by the crucifixion and scourging.

Human Flourishing as Redemptive

According to the Board of Trustees (2024) at North Greenville University, the following explanation provided the best explanation of human flourishing based on the Gospel message of the combination of humanity and divinity:

The biblical vision of human flourishing is redemptive. God's mission is to advance his kingdom and redeem the entire created order through the saving work of Jesus Christ. He calls all Christians to participate in his mission by using their gifts, talents, and opportunities to draw the spiritually lost to the kingdom through gospel proclamation, to serve other people through acts of mercy and justice, and to glorify him through everyday faithfulness in every sphere of life. In fulfilling this calling, we obey the original Creation Mandate, the ongoing Great Commandment, and the renewed Great Commission, we bless those around us (even unbelievers), and our actions bear eternal fruit that will continue into the new creation.

This set of statements supports the ideas behind Issler's (2012) five gaps. The disconnected gap emphasized the idea that those who do not follow the teachings of Christ allow themselves to experience suffering caused by evil or error. For example, cognitive distortion can occur when someone develops a Christological image connected to the failures of family systems or childhood experiences. This person then continues to reject the belief that an all-good deity exists. The distress gap follows when the person experiences moments of emotional distress and questions the character or divine love of God. By experiencing the combination of emotional stress, doubt, and disconnection, the sufferer dismisses the truth of God's character and begins to diminish the perceived credibility of professed values associated with Judeo-Christianity. Others may perceive the sufferer as having a questionable moral character because the espoused values mismatch the sufferer's actions. As a result, the sufferer's lifestyle can begin to drift into secularism and direct or latent anger directed toward Christ.

The risk of gap-related drifting underlined the need to examine one's attitudes, opinions, and values associated with human constructs of good citizenship versus divine citizenship. Some constructs of secular citizenship pertain to compliance with organizational or societal norms regardless of their origins. In secular worldviews, values tend to be treated as morally relative and changeable over time. However, divine values contain universal applicability and sacred connections to higher callings that impact the afterlife. For example, one's career could be viewed as merely transactional and instrumental for income and status. However, divine worldviews emphasize the idea of vocation regarding work. Veith (2002) stated the following comments:

Those in any line of work are usually doing it not from some high ideal but because they must make a living. Work often appears meaningless. It is a means to an end – survival,

but we survive only to work. It consumes our time, our emotions, our after-hours preoccupations (p. 15).

The sacredness of one's work supports the concept of vocation (Berg & Sadler, 2021). It eliminates the diminishment of one's work to mere instrumentality and uplifts the person by influencing his or her self-perception through a spiritual lens rooted in God's redemptive purposes. Dunlop (2021) noted that people who perceived their stories of suffering through redemptive lenses found a vocational meaning in their work. Mclean et al. (2020) stated that redemption occurs "when a challenging, negative, or traumatic experience is narrated in a way that communicates growth, meaning-made, or resolution" (p. 1).

The 1980s

Beschloss (2007) depicted the 1980s as the Reagan Administration era. The period was characterized by the predominance of face-to-face contacts, landline telephones, personal door-to-door delivery of printed newspapers, mail delivered by the U.S. Postal Service, and local and cable television; this era also revealed noteworthy political and global changes such as the culmination of the Cold War leading to the collapse of the Eastern Bloc in Europe in 1989 (Kramer, 2003; Reagan & Novak, 1989).

The Globalization of the 1990s

The 1990s under the Clinton Administration between 1993 and 2001 experienced the onset of globalization, which relocated domestic production lines to lower labor cost markets creating a global economy (Brinkley, 1997). The need to develop efficient supply chains to transport finished goods back to the domestic market evolved as a result (Rhode & Toniolo, 2006). Additionally, the middle of the decade marked the launch of email, slow-speed telephone landline-based Internet, and 2G digital cellular telephone.

The New Millennium

The onset of the new millennium coincided with the election of George W. Bush as a two-term president between 2001-2009 after a controversial legal battle with the opponent Al Gore (Beschloss, 2007). This decade amplified the growing reliance on quickly evolving technology and digitization. This technological evolution revealed the potential threats of being disconnected from the World Wide Web due to digital complications such as power grid challenges, Internet outages, and cybercrime (Casani & Wilson, 1996). The emergence of the Google search engine revolutionized Internet searches from the standpoint of speed and the number of results returned (Brophy & Bawden, 2005).

The Second Decade of the New Millenium

The second decade of the 21st century was the unprecedented time of the election of the first African American two-term President Barack Obama whose administration constructively influenced the American sociopolitical sphere between 2009 and 2017 (Obama, 2018). The use of social media as a substitute connection, communication medium, and social influencing were employed during the 2008 election and 2012 reelection campaigns. The growing reliance on technology and digitization increased the speed of life and stress. Social media redefined the meaning of friendship. In 2016, a one-term President Donald Trump was elected to serve between 2017 through 2020. Based on Wreczycki's (2021) qualitative analysis of his inaugural speech in comparison with the Save America Rally on January 6, 2021, the presidency marked a challenge to moral values.

Qualitative Research Questions

The literature review provided a working definition for (a) self-awareness, (b) social identity, (c) spirituality, and (d) self-transformation. First Corinthians 14:1 was referenced as a guide on how to develop spiritually. John 14:27 was used as a modality to share spirituality in social environments. The literature review informs and guides the qualitative research questions:

- RQ1: Since Tajfel (1978) grounded social identity theory in belonging to a group as a source of (a) identity, (b) pride, and (c) self-esteem, do you find it applicable in the U.S. culture 45 years later? If so, why? If not, why not? What does social identity mean to you, and has your view changed? If so, what caused your view to change?
- RQ2: Since Wreczycki's (2021) sustainable social value model grounded in (a) self-awareness, (b) emotional maturity, (c) emotional sovereignty, (d) self-concept, and (e) ascension of will to make moral choices supports personal autonomy to remain moral, how can a person balance this responsibility with group membership since the group depends on its leader and followers for value sustainability? Since the pillars are linear and self-awareness is necessary to balance emotions to rely on self-concept for moral choices, how do you insulate yourself from the potential impact of group dynamics to remain yourself?
- RQ3: What does spirituality mean to you within the context of your religious tradition or philosophy if you are not affiliated? If you are affiliated, how do you sustain unity with your deity to interact with others from the inspired perspective? If you are not affiliated, how do you sustain inner peace to interact with others (Gajda & Gajda, 2012)?
- RQ4: Wreczycki (2019) defined national culture as a repository of values, rights, and obligations of citizens and posited that individuals are responsible for sustaining their values and interacting with the culture, which binds a nation through national institutions. Given the technological advancements impact interactions,

how do you contribute to national cohesion while insulating yourself from the group dynamics for selfhood sustainability?

