

**Assembling Identity: The Support for Self Within and  
Across Individualized Spaces**

by

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## ABSTRACT

### **ASSEMBLING IDENTITY: THE SUPPORT FOR SELF WITHIN AND ACROSS INDIVIDUALIZED SPACES**

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The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore the use and development of physical and virtual individualized spaces as contexts for self and identity during the transition to university residence. Twenty-three female emerging adults (ages 18 to 20) were interviewed in their dorm rooms in a mid-sized university in Ontario, Canada. The interview focused on personal artifacts and their connections to self and identity and included a participant-led “tour” of participants’ dorm rooms and preferred virtual spaces.

The interviews elicited rich narratives about experiences and relationships, conceptions of change over time, and personal goals oriented to the future. Findings suggest that both physical and virtual individualized spaces provide visual clues and scaffolding for conceptualizing the self, as well as support for identity processes related to change and continuity. Furthermore, participants were maintaining access to supports for the self and identity through the creation and use of multiple individualized spaces. Overall, this study provides a deeper understanding of how objects and spaces may be used to support the self, identity development, and well-being during the transition to university residence.

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*In its widest possible sense, however, a man's Self is the sum total of all that he can call his, not only his body and his psychic powers, but his clothes and his house, his wife and children, his ancestors and friends, his reputation and works, his lands and horses, and yacht and bank-account. (James, 1890, P. 291)*

## **Introduction**

Adolescence is the physical, intellectual, and emotional transition into adulthood mediated by social and physical contexts (James, 2001). As such, adolescence is often considered a critical time for identity development (Erikson, 1968). During this time, as individuals construct a personal identity, they begin to restructure their past, understand the present and anticipate their future with some degree of psychosocial unity and purpose (McAdams, 2001). The opening excerpt, from James' (1890) book *The Principles of Psychology*, captures these far-reaching physical and social contexts in which the self may be defined and identity may be constructed. Thus, identity is a quality of unity and purpose of the self (everything that a person considers to be 'me' or 'mine'), which refers to the way the self may be assembled or expressed (James, 1890; McAdams, 2001).

Given this description, it is not surprising that several studies indicate that objects contain meanings that are important to identity formation (Belk, 1988; Kroger & Adair, 2008; Rochberg-Halton, 1984; Silver, 1996). More specifically, objects can serve as evidence relating to salient elements of personal biographies, including people, places, and events (Silver, 1996). Objects can also serve functional uses, or act as a reference to one's cultural interests, including music, television, and art preferences (Lincoln, 2004). In addition, personally meaningful or cherished objects may extend beyond functional uses and have the opportunity to mirror aspects of the adolescent self (Kamptner, 1995).

As a customary place for personal possessions, an individualized space, such as the bedroom, can reveal elements of one's attitudes, behaviours, history, personality, and identity (Gosling, Craik, Martin, & Pryor, 2005; McAdams, 1994). Constructed environments or individualized spaces are those that we create, spaces highly influenced by personal characteristics (Jones, Taylor, Dick, Singh, & Cook, 2007). These individualized spaces provide privacy, security, continuity, refuge, a context for personalization and self-representation, and a place for regulated social interactions (Gosling et al., 2005). In addition, contemporary technology and social media also provide a virtual space for individualization that may function similarly to traditional individualized spaces, offering space for personalization, self-understanding, portrayal of self and connection to others (Hodkinson & Lincoln, 2008; Lincoln, 2012). As contemporary youth use technology now more than ever before, there is an increased need to understand how these individualized spaces are used in terms of identity development (Hodkinson & Lincoln, 2008).

During the transition to university residence, first-year students must establish a new individualized space within the dormitory, offering a new context to explore objects in relation to self and identity. Previous research on transitions and objects suggests that possessions may be crucial to identity and function to facilitate transitions, providing evidence of the past and ongoing life stories (Kroger & Adair, 2008; Silver, 1996). As a context for both self and identity, the residence room is an important space for understanding identity development during the transition from adolescence to emerging adulthood.

The purpose of the current study was to explore the use and development of physical and virtual individualized spaces as contexts for identity during the transition to university. Of particular interest were the objects contained within spaces, including physical objects (e.g.,

books, knickknacks, posters) and the personal artifacts that populate virtual spaces (e.g. Instagram posts, virtual music collections). The data consisted of object- and space-related narratives of first-year university students. These interviews were analyzed to investigate the construction, use, and navigation of multiple individualized spaces in emerging adulthood. The study was informed by James' conceptualization of the empirical self (1890) and narrative approaches to identity (McAdams, 1985, 1993, 1996, 2001; Ricoeur, 1991). These theories were used as frameworks to explore the meanings attached to objects and spaces and the possible connections to the self both within and across individualized spaces.

In the following section, I clarify how identity is conceptualized in the current study using the theoretical frameworks of *the empirical self* and *narrative identity*. Subsequently, I provide a literature review including an overview of individualized spaces as contexts for objects, meaning, and identity development, and the role and use of possessions and spaces in identity development during role transitions. Following these reviews, the research questions are identified.

## **Theoretical Frameworks: Understanding Self and Identity**

### **The Empirical Self**

According to James (1890), the Self in its' widest sense encompasses the constituents it is comprised of (the material self, the social self, the spiritual self and the pure ego), the feelings and emotions that each evokes and the actions to which they prompt (James, 1890). The material self is comprised of the body, clothes, family, home and acquired property, and its relation to identity (James, 1890). The social self encompasses the recognition one gains from experienced social relations (James, 1890). The spiritual self is one's own subjective being, aptitudes and

dispositions (James, 1890). And lastly, the pure ego is everything one is aware of at one time and is associated with one's sense of personal identity (James, 1890).

In his conceptualization of the self, William James (1890) identified personality as containing two continuously present and distinct components including the objective and empirical person and the self-thought. James' referred to these elements as the "me" and the "I," respectively (James, 1890). It is with these two elements, and all of their constituents, that James is able to introduce the concept of "multiple selves" to demonstrate the complexity of personality. While personality is a combination of both elements, one's sense of identity is discovered by the "I" within all that is considered "me," thus changes in the "me" are recognized by the "I" and create shifts in identity (James, 1890).

In discussion of the "I" or the subjective thought element of self, James provides a sense of self identity through of one's self as continuing through time (James, 1890). The "I" provides the feeling that "I am the same self that I was yesterday" (James, 1890). James' (1890) identifies the identity, as constructed by the "I," as one that is relative and gradually evolving with retention of a common element. The most common element is the keeping of memories, as demonstrated through the ability of an individual at different ages to recall the same childhood and claim it as their own (James, 1890).

The "me" or empirical self is defined by James (1890) as everything that one is tempted to call by the name of me; all that can be called part of the same self. James identified a difficulty in separating what one calls 'me' with what one calls 'mine,' and in recognizing that both may serve to evoke the same feelings and actions they both must be included in the empirical self (James, 1890). In the opening excerpt James (1890) defines the empirical self, inclusive of material possession, as able to fluctuate in terms of meaning. Whether it be people, objects, or

thought, the “me” includes all that is appropriated by one as their own (James, 1890). Of primary importance to the current study are elements of the material self (the objects of ‘me’ or ‘mine’), the “sum” of these elements, and their associated sense of or contribution to personal identity found by the “I.” James’ (1890) work provides a strong theoretical foundation for exploring the use of objects and spaces in identity development. The current study also views identity through a narrative lens, an approach which can be linked to James’ definition of personal identity as the “consciousness of personal sameness” (Hammack, 2008; James, 1890).

### **Narrative Identity**

Identity, often portrayed as a crisis in adolescence, can be understood most simplistically as how one answers the question “who am I?” One’s response to this question is mediated subjectively by social, cultural, and historical contexts (Garbrecht, 2006). As adolescents begin to construct an understanding of themselves as individuals, issues pertaining to enduring characteristics and personal consistency become increasingly significant (Chandler, Sokol, Lalonde & Hallet, 2003; Harter & Monsour, 1992; Pasupathi, Mansour, & Brubaker, 2007). Identity research emphasizes the problem of personal identity as we try to answer the question of “How do we know we are the same person over time?” (Pasupathi et al., 2007).

Narrative approaches to identity assume that storytelling is a natural, universal and dominant form of human expression that represents a way in which individuals make sense of their lives in time (Bruner, 1990). As conceptualized by Paul Ricoeur (1991), narrative identity is a product of reflective processes, and it cultivates a sense of self-sameness, continuity and character through the story a person tells about themselves.

Furthermore, McAdams’ (1985, 1993, 1996, 2001) conceptualization of narrative identity through the life story model suggests that identity represents itself in the form of a story,

complete with the literary elements of characters, settings, themes, scenes, and plot (McAdams, 2001). The construction of identity narratives may occur as one tries to share memories and everyday stories with others (McLean, 2005; Pasupathi, 2001; Thorne, 2000; Thorne, McLean, & Lawrence, 2004), and this process supports the development and maintenance of narrative identity (McLean, 2005). These stories then serve as tools for the ongoing development of self (McAdams, 1993).

McAdams (1995) draws on the works of James (1890) and Erikson (1968) to highlight the importance of distinguishing this concept of identity from the concept of self. The 'self' is everything that a person considers to be 'me' or 'mine,' while 'identity' is a quality of unity and purpose of the self which refers to the way the self may be assembled or expressed (McAdams, 1995). Thus, elements of the self (e.g. possessions and thoughts) contribute to identity development. The current study seeks to explore the meanings, memories and narratives participants associate with objects and spaces to understand their relation to self and identity.

### **Individualized Spaces, Self and Identity**

Much of the literature on the importance of individualized spaces in adolescence has focused on bedroom culture (McRobbie, 1978). In 1978, McRobbie introduced the concept of 'bedroom culture' to address the gendering of the bedroom and the division of public and private spaces. This concept was built on earlier work by McRobbie and Garber (1976) that sought to examine how girls organize their cultural lives in the absence of engagement with street-based, youth cultural activities. The study suggested that the bedroom provided a private and accessible space for girls to connect to and identify with popular culture and react or resist authoritarian structures with no risk of humiliation (McRobbie & Garber, 1976). While the original concept of bedroom culture has remained relatively unchallenged, there has been a move to study bedrooms

as important youth cultural spaces across genders (Brown, Dykers, Steele, & White, 1994; Lincoln, 2004; McNamee, 1998).

