Network Science (2025), **13**, e12, 1–25
doi:10.1017/nws.2025.10007

RESEARCH ARTICLE

The structure of identity facilitation and interference

Maria C. Ramos

Interdisciplinary Social Science Program, Florida State University, Tallahassee, FL, USA
Email: mc@mariacramos.com

Abstract

This article investigates global patterns of facilitation and interference among identities—socially recognizable categories that shape individuals' sense of who they are and carry cultural expectations (e.g., mother, worker). While identity theory suggests that identities interact in structured ways, existing research often examines identities in isolation or conventional roles, limiting the ability to observe broader patterns. This study adopts a relational approach to explore how identities facilitate or interfere with each other. By drawing on sociological identity theory, I formulate hypotheses about these interactions. Using original survey data, I construct identity networks where nodes represent identities and ties indicate the prevalence of facilitation or interference. Blockmodeling techniques are then employed to characterize the global structure of these networks. The findings reveal distinct positions within the network, largely aligning with theoretical expectations.

Keywords: identity networks; generalized blockmodeling; identity structures; structural equivalence; belief networks

1. Introduction

The self, as understood in sociological social psychology, is comprised of multiple identities (e.g., a mother, a worker). Identities are deeply embedded in social structures and carry culturally shared meanings and expectations that guide behavior (Burke & Stets, 2023). Whether identities are ascribed (e.g., race) or achieved (e.g., professional roles, personal values), individuals strive to align their behaviors to match the standards associated with identities. Identity verification occurs when perceptions of the self-in-situation match the standards of the identity (the set of expectations about how one ought to be in the identity). Successful verification leads to well-being while nonverification leads to stress and other negative health outcomes (Burke & Cerven, 2019; Burke & Harrod, 2005; Cast & Burke, 2002; Gallagher, 2017).

While most studies on identity verification have focused on identities in isolation (e.g., Gallagher et al., 2022; Riley & Burke, 1995) the interaction between identities within the self has garnered increasing attention (Burke, 2003; Ramarajan, 2014). A relational perspective recognizes that identities can facilitate or interfere with each other with important implications for well-being and other outcomes (Burke, 1991, 1996; Stets & Harrod, 2004). Facilitation occurs when one identity makes it easier to hold and express another. Conversely, interference happens when one identity hinders the verification of another (Burke, 1991, 1996). Identity facilitation tends to bring positive outcomes (Fredriksen-Goldsen & Scharlach, 2006; Greenhaus & Powell, 2006; Kirchmeyer, 1992) whereas interference brings negative ones (Amstad et al., 2011; Cassidy & Davies, 2003; Marks & MacDermid, 1996).

Despite the critical importance of facilitative and interfering dynamics, empirical research on these processes remains limited. Existing studies often focus on a narrow range of identities

(Mui, 1992; Quach, 2020), constraining our ability to identify broad, systematic patterns. Much of the research also centers on conventional identities such as worker, spouse, or parent (Small & Riley, 1990; Tiedje et al., 1990; Voydanoff & Donnelly, 1999). This emphasis on mainstream identities overlooks the influence of unconventional or stigmatized identities, which might considerably impact both facilitation and interference.

This article aims to address these gaps by shifting the focus from studying micro-level processes of a few identities in specific contexts to studying macro-level patterns of facilitation and interference. Using blockmodeling techniques, I explore how different clusters of identities present distinct relational profiles systematically facilitating or hindering other identity clusters. This study not only includes conventional identities but also stigmatized ones. By doing so, it sheds light on several theoretical arguments that have been proposed but not yet empirically tested.

The article is organized as follows: First, I introduce identity theory and outline the theoretical mechanisms involved in identity facilitation and interference. Next, I translate these theoretical arguments into a networks' framework and formulate hypotheses about the structure of identity facilitation and interference. Then, I empirically examine these hypotheses using original survey data from a U.S. sample. I construct two identity networks capturing the prevalence of facilitatory and interfering relationships between identities in the sample. Using blockmodeling, I assess the configuration of facilitatory and interfering identity networks. I conclude with a discussion and directions for future work.

2. Theoretical background

2.1 Identities

This study builds upon the perceptual control model in sociological social psychology (Burke & Stets, 2023). This model conceives of the self as composed of multiple identities. Identities are socially recognizable categories that define individuals' sense of who they are, such as being a mother or a worker. Identities are beliefs about the self that connect social forces to individual behavior; identities carry a set of culturally shared meanings that are to an extent internalized by those holding the identity. Individuals strive to behave in accordance to internalized meanings.

