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Benefits of Activity Participation: The Roles of Identity Affirmation and Peer Group Norm Sharing

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The importance of out-of-school time for healthy development has been stressed in recent reports by foundations and researchers (e.g., Carnegie Corporation, 1992; Eccles & Gootman, 2002; Eccles & Templeton, 2002; Larson, 2000). There is good evidence that participating in extracurricular activities is associated with both short- and long-term indicators of positive development during adolescence. Previous research, however, tells us less about the reasons for these associations. Scholars have suggested that activities can (a) help adolescents acquire both the educational credentials and the cognitive skills needed for adult work roles, (b) work through issues of personal and social identity, (c) acquire the interpersonal skills needed to form healthy social relationships and to succeed in the world of work, and (d) refine the emotional and behavioral skills needed to become fully functioning, independent adults.

In this chapter, we discuss two mechanisms that may help explain the connection between activities and positive development: identity pursuit and affirmation, and peer group norm-sharing. To explain the connection between activities and positive development, we have proposed a synergistic system connecting activity involvement with identity exploration and peer group composition (Barber, Eccles, & Stone, 2001; Eccles & Barber, 1999). In keeping with organismic principles (Cairns, 1996), and systems theory (Ford & Lerner, 1992), we think that such a system involves bidirectional transactions between subsystems operating at several levels. Individual level systems involving values, expectancies, and identities would thus interact reciprocally with social systems and subcultural systems of meaning and values. Specifically, we believe that enhanced outcomes result for adolescents who experience a confluence of activity participation, activity-based identity adoption, and a benign peer context. Previous research, including our own, has demonstrated the pervasive connections between each of these three factors and numerous outcomes. The story we unfold is mostly one of additive main effects, but we wanted, as well, to be sensitive to the possibility of contingencies between factors that would be suggested by possible interactions.

IDENTITY—THE ROLE OF SELF-BELIEFS IN ACTIVITY PARTICIPATION CHOICES

Researchers in leisure studies emphasize the importance of leisure activities that provide a forum in which to explore and express one's identity and passion (Kleiber, 1999). The activities adolescents choose can reflect core aspects of their self-beliefs. Over the past 20 years, Eccles and her colleagues have developed and tested a model of the motivational factors influencing achievement behaviors and goals, including educational choices and recreational activity participation (see Eccles, 1987; Eccles et al., 1983; Meece, Parsons, Kaczala, Goff, & Futterman, 1982). The model links achievement-related choices such as whether or not to participate in sports or activities directly to two sets of beliefs: the individual's expectations for success in, and sense of personal efficacy for, the various options, and the importance or value the individual attaches to the available options.

For example, consider activity participation decisions. The model predicts that people will be most likely to participate in activities that they think they can master and that they value. Expectations for success (and a sense of domain-specific, personal efficacy) depend on the confidence the individual has in his or her abilities and on estimations of the difficulty of the activity. These beliefs have been shaped over time by the individual's experiences and by a subjective interpretation of those experiences (e.g., does the person think that her or his successes are a consequence of high ability or lots of

hard work?). Likewise, the value of a particular activity to the individual is assumed to be influenced by several factors. For example, does the adolescent enjoy doing the sport or activity? Does the activity validate the adolescent's identity? Is the activity seen as instrumental in meeting one of the individual's long- or short-range goals?

One additional feature of this model is important to highlight: the assumption that achievement-related decisions, such as the decision to try out for an organized sport team or to switch to the swim team rather than play baseball, are made within the context of a complex social reality that presents each individual with a wide variety of choices; each with both long range and immediate consequences. Consequently, the choice is often between two or more positive options or between two or more options that have both positive and negative components. For example, the decision to join the swim team is typically made in the context of other important decisions such as whether to play in the school band or get an after-school job, or whether to participate in an activity with one's best friend.

Over the last several years, we have been conducting longitudinal work to investigate how useful the model is in predicting involvement in sports, social activities, instrumental music, and academic subjects. The model works very well in each of these domains. It is especially powerful in predicting individual differences in voluntary leisure type activities like sports. The evidence supporting the power of expectancies and values as both direct effects and as mediators of gender differences in behavioral choices is quite strong. Using longitudinal data, we found that gender differences in expectation-related and value-related self-beliefs explained the gender difference in sports participation at both 10th and 12th grades (Eccles, Barber, & Jozefowicz, 1998). Males' greater participation in sports was explained by their self-beliefs. Males thought they were more able at sports, thought participating in sports was more useful, and enjoyed participating in sports more than females.

In addition to directing choices about selecting activities, self-beliefs predict persistence in activities. In our research, we have studied adolescents who were active in sports and who perceived themselves to be among the very best at sports in the 7th grade, and whose highly positive self-perceptions of sport competence were corroborated by the high ratings from their mothers or their teachers. Girls were underrepresented in the group of adolescents who labeled themselves as highly competent in sports (11% of all females and 30% of all males categorized as "Competent" based on their 7th-grade self and parent or teacher ratings). Gender differences in sport participation of even these talented adolescents increased over time. By the 10th grade, 30% of the Competent females were no longer involved in competitive sports at school, compared to only 13% of the Competent males. By the 12th grade, 46% of the Competent athletes had dropped out of orga-

nized sport activities; again this was more true for the females than the males (55% of females compared to 41% of males). We assessed the relation of an array of 10th grade psychological and contextual predictors with continued sports participation in the senior year of high school. Consistent with the Eccles expectancy-value model, 10th grade ratings of enjoyment, perceived importance, and self-concept of ability in sports predicted persistence in sports 2 years later for both males and females (Barber, Jacobson, Eccles, & Horn, 1997). We imagine that similar processes may operate in nonathletic youth programs. Those who enjoy and value program activities are more likely to maintain participation, whereas those who find the experience irrelevant, boring, or lacking in challenge may opt out.