Drawing on a series of studies they conducted on bedroom culture, Brown et al. (1994) suggest that the concept of “room culture” provides valuable theoretical and methodological framing for studies of identity. Their work suggests that teen bedrooms can illuminate the sources of influence (including media) that are important to the construction of the self, they provide visual clues to identity and values, and they reflect change over time (Brown et al., 1994). Adolescent bedrooms can serve as “mediators” of identity; the objects located within these individualized spaces may serve as indicators of the self in the present as well as its possible trajectories into the future (Brown et al., 1994; Steele & Brown, 1995). Their findings suggest that bedrooms are an important place for most adolescents and a place “where media and identities intersect” (Brown et al., 1994).

The study of private space was revisited by Lincoln in 2004, who focused on girls growing up in the 1990’s. Lincoln (2004) conducted in-bedroom interviews, and collected diaries from four girls ages 16-17. Lincoln posited that, for girls in the 1990s, the bedroom is often the only private, personalized, and intimate space within the home. Lincoln (2004) identified the bedroom as a biographical space that tells stories of a teenage girl’s cultural interests and, ultimately, cultural identity. Lincoln (2004) suggests that each girl’s bedroom offers its own cultural history of her experiences from childhood through the teen years, as well as insight into personal identity.

### **Objects within spaces**

According to Belk (1988), adolescent and adult belongings serve valuable functions and are often incorporated into one’s sense of self. Such possessions may act as a physical expression

of the self, allow exploration of possibilities, provide a form of reflection to others, act as a history of the self, and have the ability to positively promote one's identity (Belk, 1988; Csikszentmihalyi & Rochberg-Halton, 1981; Kamptner, 1995; Lincoln, 2004; Silver, 1996). The study of objects and their importance in identity development has largely focused on exploring the valuation of objects and the meanings they hold. Studies on the meaning of possessions indicate the existence of a personal hierarchy of objects, in which cherished artifacts make important contributions to one's identity and sense of self (Belk, 1988, 1991; Kroger & Adair 2008; Rochberg-Halton, 1984; Silver, 1996). Cherished objects serve many functions including providing connections to people, places, history and experiences, as well as symbolizing one's goals. As such, they may represent and /or facilitate lived experiences, and thus the development of narrative and identity (Kroger & Adair, 2008; Wapner, Demick & Redondo, 1990).

### **The Virtual Bedroom?**

In today's world, the objects and belongings that are important to individuals (such as photographs, books and music collections) exist in both physical spaces such as bedrooms and virtual spaces, including the internet and digital devices and platforms. Hodkinson and Lincoln (2008) compared teens' bedrooms and their online journals as spaces for identity expression and development. They found that adolescent bedrooms and online journals share core symbolic and practical elements including: (1) the importance of personalizing and occupying a space of one's own, (2) a space to make sense of and display a sense of self and identity, and (3) a safe space to serve as a base for more exclusive individual centered social networks and interactions (Hodkinson & Lincoln, 2008). Such shared symbolic and practical elements have allowed researchers to study virtual spaces similar to the ways traditional bedroom spaces have been

studied (Brown et al.; 1994; Chandler & Roberts-Young, 1998; Hodkinson & Lincoln, 2008; Lincoln 2012; Pearson, 2009; Robards, 2010).

Although both physical and virtual spaces may reflect identity, recent work by Lincoln (2012) identifies a possible difference: the bedroom is a space that often has a more limited audience and therefore may reflect an identity that is more authentic than one portrayed online. According to Lincoln (2012), to some extent social media sites be considered more ‘on-display’ than bedrooms, influencing self-presentation through pressure to display a particular ‘coolness.’ In this sense, online presentation of self is not necessarily less authentic but individuals may be inclined to highlight parts of selves or interests that are positively received by people in their network (Lincoln, 2012). Lincoln describes the increased pressure and display using Pearson’s (2009) metaphor of the glass bedroom. The glass bedroom metaphor suggests that online individualized spaces can be considered a bedroom with walls made of glass, one that can often be looked into at any time by friends and strangers at varying familiarities or of different social groups (Pearson, 2009). This metaphor highlights the blurring of the private and public realms of social media spaces (Pearson, 2009). In addition, Hodkinson and Lincoln (2008) identify the possible intersection of the physical and virtual spaces (e.g. use of social media via a computer in the bedroom) and recommend that research attend to the nature and significance of this intersection.

### **Individualized Spaces at times of Transition**

Prior research suggests that personalized spaces change and develop with the individual; items are added, removed, or relocated to reflect current interests and the development of the self (Fidzani & Read, 2014). As such, these spaces may be especially important to identity development during times of transition. Two key studies have focused on personal spaces and

life transitions, including: (1) a study by Kroger and Adair (2008), which examined the symbolic meanings and functions of valued personal objects during the transition into supervised living facilities in late adulthood; and (2) a study by Silver (1996), which examined the role of objects in identity and role transitions during the move to college dormitories and apartments.

In a study on the role of possessions during late life transitions, Kroger and Adair (2008) found several meanings and functions related to cherished objects: They provide links to relationships, connections to family across generations, previously held social statuses and links to events and life phases. Taken together, collections of cherished objects provide a record of an individual's life course. They also hold explicit function with respect to identity processes, including maintaining one's sense of self across time and revisioning the self in the context of the transition to the institutional setting (Kroger & Adair, 2008).

While research on objects and transitions in early adulthood is scant, there is one published study that focuses on young adults' transition to university and the objects that are important in this. In a 1996 study, Silver interviewed 22 Midwestern University students in their dormitories or apartments on or near campus. Each interview probed for the participant to identify their three most cherished possessions and their significance, to describe the ways in which a hierarchy of meanings is constructed across all possessions, to speak about differences pertaining to their previous room, and to describe how they determined what to bring and what to leave behind when they transitioned to university. (Silver, 1966). Silver's findings suggest that objects were regarded as crucial elements of university students' identities and they functioned to facilitate the transition to college (Silver, 1966). Objects important in identity construction were found to serve two different functions, acting both as anchors and markers (Silver, 1996). Anchors are objects exclusively related to one's prior life stages while markers are objects that

are both associated with prior life stages and the new stages brought about by transition (Silver, 1996; see also MacCannell, 1976; Mehta & Belk, 1991; Swidler, 1986). According to Silver (1996), these anchors and markers serve as crucial, physical evidence for ongoing life stories. Such objects were found to be tangible evidence of the life story, including connections to social relationships, events, places, and personal histories. The importance and function of these objects was reflected in the decision of what to bring and what to leave behind during the move to university (Silver, 1996).

### **The Current Study**

Research by Silver (1996) and Kroger and Adair (2008), highlight the importance of exploring the meanings associated with possession that are included within individualized spaces, and the role of these objects and spaces in one's identity, particularly during times of transition. Much has changed since Silver (1996) conducted his research and virtual environments have become increasingly important contexts for identity development (Lincoln, 2012). The present study extends Silver's research on the role of spaces and objects in young adults' transition to university to examine virtual as well as physical contexts. Expanding into the exploration of virtual spaces requires reconceptualising the possessions or objects related to the self beyond tangible items. The term *artifact* was chosen to encompass a variety of physical and virtual items. Physical artifacts, as demonstrated by many of the previous studies, includes physically tangible or visual items such as books, pictures, stuffed animals, posters, and knick-knacks, while virtual artifacts include items such as music, social media posts, and pictures. As such, all physical and virtual artifacts, including media, are viewed as possibly associated with personal meanings that may contribute to identity development.

### **Research Questions**

The purpose of the current study was to extend prior research on personal spaces and possessions to explore the use of personalized spaces during the transition into university residence. The study focused on artifacts contained in three individualized spaces: the residence room, the bedroom in the family home, and the preferred social media sites/applications for each participant. Research questions included:

- (1) How do physical and virtual spaces support a sense of self and identity during the transition into first-year university?;
- (2) Do physical and virtual spaces perform similar functions with respect to self and identity in the transition to university?;
- (3) How do individuals navigate individualized spaces and their associated meanings?; and,
- (4) Does the use of multiple individualized spaces contribute to one's sense of self and identity?

### **Positionality**

As a researcher, I have taken a social constructivist perspective and a subjectivist epistemological position. As such, participant narratives were understood as a constructed reality, reflecting their perspectives in that moment. As opposed to an objective reality, meaning was understood to be constructed between subjective meaning making processes and a perceived external reality (Daly, 2007). In other words, participants' narratives were understood as constructed through social discourse (Bruner, 1990). While acknowledging my participation as a

researcher in the co-construction of meaning within social discourse and analysis, I emphasize the meaning making processes of participants.

As reflective of my epistemological and ontological positioning, I recognize myself as influential in the entire research process; through its design, implementation, analysis and interpretations. Throughout the research process I attempted to be aware of my own positioning as much as possible through the use of written reflection.

## **Method**

### **Participants**

Twenty-six emerging adults (23 female, 3 male; ages 18-20) were recruited from a mid-sized Canadian university via emails sent through departmental list-serves, and posters advertising the study across campus and within residence buildings. For the purpose of this study, only the twenty-three female emerging adults (ages 18 to 20), of the twenty-six participants, were included in this analysis. While the study aimed to recruit both male and female participants, males were significantly underrepresented in the data in its entirety due to lack of male response during recruitment. For this reason, the interviews of the three male participants were not included in the analysis.

In order to be eligible for this study, individuals were required to be in their first year at the university, between the ages of 17 and 20, and living in on-campus residence. One participant had attended college prior to university but the rest were attending their first year of any post-secondary studies.

### **Procedure**

All participants were interviewed by the researcher using a semi-structured interview protocol and interviews were conducted in the participants' residence rooms. Interviews were

audiotaped and took approximately 45 minutes to 2 hours to complete. All interviews took place in the winter semester, 5-7 months after participants first moved into university residence.

The interview focused on bedroom and virtual artifacts, cherished objects, media content and their corresponding narratives. Participants were also asked to discuss the existing or pre-existing bedroom at their family home and any personally valuable, meaningful, or important objects left behind. During the section of the interview regarding social media use, participants were invited to take the researcher on a 'tour' of their preferred social media platform.