Identities encompass a broad range of self-conceptions, including roles tied to traditional social institutions (like mother or spouse), group affiliations (such as gym membership), categorical identities (including race and ethnicity), and personal traits and values (such as kindness or patriotism) (Burke & Stets, 2023; Stryker, 1968; Stryker, 1980). Identities encompass both ascribed and achieved statuses (Foladare, 1969). Ascribed identities are assigned by society based on characteristics or conditions that leave little choice, such as race, ethnicity, physical disability, or mental illness. Achieved identities, in contrast, result from personal choices that, while influenced by society, reflect a greater degree of individual agency.

Central to the perceptual control model is the identity verification process (Burke & Stets, 2023). When an identity is activated, individuals strive to align their identity standard and their self-relevant perceptions. The identity standard represents the reference points individuals aim to uphold when the identity is activated. Self-relevant perceptions in a situation include how individuals view their own behavior (self-appraisals), how they believe others perceive them (reflected appraisals), and how others evaluate their behavior (actual appraisals). Identity verification happens when the individual's self-perception in the situation aligns with their identity standard.

Understanding identity verification processes is important because it affects individuals' well-being. Successful verification enhances self-esteem and sense of mastery (Cast & Burke, 2002). Meanwhile, failure to verify one's identities leads to stress, depression, low self-esteem, and low mastery (Gallagher et al., 2022; Stets et al., 2023; Stets & Burke, 2014).

While most studies in this vein have focused on how features of identities or the situation affect the verification process (e.g., Gallagher et al., 2022; Burke & Stets, 1999; Cast, 2004), a growing

https://doi.org/10.1017/nws.2025.10007 Published online by Cambridge University Press

body of scholarship suggests that identities within the self influence each other's verification process (Reid & Hardy, 1999; Stets & Harrod, 2004). Identities can ***facilitate*** each other's verification when holding one identity makes it easier to hold or express another identity. By contrast, ***interference*** between identities occurs when holding or expressing one identity disrupts the verification of the other. Unsurprisingly, the literature on identity facilitation and interference has linked facilitation to positive outcomes (Fredriksen-Goldsen & Scharlach, 2006; Greenhaus & Powell, 2006; Kirchmeyer, 1992) and interference to negative ones (Amstad et al., 2011; Cassidy & Davies, 2003; Marks & MacDermid, 1996).

Despite the importance of facilitation and interference for well-being, empirical testing of the mechanisms involved has been scarce and limited in scope. Existing research has typically focused on the facilitation and interferences between two or three identities at a time and a limited range of identity combinations (Kirchmeyer, 1993). This limits our ability to investigate the broad pattern of facilitation and interference we should observe if the theorized mechanisms hold. Additionally, research in this vein has typically focused on conventional and/or major roles (e.g., worker, spouse, and parent) (Small & Riley, 1990; Tiedje et al., 1990; Voydanoff & Donnelly, 1999). By concentrating solely on mainstream roles, researchers may overlook identities that have significant impacts on individuals (Marcussen et al., 2019) and that might also profoundly shape identity dynamics.

In this article, I move from analyzing relationships between two or three identities to exploring broader patterns of conflict and support among identities at the societal level. At this scale, facilitation and interference mechanisms create structured patterns where certain types of identities consistently support or interfere with others. Building on previous research, I develop hypotheses about these societal-level identity dynamics and expand the analysis to include a wider range of identities.

2.2 Facilitation between identities

I distinguish three critical factors influencing the dynamics of identity facilitation: (1) the alignment of meanings and expectations between identities, (2) the granting of resources from one identity to support the verification of another, and (3) the verification demands placed on identities.

A first key element involved in identity facilitation dynamics is the compatibility of meanings and expectations between identities. This has been the main emphasis of identity theory, as several authors in this vein assert that identities facilitate each other when their meanings are aligned (Burke, 2003; Stryker, 2000; Stryker & Burke, 2000). Here, I advance the literature by distinguishing two types of meaning alignment: meaning overlap and meaning compatibility.