EMERGING ADOLESCENT IDENTITIES

We concur with Erikson's (1963) notion that voluntary participation in discretionary activities stimulates assessment of one's talents, values, interests, and place in the social structure. More rigidly structured arenas of participation such as school, work, and church may provide less freedom to explore and express identity options than discretionary activities. Therefore, voluntary participation in discretionary extracurricular activities provides an opportunity for adolescents to be personally expressive and to communicate to both themselves and others that "This is who I am" or "This is what I believe I am meant to do." Eccles and colleagues refer to this aspect of activities as *attainment value*—the value of an activity to demonstrate to oneself and to others that one is the kind of person one most hopes to be. Eccles (1987), for example, argued that gender-role identity influences activity participation because activities vary in the extent to which they provide the opportunity to explore one's masculine or feminine self. Eccles and Barber (1999) argued that activities allow one both to express and to refine one's identities.

Sports provides a very good example of these processes. Engaging in sports allows one to demonstrate that one is an athlete or a "Jock" and to explore whether being an athlete or a Jock is a comfortable identity. The decision to engage in sports should be influenced by the extent to which one places high value on being athletic or being a Jock. Engaging in sports should also facilitate the internalization of an identity as an athlete or a Jock. To the extent that one both develops a Jock identity and engages in sports, one is likely to pick up other characteristics associated with the athletic peer culture in one's social world. We explored these hypotheses with our longitudinal Michigan Study of Life Transitions (MSALT) data.

Eccles and Barber (1999) showed different patterns of outcomes, depending on the type of activity adolescents were involved in and their social identity group. Both involvement in prosocial activities and having a

"Brain" identity were associated with low alcohol and drug use, higher self-esteem, and positive academic outcomes. These adolescents also had the most academically oriented peer group and the fewest friends who drank or used drugs. The Jocks were most involved in sports; the "Princesses" reported the highest rates of involvement in school spirit and governance activities. Both involvement in sports and school spirit activities and having a Jock or a Princess social identity were associated with a mixed pattern of outcomes: positive academic outcomes and high alcohol use. Not surprisingly, the majority of these adolescents' friends were both academically oriented and regularly drank alcohol. The "Criminals" were not generally engaged in organized extracurricular activities, were involved in risky behaviors such as alcohol and drug use, and had the highest proportion of friends who both drank and used drugs. The Criminals' most common activity was sports.

Youniss and Smollar (1985) argued that adolescents develop a social sense of self as well as an individual and autonomous sense of self during adolescence. In addition, Brown and colleagues have suggested that adolescents develop socially construed representations of their peers' identities, or "crowd" identities, which serve not only as preexisting, symbolic categories through which they can recognize potential friends or foes, tormenters, collaborators, or competitors (Brown, Mory, & Kinney, 1994) but also as public identities for themselves that are recognized and accepted by peers (Stone & Brown, 1998). These social identities have been linked to both positive and risky outcomes (Barber et al., 2001; Brown, Dolcini, & Leventhal, 1997), but we do not know whether self-perceptions of belonging to particular social crowds in high school might influence one's experiences in particular activities. Of central importance from a person-environment fit perspective, we do not know if those students who perceive themselves to be Jocks or Princesses are those who benefit most from participating in those activities that validate their self-images and foster integration into relevant social traditions such as sports or cheerleading. Our recent work focuses on these types of questions. We describe our findings in this chapter.

PEER GROUP NORMS

Activities help structure one's peer group; adolescents in extracurricular activities have more academic friends and fewer friends who skip school and use drugs than adolescents who do not participate in activities (Eccles & Barber, 1999). In turn, having more academic and less risky friends predicts other positive outcomes for adolescents. Conversely, being part of a peer network that includes a high proportion of youth who engage in, and encourage, risky behaviors predicts increased involvement in risky behaviors and decreased odds of completing high school and going on to college.

Some activities facilitate membership in positive peer networks; other activities facilitate membership in more problematic peer networks (Dishion, Poulin, & Burraston, 2001; Stattin, Kerr, Mahoney, Persson, & Magnusson, chap. 10, this volume). This confluence of peers and activity participation has also been described as a *leisure culture* (Eckert, 1989). The critical mediating role of peer affiliations in the link between extra-curricular activities and youth outcomes has also been documented by Eder and Parker (1987), Kinney (1993), Mahoney and Cairns (1997), and Youniss, McLellan, Su, & Yates (1999). These researchers suggest that peer affiliations influence development, either positively or negatively, through the social norms associated with the peer group culture, through reduction in social alienation, and through acquisition of improved social skills. Such suggestions are quite consistent with what is believed to be true about peer influence more generally (e.g., Brown, 1990; Dishion et al., 2001; Kinney, 1993).

Together, peer group membership and activity involvement are also linked to identity exploration because both are linked to adolescents' sense of belonging to a particular type of peer group and having a particular activity-based persona (e.g., being a Jock or a Brain). The peer crowd prototypes associated with one's activities are potentially powerful influences on the content of one's emerging personal and social identities. For example, athletes are more likely than those who do not play sports to consider themselves to be Jocks (Eccles & Barber, 1999). In fact, attaining the typically favored male social identity of Jock may even require participation in several sports (Brown, 1990). Involvement in a sport also provides the opportunity to become integrated into the cultural milieu connected to being an athlete (Fine, 1987), thus increasing the likelihood of engaging in other behaviors associated with this leisure culture.

THE MICHIGAN STUDY OF ADOLESCENT LIFE TRANSITIONS: LINKS BETWEEN IDENTITY AND ACTIVITIES

MSALT began with a cohort of 6th graders drawn from 10 school districts in southeastern Michigan in 1984. We have followed approximately 1,800 of these youth through eight waves of data collection: two while they were in the 6th grade, two while they were in the 7th grade, one while they were in 10th grade, one while they were in 12th grade, one in 1992–1993 when most were 21 to 22 years old, and one in 1996–1997, when most were 25 to 26 years old. The vast majority are White and come from working and middle-class families. Many of the families worked in the automobile industry when we began the study and have been adversely affected by the changes in this industry over the last 10 to 15 years.