The interview protocol for this study was crafted to elicit stories and personal meaning-making in relation to media, objects and space (See Appendix A). Many of the questions were developed and adapted from Dr. Andrea Breen's protocol for similar studies on media influences and adolescent understanding of self (Breen, McLean. Cairney, & McAdams, in press; Breen, McLean, Cairney, & Scott, 2014). Several questions also incorporated questions from the life story model (McAdams, 2008) adapted to focus on objects, including questions designed to elicit narratives of personal relationships, high points, turning points, vivid memories, and memories of childhood and adolescence.

This research study was approved by the Research Ethics Board at the University of Guelph (See Appendix B).

## **Data Analysis**

**Transcription of audio recordings.** The interviews were audio recorded and transcribed verbatim. I transcribed initial interviews and a transcriptionist was hired to transcribe the rest for expediency sake. Subsequently, I reviewed the transcripts and audio files to ensure accuracy of the documents.

**Analysis of transcripts.** The collected transcripts were analyzed using thematic analysis as outlined by Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-phase approach. The analytic process was further facilitated through use of researcher note-taking, the qualitative analysis software program MAXQDA, allowing for methodical categorization of the data, and Microsoft Word, allowing for a side-by-side document comparison method to help ensure best fit of coded segments when organizing the results. Guided by the research questions and through the lenses of the conceptual framework identified, I used both theory- and data-driven approaches to understanding the ways in which participants used objects and spaces in identity formation.

Firstly, I familiarized myself with the data through collection, review of transcripts and subsequently reading through the data in its entirety, noting initial thoughts and possible codes. After familiarizing myself with the data, initial codes were generated using the qualitative software MAXQDA. Initial coding was expansive with 1490 segments originally coded, with the inclusion of codes related specifically to interview guide topics. The codes and associated groupings within the software were both data- and theory- driven; final codes were then identified. Themes were then generated from the codes based on relevance to the research questions. As described above, the conceptual frameworks, empirical self and narrative identity, guided the analysis of the data and informed many of the initial themes identified. Themes and their corresponding codes were then reviewed and subsequently named, defined and refined through ongoing analysis. An overarching conceptualization of the data was created through ongoing discussions with my advisor, Dr. Breen, who was familiar with the transcripts and theories used. Through this consultation, identified codes and themes were examined, resulting in the categories, themes, and subthemes presented in the following chapter.

## Results

This chapter outlines the results of the data analysis. As both a theory- and data-driven analysis, the themes were generated in relation to the research questions and conceptual framework used. In examining the interviews, I formulated two sections, each with corresponding themes and subthemes, to reflect the participants' use and reported meanings of spaces as related to the self and identity. The results are composed of two sections: (1) *general findings*; and (2) *spaces and identity*.

### Section 1: General Findings

#### Touring Spaces

At the beginning of the interviews, participants were asked to take the researcher on a 'tour' of their residence room, identifying the artifacts included in the room, why items were included, and details of how and when they were acquired. In addition, the researcher would inquire further about items identified, or initially not-identified, in the space. Subsequently, in the virtual component of the interview, participants were again asked to take the researcher on a 'tour' of their chosen virtual space or platform. Participants were asked to identify the items included, why they were included, how they used the space, and how often they used the space. Again, the researcher prompted for more details on items included within the virtual space.

While individual differences existed in the meanings present in various spaces, all participants were able to identify artifacts in both physical and virtual spaces that related to personally significant meanings or experiences. The tour method used in the interviews elicited rich identity narratives as participants were able to reference artifacts within these spaces during the interview and able to show these artifacts to the researcher. The researcher was also able to ask questions on artifacts included in the space. Participants provided detailed accounts of the

memories and meanings they associated with artifacts within these spaces. Overall, the “tour” approached used in these interviews allowed for the elicitation of rich data, some of which likely would not have been elicited using traditional interview methods alone.

### **Variation in Individualized Spaces**

**Variation in physical spaces.** The residence room was the primary physical space explored and the context for the interview, however participants were also asked about the bedroom in the family home. While participants identified many significant objects in both the university residence and their previous bedroom in the family home, there was variation in the significance of these spaces. Most participants identified having access to their previous bedroom and the many artifacts they contained, as exemplified by the following quotes:

Yeah, that was really hard. Actually, I think it wasn't quite as hard because I live so close, it's sort of like oh well, if I don't really need that because I can just come home on the weekend and get it. (Participant 8)

...In general I just didn't think I'd have enough space or I'd be coming back so often I'd see them anyways. So there's not really a point in moving them all. (Participant 5)

However, as demonstrated in the following excerpt, one participant identified scarce representation of self within the previous bedroom:

P: ...there's not really much in there, it's just the bed and the little dresser and the chest of drawers and there was a lamp in there but I think they broke it. So that might not be there anymore, but it's very plain. There's nothing identifying that I was even there.

I: Okay, so no pictures, no posters no –

P: Not really, pictures. It has that's not true. There's one quilt. There'd be one by my grandmother, the same one with the ring and the pearls and everything. That's the only

thing that would even identify that I am even part of that family because there's nothing else except for photos in that house that, you know, states that I exist at all in that home.

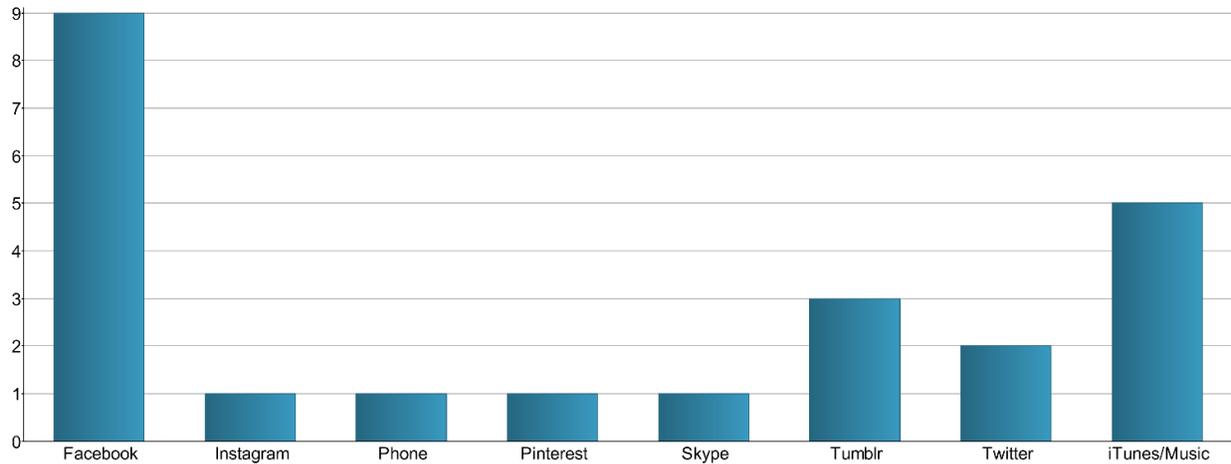
(Participant 19)

For Participant 19, there were few personally significant objects in her family home that reflected her self but this was also not her primary residence in the years leading up to university. While there was some variation in the amount of objects and significance attributed to previous bedrooms, all participants discussed contents and significance of the residence room and previous room they inhabited.

**Variation in virtual spaces.** Recognizing that individuals may use many diverse social media, virtual spaces, and platforms, and that they may use these spaces differently, participants were asked to identify the space or platform that they identified as being the most important to their sense of self. The concept of virtual space was not constrained in the interview and participants were allowed to identify virtual space through their own interpretation; including spaces that may not fit the traditional definition of space (e.g. music playlists).

During the section of the interview that focused on virtual spaces, the questions primarily explored the space identified by the participant to be most important to their sense of self. As Figure 1 suggests, there was variation in which virtual space participants identified as most salient to the self. The term 'virtual space' will be primarily used as encompassing each and all of these spaces.

Figure 1

*Virtual Spaces Identified as Most Important to Participant Sense of Self***Space as Constructed**

Throughout the interviews, participants identified their role in constructing and composing the physical and virtual individualized spaces they inhabited. For example, Participant 21 identifies her active role in space use and construction when she compares “decorating” her online environment and her residence room:

“like online you can like put things here and choose what goes where and stuff like that.

So like that I can do in here as well...”

For many participants, this space construction was very intentional, as demonstrated in the following excerpt about a dorm room:

...when I was choosing these things, I really wanted to choose things that would really represent me, because coming to university you know, when you’re meeting new people I kind of want my room like when people come into my room I want them to like see like oh, this is so [participant’s name] or yeah, and so I try and base things on personally what I like, like my interests and everything. (Participant 13)

While participant 13 is referring to intentionally curating the content of her room, a similar idea is expressed by Participant 20 when she describes using Twitter:

“I wouldn’t want to post it on my profile because I don’t want people thinking that’s who I am I guess.”

In these excerpts participants identify purposefully constructing spaces to reflect a sense of the self.

***Perceived Limitations and Possibilities of Physical Spaces.*** During the interviews, participants made note of perceived limitations and possibilities regarding physical spaces. The most salient perceptions were in regards to space (im)permanence, restrictions imposed by others, and the finite nature of physical space. A few excerpts are presented below to demonstrate the variation in these perceptions:

...I would choose to keep my more important things at home because I feel it’s more of a permanent place than here. So I don’t see like why I would need to bring everything here, especially when I’m only here for a short period of time. So I don’t know, yeah. Why would – like especially a lot of it is knick-knacks, so why would I transport it into a space where I don’t have a lot of room? (Participant 6)

For Participant 6, the limited space and temporariness of the residence room was a reason to leave items behind, while Participant 21 identified the temporary space as an opportunity to decorate and add items as desired:

...this place is probably most different because it’s temporary so I could literally just put anything up on the wall anywhere I want, decorate it I have snowflakes on there just because it’s wintertime, why not?

As demonstrated in the excerpts above, participants noted differences between the residence room and previous room in terms of the limitations and possibilities they perceived these spaces to have. Overall, participants suggested these perceptions influenced the objects they included in the residence and likely greatly influenced participants' use of the residence and previous rooms.