Meaning overlap occurs to the extent that the meanings and expectations of one identity match those of the other (Stets, 1995). For example, the identities of liberal and environmentalist share common meanings. Supporting renewable energy initiatives, environmental regulations, and conservation efforts can be seen as both liberal and environmentally responsible, creating a shared set of meanings. Verifying one identity with respect to the overlapping meanings will simultaneously verify the other, as the same actions satisfy the expectations of both identities.

Importantly, principle-based identities, such as those grounded in values, religion, or spiritual beliefs, tend to have a high degree of meaning overlap with other identities within the self (Burke, 2004; Stets & Carter, 2011; Stets & Carter, 2012). This high degree of overlap occurs through two mechanisms: first, by choosing identities that inherently align with one's values, such as voluntary memberships; and second, by influencing the expression and standards of other identities, including ascribed and stigmatized ones, to align with core principles (Hitlin, 2011; Tsushima & Burke, 1999).

Meaning compatibility occurs when the meanings of two identities are distinct but complementary. For example, the roles of father and husband involve different yet harmonious expectations, such as providing emotional support to children as a father and to a spouse as a husband. The emotional support given to children can positively influence the marital relationship,

https://doi.org/10.1017/nws.2025.10007 Published online by Cambridge University Press

creating positive spillover. Spillover effects are particularly common among identities within the same institutional domain, where shared values and skills often complement each other, and their integration is encouraged by institutions. Additionally, alters within the same domain are usually aware of one's actions across different roles, aligning the meanings and expressions of these identities (Burke, 2006). Both meaning overlap and meaning compatibility should increase the likelihood of identities facilitating one another, such that: **the greater the alignment in the meanings of two identities, the greater the likelihood that they will facilitate each other (Proposition 1)**.

Second, identities facilitate other identities by providing resources that help sustain other identities (Freese & Burke, 1994). These resources can be symbolic or instrumental. Symbolic resources are abstract and transituationally applicable, including meaning, purpose, solace, and behavioral guidance. For example, principle-based identities such as religious or spiritual identities can help individuals have an overall sense of purpose that motivates action and eases their path in choosing, holding, and expressing other identities (Hitlin, 2003; Thoits, 2013). Principle-based identities also typically provide meaning and solace, helping individuals make sense of life's experiences and cope with difficulties. Symbolic resources also involve providing behavioral guidance across situations, giving individuals a sense of coherence. Therefore, I sustain that: **the greater the symbolic resources associated with an identity, the more likely it is to facilitate other identities (Proposition 2).**

Identities can also grant the individual access to instrumental resources to fulfill the demands associated with other identities (Stets & Cast, 2007). Instrumental resources include access to information, emotional support, economic gains, or social and cultural capital (Burke & Stets, 2023; Miles, 2014). For example, being a friend can provide emotional support to navigate other identities; being a member of a parent-teacher association can provide information that facilitates parenting, and being a member of a social club can provide access to clients and the cultural toolkit to navigate social interactions at a corporation. Additionally, holding identities perceived as high status can facilitate the verification of other identities across situations through increased access to resources, more favorable appraisals from others, and reduced sensitivity to reflected appraisals (Stets & Harrod, 2004). It follows that: **the greater the instrumental resources associated with an identity, the more likely it is to facilitate other identities (Proposition 3).**

A third key aspect involved in identity facilitation dynamics is the verification burden of one's identities. The burden of identity verification is given by the amount of effort required to meet expectations and the rigidity of such expectations. Verification burdens include emotional and psychological resources, time, and money needed to verify identities. Moreover, identities involving rigid requirements for verification impose greater burdens than those with flexible and abstract criteria (Burke, 2020). For example, the role of a mother entails specific and rigid expectations, such as ensuring proper education, nutrition, and sleep, offering emotional support, and other types of nurturing. In contrast, principle-based identities, such as being a Christian, generally allow for a range of interpretations and actions, such as attending church, or engaging in community service or personal spiritual practices. Therefore, I sustain that: **the greater an identity's verification burden, the more likely it is to receive facilitation from other identities (Proposition 4).**