The data were collected via self-administered questionnaires completed either at school during regular school hours or at home. The 7th-grade waves were collected in the adolescents' math classrooms. The 10th- and 12th-grade waves were collected in a large common room—usually the lunchroom. The post high-school waves were completed at home using a mailed questionnaire. In addition, complete school records from Grade 5 to Grade 12 were collected for participants; these included grades, absences, and courses taken.

Measures of Activity Participation and Identity

Activity Involvement. At 10th grade, adolescents were provided with a list of 16 sports and 30 school and community clubs and organizations and asked to check all activities in which they participated. To measure sports participation, we asked: Do you compete in any of the following school teams (varsity, junior varsity, or other organized school program) *outside of PE*? Sports included in the checklist are listed in Table 9.1. To measure participation in nonsport activities, we asked: Do you participate in any of the following activities or clubs at school? Activities included in the checklist are listed in Table 9.2. We also asked about a range of activities outside of school: Do you participate in any of the following clubs or activities outside of school? Activities included in this checklist included: Scouts/Girls or Boys, Clubs/Ys, 4-H, Junior Achievement, Political campaign, Church groups, and Volunteer/service work. In order to understand patterns related to participation in various types of activities, we grouped the extracurricular activities into five categories: (a) *Prosocial Activities*—church group involvement and/or participation in volunteer and community service type activities; (b) *Team Sports*—participation on one or more school teams; (c) *Performing Arts*—participation in school band, drama, and/or dance; (d) *School Involvement*—participation in student government, pep club, and/or cheerleading; and (e) *Academic Clubs*—participation in debate, foreign language, math, or chess clubs, science fair, or tutoring in academic subjects.

Identity Group. *The Breakfast Club* (Hughes, 1985) was a prominent film when our study participants were in the 10th grade. We asked the participants to indicate which of five characters (the Princess, the Jock, the Brain, the Basket Case, or the Criminal) was most like them. We told them to ignore the gender of the character and base their selection on the type of person each character was. Twenty-eight percent selected the Jock identity, 40% the Princess, 12% the Brain, 11% the Basket Case, and 9% the Criminal. In this section, we summarize our findings of links between activity participation and self-identification into one of the five *Breakfast Club* character types.

TABLE 9.1
 Percentage in Sports Activities Who Profess Each Social Identity
 for Each Gender (All Measured in 10th Grade)

Females	n	Princess	Jock	Brain	Basket		Chi Square
					Case	Criminal	
Softball	94	43	35	9	7	6	54.898***
Basketball	55	38	38	13	7	4	37.812***
Volleyball	91	41	30	11	12	7	31.775***
Baseball	18	39	11	11	11	28	25.522***
Track/Cross-Country	63	52	29	14	5	0	23.394***
Football	16	50	13	6	6	25	17.979**
Soccer	19	37	42	11	5	5	16.019**
Cheerleading	66	71	12	6	9	2	7.372
Swimming/Diving	69	55	16	13	10	6	2.982
Tennis	53	58	17	11	11	2	2.271
Gymnastics	24	58	8	8	17	8	1.519
Any Sport	283	57	22	11	6	4	68.294***
Total Females	541	57	13	11	15	4	

Males	n	Princess	Jock	Brain	Basket		Chi Square
					Case	Criminal	
Football	134	1	78	4	2	14	53.988***
Basketball	108	2	81	8	4	5	43.017***
Baseball	121	1	78	7	2	12	39.905***
Ice Hockey	37	0	73	3	3	22	11.659*
Wrestling	59	2	73	8	3	14	10.321*
Track/Cross-Country	66	3	70	14	5	9	7.370
Golf	37	0	65	24	3	8	4.697
Volleyball	21	5	62	5	5	24	4.090
Soccer	38	3	68	11	5	13	3.576
Tennis	35	3	63	23	0	11	3.515
Softball	11	0	64	9	0	27	2.915
Swimming/Diving	53	2	58	19	8	13	.756
Any Sport	280	2	69	14	5	11	73.237***
Total Males	400	3	55	20	7	16	

Note. Bold print highlights cells with percentages higher than would be expected by chance; italics highlights cells with lower percentages than expected. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$. Activities with fewer than 10 participants within gender are not reported in table.

A series of chi-squared analyses revealed that social identities were differentially distributed across sports and activities (see Table 9.1). Not all athletes saw themselves as Jocks. Because sports was the most common activity, there were substantial numbers of sports team participants in each of the five *Breakfast Club* identity groups. Similar to their female nonathlete peers, female athletes often self-identified as Princesses (58% of gymnasts and 55% of swimmers) rather than Jocks (8% and 16%, respectively). The vast majority of cheerleaders saw themselves as Princesses (71%) rather than Jocks (12%). The highest proportion of female athletes who considered themselves to be Jocks participated in basketball, softball, soccer, volleyball, and track (see Table 9.1). A higher proportion of female Criminals than one would expect by chance was found in baseball and football. Overall, 22% of female athletes considered themselves to be Jocks, which is substantially higher than in the general female population (13%). Demonstrating remarkably high stability of participation for females with an identity linked to their sports involvement, 90% of the female Jocks were still playing sports 2 years later in Grade 12.

Male athletes frequently identified themselves as Jocks (69%); this was especially true for those who played basketball, football, baseball, ice hockey, and wrestling (see Table 9.1). These five sports also had the fewest participants who self-identified as Brains. Overall, male athletes were unlikely to label themselves as Brains (14% of athletes compared to 20% in the male population), with golf, tennis, and swimming being the only sports with substantial participation by Brains. There was moderate stability in sports play among the male Jocks, with 70% still playing sports in 12th grade.