***Perceived Limitations and Possibilities of Virtual Spaces.*** Similar to physical spaces, participants made many comments on the perceived limitations and possibilities of the virtual spaces they chose. Most participants described these limitations or possibilities in comparison to those attributed to physical spaces. Participants often described virtual spaces as offering greater possibility for self-representation, as presented in the following excerpts:

...there's like a limit on how much you can just show and like in terms of items in your room but on Facebook it's electronic so you can you have no limits, you can photo-shop things to like show what you want to show, you can post pictures of anything and videos and like multimedia, it's a lot of different ways of expressing what you think. (Facebook; Participant 24)

...all the stuff I'm interested in is all [on Tumblr] and I feel like my room even though I have some stuff, but especially with my interests, it doesn't have like everything that it possibly could. I feel like Tumblr is more capable of having stuff that is more related to me. (Tumblr; Participant 5)

While many participants described diverse virtual spaces as offering increased access to possible interests and reflections of self, some described the limits to the virtual spaces. For Participant 19, Facebook was perceived as unable to contain the tangible items she identified as important:

Like Facebook yeah it has all my photos, but it doesn't have all the stuff that I have from my grandmother or it doesn't have all my crazy books or my journal or my- the coat that reminds me of my dad. Like it doesn't have all these other things that I can't really put on Facebook because that's just a medium that doesn't allow for many things other than photos and words.

In the above excerpts, participants demonstrate the perceived possibilities and limitations associated with preferred virtual spaces. Overall, participants suggested that these perceived limitations and possibilities were related to the ways in which virtual spaces were created and used. In addition, the comparison of physical and virtual spaces suggests the influence of limitations and possibilities on the development and use of different spaces. The excerpts above also suggest that the constructed spaces contain and reflect evidence of the self. The concept of evidence or documentation is explored further in the next section.

## **Section 2: Spaces and Identity**

### **Maintaining**

For participants the construction of the new residence room required first identifying what would be needed. The theme *maintaining* demonstrates the use of spaces and artifacts in processes of maintaining connections to meanings and narratives important to the self. This theme incorporates subthemes related to the past self or past connections and the maintenance of access to these connections within and across time and spaces.

**Maintaining the self through documentation.** Many participants referred to the possibility for artifacts and spaces to act as “documentation” of the self, life experiences, or connections to others, and the importance of such documentation. This section briefly explores

both virtual and physical artifacts which act as expressions of or documentation of the self and connections across time.

*Connections to Self in time.* For the majority of participants, connections to experiences or times (e.g. childhood, high school, and highpoints) were present in all spaces to varying degrees. In the following excerpt, Participant 13 describes the ability of music in her playlist to elicit strong childhood memories and memories of past experiences:

...there's this group called Sky and they sang this one song I remember always hearing, when my dad would like be driving and I'd be in the backseat, like when I was little. And I'd when I hear that song I would even remember and envision those kinds of moments... that song reminds me of my childhood. Like back home.

Participants also described connections to high school memories within spaces. For participant 21, the 'Mock Trial' was a recurrent in her narratives and a personally significant component of her high school years. She describes a variety of connections within her residence room and reminders left at home:

...my core thing of Mock Trial I said is at home but I have my Mock Trial hoodie here, and which I like to wear because I just like to think about it. Before Christmas break I had all my club sweaters here, like my student council sweaters and like I had my prefect pin but I think that I have a little bit of all of it here, like I have my prom pictures and my grad pictures, um just things I did in high school... I kind of like to have it here just like I said, none of my high school friends go here, so I just kind of have it here to like remind me of that.

The above excerpts, exemplify the use of spaces in connection to the self in time. For participants these artifacts worked as reminders of their associated memories.

*Connections to Others.* Connection to others was a prominent theme in the data, striking in the narratives associated with objects and spaces. Participants identified the importance of holding on to past connections, present connections, and connections to others with similar interests. Both physical and virtual spaces were described as containing artifacts associated with past and current relationships; however, many participants described the ability of tangible objects to go beyond reflection or reminders to contributing a sense of others' presence in their life:

The first day living here, like I felt not alone but they weren't with me. Even though they were, oh Facebook, oh Twitter, it's just like I don't see them every day anymore. So then I bring [physical] pictures of my life to remember that they're still with me... (Participant 16)

...he sent me this [necklace], as sort of just like a thing, it was sort of like his heart for safekeeping sort of thing while he was in the army. And yeah, I don't know. It's sort of been like always having his heart nearby even though he's really far away. (Participant 8)

The previous excerpts demonstrate artifacts as not only a reference to meanings but as providing a sense of presence or relationship as existing or persevering within this new space. In contrast, the interactive nature of virtual spaces like Facebook, Skype, or Tumblr, provided an alternate means of preserving these connections. Of all of the virtual spaces she occupies, Participant 8 identifies Skype as most important to her sense of self because she is able to "keep in contact with all the people" that she really cares about. She describes the importance Skype has played in maintaining the relationship with her long-term boyfriend overseas and allowing her boyfriend to be "there for most of the high points and the low points":

...Skype was super important, so that we could get like to see him. And once we started talking face to face, it just added something extra to the conversation so like when we don't have it, it just sucks kind of thing? So it's yeah, it's Skype is really like pretty much indispensable when you have a long distance relationship, and it's the only way to feel like you're like actually together.

These examples affirm that participants are utilizing both physical and virtual artifacts and spaces in ways that support ones' lived experiences and connections to others, as such, objects may act as support to narrative identity. Throughout this section, the excerpts are comprised of participants' understanding of artifacts and spaces as documentation or evidence of the self and connections. The importance of documentation, as reference to previous experiences and connections, suggests that references to the self across time and space may help maintain and support self-continuity through the narratives they are associated with.

In the excerpts above, participants not only demonstrate the importance of maintaining connections to the self and others but ways that artifacts and spaces support these connections in different ways. Thus, different spaces, vary in function and use and may fluctuate in importance to the maintenance of self and connections to others at various points in time.

**Maintaining Access.** When choosing what to bring with them to university, participants often emphasized the importance of maintaining access to personally salient artifacts and documentation of memories within spaces.

*The residence room.* As demonstrated above, objects in participants' residences were associated with personally significant narratives. The presence of these meanings in spaces alone may indicate accessibility, insofar as the residence room was the primary 'lived in' physical

space of participants. However, in addition, many participants reiterated sentiments on the importance of the tangible and visible presence of objects located in the residence room.

For example, when reflecting on her room, Participant 19 stated, “So this right now is my life. This room.” In the following quote, she reiterates and expands on this thought when asked where she keeps the things that are most important to her:

With me. Here. Because like I take my life with me, I don't like leaving stuff behind. I want to be able to hold it and look at it and you know? Most important things to me are the stuff I use pretty much every day, so it's best to have it with me.

When discussing the composition of the residence room and the location of important objects, several participants similarly referred to bringing objects as a means of ‘taking their lives with them.’ Furthermore, some participants spoke of placing objects that were especially salient to them in places where they were accessible and on-display. In the following quotes, Participant 19, and 10 discuss object placement:

Um anything that's like super important to me is going to be right by my bed or underneath my bed, or it's going to be on a bookshelf, on display if it's something that I think needs to be shown and it's beautiful. Or it's on walls, whatever. But yeah usually something very close to me or wherever it is that I usually sit or sleep in the room.

(Participant 19)

I would say like my bedside table, that's where a lot of my important stuff is, whether it be like my bible or what I had to do this week and appointments and stuff like that but I don't know, because also like my walls. Like I was saying with the photos, like that's important to me and that's just kind of everywhere so. (Participant 10)

In each of the above examples participants identify the importance of access to artifacts in the composition of their residence room and their active role in maintaining this access.

*Virtual space.* While participants reported using virtual spaces and platforms prior to the move to university, the virtual spaces, artifacts, and previous connections can be understood, in various ways, to have come “with” them. For example, when participant 7 is asked whether there are any important objects she wished she had brought with her to university she says:

...not really, just because I like planned it out like fairly well. Um everything um like everything that I thought I would miss, I just like, you know, I took a picture of it using my iPad and you know, so if I did end up missing it I could just look at a picture of it.

This participant found a way of bringing personally salient objects with her in their virtual form. Some participants also identified the importance of preserving, accessing, or recreating virtual spaces and artifacts through various means. When asked what she would you most like to get back if her iTunes account were to accidentally be deleted or no longer available, Participant 17 highlights the importance of preserving her iTunes playlist:

Um for sure, definitely the playlist that I made – this playlist, I’d want to get all the same songs that I’ve had on here. These are like the most listened to, the most times I’ve listened to some of them a hundred times, even though the plays got deleted. So definitely I’d put all these ones back on there. I’d be able to see on my phone I have all of them there, but I only put the important songs on there because I don’t have enough space. So I’d go through my list and I’d download all those ones again.

In this quote, iTunes was described as more important to this participant’s sense of self than the residence room.

The excerpts above demonstrate varying degrees of accessibility of important objects and narratives within the context of residence rooms and virtual spaces. Overall, the above examples reflect participants' active preservation of access to meanings, objects and spaces and the role and utility of the physical and virtual spaces in this accessibility. These findings suggest that individuals are using artifacts and spaces in the maintenance of the self across both time and space during the transition to university residence.

### **Becoming**

For the majority of participants, the construction of the new residence environment requires first identifying what would be needed. The theme *becoming* demonstrates the use of spaces and artifacts in processes of becoming or changing. This theme incorporates subthemes (*Who I am Becoming*, *"I Can Do This,"* and *The Necessary Tools*) that primarily relate to the present self; a self which is characterized by the newly acquired role of university student, the self as emerging adult, and the self within the university context.

#### ***Who I am Becoming***

The subtheme *who I am becoming* was notably present in the data. For many artifacts in the physical and virtual environments referenced future career paths and were considered important reminders of goals to work towards. In the following excerpt, Participant 14, identifies a quote on her wall as an important reminder of her goal to become an animal trainer:

I: And can I ask about the...quote that you pointed out as being important to you?

P: Yeah um, I found it in a magazine and I want to be an animal trainer, or a marine animal trainer and um I found this in the magazine and I was like uh, this is awesome. So I just wrote it out; it keeps me inspired every now and then, I just read it and...

I: Okay. Can I read it?

P: Yeah, go for it.

I: So, 'Animal trainers have one of the most visible and desired jobs in zoological park. Few colleges offer an animal training degree but degrees in other fields such as animal psychology or zoology are useful. To help become a good performer, future trainers may choose an educational background in drama or communication. Opportunities for animal trainers are limited. Those who wish to become a trainer should maintain good grades in school; develop swimming skills such as – as much as possible. Take scuba classes, practice public speaking abilities and maintain positive attitude. Remember, believe and you will achieve.'