Methodology

Qualitative Methods and Analysis

Liamputtong and Ezzy's (2005) qualitative analysis method was used to facilitate immersion in the content for themes to emerge to be translated into codes representing underlying traits infused with (a) emotions, (b) feelings, (c) thoughts, (d) words, and (e) actions with social implications. Qualitative data are presented from six participants split between three males and three females with themes and codes representing traits. Data collection involved semi structured interviews and written responses to four questions distributed via email. The researchers transcribed the narrative responses into Word format for coding to occur. To derive meaning from the data, Saldana's (2009) *in vivo* coding method was used to interpret the data from an exploratory perspective. The study required an openness to participants' perspectives that would allow their ideas and thoughts to emerge from their statements rather than the researchers imposing interpretative biases linked to theoretical preferences that supported other types of coding.

Exegetical Methods and Analysis

To capture a biblical understanding of the chosen pericopes, Robbins' (1996) concept of inner texture supported the exploration of the "communication transaction," which a text supplies through "the implied author, the narrator, and the characters who work together to communicate that message" (p. 28). The exploratory nature of the qualitative study needed a consistent openness in the exegetical analysis so that meaning could be derived from multiple angles without limitations created by other sociorhetorical methods. In John 17:24, the narrator John witnessed Jesus Christ addressing God before the betrayal and crucifixion. Christ used a prayer involving promises and statements that affected the eternal future of the disciples, a particular future that promised eternal placement with Christ and a transformation of moral character in the present life. The transformation involved (a) full acceptance of grace, (b) Christ as being God, and (c) inner peace that could only take place with God inspiring the transformation rather than it being sourced from internal processes of the disciples.

Results

Six participants – three males and three females – contributed content answered four research questions. The content was analyzed qualitatively to extract themes. Themes were converted to one- or two-word traits to compare them to Jesus' characteristics extracted from Matthew 5:3-12.

Participant 1

Participant 1 is a 65-year-old male of Polish origin residing in the Midwest for 40 years. He is an attorney, entrepreneur, father of four adult children, and a practicing Catholic.

Table 1: *Participant 1: Content, Themes, and Codes*

Content	Themes	Codes
I am not familiar with Tajfel’s social identity theory. I do not negate the impact of group membership. However, I believe that belonging to a group should never occur at the cost of individuality. For instance, I was born in the Eastern Bloc Poland. So, I am Polish. I have lived in the U.S. for the past 38 years and am a naturalized American. I speak English, Polish, Russian, and Ukrainian. In my line of work, people visit me in my office, and I visit people in prisons. So, my social identity depends on what I do at any moment and what I think about myself when I interact with others. There are core roles I fulfill like being the son of my late parents living their values that merged with my traits. I am a brother, a father to four adult children, an attorney, and a partner in a law firm. If I am to mention my core values, courage to be patient to control my emotions so they do not control me comes first. What others think of me is not my business. Do my roles define me? Only to the extent of	Balanced group membership with being social but emphasized the value of individuality in human dynamics regardless of how many groups a person belongs to. Provided a broad spectrum of social identity given the country of origin, destination country, the languages spoken, profession as a source of income, and social roles.	Care Cohesion Courage Humility Individuality Integrity Mercy Patience Perseverance Self-respect Self-restraint Social justice Unity Vigilance

Content	Themes	Codes
<p>my thinking about them. Am I proud of at least some of them? Of course. How could I not be? Am I my Juris Doctor degree? No, a degree is merely the means to be a credentialed professional with a license to practice immigration law federally and other branches of law in two states. In my view, a sense of social identity is complex and depends on an individual. I immigrated to the U.S. with a law degree from the best Polish university. I could not use it because I did not speak English. I went to law school here to learn the American law and pass bar exams in two states. So, at one point I was a non-English-speaking documented migrant earning a minimum wage and attending law school. That identity is still part of me regardless of whether people I interact with today know my personal history. That social identity shaped who I am today. What changed were my roles. What has not changed are the traits that are not just my parents' values.</p>		
<p>I agree with Wreczycki's sustainable social value model and the linear nature of its five pillars. With courage, I sustain self-awareness and patiently control my emotions to be able</p>	<p>Agreed with Wreczycki's sustainable social value model. Emphasized the role of courage to be self-aware and to be in control of emotions. Expressed</p>	<p>Authenticity Courage Humility</p>

Content	Themes	Codes
<p>to ascend into my highest instincts to make moral choices with value-adding characteristics. I use humility and patience to not fall into the trap of self-aggrandizement to be my integrated self. The question what Jesus would do is on my mind often. Even when I am in the court room and have the same level of education as the presiding judge, I listen to all arguments carefully and stay silent when receiving instructions. This teaches me how to better help my clients in the future. To be independent of the opinions of others is in my view the greatest spiritual gift.</p>	<p>humility, asking what Jesus would do. Warned of the danger of self-aggrandizement when one falls for the opinions of others, which can be flattery intended for lower purposes. Emphasized being emotionally sovereign from the opinions of others as a spiritual gift to the self.</p>	<p>Integrity Morality Others-centered Patience Self-awareness Self-restraint Service Spirituality Wisdom</p>
<p>I practice the Catholic religion differently from my parents. I have a strong relationship with the Catholic tradition and recognize all the religious holidays that are important to me. I am not able to ignore them. They are grounded in my faith. They are also grounded in my inner and personal feelings. These are not necessarily intellectual experiences. Spirituality is an internal force that enables me to penetrate all concepts, stereotypes, and even mystical propositions to identify my position and feelings and compare them with the existing concepts of my own</p>	<p>Religious and spiritual. Prioritizes the religious holidays as faith foundation. Relies on religious tenets and symbols for processing feelings that stem from emotions. Uses spirituality as an overarching power to connect emotional, psychological, and physical aspects with integrity. Perceives, feels, and uses spirituality as a transcendence vehicle to introspect, self-reflect, and connect the material with the subtle. Emphasizes</p>	<p>Care Cohesion Humility Integrity Joy Mercy Perseverance Self-restraint Self-transformation Social justice</p>