Although the distribution of the five identities across the nonsport activities was less extreme, the patterns were what one would expect (see Table 9.2). Among the females, the Princesses were overrepresented in pep club and dance; the Brains were overrepresented in band and orchestra and underrepresented in dance. Among males, the Brains were overrepresented in foreign language clubs, math and science clubs, and band or orchestra; the Basket Cases and Princesses were overrepresented in drama. Although few males (3%) self-identified as Princesses, the male Princesses were also overrepresented in dance, foreign language club, and band.

We think that these data indicate an important variability across activities and sports. Not all extracurricular involvement is equivalent. In fact, even within the category of *sports*, the teams seem to vary considerably from each other in the types of students who participate, and the meanings attached to team membership. These differences are reflected in the identities of participants. One dimension that may be relevant for identity differences is the gender-appropriateness of the activity. Participation in gender-appropriate sports is linked to popularity, and better heterosocial status. For example, female gymnasts are rated by males as the most desirable athletes to date, and male football players are the most preferred dates

TABLE 9.2
 Percentage of Females and Males in Activities
 Who Profess Each Social Identity (All Measured in 10th Grade)

Females	n	Princess	Jock	Brain	Basket		Chi Square
					Case	Criminal	
Dance	83	75	10	4	10	2	13.612**
Band/Orchestra	112	55	11	17	16	1	9.809*
Pep Club	71	72	11	8	8	0	9.776*
Foreign Language Club	70	66	4	14	14	1	8.307
Art	48	52	10	8	21	8	3.705
Student Government	65	65	14	8	12	2	3.174
Drama	78	56	9	12	21	3	3.174
Service Club	17	65	6	18	12	0	2.590
Math, Science Clubs	17	53	18	12	18	0	1.194
Any Organization	345	57	13	12	14	3	7.032
Total Females	541	57	13	11	16	4	

Males	n	Princess	Jock	Brain	Basket		Chi Square
					Case	Criminal	
Drama	29	14	24	31	21	10	29.310***
Math, Science Clubs	26	4	19	38	8	31	15.120**
Band/Orchestra	52	8	37	35	8	13	14.647**
Foreign Language Club	19	11	32	47	5	5	14.625**
Dance	23	13	48	13	4	22	9.570*
Student Government	23	9	70	17	0	4	7.331
Service Club	12	8	33	33	8	17	3.344
Art	32	6	56	16	9	13	2.209
Any Organization	177	5	44	27	9	15	20.988***
Total Males	396	3	55	20	7	16	

Note. Bold print highlights cells with percentages higher than would be expected by chance; italics highlights cells with lower percentages than expected. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$. Activities with fewer than 10 participants within gender are not reported in table.

for females (Holland & Andre, 1994). The Princess identity that accompanies gymnastics and cheerleading in our study is likely connected to more traditional gender role enactment and the typical body-type associated with those athletic activities. We are also interested in the social meaning of arts and performance activities like band and drama, which include the largest numbers of Basket Cases. Perhaps art is considered a more non-conformist activity, and marginalized youth may find a place for themselves in a performance art that would not be open to them in the more traditional activities of sports, cheerleading, or student government. Finally, some of the variability in identity across activities may reflect local or regional differences in values for different activities or sports—for example, wrestling may be the most popular and jocklike male sport in some regions, compared to football and basketball in our school districts. What does seem to be clear in these data is that we should expect differences in the benefits and risks that may accompany different activities.

As noted earlier, participation in activities has positive consequences for several aspects of adolescent functioning. Are these relations stronger if one's activities map well onto one's social identity? In keeping with our expectations regarding both additive and contingent effects, we used analyses of variance (ANOVA) to examine possible main and interactive effects of activity participation and identity group on outcomes. Although few interactions were significant, those that were supported the idea that consistency between one's identity and one's activities predicts better functioning than inconsistency. For example, those Jocks who were not involved in school sports had lower GPAs, $F(4, 829) = 3.2, p < .05$; $M_s = 213$ and 258 , and felt more socially isolated, $F(4, 620) = 2.0, p < 1$; $M_s = 3.1$ and 2.9 , than those who were (see Appendix for a description of measures). Similarly, those Princesses who were involved in school spirit activities reported higher levels of occupational identity formation in 10th grade than those who were not involved, $F(4, 893) = 2.8, p < .05$; $M_s = 6.0$ and 5.7 . Based on these findings, we looked next at the consequences of dropping out of an activity that fit well with one's social identity. The clearest example of this connection in our data is in the domain of sports.

Negative Consequences of Dropping Out of Sports for the Jocks. What are the consequences of dropping out of a highly valued activity such as sports that is also central to one's identity? Athletes who discontinue sports participation are likely to experience a reduction in the level of recognition they receive (e.g., praise from peers or coaches, or seeing their name in the school paper) for their participation in sports. In addition, these adolescents may have experienced the rejection associated with being cut from the team because they were not good enough. Both of these consequences are likely to undermine these athletes' self-concept of sports

ability and this is what happened: Among our 10th grade athletes, those who discontinued sport participation by 12th grade started lower and declined in self-concept of sports ability, whereas those who continued to play were higher in 10th grade and increased by 12th grade (Hunt, 2002). These results suggest there is an identity affirming role of continued sports play in the domain of sports competence.

Dropping out of, versus continuing to play, sports also predicted changes in psychological adjustment from 10th to 12th grade. This association was complex, depending on both the value attached to sports in 10th grade and the participation in other extracurricular activities in 12th grade (Hunt, 2002). The continuing sport participants generally looked the best; they showed declines in depressed affect regardless of the value they placed on sports in 10th grade. The pattern was more complex for those adolescents who had dropped out of sports between 10th and 12th grade. For those sport dropouts who had placed high value on sports in 10th grade, depressed affect increased if they were not involved in any other extracurricular activity at 12th grade. In contrast, if they had replaced sports with another extracurricular activity in the 12th grade, they showed a decrease in depressed mood.