P: Yeah, so it just kind of reminds me of my goals.

I: Cool. So do you look at it often then?

P: Yep, very often.

I: Are you in zoology then?

P: Yes.

For Participant 14, her goal was directly related to her program of study and reason for being at the university. Similarly, Participant 11, posted short and long term goals within her room in the same manner:

Um I think I'm overall a balanced person, um I tend to like travel and I want to be a geologist or a teacher, so I think I have a little bit of that in the room, so over there I like post the goals that I have in life, right? And I kinda just like see them every day and I think that is a positive thing to do to have your goals in mind. So when you work towards them you know what you're working towards I guess, so yeah.

She identifies the importance of these goals as something to work towards, but highlights the importance of the presence and location of these reminders within her residence room:

Um I kind of just put them above my desk because I thought it'd be easier for me to see, if I were to sit here or if I were just coming in and out of the room, so I could see them every time and kind of remind myself of why I'm here, what I'm doing in my life, just like temporary goals, just to keep me going.

In the above quotes, participants identified goals as reminders of who they planned on becoming or how to get there as related to the new university context.

### **“I Can Do This”**

As expected with times of transition, participants identified the move to university as one marked by significant adjustment. The theme “*I can do this*” incorporates the various artifacts that support the present self within the new roles and context. This is captured in the following interrelated subthemes.

**Motivation.** Participants identified artifacts that act as motivation to the present self in the new roles and contexts. The following excerpts demonstrate artifacts as used to motivate and support the present self during transition. Participant 7, reads a quote she strategically placed at the centre of her desk and the motivational support she attributed to it:

Um ‘You gain strength, courage and confidence by every experience in which you stop to look fear in the face, you are able to say to yourself I’ve lived through this horror, I can take the next thing that comes along; you must do the things you cannot do’. And that’s really a big thing for me because I like, you know, I have like some like anxiety attached to like social situations or like going out and doing something and you know, that kind of makes me you know, put it in perspective a bit more and think you know like, you can do

these things, like it's not yeah. It's not that difficult. And when you actually do it you'll feel good about yourself and you'll be able to take whatever else that comes next.

Similarly, Participant 16 describes a greeting card in connection to motivational support from her family:

I kept a card that she gave me at graduation, an accomplishment one and I read it and I almost teared up. Its things that she said, because she's very outgoing and does all this volunteering and the ideal of what a student is, like volunteering, paying off [inaudible] rent, living in [city name] which is barely like – you know? Like a student, and she's like do that, do this, you might as well do it. Like what's stopping you? So it's more like I don't have a memory of my sister but other than the things that she's said and she motivates me more. My family motivates me.

Participants identified many objects as associated with motivation. For some these motivations were specifically tied to the current career path, as seen in *who I am becoming*, for others, like the participants above, these artifacts motivated the self within this new context or in more general life direction.

***Achievement.*** Many participants also identified artifacts that were associated with personal achievements. Achievement artifacts took many different forms and were present across most participants' physical and virtual spaces. Participants identified artifacts symbolizing previous achievements, achievements leading to the present context, and achievements during their time in university. In the following excerpt, Participant 5, identifies her university acceptance letter as an important accomplishment:

P: actually I think I still have like my [university] acceptance letter at my house. At home. And like when I first got it, it was like a letter from [university] so I was really

excited and my mom was like open it, open it and like I opened it up and like I was so excited, I crinkled it up in my hands, like it's still like sitting there, like all crinkled up. But like I was really happy, I was so happy when I got into [university].

...

I: Okay so could you please say a word or two about why you think that particular moment was so good? Or and what the scene might say about who you are as a person or about your life?

P: Hm well like it was a really big accomplishment to get into university, even though both of my sisters have been there I felt like for some reason I felt like maybe I wouldn't get in, like they got into all their choices and stuff. So and I'd already gotten two acceptances from other universities but I was still waiting on [university] because it was the last one to come in and that was the one I really wanted to go to. And so I don't know, I felt like I was like yes, I finally did something right, like [inaudible] I did I was going in the right direction, at least.

Similarly, Participant 20 identifies the accomplishment of finishing high school while describing the meaning associated with a prom picture:

I think like I said, it kind of represents like putting yourself through all the studying and all the tests, like it pays off. So like it kind of reminds me here, at university like study and that kind of stuff and it'll pay off like with the good grades. And I know like prom doesn't have like a grade value but it's kind of like you did so well and you worked so hard and now you get to celebrate.

While the accomplishments took many forms (e.g. awards, honour lists) the narratives of achievement often included the recognition of one's hard work and the achievement as a reward

or “pay off”. As many participants identified the importance of working hard in university, some made direct connections to an end reward. These narratives associated with achievement likely promoted the efforts individuals perceived to be required in the new context.

***Independence.*** Independence was often considered by participants to be a significant component in their adjustment to university. Individualized spaces were used by participants to reference both newfound independence brought on by the transition to university and previous experiences that represented one’s independence at earlier times. In the following quote, Participant 16 discusses her pictures as a reflection of the independence associated with leaving a previous context:

I don’t know. Maybe just I always talk about this and pictures or whatever, maybe the turning point is leaving when like it’s hard to meet people when you get older because you don’t have all those things going on, you don’t have time and like leaving, like all my friends kind of stay with me and the turning point is going off on my own and finding me who I am instead of having my friends with me because they usually push me in high school, let’s do this together, let’s do this organization, let’s do this, let’s do this. But leaving and not with them being like a chain, and then deciding what to do with me, myself without anyone else deciding myself, so then like but being able to still be with [inaudible] university by now. But they’re still with me, the turning point’s probably just leaving.

In addition to representing newfound independence, many participants also identified artifacts related to previous experiences of independence. In the following excerpt, Participant 13, identifies a frame referencing the first trip without her family to New York City:

Because it's probably like one of the few moments that I actually felt like really happy in my life. And also one of the moments that I actually I was really um I got to be very independent, because this was the first vacation well not vacation, well first trip I went without my immediate family. And um yeah, so it was the first time I got to be independent in such a big city.

In the examples above, participants associated independence with artifacts they kept in their residence rooms. As participants identified artifacts and spaces to be associated with narratives of the self as independent, it is likely that these artifacts and narratives supported adjustment to university. Overall, the theme "*I can do this*" demonstrates participants' use of spaces as sources of support for the self that is changing or becoming. The inclusion of these artifacts within spaces act as both support and motivation for directing action in the new context.

### **The Necessary Tools**

In order to find out more about objects of essential importance, the interview included three key questions regarding items to save from spaces. Of particular importance in this section was the interview question: "If there was a fire in your residence building and you only had enough time to save three things from your room what would those three things be? Why? Being as specific as you can, could you tell me about this object and how it got its meaning? When/where did you get it? Who was involved?"

In response to the question, the majority of participants described the importance of saving objects that reflected need including laptops, phones, and wallets. One participant described the choice of practical items as sounding "heartless" but described the immediate importance of these items:

That's so hard. Um... crap. Okay. I would probably grab, and this is going to sound really heartless, first and foremost my laptop. Because all my schoolwork's on there, um I have papers that I still have not submitted, that need to be sent off, so that's a big deal unfortunately, it's the first thing I think of. Um next I would probably grab – I would probably grab the jewelry box, because it has some really important things in there that I don't want to lose. I don't know if they'd melt in the fire or if it would even reach my room but like I said, [inaudible] okay I'm grabbing that and throw it in the backpack. And then probably my keys or my phone. I don't know. Probably my phone because keys are not as big a deal; phone, if I lose my phone, all my phone numbers are in there, I have emails and appointments and like everything's in my phone, so if I ever lost it I'd be royally screwed. (Participant 19)

The most striking rationale for saving practical objects was their function in relation to the role of student. This practical preservation is demonstrated by the following participants:

If I was to get one more thing, which is kind of like cheating but even if I could, it'd be my computer. Just because not so much for the technology but like all the pictures that I take are all on my computer. I don't have them on an external hard drive which I should but, all of that and all my notes so like if it happened during exam time I'd have nothing. Oh my gosh that would be so stressful. (Participant 21)

...definitely my Mac book, because I just got it and I can't afford another computer, and it has all my schoolwork on it and it's really, really important. (Participant 17)

The excerpts above demonstrate the importance of artifacts or tools that support the role of student. Unlike, artifacts identified as connections to past selves and connections, these artifacts or devices primarily reflect immediate importance to the present self. In contrast to the

artifacts presented in “*I can do this*” these specific artifacts and spaces act as tools participants considered necessary for the preservation of the self within the new role.

**“When it all comes together”**

The exploration of physical and virtual spaces above demonstrated shared and distinct meanings, functions, and uses of different individualized spaces, suggesting that individualized spaces may function to support identity and identity processes in different and complementary ways. “*When it all comes together*” goes beyond artifacts to presents participants’ reported conceptions of the self as reflected by and across multiple spaces. The contribution of spaces to one’s sense of self are explored through the subthemes *spaces as “parts” of the self: past, present, and future* and *spaces as the same self*.

***Spaces as “parts” of the self: Past, present, and future.*** As demonstrated previously, the data suggested that spaces may have distinct uses or meanings as related to one’s sense of self. For some participants, whole spaces were identified as reflections of or distinct “parts” of the self beyond complementary or shared narratives within spaces. In the following quote, Participant 11 responds to the question of whether her Facebook and residence say similar things about her:

P: ...I don’t think so. I think here they’d just think oh, this girl she has no balance, she just wants to travel. Right? Versus like on my Facebook there’s a little bit more, there’s a few places that I’ve been to, um like France and um I’ve also been to like South America and stuff. There’s that stuff and then um like here they’d only see like oh she wants to travel but she hasn’t been anywhere or like there’s no pictures here so they’d think man, this girl has no friends or family. But I don’t know, I don’t see it that way though because for me personally, I like to look at the future instead of the past. If that makes sense.

I: Yep.

P: Because I like to post future goals and future places that I want to see, versus past which is on Facebook, you know?

I: Yep. Why do you think you do that?

P: Um because it's always good to like look forward in life versus back, you know? Like this is an uncomfortable position versus this; this is comfortable. Like there's a reason why your head is at the front versus in the back. You know?