Content	Themes	Codes
<p>understanding of supernatural forces in religious and secular contexts. For me, spirituality is periodically recurring moments of reflection on being using the religious and secular aspects. In the word, dwelling in silence with God, within the context of reasoning, meditation, and perspective, I find much in common with the Jehovah’s Witness tradition. In my dialogue with God, I do not need an intermediary like a priest. For some, the presence of this intermediary is important to continue the tradition, and for some not. For me, the presence of a priest matters but only when I align with him on values. I do not appreciate a money-oriented priest. A value-based priest is a spiritual shepherd who follows Christ and leads others. The communion with God has a positive effect on all relationships with people and the environment. A nervous person finds a moment of reflection and time to be balanced. Therefore, everything should take place in communion with God because intimacy with God allows us to move away from our feelings and focus on relationships with others through communion with God as a constructive approach to life, finding time</p>	<p>religious practice as different from the ancestral approach to encompass all steps of <i>Lectio Divina</i>. Brings results of communion with God to social environments. Considers communion with God as transcendent and restorative to practice emotional self-constraint to result in emotional sovereignty and rely on self-concept for free will ascension to make moral decisions for sustainable social value. Relies on communion with God as a modality to practice <i>agapao</i> which results in doing what is right at the appropriate time for sustainable value adding reasons. Perceives God as a morally loving parent who gives children free will to form their moral character based on ancestral values to ascend to make moral choices that result in constructive social consequences.</p>	<p>Transcendance</p>

Content	Themes	Codes
<p>for others, empathy, and developing our personality and character. Self-work is a life-long process. Unity with God is a leading element of self-work to bring the best self forward originating from the highest instincts to all relationships starting from God and moving to others and our environment. This is what God expects of us. God created the world, but God is not a dictator and does not make us do anything. God gave us free will to make choices. Reflection must be profound for these choices to be right to add sustainable value to the human family.</p>		
<p>U.S. culture is abstract given the diversified states and cultural heritage of their inhabitants. For me, being a patriot is not just waving the flag but always putting the nation first. I assist migrants on the path to citizenship. I work a lot and do not have many interactions in settings outside of the office, courtrooms, and prisons. I use technology responsibly but prefer a paper calendar to keep my appointments. When I have free time, I watch hockey, fish, or listen to the birds. I know who I am and can detect the intentions of others. I value emotionally stable people and keep the emotionally unstable</p>	<p>Pointed at the abstract nature of U.S. culture. Defined patriotism as placing the nation first before personal interests. Amplified being others-centered in assisting them in realizing their American dream. Tends to overwork and values time outside of work. Prefers spending time in nature enjoying hobbies or watching hockey. Is self-assured through introspection and emotional control.</p>	<p>Care Courage Humility Others-centered Patriotism Self-care Selflessness</p>

Content	Themes	Codes
ones away. Avoiding drama is important for the quality of life. By living a meaningful life, I contribute to national meaning.		

Research Question 1

The participant agreed with group dynamics emphasizing that the group membership should not alter personal values. The participant disclosed not being familiar with Tajfel's (1978) social identity theory not challenging group membership's importance in shaping social identity but emphasizing the role of individuality as self-perception through introspection with courage to be patient and maintain emotional control for emotional sovereignty. The participant revealed the traits of (a) care, (b) cohesion, (c) courage, (d) humility, (e) individuality, (f) integrity, (g) mercy, (h) patience, (i) perseverance, (j) self-respect, (k) self-restraint, (l) social justice, (m) unity, and (n) vigilance. The participant pointed at the cumulative nature of social identity acquired through the previous roles stamped in the subconscious and grounded in moral character to be referenced.

Research Question 2

The participant agreed with the pillars and linearity of Wreczycki's (2021) sustainable social value model. The participant revealed the traits of (a) authenticity, (b) courage, (c) humility, (d) integrity, (e) morality, (f) others-centeredness, (g) patience, (h) self-awareness, (i) self-restraint, (j) service, and (k) spirituality. Courage and patience to be self-aware through introspection to be in emotional control allowed the participant to suspend his concepts to produce the best and mutually satisfying solutions while in service to others. The participant referenced what Jesus would do – rely on (a) courage, (b) patience, and (c) wisdom – to operationalize his and others' best interest in a group setting.

Research Question 3

The participant's content, translated to themes, revealed traits such as (a) care, (b) cohesion, (c) humility, (d) integrity, (e) joy, (f) mercy, (g) perseverance, (h) self-restraint, (i) self-transformation, (j) social justice, and (k) transcendence. The participant emphasized the importance of religious holidays and the reliance on religious tenets and symbols as an expression of spirituality.

The participant's traits overlapped with Jesus' values extracted from Matthew 5:3-12. This finding aligns with the participant's disclosure of using *Lectio Divina* as a transcendence and self-transformation modality to balance the emotional, psychological, and physical demands of

daily living with the need for restoration to be able to sustain moral character to live a decent life of meaning while creating and sharing sustainable social value. The participant’s traits support the linearity and dependence on Wreczycki’s (2021) sustainable social value model. The participant’s disclosure of introspecting and self-reflecting on the emotional states while modulating feelings with self-awareness supports the need for emotional control with self-awareness and self-constraint to sustain emotional sovereignty.

Research Question 4

The participant revealed the traits of (a) care, (b) courage, (c) humility, (d) others-centeredness, (e) patriotism, (f) patience, and (g) selflessness. The participant is an introspective and self-reflective individual focused on service to others while sustaining moral values. Through humility, the participant revealed caring for the nation by living a life of purpose and meaning.

Participant 2

Participant 2 is a 57-year-old female residing in New England. She is self-employed and identified as not affiliated with a religious tradition.