To further examine the value of sport to one's identity, we tested the convergence of sports play, activity participation, and Jock identity, and the three-way interaction was significant for depressed mood, $F(2, 318) = 5.17$, $p < .05$. The least positive changes in depressed mood from 10th to 12th grade were for those who did not see themselves as Jocks, but were still playing sports, and had no other activities, and for those who saw themselves as Jocks, were not playing, and had no other activities. The most positive changes, as with sports value, were for those who saw themselves as Jocks, and had taken up an activity after discontinuing sport play.

Dropping out of sports may also undermine attachment to school. Though a sense of belonging at school may result from a number of personal and social contextual factors, extracurricular activities are an especially likely path to attachment to one's school. They can facilitate connections in the school context that satisfy adolescents' developmental need for social relatedness, competence, and autonomy. Activities also contribute to one's identity as a valued member of the school community. Such links to school likely result in the findings that activity participants have higher academic focus (Marsh & Kleitman, 2002) and reduced likelihood of dropping out (Mahoney & Cairns, 1997). In our research, activity involvement predicts higher GPAs and future college attendance and greater school attachment, even after controlling for academic and social success (Eccles & Barber, 1999). This is particularly true for sports participation. Interestingly, discontinuing sports participation was not uniformly negative for our adolescents. The sports-school attachment link was particularly strong for those who

highly valued sports (Barber, Jacobson, Horn, & Jacobs, 1997). For example, consistent with a person–environment fit framework, those students who placed a high value on sports in 10th grade and were no longer involved in sports in the 12th grade suffered the most dramatic decline in attachment to school. Those athletes who had not placed high value on sports in 10th grade and were no longer involved in sports in 12th grade did not experience this decline in school attachment (Barber et al., 1997). Thus, the extent to which sports were more central to one's identity influenced the connection between participation and school attachment.

Taken together, these findings suggest that one mechanism whereby sports and activities may have a positive influence is through their validation of identity. When activities confirm or support one's self-concept, they may promote psychological well-being and attachment to the school setting that provides the participation opportunities. When opportunities are withdrawn, unavailable to those who desire them, or a bad match to the interests of the adolescents, such support for identity exploration and affirmation are lacking. A second mechanism through which activities can influence positive development is through the social networks created through participation.

Activities as Peer Contexts

Activities link adolescents to certain types of peers and to changes in peer contexts. Adolescents who play on teams together or work together on projects or performances are likely to spend considerable amounts of "down time" together, developing new friendships; sharing experiences; discussing values, goals, and aspirations; and co-constructing activity-based peer cultures and identities (Brown, 1990; Youniss & Smollar, 1985).

We have examined the link between activity participation and the characteristics of one's friends at two time points during high school. At 10th and 12th grades, participants were asked about the proportion of their friends who were involved in risky behaviors and the proportion of their friends who were academically oriented. To assess the relative riskiness of their peer context, we asked them what proportion of their friends regularly drank alcohol, used drugs, and skipped school. To assess the relative academic orientation of their peers, we asked them what proportion of their friends planned to go to college and were doing well in school. Response options ranged from 1, *none*, to 5, *all*. We then computed a *risky peer context* variable and an *academic peer context* variable by deriving means for the risky and academic peer items. Next, each participant was coded as being in a relatively more risky or less risky peer context for each grade, depending on whether he or she had reported a proportion of peers above or below the mean proportion for that grade. We then classified our participants into four categories: (a) *consis-*

tently risky peer context, in a relatively more risky peer context at both 10th grade and 12th grade; (b) *increasingly risky peer context*, in a riskier peer context at 12th grade than at 10th grade; (c) *decreasingly risky peer context*, in a better peer context at 12th grade than at 10th grade; and (d) *consistently less risky peer context*, in a relatively less risky peer context at both grades. Analogous groups were created based on the variables computed at 10th and 12th grade for the relative academic orientation of participants' peer contexts.

We next conducted four sets of analyses. First, we assessed the differential distribution of peer context categories across five activity categories. Because the same adolescent can participate in more than one activity category, we ran separate chi-square analyses for each activity category. We conducted these analyses separately for females and males because particular types of activities are likely to have different meanings for each gender. Next, we assessed the peer context distributions for individual sports and activities. Third, we assessed the distribution of peer contexts across our five social identities. Finally, we assessed the relation of peer contexts to our major indicators of adolescent functioning in order to determine whether the characteristics of peer contexts were consistent with the types of outcomes associated with activity participation and activity-based social identities. Consistency in indicators of adolescent functioning across peer contexts, identities, and activities would support our hypothesis that the link between activity involvement and adolescent development reflects in part the synergistic influences of peer contexts, identity formation, and activity involvement.

More and Less Risky Peers. For both females and males in prosocial activities, the distribution of risky high school peer contexts differed significantly from that expected by chance. In keeping with our consistency hypothesis, adolescents involved in prosocial activities were unusually likely to report being in a low risk peer context at both time points and particularly unlikely to report being in a high risk peer context at both time points (see Table 9.3). Looking within activity types, two specific activities were associated with being in increasingly risky peer contexts for males: football and swimming. Although 18% of males in general reported peer contexts that were increasingly risky, 29% of football players and 33% of swimmers did. Male football players were also underrepresented in consistently less risky peer contexts (26% vs. the marginal 36%) and decreasingly risky peer contexts (11% vs. 18%).