For Participant 11, the spaces not only reflected different parts of the self but the space of the residence room was purposely future-oriented. In contrast, another participant described her Pinterest account (as the virtual space most important to her sense of self) as more future-oriented than the residence room: "I don't really look back when I'm pinning. I always look ahead, like my wedding and my future house and trips and yeah stuff like that" (Participant 1). Participant 11 expands on the distinct reflections of her spaces in terms of the self when asked which space was more important to her sense of self:

...I would say that it's kind of all equal. I guess because like [residence room] is my future, [Facebook] is my past. I would say together they make who I am... Sounds like a cheesy quote but, I think it's true...

In this excerpt the participant not only described her Facebook and her residence room as reflective of past and future selves, she was unable to distinguish one as more important than the other. As reflections of past and future selves, she identifies the importance of both in her understanding of self or 'who' she is.

Likewise, Participant 13 describes the spaces as reflective of past and present selves when asked to compare her music playlist and her residence room:

P: Because a lot – this is 90s music, childhood music. And if you look in my room, I have very minimal things from like my childhood. Maybe the only thing from my childhood would be like either my sketchbook but that's the only non-visible, when you first enter. Maybe like the only thing else is my poster, the Beatles.

I: Okay. So how else might they be similar or different do you think?

P: I think they're different... they're more different because I have more um more things more recent things than uh childhood, because I don't have a lot of past or childhood uh objects in my room.

I: ...my residence reflects more of who I am, my personality, whereas my music just reflects more just my past and like I know I've changed throughout my past like throughout my life. This is when I was much younger, so now this is more recent things so this is who I am now.

While she identifies the residence as containing 'more recent things' and a space reflecting 'who' she is 'now', her music playlist provides her with a reflection of the past and an indication of the changes that have led to who she is now. These excerpts suggest that spaces themselves are being constructed by participants to reflect parts of the self, parts necessary to the 'whole' self. As such, access to these spaces may be critical to one's understanding of self.

*Spaces as the same self.* When asked to identify the space most important to their sense of self, some participants did not distinguish either their physical or virtual space as being more important than the other. In the following quote, Participant 6 describes the importance of both her iTunes and residence room as important to her sense of self:

I think they're like equally important. Just I think they also portray sort of the same thing but just different ways of just portraying it. So I think they're just equally important.

Because I don't know. Like they're saying the same thing about me. So I don't think I'd be able to choose, just like a different way of saying it so yeah.

She elaborates on this claim when asked to identify how the spaces might be different:

Um... different? My iTunes? Um... I don't really- I don't know. I don't really think they're different. I don't know. Because they're like me, you know, they're both like part of me so I don't know.

Despite a difference in portrayal, both spaces are described as presenting similar reflections of the same self; not complementary to each other but both inextricably included in understanding the self.

In the excerpts provided, multiple individualized spaces, in all they signified, were essential to one's overall understanding of self. It is evident that the use of individualized space as a context for understanding the self is not bound to one space. For the participants above, specific spaces were understood as reflective of significant parts of the self. For some, this meant identifying spaces as representative of past, present, and future selves; distinct spaces of collective meaning that attributed to an understanding of a more holistic and complete self. For others, multiple spaces of similar reflections were inextricably intertwined into one's sense of self. Participants often attributed meanings, connections, or interests to spaces in distinct ways and varied significance. The conceptualization of participants' sense of self as understood through various individualized spaces and imbued meaning highlights the intricacy and variation of the use of individualized spaces in relation to identity and identity processes.

### **Discussion**

The main purpose of the current study was *to explore the use of personalized spaces during the transition into university residence*. This purpose was supported by four key research

questions: (1) How do physical and virtual spaces support a sense of self and identity during the transition into first-year university?; (2) Do physical and virtual spaces perform similar functions with respect to self and identity in the transition to university?; (3) How do individuals navigate individualized spaces and their associated meanings?; and (4) How does the use of multiple individualized spaces contribute to one's sense of self and identity?

During the interviews participants identified using a variety of virtual and physical spaces, as they also identified perceived limitations and possibilities of these spaces. Participants discussed the many artifacts included within their various individualized spaces, their associated memories and narratives, the significance of these artifacts and narratives, and the construction, function and use of these objects and spaces in developing a sense of self and identity. These data suggest that objects and spaces serve various functions in support of identity development processes, including maintaining *connections to the self in time*, maintaining *connections to others*, and support for the self as changing or becoming. Overall, the results of this study indicate that support for self and identity is not just found within but across multiple individualized spaces. Furthermore, the results indicate that participants are maintaining, constructing and navigating multiple spaces and meanings during a time of transition, when support for the self and identity may be of increased importance (Silver, 1996).

### **Spaces and the Self: An Expanding Toolkit for All that is “Me”?**

Reflecting on James' claim that “a man's Self is the sum total of all that he can call his”, the empirical self encompasses all objects or possessions that can be incorporated into one's sense of self (1890). Guided by James' theory, the current study was novel in its exploration of objects, self, and identity, as associated with a variety of both physical and virtual individualized spaces in the context of the transition to university residence. As contexts for identity, the current

study takes into account that individualized spaces cannot be understood as detached from the objects and meanings they contain. Given this intricacy of meanings related to objects and spaces, this study explored the support for self and identity found both within and, subsequently, across spaces.

### **Supporting a Sense of Self and Identity Within Spaces**

The findings presented in this section are of primary importance to the first and second research questions: (1) How do physical and virtual spaces support a sense of self and identity during the transition into first-year university?; and (2) Do physical and virtual spaces perform similar functions with respect to self and identity in the transition to university? Largely consistent with previous literature on objects and identity during times of transition (Kroger & Adair, 2008; Silver, 1996), participants in the current study identified a variety of artifacts that evidenced past and on-going life stories supportive of identity processes during the transition to university. Participants identified both physical and virtual artifacts they associated with previous selves, times, and experiences, previous and on-going connections to others, present roles, and future goals and expectations. Based on the object-related narratives provided by participants, the functions of objects were presented in two key overarching themes; *maintaining* and *becoming*.

In the theme *maintaining*, objects in physical and virtual spaces served as documentation of the self, lived experience and connections to others, Whereas, in the theme *becoming*, artifact-related memories and narratives functioned to support 'hoped for' or changing selves, primarily related to the present role of university student. These themes parallel the findings of Kroger and Adair (2008), who posited that cherished objects possess explicit functions related to identity processes, including preserving a sense of self across time and revisioning the self within the

context of transitions. More specifically, the object-related functions of *maintaining* and *becoming* in the present study correspond to Kroger and Adair's (2008) proposed functions of supporting self-continuity and supporting transition-related self-revision, respectively. However, it is important to note that the present study explored the function of a variety of physical and virtual objects, beyond those identified as primarily prized or cherished by the possessor (as was the focus of the study by Kroger & Adair, 2008). In contrast to Kroger and Adair's findings which highlight maintenance and consolidation processes in later-life transitions, the findings of the present study also place significant emphasis on processes of *becoming* and its related symbolic meanings, thus suggesting that artifacts that support the self as becoming may be particularly important during transitions in emerging adulthood.

The findings of the current study also bear several parallels to Silver's (1996) study of objects during the transition to college. Similar to Kroger and Adair (2008), Silver (1996) posited that objects important to identity construction could be categorized as serving at least one of two functions including: (1) Anchors, as related exclusively to prior life stages, serve as a reminder of lived experiences and connections to the self at prior times; and, (2) markers, as related to both prior life stages and those brought about by transition. In relation to the current study, Silver's concept of anchors parallels the subtheme *maintaining the self through documentation*. Participants in the present study identified the ability of spaces and objects to serve as documentation of the self and the personal salience of that documentation of the self and connections across time. Additionally, markers parallel the becoming subtheme, *who I am becoming*, which identifies artifacts that served to signify the reasons and goals associated with being in the new university context. However, while the current study supports Silver's findings,

it also extends beyond consideration of anchors and markers to more fully explore themes of maintaining and becoming.

Many of the participants' artifact-related narratives suggest that objects and spaces support the individual in new environments and roles. In addition to the subtheme *who I am becoming*, discussed above, the study identifies two novel subthemes related to processes of becoming including "*I can do this*" and *the Necessary Tools*. The theme "*I can do this*" presents three striking artifact-related narrative forms present throughout the data, including *motivation*, *achievement*, and *independence*. Within these three forms, participants discussed objects that served to (1) represent goals and move the self forward towards short and long term goals related to university, career paths, and overall selves; (2) to represent past achievements, achievements leading to the present, and recent achievements within the new roles and contexts; and (3) to represent past experiences of independence and symbolize present or newfound independence brought about by the transition to university.

As the subthemes suggest, *motivation* and *achievement* served to symbolize goals and the effort needed to reach those goals, while *independence* suggests the independence deemed by participants to be necessary in the new context. These subthemes focus on personal agency, or the degree to which individuals can affect change in their own lives, which is important for positive psychological adaptation (McAdams & McLean, 2013). Findings from the present study suggest that objects may support life stories during times of transition and, as such, they may provide scaffolding for the development of personal agency and well-being.

Overall, objects were found to act as a reference to the previous selves and experiences, connections to others, reminders of who one wants to be, and function to support, facilitate and monitor change related to the present self in the transitional context. While the themes

“maintaining” and “becoming” were largely consistent with previous literature on cherished objects, they draw significant parallels to identity processes as related to change and continuity. Building on the existing literature, the current study found that support for the self in transition was prominent in object narratives and highlights the importance of objects and spaces in providing support for the self becoming. Given that individualized spaces and artifacts serve to support the development of self and identity, access to these supports may be especially critical during times of transition, perhaps especially in emerging adulthood when self and identity processes are paramount (McLean & Breen, 2014).

### **Supporting a Sense of Self and Identity Across Spaces**

According to James (1890), the empirical self is all that one is tempted to call “me”, objects or possessions can be incorporated into one’s sense of self. While previous studies on individualized spaces and identity have aimed to understand specific spaces as a collection of these object-related narratives, few studies have examined support for the self as reflected ‘across’ multiple individualized spaces. In relation to the third and fourth research questions, (1) How do individuals navigate individualized spaces and their associated meanings? and (2) Does the use of multiple individualized spaces contribute to one’s sense of self and identity?, the current study provides novel insight into the role and use of multiple individualized spaces in identity development. As the findings suggest, the dispersal of artifacts and meanings across contexts and the accessibility to possible selves or interests highlights a need to understand such contexts as an ‘expanding toolkit’ for all one is able to include in the self at one point in time.