2.3 Interference between identities

I distinguish two critical factors influencing identity interference: verification burdens and contradictory meanings. As discussed above, the burden of verification is given by the demands required to sustain identities, including physical, emotional and psychological, financial, and time and energy resources. Holding identities perceived as low status also creates verification burdens, as these individuals are more susceptible to negative appraisals from high-status individuals (Stets & Harrod, 2004). The greater the expectations and demands associated with an identity, the more

https://doi.org/10.1017/nws.2025.10007 Published online by Cambridge University Press

likely it is to create time and energy conflicts with other identities (Goode, 1960; Marks, 1977) and interrupt their verification (Burke, 1991, 1996, 2003). It follows that: **the greater an identity's verification burden, the more likely it is to interfere with other identities (Proposition 5).** Similarly, the greater the maintenance demands of an identity, the more susceptible it is to disruptions from other identities, making it a likely target for interference. Thus, I sustain that: **the greater an identity's verification burden, the more likely it is to receive interference from other identities (Proposition 6).**

A second driver of identity interference involves conflicting meanings and expectations. This driver has received considerable attention by identity scholars. Stryker (2000) argues that when identities have little overlap in their meanings, they can coexist without causing interference. However, when individuals face contradictory expectations or meanings, they can experience significant interference, as sustaining one identity will make it harder to sustain the other one (Burke, 1991, 1996, 2003).

A spectrum of contradiction in meanings can be understood through two opposing poles: fundamental conflict and contextual conflict. At one end, fundamental conflict arises when identities are inherently incompatible due to deeply rooted societal norms or core contradictions within the identities themselves. For example, liberal and conservative identities typically have conflicting values. This deep misalignment in the core meanings of the identities makes such identity combinations rare within the population. However, when they do co-occur, the identities involved have a high probability of interfering with each other. For instance, someone who identifies as both a healthcare professional and an anti-vaccine advocate is likely to experience conflict between these identities.

At the other end of the spectrum, contextual conflict occurs when incompatibilities in meanings and expectations are not inherent to the content of identities but are driven by specific situational factors. This type of conflict can occur due to factors such as overcommitment to one identity or holding identities that involve unusually excessive demands imposed by the self or others (Burke, 1991, 1996). Individuals may also experience contradictory expectations between identities, not rooted in fundamental societal norms but specific to the individual's unique circumstances. Additionally, significant life events like a divorce or job loss can create periods of misalignment and conflict between the self's identities (Burke & Stets, 2023). Contextual conflicts are more likely to impact disadvantaged groups, who may face a higher frequency of adverse life events and greater demands on their identities. Thus, contextual conflict tends to appear systematically within certain clusters of individuals facing specific challenges, rather than reflecting broad societal consensus on identity incompatibility. Therefore, I sustain that: **the greater the fundamental conflict between identities, the greater the likelihood that they will interfere with each other (Proposition 7).**

2.4 Identity networks and blockmodeling

Identity facilitation and interference relations can be represented as networks where nodes are given by identities and ties connecting nodes are given by the prevalence of facilitation and interference between identities in the population. Then, blockmodeling (Doreian, 1999; Lorrain & White, 1971) can be used to identify collections of identities that have a similar pattern of facilitation and interference ties to other identities. Blockmodeling consists of: (1) grouping nodes into clusters (positions) that have similar ties to other nodes and (2) determining relationships within and between clusters. By determining relationships within and between clusters of identities, blockmodeling arrives at a smaller and interpretable structure compared to the more complex original network.

When using blockmodeling, nodes are grouped based on their relational similarities according to some meaningful equivalence. Two notions of equivalence are widely recognized: structural and regular equivalence. Structurally equivalent nodes are entirely substitutable; they share identical

https://doi.org/10.1017/nws.2025.10007 Published online by Cambridge University Press

patterns of incoming and outgoing ties with all other nodes (Lorrain & White, 1971). Meanwhile, regularly equivalent nodes share equivalent tie profiles with other nodes that themselves exhibit regular equivalence (White & Reitz, 1983). Unlike structural equivalence, regular equivalence allows for some flexibility, requiring only a shared tie profile with some nodes in other blocks composed of regularly equivalent nodes.

This study adopts structural equivalence due to its alignment with the theoretical grounding of this study. Using structural equivalence enables me to examine whether facilitatory and interfering identity networks consist of approximately substitutable nodes, in line with the theoretical arguments presented. The identities examined in this study (e.g., being a father, a mother, a person with a mental health diagnosis, a religious person, and a spiritual person) are broad and common categories. This places fewer constraints on their ability to form direct ties with one another. These properties align with structural equivalence, which groups nodes based on similar direct ties. Moreover, blockmodeling approaches demonstrate greater robustness when employing structural equivalence compared to other equivalence classes (Doreian et al., 2005).