Interestingly and in contrast to the male swimmers, competitive swimming was associated with a relatively benign peer context for females, with 53% of female swimmers consistently reporting a less risky peer context (vs. the marginal 36%) and only 4% reporting increasingly risky peer contexts (vs. the marginal 14%). Females, but not males, in band or orchestra

TABLE 9.3
Percentage of Students in Peer Contexts of Varying Riskiness
and Academic Orientation in Each Extracurricular Activity Type

	<i>n</i>	<i>Less Risky</i>	<i>Getting Better</i>	<i>Getting Worse</i>	<i>Consistently Risky</i>	<i>Chi Square</i>
Females						
<i>Activity Type</i>						
Prosocial Activities	122	46	25	18	11	21.514***
Any Sport	188	39	23	13	26	
Performing Arts	188	37	22	18	22	7.244tr
School Involvement	102	35	22	18	26	
Academic Club	72	40	24	17	19	
All females	409	36	25	14	25	
Males						
<i>Activity Type</i>						
Prosocial Activities	52	60	14	14	14	16.984**
Any Sport	181	33	17	20	30	
Performing Arts	62	42	18	18	23	
School Involvement	26	58	8	12	23	6.612tr
Academic Club	30	40	17	7	37	
All males	273	35	19	18	29	

	<i>n</i>	<i>Never Academic</i>	<i>Getting Less Academic</i>	<i>Getting More Academic</i>	<i>Consistently Academic</i>	<i>Chi Square</i>
Females						
<i>Activity Type</i>						
Prosocial Activities	122	21	11	24	44	8.429*
Any Sport	188	23	12	15	50	25.566***
Performing Arts	188	27	11	22	40	
School Involvement	102	17	12	24	48	13.700**
Academic Club	72	21	6	21	53	11.680**
All females	410	31	11	20	38	

(continued on next page)

TABLE 9.3 (continued)

	n	Never Academic	Getting Less Academic	Getting More Academic	Consistently Academic	Chi Square
Males						
Activity Type						
Prosocial Activities	52	19	19	15	46	8.864*
Any Sport	181	32	17	20	30	
Performing Arts	62	23	11	24	42	6.079
School Involvement	26	15	27	19	39	
Academic Club	30	10	27	27	37	7.871*
All males	274	31	16	22	31	

Note. Bold print highlights cells with percentages higher than would be expected by chance; italics highlights cells with lower percentages than expected. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

were unusually likely to report being in increasingly risky peer contexts (22% vs. the marginal 14%).

Our next analyses revealed connections between risky peer contexts and our most prominent activity-based social identity. Male Jocks were over-represented in increasingly risky peer contexts (23% vs. the marginal 18%) and underrepresented in decreasingly risky peer contexts (14% vs. 19%). In contrast, female Jocks were under-represented in increasingly risky peer contexts (4% vs. 14%).

The relative riskiness of one's peer context was also associated with academic and substance use outcomes. Adolescents reporting the riskiest peer context pattern had higher rates of drinking, getting drunk, and marijuana use at age 18 than all other groups (contrasts significant at $p < .001$), after controlling for gender. They had lower high-school GPAs at age 18 than those in the consistently less risky peer context pattern ($p < .001$), even after controlling for ability, socioeconomic status (SES), and gender (see Table 9.4 for means).

More importantly for this chapter, there was a significant interaction between risky peer context and participation in school involvement activities for years of schooling achieved by age 24, $F(3, 435) = 3.305, p < .05$: Consistent with our hypotheses, students who reported both risky peer contexts

TABLE 9.4
Ms for Academic Outcomes and 12th-Grade Substance
 Use Outcomes With MANCOVA Results

	More Risky	Getting Worse	Getting Better	Less Risky	F
High School GPA	263.9	272.9	276.0	295.4	10.037***
Years of Schooling	14.9	14.9	14.7	15.2	2.280
Drinking Frequency	5.5	4.3	3.2	2.7	51.225***
Frequency of Getting Drunk	5.2	3.8	2.8	2.3	82.488***
Marijuana Use Frequency	2.9	1.8	1.3	1.2	38.579***

	Never Academic	Getting Less Academic	Getting More Academic	Consistently Academic	F
High School GPA	262.6	274.8	287.9	285.5	6.531***
Years of Schooling	14.5	14.9	14.8	15.4	10.054***
Drinking Frequency	4.1	4.2	3.6	3.6	1.874
Frequency of Getting Drunk	3.6	3.9	3.4	3.2	2.252
Marijuana Use Frequency	2.1	1.8	1.7	1.5	2.788*

Note. *Ms* have been adjusted for covariates; academic outcomes adjusted for ability, SES, and gender; substance use outcomes adjusted for gender. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

and noninvolvement in school spirit and governance activities completed approximately 1 year less of schooling on average (14.7 years) than those in risky peer contexts who had participated in school involvement activities (15.6 years). Thus, the positive impact of school involvement activities was accentuated for participants in the riskier contexts.

We next conducted analyses to assess the operation of synergy effects on substance use outcomes for Jocks, hypothesizing that individuals would be at more risk if they were in both sports and more risky peer contexts than if they were in sports but not in risky peer contexts. Repeated measures multivariate analyses of variance (MANOVAs) encompassing within-subject time effects provided support for our synergy hypothesis, revealing that athletes with a Jock identity and consistently having riskier friends (i.e., those exhibiting a

confluence of identity, activity, and risky peers) had higher levels of drinking overall across the two waves than those who had less risky friends at either wave, $F(3, 24) = 3.619, p < .01$ for females and $F(3, 58) = 5.165, p < .01$ for males. Furthermore, significant interactions between time and peer context for Jocks, $F(3, 58) = 5.856, p < .05$ for males and $F(1, 26) = 8.283, p < .01$ for females, indicated that having an increasingly risky peer group was associated with comparatively large increases in drinking frequency.

More and Less Academic Peers. Adolescents' distribution across the four academic peer contexts supported hypotheses based on the link between activity contexts and academic achievement (see Table 9.3). Overrepresentation in consistently academic peer contexts and/or underrepresentation in consistently less academic peer contexts was revealed for females in prosocial, sports, school involvement, and academic club activities and for males in prosocial, performing arts, and academic club activities.

Examination of individual activities within activity types revealed that participation in softball (60%), swimming (51%), basketball (52%), volleyball (55%), pep club (49%), service clubs (78%), student government (56%), debate and forensics (80%), and foreign language clubs (53%) predicted overrepresentation in the most academic peer context pattern for girls (marginal rate, 38%). For boys, participation in tennis (53%) and band or orchestra (50%) predicted the most academic peer context pattern (marginal rate for males, 31%).