Findings suggest that both physical and virtual spaces perform functions that support a sense of self and identity during the transition into first-year university. In many ways, these spaces performed similar functions such as documenting and maintaining connections to the self

and others, as well as supporting processes of maintaining and becoming. However, the virtual and physical spaces were often associated with diverse perceived limitations and possibilities. For example, several virtual spaces allowed participants to sustain connections to others or connections to possibilities (e.g., through the internet) in ways that physical spaces often lacked. Altogether, this study highlights the importance of extending previous study of objects and spaces, as related to identity, to the contemporary, technological world and the need to further understand the use of multiple spaces in relation to identity development.

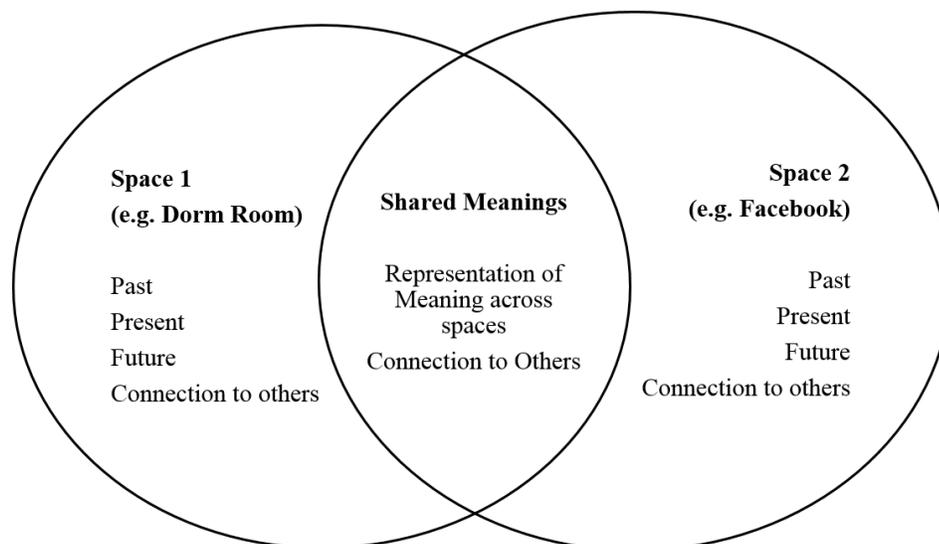
According to more recent literature on individualized spaces, contemporary technology and social media spaces may serve important functions similar to those of traditional individualized spaces, like the bedroom (Hodkinson & Lincoln, 2008; Lincoln, 2012). Aside from the recognized need to explore virtual spaces in the context of identity, research has focused on exploration of one researcher-chosen platform per study (e.g. Lincoln, 2008), whereas, this study extends on previous work by including and exploring a variety of preferred virtual spaces. Participants were able to identify the space most important to their sense of self during the time of the interview. While the spaces identified varied greatly, all participants in the current study identified using multiple virtualized spaces in addition to the physical spaces they occupied. The results of the present study demonstrate that various physical and virtual spaces supported similar functions related to the self and identity during the transition to university. As such, it is important to understand the ways in which these spaces are created, used, and navigated.

The participants in this study created and used spaces to complement, compartmentalize, or duplicate interests, meanings, social connections, and, ultimately, as parts of or reflections of

the self. While construction and use of these spaces differed, Figure 2 depicts possible similarities and distinctions between two separate spaces.

Figure 2

*Dispersal of Meaning Within and Across Individualized Spaces*



For the participants, the meanings and functions of spaces can be shared, distinct, or complementary, suggesting that the use of multiple spaces provides individuals greater access to a repertoire of personal meanings. In addition, the self, meanings, or narratives can be communicated differently across various spaces and mediums. Figure 2 incorporates the understanding, as demonstrated in the analysis, that individuals may be ‘inhabiting’ multiple individualized spaces (including digital and virtual ones beyond the two overlapping spaces presented in Figure 2).

Acknowledging that individualized spaces have different formats, uses, functions, limitations, and possibilities (as evidenced in *general findings*) there are a variety of possible meanings and uses that individuals can attribute to these spaces. As such, individualized spaces

function as a method of *maintaining access* to support and evidence of individual narratives and meanings and, consequently, the self, albeit possibly in different ways. All available significant meanings or narratives, while not all incorporated into one's sense of self, can then be drawn on to contribute to, or support, one's sense of self as needed.

Building on the support for self found within spaces, participants also reflected on the ways in which spaces were important to their sense of self. "*When it all comes together*" presents participants understanding of the self as reflected across multiple spaces. For some participants, whole spaces represented distinct parts of the self. Thus, these parts or spaces must be taken into account as part of the self and identity; Recalling Participant 11:

...Important than the other? Oh um... I would say that it's kind of all equal. I guess because like [residence room] is my future, [Facebook] is my past. I would say together they make who I am... Sounds like a cheesy quote but, I think it's true...

While other participants identified spaces as inextricably important to their understanding of the 'whole' self. For the participants in this study, multiple spaces held varying degrees of significance to their understanding of self. Thus, it is clear that the support for self and identity is not bound to one individualized space. As different spaces were understood by participants to be reflections of the self, the data suggest support for a broader, contemporary "sum" of the self.

Overall, the present study demonstrates that participants are indeed navigating and actively maintaining access to spaces, objects and meanings that support the self and identity. The findings of this study were understood in relation to the transitional period that participants shared, the move to first year university residence. During times of transition, the access to interests, objects, or spaces can be very important to supporting the self (Kroger & Adair, 2008; Silver, 1996). These findings relate directly to the third and fourth research questions ("How do

individuals navigate individualized spaces and their associated meanings?” and “Does the use of multiple individualized spaces contribute to one’s sense of self and identity?), as participants created, maintained, and navigated multiple individualized spaces that were found to contribute to their sense of self and identity in shared, similar, and distinct ways.

### **Limitations**

There are several important limitations to note in this study. First, the sample size and recruitment measures, which yielded a small group of women from one university. While this sample is not generalizable to other populations, the goal of this qualitative study was to gain a deeper understanding of the use of spaces in identity development. However, according to Rosenblatt and Fischer (1993), such generalizability to populations is less important in qualitative research than quantitative research as data reveals greater richness and complexity. An additional limitation is the possibility that participant interest in the study was related to a self-selection bias. While participants did differ in terms of invested development of their residence rooms, self-selection bias was an unavoidable possibility with the recruitment methods that were used.

Another limitation of the current study is that all participant interviews took place in the second semester, 5-7 months following the move to university residence. As such, the findings include some retrospective accounts on the development and use of different individualized spaces. While this timing was chosen to allow space for participant adjustment and revisioning processes, it may not accurately demonstrate the use of various objects and spaces at different points in the transitional period. Given that objects and spaces may change in significance at different points in time, future studies should explore change in the importance of objects throughout transitional periods.

Additionally, it is important to note the extent to which this study was developed and guided by theory and an underlying assumption that selves are created through interactions with other people and objects. This study sought to explore the stories and meanings related to both cherished and everyday objects and it is possible that the interview context prompted participants to search for meanings that may not be relevant to them outside of the interview context. However, while this possible bias toward meaning is noted, there was an attempt to mitigate the potential imposition of meaning by asking participants whether or not there were meaningful artifacts at the beginning of the interview questions (e.g. “Is there anything in your room here or at home that especially reminds you of your high school years?”), prior to prompting for further details.

### **Conclusion and Future Directions**

This exploratory study serves as a valuable step in understanding the significance of objects and multiple spaces (physical and virtual) in identity development during times of transition to adulthood. The analyses suggest that individuals use a variety of individualized spaces to support the self and identity during the transition to university. In addition to creating and maintaining these spaces, I propose that participants are actively maintaining connections to the self and others and navigating meanings across both time and space. I also suggest that the use of multiple spaces provides increased support for the self and may be especially critical during times of increased change. While the study deepens our understanding of the importance of spaces and artifacts in identity development during the transition to university residence, future studies should seek to address larger and more diverse samples.

In terms of future research directions, the current study suggests a need to extend the study on individualized spaces and identity to explore the diverse individualized spaces that

individuals inhabit and the support they provide. As the majority of participants in this study identified occupying multiple physical and virtual individualized spaces, they discussed the importance of maintaining access to artifacts, meanings, and spaces (e.g. previous room in the family home). Further research on the significance of individualized spaces should seek to more closely examine the importance of accessibility to significant meanings and spaces, the role of such access in space construction and self processes, and the ways that available spaces are navigated and used.

This research identifies the use of objects and spaces to support narratives and meanings that may be beneficial to promoting the student well-being during the transition to university residence. This has implications for identifying supports for identity development and well-being during times of increased vulnerability and change. While this study focuses on university-related transitions during emerging adulthood, future studies should aim to understand the use of objects and spaces during other life transitions, particularly those associated with increased risk to positive well-being, such as youth immigration (Sharma & Sharma, 2010), and transitions for youth in care (Garstka, Lieberman, Biggs, Thompson, & Levy, 2014). It would be advantageous to gain an increased understanding of how spaces are used in relation to identity in order to support positive well-being during emerging adulthood and across the life span.

Additionally, this study has methodological implications for the study of self and identity. During the interviews, artifacts and individualized spaces provided visual clues and scaffolding for conceptualizing the self. The participant-led “tour” of participants’ dorm rooms and preferred virtual spaces elicited rich narratives about experiences, relationships, the self, and identity, which likely would not have been elicited using traditional interview methods alone. As such, these findings suggest that this interview approach is a productive method for exploring

conceptions of self in emerging adulthood and may be beneficial to future research on identity in adolescence and emerging adulthood.

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## Appendix A

*This semi-structured interview was developed using/adapting McAdams' Life Story Interview (2008) & work by Andrea Breen (in preparation).*

### Interview Protocol

This kind of interview is a semi-structured interview. This means we try to keep the questions the same for different participants. Some of the questions might sound repetitive, but I have to ask the same questions of everyone, so I am sorry if it seems awkward in any way. Please do try to answer the questions as fully as you can if you are comfortable doing so.

Is this your own room or do you share with other people? (if sharing) Do you have an area that is your own space?