Table 2: *Participant 2: Content, Themes, and Codes*

Content	Themes	Codes
I must start by saying I have not studied Tajfel’s social identity theory, but I do understand how we are now identifying <i>belonging</i> in the United States today. The concept of belonging has become a cultural buzzword and is used to explain what feels like the fracturing of established societies worldwide. I believe there has always been a conflicting view of those who choose to be loners, or at least outside of the general fold of belonging. “He was always a loner” is an often-used expression after shocking and violent acts. Narcissists,	Interpreted belonging as a buzzword often misused to reflect fractured groups.	Care
	Focused on solitude and introspection. Warned of the danger of stereotyping.	Cohesion
	Warned against narcissism.	Compassion
	Pointed at the opposite ends of the human condition – a loner and an influencer – perceiving both as dangerous.	Consideration
	Perceived as a well-functioning society is an evolving phenomenon working toward unity and tolerance. Emphasized the	Courage
		Egalitarianism
		Humility
		Integrity
		Introspection
		Reflection
	Self-transformation	

Content	Themes	Codes
<p>and I mean a clinical version of this maladaptive personality disorder, are that dangerous two-sided coin of loner and influencer. Their power is so often derived from their ability to impact self-esteem, pride, and identity. As we are seeing right at this moment in American politics, this ability to influence and control is, as has always been true, incredibly dangerous. Our definition of society has not evolved into people feeling more connected to all people and species on Earth. Not that it ever has been. I would have hoped that science and humanity would have evolved alongside one another, but there appears to be an almost inexplicable aspect of human nature that seeks conflict and a need to see some humans as <i>others</i>. It has reached a breaking point in our country today. Pride is not something to scream about, your side winning at all costs is not winning at all. We hear the word <i>factions</i> to describe the evolution of social identity, extremists breaking from a group that once was their source of identity, pride, and self-esteem.</p>	<p>need to focus on unity to minimize divisions and conflict. Pointed at pride as a misleading trait to be offset with humility to be egalitarian. Emphasized the need to sustain moral values as a social cohesion modality without overreliance on deriving the sense of belonging, self-esteem, and pride from groups.</p>	<p>Social Justice Solitude Vigilance</p>
<p>But I do not think this is different from 45 years ago.</p>		

Content	Themes	Codes
<p>Throughout history, there have always been violent conflicts, persecution, and inexplicable hatred of people just because they are perceived as <i>others</i>. It feels dangerous today because we know where history tells us we are heading. We have forgotten the basic principle that we all do better when we all do better.</p>		
<p>What a great question. It would be so great if there were indeed a universal moral code that all humans agreed to and followed. If we as individuals could regulate our own words and actions to hold our own selves accountable and redirect, apologize, embrace humility when we misstep what a beautiful world this would be! First, we would need to establish that we are a worldwide society. That kindness and truth, living with having enough and rejecting excess and greed are the foundation of harmony. That we must do our best to do no harm. I do not think this is what we are being taught. I do not think this is what we are encouraged to strive for, but instead to have more of everything even when so many do not have enough. Second, culturally we are not being raised and nurtured to look up</p>	<p>Emphasized the need for emotional and psychological self-regulation for personal accountability. Pointed at the need to forgive and to extend an apology. Pointed at care, harmony, kindness, and truth and social cohesion values.</p> <p>Commented on overreliance on technology at the expense of face-to-face relationships.</p> <p>Pointed at balance and responsibility as the cornerstones of a well-functioning society.</p>	<p>Accountability</p> <p>Balance</p> <p>Care</p> <p>Courage</p> <p>Forgiveness</p> <p>Harmony</p> <p>Hope</p> <p>Humility</p> <p>Kindness</p> <p>Mercy</p> <p>Responsibility</p> <p>Self-restraint</p> <p>Service</p> <p>Truth</p>

Content	Themes	Codes
<p>from our devices and see how we fit gently into the world. If we are to follow our leaders, as the question asks, while at the same time being true to our own moral center, we will need to rebuild society with hope instead of fear. To always be in reaction is to have no chance to find balance. That said, personal responsibility is, I believe, the cornerstone of society. We must first be the best version of our own selves. The opposite of the trending of today's world societies moral direction may well be embracing Service as a principle we could all prioritize.</p>		
<p>A bold assumption any of us have inner peace! For me, it is the Yamas and Niyamas that are my guiding principles. Nonviolence, truthfulness, not stealing, no excess, no possessiveness. Purity, contentment, self-discipline, self-study, surrender. I start my day in reflection of these guiding principles and do my best to look at my own choices to see if I am on the right path. When I am embodying all or some of these wisdoms, I am in balance. I am still searching for my highest self!</p>	<p>Participant pointed at self-awareness as paramount to achieve inner peace. Reflecting on one's emotions though guiding principles is self-work. Through humility, the participant revealed being on a journey of self-discovery.</p>	<p>Courage Humility Peace Self-awareness Self-development Self-discovery</p>

Content	Themes	Codes
<p>The Internet has certainly hijacked civil discourse and exchanges with those whose perspectives differ from my own. For me, being an active volunteer in different schools and organizations has been a significant part of my life since I was a child. Volunteering in organizations within my community has been a value my parents instilled, and it is still an important part of my life. I find this to be the most impactful way for me to live in this world. I learn how others live, and they learn the same about me. This, at least I hope, makes it much harder for people to be likely to vote for things they know would cause me harm. Knowing more about how others live, whether by choice or circumstance, makes us all less judgmental and kinder.</p>	<p>Concerned with the use of the Internet as not always having a constructive influence on human affairs. Emphasized social service as a path to inner peace and fulfillment in changing times. Amplified expanding knowledge about others as means of connecting.</p>	<p>Care Charity Consideration Courage Fulfilment Harmony Knowledge No Judgement Peace</p>
<p>If I insulate myself from <i>group dynamics</i>, this may simply be that I have turned away from the noise and the circus that is a nonstop barrage of ugliness. I do not need to hear the daily rants to understand how many people have been led to believe some extremely dangerous things. I am not a participant of social media; I get my news from my hometown paper</p>		

Content	Themes	Codes
[<i>New York Times</i>] and listen to NPR for news.		
I do not know what could happen to have my values shift. I hope nothing unless it shifts me towards greater kindness.		

Research Question 1

The participant expressed concern for group dynamics given the impact of technology, narcissism, and politics. The participant's traits of (a) care, (b) cohesion, (c) compassion, (d) consideration, (e) courage, (f) egalitarianism, (g) humility, (h) integrity, (i) introspection, (j) reflection, (k) self-transformation, (l) social justice, (m) solitude, and (n) vigilance contributed to the expression of concern for fractured groups. The participant emphasized the importance of introspection to shield from stereotyping. The participant discussed the opposite personalities – a loner and a social influencer – as emotionally challenging and sometimes dangerous. The participant pointed at the value of each person's contributions to a well-functioning society to foster unity and tolerance for diversity. The contributions can be maximized by sustaining and practicing values.