Analyses regarding the distribution of more and less academic peer context patterns within *Breakfast Club* identities indicated significant differences for females, $\chi^2(3, N = 333) = 24.09, p < .05$. Again as predicted by the relation of identities to academic outcomes, the female Jocks were overrepresented in consistently academic peer contexts (53% compared to the marginal 39%) but male Jocks were not. Follow-up contrast analysis of percentages of academically oriented friends at each wave revealed that female Jocks had a higher proportion of academically oriented friends than male Jocks did in 12th grade, $F(1, 191) = 7.29, p < .01$; $M_s = 4.0$ and 3.7 or approximately 75% and 68%.

Thus, the likelihood of having a relatively benign or a relatively risky peer context varies systematically across identities and activities. We have found, as well, that outcomes can be contingent on particular synergistic or asynchronous patterns of activity, identity, and peer context. For example, looking specifically at our male and female Jocks, we found that those who went on to college and who completed a college degree by age 24 were more likely than expected to report being in consistently academic peer contexts $\chi^2(3, N = 133) = 12.68, p < .01$ for college attendance and $\chi^2(3, N = 112) = 10.03, p < .05$ for degree completion. Three quarters of Jocks who re-

ported consistently academic peer contexts went on to college and one half had completed a degree by age 24. In contrast, only 40% of the Jocks who had reported being in consistently nonacademic peer contexts went to college after high school, and only 17% had completed a degree by age 24. Logistic regression analyses that partialled out the effects of ability, SES, and gender confirmed that the likelihood of college attendance and college completion was significantly greater for those Jocks who were in consistently academic peer contexts than for those in consistently nonacademic peer contexts, $\chi^2(1, N = 114) = 7.61, p < .01$ and $\chi^2(1, N = 100) = 7.01, p < .01$, respectively. Importantly for our hypotheses, an analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) on completed years of schooling (controlling for ability, SES, and gender) also revealed a significant effect for academic peer context, $F(3, 99) = 3.58, p < .05$. Contrasts indicated that those Jocks who were in consistently more academic peer contexts had completed approximately one more year of schooling than those in consistently less academic peer contexts (15.4 years vs. 14.5 years; contrast significant at $p < .01$).

Exposure to more versus less academic peers was associated with high school GPA and years of schooling for our sample as a whole. Having more academic peers at both 10th and 12th grades predicted better educational outcomes than having fewer academic peers at one or both waves (see Table 9.4). More importantly for this chapter, an interaction between sports activities and academic peer context, $F(3, 436) = 3.071, p < .05$, indicated that for athletes, better educational attainment accrued for individuals who were exposed to a relatively more academic peer context either at 10th grade or at 12th grade, or both (approximately 15.5 years vs. 14.6 years). For nonathletes, better educational outcomes were contingent on being in an academic peer context at both waves (15.5 vs. approximately 14.3). In other words, nonathletes completed fewer years of schooling than athletes unless they had consistently academic peers.

Academic peer contexts were also associated with 12th-grade marijuana use and frequency of getting drunk (see Table 9.4). Individuals consistently in relatively academic peer contexts reported less frequent marijuana use than those consistently in less academic peer contexts in their senior year (contrast significant at $p < .01$).

SYNERGIES AND DEVELOPMENT DURING ADOLESCENCE

Our findings suggest that activity involvement may indeed provide opportunities for adolescents to define and publicly express identity (Barber et al., 2001; Brown, 1990; Eccles & Barber, 1999). Peer crowd identities, often forged through activity participation, may represent an important way in

which agency is expressed by individuals as they commit to the patterns that will characterize their adult lives.

Activities also appear to provide peer group niches in which adolescents may do the work of co-constructing values and identities (Youniss & Smollar, 1985). Our findings suggest that the characteristics of our participants' peer contexts reflected both their social identities and their activity involvement. For example, those athletes who also considered themselves to be Jocks hung around with a mixed group of peers—peers who were academically oriented and peers who consumed large amounts of alcohol. Consequently, it is not a surprise that these adolescents also had high educational outcomes and consumed large amounts of alcohol.

We are interested in the workings of these synergies but do not expect to document firm causal conclusions about the relations among components of the system as a whole. We believe that the ordering of the relations among activity participation, identity pursuit and affirmation, peer group norm sharing, and developmental changes in academic and psychosocial functioning during adolescence is, in fact, quite fluid and bidirectional. Similarly, Cairns (1996) suggested that continuity and change depend on the collaboration of systems at the level of individuals, dyads, social networks, subcultures, that regulatory constraints are correlated, and that they collaborate to organize behavior in directions that are contingent upon context. Our findings are consistent with this emphasis on the collaboration and contingency of regulatory constraints. We found strong evidence that these domains of adolescent life are correlated—leading to the increased likelihood that specific individuals will either be exposed to the confluence of their characteristics or will not be exposed to any of their characteristics. Whether this confluence begins with selection and ends with socialization or begins with socialization and ends with the joint effects of selection and mutual socialization is less interesting to us than the processes that underlie the confluence itself. In fact, we consider sorting out selection influences from the influences of social experience to be a futile effort in naturalistic, longitudinal studies. We have done everything we can by controlling for their position on the outcome measures prior to the point at which we assessed participation. However, because we think selection and social experience work together as a fluid, synergistic system to influence developmental trajectories, the "unique" or net influence of either selection or socialization becomes meaningless.