For many people bedrooms and other private spaces are filled with objects or artifacts that give clues to others about who they are or what their interests might be. This could be anything from photographs, posters of their favourite bands or movies or music, books, games, quotes on the wall, clothes, bedding, gifts, knick-knacks or virtually any other item in the space. If someone who didn't know you were to enter your room and snoop around what do you think they would say about you? {Prompt for reasoning; for example- do you think anything in this room hints at who you are as a person? How?} Would that be accurate? What would they miss?

So now I want to ask you how you would personally describe yourself to me? Did you use any of these objects in forming your description of yourself? (if yes) Can you tell me about these objects?

Would you mind giving me a tour of your room and telling me about the items you have in here? Posters, media, figurines, art, clothes, etc—Why do you have this? Where did it come from? When/how did you get this? Was this a gift or was someone else involved? {Researcher will ask about various items in the space—room specific }

Are there any items you keep in a drawer, on a computer, or are currently less visible that are important to you? This could be any item; a photograph, a diary, something on your phone or computer?

If there was a fire in your residence building and you only had enough time to save three things from your room what would those three things be? Why? Being as specific as you can, could you tell me about this object and how it got its meaning? When/where did you get it? Who was involved?

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So I've asked you a lot of questions about the stuff in your room here. The move to university residence often means deciding if and what items to bring from home, what items to leave behind, and sometimes addition of new items. How did you decide what objects were important

to bring with you to residence? What? Why? What have you added or acquired since coming to university?

Did you have your own bedroom at home or one that you shared with other people? (If sharing). Did you have your own space within your room? A part of it that feels like yours?

Are you able to visit home often? Is your previous room still intact? How so? How not?

Thinking of your other bedroom and the objects it contains, can you tell me more about them? Is there anything in your old bedroom that stands out as particularly important to you? {Prompt for connection to others, events, time periods; Who? What? Where? When?}

What objects did you leave behind? Are any of them important to you? Why did you choose to leave them behind?

Are there any objects you wish you had here on campus?

Thinking about the contents of your residence and your room at home, where do you keep the stuff that is most important to you?

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Is there anything in your room here or at home that especially reminds you of your high school years? Where? Why? Being as specific as you can, could you tell me about this object and how it got its meaning? When/where did you get it? Who was involved?

Is there anything in your room here or at home that reminds you of your childhood at all? Where? Why? Being as specific as you can, could you tell me about this object and how it got its meaning? When/where did you get it? Who was involved?

People experience many different relationships with people in their life; these could be friendship; family; romantic or other. Is there an object or picture in your room here or at home that reminds you of a significant relationship in your life? Can you tell me about it? Who? (Specifics)

A high point is a scene, episode, or moment in your life that stands out as an especially positive experience. This might be *the* high point scene of your entire life, or else an especially happy, joyous, exciting, or wonderful moment in your life story. Are there any objects in your room here or at home that you associate with a high point in your life? What is it? Could you tell me about what happened, when and where, who was involved, and what were you thinking and feeling during this high point? Also, please say a word or two about why you think this particular moment was so good and what the scene may say about who you are as a person.

In looking back over your life, it may be possible to identify certain key moments that stand out as turning points -- episodes that marked an important change in you or your life story. Are there any objects in your room here or at home that you associate with a turning point in your life? What is it? Could you tell me about what happened, when and where, who was involved, and what were you thinking and feeling during this turning point? Also, please say a word or two

about why you think this particular moment was so good and what the scene may say about who you are as a person or about your life.

Many people have memories, experiences, or times in their life that stand out as especially vivid or meaningful. This could be an especially memorable, vivid, or important scene, positive or negative. Is there an object in your room here or at home that reminds you of a particularly meaningful time or experience that we have not yet talked about? Please describe this scene in detail, tell what happened, when and where, who was involved, and what you were thinking and feeling. Also, what does this memory say about you or your life?

If you could save three things from your room at home what would it be? Why? Being as specific as you can, could you tell me about this object and how it got its meaning? When/where did you get it? Who was involved?

Is this more or less important than what you would save from your residence room? How? Why?

## **FUTURE**

Now I'd like you to imagine the future, about 5 years from now, the room you might have and the objects you would have in it. Can you tell me a bit about what you think you would have?

What do you think your future room would say about the person you might be in the future?

Will the room give any clues to the things you might like to do (sports, travel, work, hobbies, family)? What objects might hint at these interests?

Of the room and objects you can think of, what do you think your imagined future room says about the kind of life you will have? How?

Do you think your residence room, previous room, and future room say anything similar about you? How might they be different?

## **SOCIAL MEDIA/TECHNOLOGY QUESTIONS**

The next set of questions is on social media or other media applications. Some students use other forms of media that may be important to them such as music playlists, phone applications, gaming software, Youtube, or social media such as Facebook, Pinterest, Twitter, Instagram or Journal sites. Do you use any forms of media like those? Which ones do you use?

Which one is the most important to your sense of who you are? Why? How long have you used it?

For this section of the interview I am inviting participants to take me on a 'tour' of their preferred media application. This is entirely optional, and the following questions will be asked

of all participants regardless of whether they show me their preferred application. Would you feel comfortable showing me your {application}?

{Media platform specific questions (Ie; How do you use it? How often do you use it? Posts? Comments? Conversations? Pictures? How do you decide what to include? Where do you access this platform the most?)}

Is there anything on (application) that especially reminds you of your high school years? Being as specific as you can, could you tell me about this object and how it got its meaning?

Is there anything on (application) that reminds you of your childhood at all? Being as specific as you can, could you tell me about this object and how it got its meaning?

Is there an object or picture or other content on (application) that reminds you of a significant relationship in your life? Can you tell me about it? Who? (Specifics)

Thinking again of a high point or especially positive experience, is there any content on (application) that you associate with a high point in your life? Could you tell me about what happened, when and where, who was involved, and what were you thinking and feeling during this high point? Also, please say a word or two about why you think this particular moment was so good and what the scene may say about who you are as a person.

Is there any content on (application) home that you associate with a turning point in your life? What is it? Could you tell me about what happened, when and where, who was involved, and what were you thinking and feeling during this turning point? Also, please say a word or two about why you think this particular moment was so good and what the scene may say about who you are as a person or about your life.

Is there any content on (application) that reminds you of a particularly meaningful time or experience? Please describe this scene in detail, tell what happened, when and where, who was involved, and what you were thinking and feeling. Also, what does this memory say about you or your life?

Do you think that the way you portray yourself (online) is similar, different, or the same as the way people see you in the real world? How?

If for some reason your site (or other platform) were to be accidentally deleted or no longer available, what would you most like to get back? Why?

In thinking of your (preferred app) and your dorm room together, are they similar in what they say about you? How/why? And in what ways might they be different?

Which one do you think is most important to your sense of who you are? Why?

That's all of the questions I have for you at this time. Is there anything else that you would like to add? How was this interview experience for you? Do you have any recommendations for ways we might improve this interview?

#### References

- McAdams, D. P. (2008). *The life story interview* [PDF document]. Retrieved from <http://www.sesp.northwestern.edu/docs/LifeStoryInterview.pdf>
- Breen, A. V., Scott, A. C., & McLean, K. C. (manuscript in preparation). "*Identity Artifacts*" and *Identity Development*.

## Appendix B

	<h2 style="text-align: center;">RESEARCH ETHICS BOARD – General REB-G</h2> <p style="text-align: center;">Certification of Ethical Acceptability of Research Involving Human Participants</p>
<p><b>APPROVAL PERIOD:</b></p> <p><b>REB NUMBER:</b></p> <p><b>TYPE OF REVIEW:</b></p> <p><b>RESPONSIBLE FACULTY:</b></p> <p><b>DEPARTMENT:</b></p> <p><b>SPONSOR(S):</b></p> <p><b>TITLE OF PROJECT:</b></p>	<p><b>November 15, 2013</b> to <b>November 15, 2014</b></p> <p><b>13OC035</b></p> <p><b>Delegated Type 1</b></p> <p><b>Breen, Andrea (abreen@uoguelph.ca)</b> <b>Family Relations &amp; Applied Nutrition</b></p> <p><b>SSHRC Insight Development Grant</b></p> <p><b>The Bedroom Study</b></p>
<p>The members of the University of Guelph Research Ethics Board have examined the protocol which describes the participation of the human subjects in the above-named research project and considers the procedures, as described by the applicant, to conform to the University's ethical standards and the Tri-Council Policy Statement, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition.</p> <p>The REB requires that you adhere to the protocol as last reviewed and approved by the REB. The REB must approve any modifications before they can be implemented. If you wish to modify your research project, please complete the Change Request Form. If there is a change in your source of funding, or a previously unfunded project receives funding, you must report this as a change to the protocol.</p> <p>Unexpected events and incidental findings must be reported to the REB as soon as possible with an indication of how these events affect, in the view of the Responsible Faculty, the safety of the participants, and the continuation of the protocol.</p> <p>If research participants are in the care of a health facility, at a school, or other institution or community organization, it is the responsibility of the Principal Investigator to ensure that the ethical guidelines and approvals of those facilities or institutions are obtained and filed with the REB prior to the initiation of any research protocols.</p> <p>The Tri-council Policy Statement, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, requires that ongoing research be monitored by, at a minimum, a final report and, if the approval period is longer than one year, annual reports. Continued approval is contingent on timely submission of reports.</p> <p><b>Membership of the Research Ethics Board - General:</b> S. Banerjee, <i>Community Member</i>; J. Carson, <i>Community Member</i>; S. Chuang, <i>FRAN (alt)</i>; K. Chuong, <i>Graduate Student</i>; J. Clark, <i>PolSci (alt)</i>; J. Dwyer, <i>FRAN</i>; M. Dwyer, <i>Legal</i>; B. Ferguson, <i>CME (alt)</i>; B. Giguere, <i>Psychology (alt)</i>; B. Gottlieb, <i>Psychology</i>; S. Henson, <i>OAC (alt)</i>; S. Hickson, <i>COA</i>; L. Kuczynski, <i>Chair</i>; A. Lauzon, <i>OAC</i>; R. Ragan, <i>Legal (alt)</i>; C. Rice, <i>FRAN</i>; V. Sobala, <i>SOAN (alt)</i>; R. Stansfield, <i>SOAN</i>; J. Wood, <i>Graduate Student (alt)</i>; S. Yi, <i>CME</i>.</p>	
<p>Approved:</p> <p> Chair, Research Ethics Board- General</p> <p>Date: _____</p>	