There are well-known blockmodel types that represent distinctive global structures (Cugmas et al., 2021). Core-periphery structures present a "core" densely connected within itself and a "periphery," which is sparsely connected and primarily linked to the core. Cohesive blockmodels form tightly-knit clusters with strong internal ties. Hierarchical blockmodels are arranged into top-down relationships. Transitive blockmodels encompass transitive relationships, where if position A is connected to B, and B to C, then A is connected to C. Reciprocal blockmodels present positions that send and receive ties to and from each other.

Translating identity theory's ideas into the blockmodeling framework yields expected positions and structure of identities in the facilitation and interference networks. Table 1 summarizes the theoretical propositions guiding the analysis of identity facilitation, along with the empirical patterns and blockmodel structures implied by each. I derive five hypotheses from these propositions.

H1: Principle-based identities will occupy a symmetric core in the identity facilitation network

Propositions 1, 2, and 4 together support the expectation that principle-based identities will form a dense and symmetric core in the facilitation network. Proposition 1 holds that facilitation is more likely between identities with aligned meanings. As master identities, principle-based identities align in meaning with a wide range of other identities and help maintain an internally coherent self-concept. This meaning alignment increases the likelihood that principle-based identities will both send and receive facilitation across identity types. Proposition 2 further suggests that identities with greater symbolic resources are more likely to facilitate others. Principle-based identities offer substantial and widely applicable symbolic support that is thus conducive to outward facilitation. Finally, Proposition 4 posits that identities with higher verification burdens are more likely to receive support. While principle-based identities may not carry the highest burdens, their still present need for verification implies they will also receive facilitation, especially from identities with aligned meanings. Together, these mechanisms imply that principle-based identities should occupy a symmetric core in the identity facilitation network.

H2: Instrumental supporter identities will occupy a semi-core in the identity facilitation network

Propositions 1, 3, and 4 suggest that instrumental supporter identities will form a semi-core that is outwardly connected but less expansive than the principle-based core. Proposition 1 holds that facilitation is more likely when identities share aligned meanings. Because instrumental supporter identities tend to be more context-specific in their meaning and activation, they are likely to exhibit some, but more selective mutual facilitation with other identity types. Proposition 3 asserts that identities with greater instrumental resources (e.g., time, skills, access) are more likely

https://doi.org/10.1017/nws.2025.10007 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Table 1. Theoretical and empirical alignment in identity facilitation networks

A. Proposition	B. Empirical Pattern Consistent with Proposition	C. Expected Blockmodel Pattern Consistent with B	D. Observed Blockmodeling Pattern
1. Greater meaning alignment → more likely to mutually facilitate	Because principle-based identities share meanings widely, they mutually exchange facilitatory ties broadly.	Principle-based identities will form a cohesive and symmetric core, sending and receiving facilitatory ties from all other types of identities.[a]	Yes
	Because instrumental supporters are more context-specific, they facilitate and are facilitated more selectively than principle-based identities.	Instrumental supporter identities will form a semi-core with more limited facilitatory ties to and from other identities than principle-based identities.[b]	Partially. While most instrumental supporters present more limited facilitatory ties compared to ideal-type principle-based identities, those providing very high levels of instrumental support display ties comparable in extent and symmetry.
	Identities within the same institutional domain facilitate each other.	Institutional roles will form cohesive blocks (structurally dense subgroups).[c]	Yes
	Stigmatized identities' meanings align only with principle-based identities and will mutually facilitate only with them.	Stigmatized identities will not form a cohesive block.[d]	Yes
2. Greater symbolic resources → more likely to facilitate other identities	Principle-based identities send abundant facilitatory ties.	Principle-based identities will form an outwardly connected core.[a]	Yes
	Instrumental supporters and institutional roles send some, but more limited facilitatory ties than principle-based identities.	Instrumental supporters[b] and institutional roles[c] will have fewer outward connections than principle-based identities.	Partially. Instrumental supporters providing very high instrumental support present as many outward ties as principle-based identities.
	Stigmatized identities send few or no facilitatory ties.	Stigmatized identities will form a periphery with minimal to no outgoing ties.[d]	Yes
3. Greater instrumental resources → more likely to facilitate other identities	Instrumental supporters send abundant facilitatory ties.	Instrumental supporters will have considerable outgoing ties.[b]	Yes
	Institutional roles send more limited facilitatory ties than instrumental supporters.	Institutional roles will have some, but fewer outward ties compared to instrumental supporters.[c]	Yes
	Stigmatized identities send few to no facilitatory ties.	Stigmatized identities will form a periphery with minimal to no outgoing ties.[d]	Yes
4. Greater verification burden → more likely to receive facilitation	Stigmatized identities receive substantial facilitation.	Stigmatized and challenging identities will form an asymmetric periphery, with substantial inward facilitatory ties.[d]	Yes