Research Question 2

The participant revealed the traits of (a) accountability, (b) balance, (c) care, (d) courage, (e) forgiveness, (f) harmony, (g) hope, (h) humility, (i) kindness, (j) mercy, (k) responsibility, (l) self-restraint, (m) service, and (n) truth. Although the participant did not expressly state an agreement or disagreement with Wreczycki's (2021) sustainable social value model and the linearity of its pillars, the alignment of traits revealed self-awareness and emotional control with vigilance.

Research Question 3

The participant revealed the traits of (a) courage, (b) humility, (c) peace, (d) self-awareness, (e) self-development, and (f) self-discovery. As a person not affiliated with any religious tradition, the participant equated spirituality with inner peace and the belief that all should experience it. The participant pointed at self-awareness as critical to the achievement and sustainability of inner peace to bring peace to the world. Through humility, the participant expressed being on a journey of self-discovery in search of the highest self.

Research Question 4

The participant revealed the traits of (a) care, (b) charity, (c) consideration, (d) courage, (e) fulfillment, (f) harmony, (g) knowledge, (h) no judgement, and (i) peace, expressing concern for a well-functioning national culture focused on value sustainability to promote appreciation for diversity and tolerance. The participant was concerned with overreliance on technology in contracts in the era of growing narcissism and sociopolitical divide. The participant pointed at charitable work and social knowledge sharing as solutions to sustain a well-functioning nation.

Participant 3

Participant 3 is a 52-year-old male residing on the West Coast. The participant is employed in the biopharmaceutical sector and identified as originating from India from the ancestral Hindu and Muslim traditions but not practicing them.

Table 3: *Participant 3: Content, Themes, and Codes*

Content	Themes	Codes
When Tajfel published the social identity theory, I was 7. I do not think that social identity should be group dependent. I enjoy mingling with different ethnic groups while listening to music, eating foods, and travelling. But what I do is to expand my knowledge and see how people interact. I enjoy being a fellow sojourner on the trip of self-knowledge while interacting with others. I am now wiser than I was at 20, 30, or 40. In my 20s and 30s, work and achievements were priorities. Once I turned 40, balancing work with relaxation became important. I do not think of myself as a social identity. What others think of me is not important to me. What I think about myself is important. This	Agreed with social identity theory but stated that social identity should not be dependent on the opinions of others as individuals or as members of groups.	Courage Humility Openness Self-knowledge Tolerance Wisdom

Content	Themes	Codes
philosophy took some time to develop.		
In Eastern cultures, self-awareness is emphasized as a path of self-discovery and no attachment. I agree with Wreczycki's sustainable social value model. Self-awareness leads to self-reflection for effective emotional management. This is how we explore the self and evaluate our intentions. I introspect to ensure that I am on the right path. I am perceptive and stay away from people who find it challenging to manage their emotions.	Brought the Eastern perspective to self-awareness. Agreed with the sustainable social value model. Emphasized the value of humility to introspect and self-reflect to evaluate intentions on the journey of self-discovery.	Caution Courage Emotional management Humility Intentionality Introspection Self-awareness Self-discovery Self-reflection
I believe that in Western society religion and spirituality are outward expressions of what we do as part of organizations, churches, charities, and the like. To me as a person originating from Eastern culture, spirituality is an inward growth, and it comes as a spiritual matter from my own reflections. Furthermore, anyone can achieve spirituality and balance, which are the same. Balance comes from not craving what we do not need. Lastly, the spiritual ladder of inner growth involves different things such as meditation, chanting, going	Does not exclude the existence of spirituality in any religious tradition but pursues spiritual growth through secular modalities. Uses self-reflection for spiritual growth. Pursues spiritual growth from inner knowing that less is more and believes in detachment. Uses several modalities to pursue spiritual growth.	Devotion Discernment Self-awareness Self-reflection Wisdom

Content	Themes	Codes
silent for several days to self-reflect, using those tactics to explore the inner spiritual self.		
I discuss my philosophy with others and the importance of the human spirit versus the ego. I emphasize that letting the ego go is difficult but crucial to spiritual growth.	Discusses his philosophy with others. Emphasizes inner growth while diminishing the ego. Discerns when to engage with others and when to retreat to maintain and sustain inner balance.	Balance Discernment Generosity Faith Hope
I impart my philosophies with people I interact with family members, friends, neighbors, and others. I maintain healthy boundaries with people, especially those who appear emotionally unbalanced. I enjoy watching the sunset. I find it philosophical. The human ego is all about control. The book and the movie <i>Life of Pi</i> show that human life is in the various stages of letting go. It is like letting go of the house one lives in. Once a person learns about control and the state of being attached to things that they do not care about anymore, it is easier to become free because what happens other people will accept us for who we are rather than what we own.	Expresses hope that letting go of attachment to material possessions will result in being unconditionally accepted by others.	Humility Self-care Self-development

Research Question 1

The participant revealed the traits of (a) courage, (b) humility, (c) openness, (d) self-knowledge, (e) tolerance, and (f) wisdom. Although the participant agreed with social identity theory, the contributor contested the potential dependence of social identity on

others as individuals or members of groups. The participant identified as being in search for the highest self while travelling the world to get to know different people and learning about their way of life.

Research Question 2

The participant revealed the traits of (a) caution, (b) courage, (c) emotional management, (d) humility, (e) intentionality, (f) introspection, (g) self-awareness, (h) self-discovery, and (i) self-reflection. The participant expanded the view on self-awareness through the lens of Eastern culture. While the participant agreed with the pillars and linearity of Wreczycki's (2021) sustainable social value model, the emphasis on humility to introspect and self-reflect for effective emotional management while alone or interacting with others was helpful to him to connect self-awareness with emotional maturity and sovereignty.

Research Question 3

The participant revealed the traits of (a) devotion, (b) discernment, (c) self-awareness, (d) self-reflection, (e) spiritual growth, and (f) wisdom. As not affiliated with a religious tradition, the participant perceives spirituality as inner peace and uses self-reflection for spiritual growth based on detachment and the philosophy of less is more.

Research Question 4

The participant expressed (a) balance, (b) discernment, (c) generosity, (d) faith, (e) hope, (f) humility, (g) self-care, and (h) self-development. The participant believes in and practices moral character formation and sustainability to interact with others to learn about their lives and expand knowledge about other cultures. The participant considers being perceptive and maintaining relations with minimal maintenance with people as individuals or in groups.