We believe that our results reflect Cairns's (1996) notion of *sociogenesis*—the transactional processes wherein individuals and their social environments collaborate to effect continuity and change in development. Adolescent selves and values are not created in a vacuum and they must be constructed rather than bequeathed from parents or genetic endowment. However, rather than a prepackaged youth culture to which all adolescents

subscribe, we, like others, believe that there are various subcultures or prototypic identity groups within the social milieu of the high school, at least in North American secondary schools (Brown, 1990; Stone & Brown, 1999). Each group has well-defined, distinctive characteristics and lifestyles, and many of them are associated with particular extracurricular activities. Research centering on extracurricular activities (Eccles & Barber, 1999; Eckert, 1989; Fine, 1987; Youniss, Yates, & Su, 1997) suggests that crowds are part of a larger contextual system—including personality and personal identity, activity choices, co-participants, and the cultural features of particular activities—that influences individuals' pathways through adolescence.

But we must ask how this contextual system actually influences development. Youniss and Smollar (1985) described a process of *consensual validation*, wherein individuals collectively work out their views on identities, issues, and activities. We think that it is through such processes that high-school students decide collectively whether it is "cool" or not to aspire to a college degree or a construction job, to cut class, to participate in classroom discussions, or to go out for football. Discussions regarding alcohol, marijuana, or the science fair are, we believe, different depending not just on whether they take place at a cafeteria table peopled by students who participate in extracurricular activities or not, but also on the activity in which the students participate. Because there is a strong association between hanging out with substance-using peers and the likelihood of using substances oneself (Brown et al., 1997; Curran, Stice, & Chassin, 1997; Hawkins, Catalano, & Miller, 1992), the views promoted in particular peer contexts are of extreme importance in determining adolescent risk behavior. The attitudes of friends regarding academics are also an extremely important influence on adolescents' own attitudes and achievement (Fuligni, Eccles, & Barber, 1995; Sage & Kinderman, 1999).

FINAL CONCLUSION

Why then do 10th-grade activities have such lasting predictive effects? Previous theory and research suggest that crowd identities may reflect personality dispositions and values that predate the adolescent years and that adolescents *choose* crowds to a certain extent. However, it also appears that adolescents can be *assigned* to crowds by peers in recognition of their behavioral choices and personalities (Brown, 1989, 1990). Perhaps adolescents make use of the formal activities and the informal social organization of the high school to negotiate and formalize their identities. The patterns of behavior expressed, solidified, and formalized first in high school organized activities may carry forward, providing both continuity in connection to others with similar values and backgrounds, and the ongoing validation of the social identity established in adolescence. In this

sample, the adolescents who are active in high school clubs and organizations and who do volunteer work are most likely to continue their activity participation patterns in young adulthood (Raymore, Barber, Eccles, & Godbey, 1999). Therefore, our results may reflect not only the benefits of participation during adolescence, but also the enduring impact of a continuing synergistic relationship between activity involvement and social identity across the transition to adulthood.

Making diverse clubs and activities available to a wide range of students is important. At a time when identity formation is a central concern, the opportunity to embed one's identity in multiple extracurricular contexts and to experience multiple competencies facilitates attachment to school and adjustment. Beyond the identity exploration possibilities, activity participation is also linked to affiliation with peers who are academically focused. It is this synergistic system that adolescents can benefit from when varied opportunities are available for participation.

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APPENDIX

Additional Measures

Psychological Adjustment. Participants responded to a set of items about psychological adjustment at Waves 5 and 6. The seven-point items began with "How often do you ..." and responses ranged from 1, *never* to 7, *daily*. Self-esteem was measured with 3 items (Cronbach alphas = .77 at Wave 5 and .80 at Wave 6) including "feel sure about yourself," "feel satisfied with who you are," and "feel good about yourself." Depressed mood was measured with 3 items: (Cronbach alphas = .60 at Wave 5 and .66 at Wave 6) that included "feel unhappy sad or depressed?," "lose your appetite or eat a lot when you get upset?," and "feel that difficulties are piling up so high that you can't overcome them?" Social isolation was measured using a single item: "feel lonely?" Although the three psychological adjustment scales were significantly correlated between

Wave 5 and Wave 6, the correlations were not high (less than .48 for all 3 scales) indicating that these mood state variables had adequate variability to consider changes from Wave 5 to Wave 6.

Value of Sports and Self-Concept of Sports Ability. The value participants placed on sports was assessed using a 2-item scale at Wave 5 ($\alpha = .70$). These items were "How much do you enjoy playing sports?" (1, *a little* to 7, *a lot*) and "For me, being good at sports is ..." (1, *not at all important* to 7, *very important*). A dichotomous score was computed for low- and high-sports value for further analysis. To create the split, anyone with a score of 6 or above was coded as having a higher value for sports, and those who scored below 6 were coded as having a lower value for sports. Self-concept of sports ability was assessed using a 2-item scale at Waves 5 and 6 (α s = .80 and .84, respectively). The items in the scale were "How good at sports are you?" (1, *not at all* to 7, *very good*) and "If you were to rank all the students your age from the worst to the best in sports, where would you put yourself?" (1, *the worst* to 7, *the best*).

Occupational Identity. Occupational identity was measured with three items ($\alpha = .79$) following a question asking about the kind of job participants would like to have in adulthood. These items included "How sure are you that this is the kind of job you would like?" (1, *not at all* to 7, *very sure*) and "How much have you thought about this choice?" (1, *a little* to 7, *a lot*).

Family Demographics. We included mother's education as a measure of family socioeconomic status. This variable was collected from mothers at the first wave when the adolescents were in the 6th grade. Mothers indicated on a 9-point ordinal scale their highest level of education with 1, *grade school*, 3, *high-school diploma*, 6, *college degree*, and 9, *PhD or other advanced professional degree like an MD*. We collapsed this scale into a 4-point ordinal scale with 1, *less than high-school diploma* (10% of sample overall), 2, *high-school diploma or GED* (40%), 3, *some postsecondary* (30%), and 4, *bachelor's degree or more* (20%).

Academic Aptitude. We collected the verbal and numerical ability subscores (percentile rankings) on the Differential Aptitude Test (DAT; The Psychological Corporation, 1981) from 9th-grade school records.

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Organized Activities
as Contexts of Development
Extracurricular Activities, After-School
and Community Programs

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