https://doi.org/10.1017/nws.2025.10007 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Table 1. (Continued).

A. Proposition	B. Empirical Pattern Consistent with Proposition	C. Expected Blockmodel Pattern Consistent with B	D. Observed Blockmodeling Pattern
	Instrumental supporters and institutional roles receive moderate facilitation.	Positions including instrumental supporters[b] or institutional roles[c] will approximate symmetry, receiving inward facilitatory ties.	Yes
	Principle-based identities receive at least some facilitation as they also need to be verified.	Principle-based identities will receive at least some inward ties.[a]	Yes

Notes: Taken together, these propositions indicate a consistent identity structure should emerge: [a] principle-based identities should form a core (H1), [b] instrumental supporters a semi-core (H2), [c] institutional roles should form cohesive domain-specific blocks (H3), and [d] stigmatized identities should occupy a peripheral position (H4), the overall structure should be a mixed core-semi-core-periphery with cohesive blocks (H5).

to facilitate others. Accordingly, instrumental supporter identities are expected to send facilitation to a range of other identities, particularly to those with high verification burdens, as suggested by Proposition 4. However, due to their more limited meaning alignment and narrower applicability of instrumental support, these identities are expected to form a semi-core rather than a fully integrated core in the facilitation network.

H3: Stigmatized and challenging identities will occupy a periphery in the identity facilitation network

Propositions 1 through 4 imply that stigmatized and challenging identities will occupy a peripheral position in the facilitation network. These identities generally lack symbolic (Proposition 2) and instrumental (Proposition 3) resources, limiting their ability to facilitate others. While stigmatized identities tend to have minimal meaning alignment with most other identity types (Proposition 1), their meanings overlap with principle-based identities particularly around dignity, inclusion, and resilience. This makes the mutual verification of these identities likely. Sigmatized and challenging identities are also difficult (if not impossible) to exit and require substantial resources for management. Proposition 4 thus indicates that high verification burdens make these identities likely to receive facilitation, particularly from core and semi-core identities. The result is a peripheral position characterized by low outward but moderate inward facilitation.

H4: Institutional roles will occupy cohesive blocks in the identity facilitation network

Propositions 1, 2, 3, and 4 suggest that identities within the same institutional domain (e.g., family, work) will facilitate one another and form structurally cohesive blocks. Proposition 1 predicts mutual facilitation when identities share aligned meanings, and institutional roles share context-specific meanings and expectations. Because they offer limited symbolic (Proposition 2) and instrumental (Proposition 3) resources, institutional identities send some, but limited facilitation to other identities, particularly those with verification burdens (Proposition 4). Proposition 4 further suggests that their moderate verification burdens make them likely to receive some facilitation. Taken together, these dynamics imply that institutional identities will cluster into internally dense, mutually supportive blocks that also take intermediate positions between core and peripheral identity positions.

H5: The facilitation network will exhibit a mixed core-periphery and cohesive structure

Taken together, Hypotheses 1 through 4 imply that the identity facilitation network will be organized as a mixed core-periphery structure with cohesive substructures. Principle-based identities are expected to form a symmetric core; instrumental supporters will form a more selective semi-core; stigmatized identities will occupy a peripheral position with limited outward facilitation but some inward support; and institutional roles will form cohesive role-based blocks. These

https://doi.org/10.1017/nws.2025.10007 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Panel A. Facilitatory

	1 (H1)	2 (H2)	3 (H3)	4 (H4)	5…
1	com	com	com	com	com, null
2	com	com	com	com	com, null
3	com	com, null	com	com, null	com, null
4	com	null	null	null	com, null
5…	com, null	com, null	com, null	com, null	com, null

Panel B. Interfering

	1 (H6)	2 (H7)	3 (H8)	4 (H9)	5 (H9)	6...
1	com	com	com	com	com	com, null
2	com	com	com	null	null	com, null
3	com	com	null	null	null	com, null
4	null	null	null	null	com	com, null
5	null	null	null	com	null	com, null
6...	com, null	com, null	com, null	com, null	com, null	com, null

Figure 1. Hypothesized blockmodels.

differentiated positions reflect variation in meaning alignment, resource provision, and verification burdens, as theorized in Propositions 1 through 4 and summarized in Table 1. Panel A of Figure 1 illustrates this expected network structure.