Participant 4

Participant 4 is a 50-year-old male residing in New England contributed the content below to answer four research questions. The participant did not disclose the source of income. The participant identified as originating from and practicing the Native American Mohegan tradition.

Table 4: *Participant 4: Content, Themes, and Codes*

Content	Themes	Codes
I have not heard of Tajfel's social identity theory. While I agree with the sense of belonging and pride in	Emphasized the importance of belonging to a tribe. Cautioned about	Care

Content	Themes	Codes
connection with a tribe membership and a source of identity, I want to emphasize that this must be a healthy relationship between an individual and the tribe. Simply put, the individual must not be superficially inflated or diminished by the tribe. My heritage is Native American Mohegan. Although I am a Mohegan, there is a lot more to me than my heritage. Since boyhood, I have felt like a Mohegan but wanted to evolve and pursue dreams bigger than myself. In my tradition, we call this path following the Great Spirit.	false pride in connection with tribe membership that must not interfere with self-development achieved through being centered following the Mohegan's rituals while interacting with others and the environment.	Cohesion Commitment Courage Egalitarianism Humility Integrity Joy Mercy Perseverance Self-care Self-restraint Social justice
To relate to everyone and everything requires razor-sharp self-awareness without inflating self-importance. I agree with Wreczycki's pillars starting from self-awareness and leading to socially conscious living though emotional balance and the use of free will to self-constrain and make good choices. When we feel connected to one another and our environment, we naturally care for ourselves while caring for others and the environment.	Emphasized the critical importance of the Mohegan tradition's cohesion to treat all and the environment in a kind manner.	Care Cohesion Commitment Courage Egalitarianism Humility Integrity Joy Mercy Perseverance

Content	Themes	Codes
		Self-care Self-restraint Social justice
<p>Native spirituality is not a religion but a way of life. We have many beliefs that may differ from the mainstream. Our main belief is that we are all connected with all things that surround us. That means all skin color – red, white, black, yellow, and others – all animals, plants, rocks, water, earth, sun, and the universe. The state of inner peace and harmony is keeping centered. The law of being good to each other, taking care of each other, and loving one another. We do this with ceremony, sweat lodge, dance, singing, music, food, fire, water, herbs, meditation, vision quest, and other celebrations. Our harmony is shared together by helping one another through celebration, praying, dance, music, ceremony, singing, meditation, and sweat lodge. The sweat lodge we had just performed was the grandmother (wisdom, love, peace), and it was formidable while the Earth and ancestors spoke.</p>	<p>Interpreted the Mohegan tradition as a way of life rather than a goal in life to be achieved. Emphasized the foundational connection with all humans and the environment as part of the Mohegan’s spirituality celebrated through inner peace and harmony and expressed not only in daily life but during tribal gatherings to participate in ceremonies, sweat lodge, dancing, singing, playing music, sitting by the fire and enjoying eating food spiced with herbs, drinking water, and meditating.</p>	<p>Care Cohesion Commitment Courage Egalitarianism Humility Integrity Joy Mercy Perseverance Self-care Self-restraint Social justice</p>
<p>National culture is a big combination of two simple words. The first implies a specific contiguous territory. But we share the United States of America’s nationality with the Hawaiians and</p>	<p>Emphasized simplicity in conceptualizing the social phenomena of interest to derive meaning. Pointed at the U.S. diversity as a nation that occupies not</p>	<p>Care Cohesion Commitment</p>

Content	Themes	Codes
Alaskans as states not to mention the territories overseas. Even in a contiguous territory, there may be regional variances depending on what is important for the local inhabitants. For as long as all of us value our unity as <i>E Pluribus Unum</i> out of many one, we can coexist in peace and harmony. I live through the lens of my Mohegan tradition applying my tribe's spirituality as a path of self-discovery while learning about other regions. I am open to learning but rely on my principles and my tribe's spirituality to stay centered.	only a contiguous territory but distant lands.	Courage Egalitarianism Humility Integrity Joy Mercy Perseverance Self-care Self-restraint Social justice

Research Question 1

The participant revealed the traits of (a) care, (b) cohesion, (c) commitment, (d) courage, (e) egalitarianism, (f) humility, (g) integrity, (h) joy, (i) mercy, (j) perseverance, (k) peace, (l) self-care, (m) self-restraint, and (n) social justice. The participant emphasized the importance of belonging to the Mohegan tribe for social identity but warned about false pride as the ego's expression. The participant amplified inner peace as a way of interacting with others and the Earth. The participant's social identity is closely tied with the ancestral heritage and deep roots to practice native spirituality in service to others and the natural environment.

Research Question 2

The participant revealed the traits of (a) care, (b) cohesion, (c) commitment, (d) courage, (e) egalitarianism, (f) humility, (g) integrity, (h) joy, (i) mercy, (j) perseverance, (k) self-care, (l) self-restraint, and (m) social justice. He agreed with Wreczycki's (2021) sustainable social value model and its linearity. Through a sense of belonging to the Mohegan tradition focused on conscious and meaningful living, the participant finds integrity.

Research Question 3

The participant revealed the traits of (a) care, (b) cohesion, (c) commitment, (d) courage, (e) egalitarianism, (f) harmony, (g) humility, (h) integrity, (i) joy, (j) mercy, (k) perseverance, (l) self-care, (m) self-restraint, and (n) social justice. He referred to Mohegan spirituality as a way of life in harmony with selfhood, others, and the environment. The contributor participates in tribal rituals to sustain Mohegan spirituality.

Research Question 4

The participant revealed the traits of (a) care, (b) cohesion, (c) commitment, (d) courage, (e) egalitarianism, (f) humility, (g) integrity, (h) joy, (i) mercy, (j) perseverance, (k) self-care, (l) self-restraint, (m) simplicity, and (n) social justice. The participant focused on simplicity in social settings while pursuing the Mohegan way of life. The philosophy focuses on inner peace and harmony with all existence.

Participant 5

Participant 5 is a 33-year-old female residing on the East Coast. The participant is employed in the transportation sector and identified as originating from but not practicing the Catholic tradition.

Table 5: *Participant 5: Content, Themes, and Codes*

Content	Themes	Codes
Social identity is personal. Our identity should not be dependent on others. Reputation is important, but we are a lot more than our reputation.	Referred to social identity as personal. Emphasized emotional sovereignty in relation to social identity. Pointed at reputation as important. Amplified the broader meaning of social identity beyond reputation.	Courage Emotional maturity Emotional sovereignty Reputation Self-awareness
I agree with the model. Self-awareness allows me to feel my emotions and modulate my thinking to be constructive toward myself and others.	The participant emphasized the ability to feel emotions and monitoring thinking about feelings to feel independent of the emotional flow. With	Courage Emotional maturity Emotional sovereignty Freedom

Content	Themes	Codes
When I feel and see my emotions, I feel free.	emotional sovereignty, the participant can interact with others from the position of self-confidence and be free of any destructive interactions.	Peace Self-awareness
To me, spirituality is a feeling, an understanding, and a belief in something greater than myself. Spirituality is unique to all. I believe the more we invest in the law of attraction the more constructive experiences we will be subjected to. I achieve inner peace and harmony through fitness training and diving into an enjoyable book. I enjoy outdoor activities such as hiking, kayaking, and biking.	The participant pointed at higher power as the source of spirituality and emphasized the individual perception of spirituality.	Courage Inspiration Reverence
I share my inner peace and harmony with others via consistent outreach and continuous motivational speaking, turning negatives into positives, donations, and kindness events such as the ones hosted by the Kindness Crew.	The participant is a charitable individual involved in motivational outreach, donating time and resources, and participating in kindness.	Courage Charity Generosity Kindness

Research Question 1

The participant revealed the traits of (a) courage, (b) emotional maturity, (c) emotional sovereignty, (d) reputation, and (e) self-awareness. The participant interpreted social identity as a personal endeavor. The participant relied on self-awareness and emotional maturity and sovereignty to draw a difference between reputation and social identity.

Research Question 2

The participant revealed the traits of (a) courage, (b) emotional maturity, (c) emotional sovereignty, (d) freedom, and (e) self-awareness. The participant relies on self-awareness for self-observation and modulation of emotions, feelings, and thoughts. Via these modalities, the participant stays constructive and maintains inner peace.

Research Question 3

The participant revealed the reliance on higher power as a source of spirituality. She emphasized reverence for higher power. The participant amplified the personal nature of spirituality. The participant revealed the traits of (a) courage, (b) inspiration, and (c) reverence.

Research Question 4

The participant revealed the traits of (a) courage, (b) charity, (c) generosity, and (d) kindness. As a person not affiliated with a religious tradition, the participant perceives spirituality as being involved in something larger than selfhood. The participant sustains spirituality through commitment to principles and enacting them in social settings via charity for sustainable social value.

Participant 6

Participant 6 is a 30-year-old female residing on the East Coast. She is employed in the transportation sector and identified as originating from and practicing the Catholic tradition.

Table 6: *Participant 6: Content, Themes, and Codes*

Content	Themes	Codes
To me, social identity is a personal perception that can be fueled by emotions and feelings. I am a granddaughter, daughter, sibling, fiancé, co-worker, and many other roles. What connects them are my principles based on my faith and ancestral values. I am 30 years old, so work achievements are important to me. But family is most	Pointed at social identity as personal rather than dictated by a group membership. Emphasized faith and family as a source of values. Focused on deriving self-esteem from within.	Courage Faith Family Introspection Principled Self-discovery

Content	Themes	Codes
important even when things get challenging. My self-esteem comes from who I am and am becoming.		
Self-awareness is critical for self-observation, self-reflection, and monitoring how I interact with others. I am a human resources practitioner, so my work demands of me to always be knowledgeable and professional. Emotional control and sovereignty are critical in my line of work. I always do what is best given the circumstances. As an experienced human resources professional, I apply what I practice at work based on my personal values to all life situations. This is my shield and armor to ensure that destructive influence from outside is minimized.	Agreed with the sustainable social value model's pillars. Pointed at self-observation and self-reflection as effective modalities to control emotions to be emotionally sovereign. Amplified self-knowledge as the most effective way to interact with others professionally and in personal settings.	Courage Emotional control Emotional sovereignty Knowledge Professionalism Self-awareness Self-knowledge Self-observation Self-reflection
To me spirituality means I feel and believe that there is something greater than just the physical world we live in. I believe that when our loved ones are no longer here with us physically, they are still here spiritually watching over us. In relation to religion, I am Catholic and do believe that heaven is real and where we go in the afterlife. In relation to religion, I usually attend church weekly and pray for	The participant relies on Catholic spirituality as a source of higher power, hope, and inner and outer peace. The participant prays for health, family, and fulfillment. The participant practices the Golden Rule.	Care Constructive Courage Fulfillment Hope Peace

Content	Themes	Codes
<p>family, health, and my desires for the future. I try to enter each day with a good attitude, putting out the type of energy of positivity I would like to receive in return. Even on bad days I try my best to remain at peace with the belief that tough days and times will pass, and tomorrow is a new day.</p>		
<p>I share my spirituality by giving advice when friends or family members need it most, sharing my perspective that all things in life will work themselves out. I always try my best to be a positive energy and a person to be around, hoping that I will inspire those who need it and attract others with the same energy to me.</p>	<p>Shares spirituality by caring for relatives and friends to uplift them. Hopes that all issues will be constructively resolved. Stays positive to attract constructive outcomes through reciprocity.</p>	<p>Care Compassion Courage Hope Inspiration Positivity Reciprocity Uplifting</p>

Research Question 1

The participant revealed the traits of (a) courage, (b) faithfulness, (c) family orientation, (d) introspection, (e) being principled, and (f) self-discovery. The participant emphasized social identity as a personal endeavor within the social context. The contributor relies on ancestral faith and family values for social identity’s sustainability.

Research Question 2

The participant revealed the traits of (a) courage, (b) emotional control, (c) emotional sovereignty, (d) knowledge, (e) professionalism, (f) self-awareness, (g) self-observation, (h) self-knowledge, and (i) self-reflection. The participant agreed with the pillars of

Wreczycki's (2021) sustainable social value model emphasizing the value of self-observation and self-reflection to modulate emotions, feelings, and thoughts to act in accordance with the chosen profession regardless of the setting and circumstances.

Research Question 3

The participant revealed the traits of (a) care, (b) constructivism, (c) courage, (d) fulfillment, (e) hope, and (f) peace. The participant's spirituality flows from the Catholic faith. The participant is practicing the Golden Rule for selfhood sustainability.

Research Question 4

The participant revealed the traits of (a) care, (b) compassion, (c) courage, (d) hope, (e) inspiration, (f) positivity, (g) reciprocity, and (h) uplifting. The participant relies on Catholic spirituality and the practice of the Golden Rule while interacting with others in a professional setting, allowing the same standards to inform her behavior in personal situations. The participant cares for relatives and friends through prayers for health and fulfillment.

Discussion

Six participants' content, themes, and codes are summarized in Table 7. Participants confirmed all questions. Leading codes of each question are cited below.

Table 7: *Participants' Summary of Codes Across the Research Questions*

Participant	RQ1	RQ2	RQ3	RQ4
1	Patience	Patience	Care	Care
2	Humility	Forgiveness	Humility	Charity
3	Wisdom	Humility	Spirituality	Hope
4	Peace	Integrity	Harmony	Perseverance
5	Self-awareness	Self-awareness	Reverence	Kindness
6	Self-discovery	Self-knowledge	Care	Care

All participants were value-based individuals. They represented two genders and three states on the East Coast in the New England region, one state on the West Coast, and one Mid-Western state. The participants exhibited courage to partake in a semi

structured interview based on four questions, which required narrative responses calling for conceptualization of their selfhood within the context of (a) social identity, (b) self-awareness, (c) emotional balance, (d) emotional sovereignty, (e) the ascension of free will to dwell in God or believing in something greater than themselves for the secular participants, (f) making moral choices and acting on them for sustainable social value, (g) relying on spirituality to sustain the integrated self-known as selfhood, and (h) contribute this energy to the national cohesion while being morally vigilant to insulate themselves from group dynamics.

All traits extracted from Matthew 5:3-12 except for commitment revealed themselves from the participants' content based on themes. Table 8 summarizes by participant the count of overlapping values for each research question.

Table 8: *Participants' Traits Overlapping with Jesus' Values Extracted from Matthew 5:3-12*

Participants	RQ1	RQ2	RQ3	RQ4
1: Religious male (65), Midwest	8	2	9	2
2: Secular female (57) New England	5	4	1	1
3: Secular male (52), West Coast	1	1	0	2
4: Secular male (50), New England	11	11	11	11
5: Secular female (33), New England	0	0	0	0
6: Religious female (30), New England	0	0	1	1

Participant 4, the 50-year-old male participant from New England, revealed the highest number of values overlapping with Jesus' values based on Matthew 5:3-12. Although the participant shared being a secular person, the partaker is a descendant of the Mohegan tribe, and his traits consistently revealed themselves across the four research questions. The participant who came in second was Participant 1, the 65-year-old male from the Midwest originating from a religious country. While the participant's profession as an attorney supported integrity and social justice, the traits that overlapped with Jesus such as (a) care, (b) cohesion, (c) humility, (d) joy, (e) mercy, and (f) perseverance may have developed as a result of hardships in the youth spent in an Eastern Bloc country and the ability to start a new life in the United States.

Participant 2, the 57-year-old secular female from New England, revealed a moderate number of overlapping values with Jesus. The participant's concern with the declining

values in the changing and polarizing society drove her responses while her commitment to charitable work provided her with a sense of purpose and fulfillment. Participant 3, the 52-year-old secular male participant from the West Coast, moderately overlapped with Jesus' values as well. The participant's originating country of India and the mix of two ancestral religions (i.e., Islam and Hinduism) may have influenced his views. Participant 6, the 30-year-old religious female from New England, overlapped with Jesus' value of care within the context of spiritual development and sharing the results of it socially. Participant 5, the 33-year-old secular female from New England, did not overlap with Jesus' values. However, the participant's courage revealed her concern with her reputation, peaceful disposition, reverence for spiritual growth, and generosity.

Although all participants stated not being familiar with Tajfel's (1978) social identity theory, they agreed with belonging to a group as a source of (a) belonging, (b) pride, and (c) self-esteem. However, due to the changing national culture impacted by declining values and polarization within the context of the sociopolitical spectrum, the participants recommended caution and moral vigilance while considering group membership. The participants emphasized the importance of self-awareness in emotional management for emotional maturity and sovereignty to be able to rely on self-concept from within to ascend the will to make moral choices for sustainable social value.

Limitations and Future Direction

The study focused on the participants' familiarity with Tajfel's (1978) social identity theory, its meaning, and agreeing or disagreeing with its application in contemporary U.S. culture. The knowledge of Wreczycki's (2021) sustainable social value model and the linearity of its five pillars with special emphasis on the connection between self-awareness and emotional maturity to make the other three pillars possible was analyzed. The participants also shared their perception of spirituality, its meaning, and its application in their social environments to share how they contribute to the national cohesion while at the same time protecting themselves from group dynamics.

The study was limited to six participants; all of them, except for two, were residents of New England. To provide more diversity, more participants from other regions could be asked to answer the research questions. Also, since the study revealed that emotional stress can break the connection between self-awareness and emotional sovereignty, inquiring about emotional stress recovery modalities is worthwhile to aid self-transformation by committing to spiritual growth.

Conclusion

To provide research content, six participants – three females and three males – shared their perceptions of social identity, the role of spirituality, and self-transformation within the context of U.S. culture. Tajfel's (1978) social identity theory was referenced following Dean and Newton's (2022) resetting and returning to the drawing board method, to inquire if and to what extent social identity theory applies in the contemporary U.S. culture. The national culture analysis referenced key events from the 1980s, 1990s, and the first and second decades of the new millennium. Since U.S. culture functions within the global dynamic impacted by technology, the answers to four research questions were expected to provide data to inform whether technology supports sustaining moral character as a repository of values or may be a hindrance.

Wreczycki's (2019) working definition of national culture as a repository of values, rights, and obligations was referenced. Wreczycki's (2021) sustainable social value model was used to examine selfhood sustainability. Jesus' values derived from Matthew 5:3-12 extracted by Winston (2002) and Wreczycki were referenced as a benchmark to assess how participants' traits derived from the content, themes, and codes compared. Robbins' (1996) sociorhetorical interpretation was used to move toward what it means to balance between engaged and disengaged – to be in this world but not of it. The John 14:27 pericope was analyzed exegetically to explain the concept of self-awareness and self-transformation using Lancaster and Palframan's (2009) position that spirituality plays a noteworthy role in personal growth based on (a) openness to transcendent power, (b) self-acceptance, and (c) elevation above ego's constructs to relate to selfhood.

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