Theoretical propositions lead to a set of structural hypotheses about how identities interfere with one another and how those interferences are organized in the network. I present these hypotheses below. To guide this discussion, Table 2 summarizes the theoretical propositions underlying identity interference, the empirical patterns they imply, and the expected blockmodel structures.

H6: Stigmatized and challenging identities will occupy a symmetric core in the identity interference network

Propositions 5 and 6 indicate that identities with greater verification burdens are more likely to both send and receive interference. Stigmatized and challenging identities tend to involve strenuous verification demands (whether emotional, social, or material) making them frequent sources and targets of interference. These identities are expected to interfere with each other as well as with other identities that also carry verification burdens. However, they are unlikely to interfere with, or be interfered by, identities with low verification burdens, such as principle-based identities. As a result, stigmatized identities are expected to form a cohesive and symmetric core in the interference network: one that is internally dense but structurally isolated from low-burden identity positions.

H7: Institutional roles will occupy a semi-core in the identity interference network

Based on Propositions 5 and 6, identities with intermediate levels of verification burden (such as institutional roles) are expected to form a semi-core. These identities will both send and receive moderate levels of interference, primarily with other identities that involve burdens. Their position reflects the manageable but present demands they place on individuals. However, their interference is expected to be more limited in scope and intensity compared to the core of stigmatized identities. Finally, and based on Propositons 5 and 6 too, their ties to identities with low or no burdens (e.g., principle-based identities) will be minimal or absent.

H8: Principle-based identities will occupy a periphery in the identity interference network

According to Propositions 5 and 6, identities with minimal verification burdens are unlikely to interfere with other identities or be targets of interference themselves. Principle-based identities generally present highly flexible demands that are open to interpretation and can be met through

https://doi.org/10.1017/nws.2025.10007 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Table 2. Theoretical and empirical alignment in identity interference networks

A. Proposition	B. Empirical Pattern Consistent with Proposition	C. Expected Blockmodel Pattern Consistent with B	D. Observed Blockmodeling Pattern
5. Greater verification burden → more likely to interfere	Stigmatized identities send substantial interference ties to other identities.	Stigmatized identities will form an outwardly connected core.[a]	Yes
	Instrumental supporters and institutional roles send some, but fewer interfering ties than stigmatized identities.	Instrumental supporters and institutional roles will form a semi-core, with fewer outward connections than stigmatized identities.[b]	Yes
	Principle-based identities will send some, but minimal interference ties to other identity types.	Principle-based identities will form a periphery with minimal to no outgoing ties.[c]	Yes
6. Greater verification burden → more likely to receive interference	Stigmatized identities receive substantial interference ties from other identities.	Stigmatized identities will form a cohesive and symmetric core, with reciprocal ties to identities that have verification burdens.[a]	Yes
	Stigmatized identities will not interfere with identities that lack verification burdens.	Stigmatized identities will form a selective core, with minimal to no outward ties towards principle-based identities.[a]	Yes
	Instrumental supporters and institutional roles receive some, but fewer interfering ties than stigmatized identities.	Instrumental supporters and institutional roles will form a selective semi-core, with minimal to no outward ties towards principle-based identities.[b]	Yes
	Instrumental supporters and institutional roles will not interfere with identities that lack verification burdens.	Instrumental supporters and institutional roles will form a selective semi-core, with minimal to no outward ties towards principle-based identities.[b]	Yes
	Principle-based identities will receive minimal interference from other identities.	Principle-based identities will form a periphery with minimal to no incoming ties.[c]	Yes
7. Greater fundamental conflict → more likely to mutually interfere	Ideologically conflicting identities (conservative- and liberal-leaning) will mutually interfere.	Conservative- and liberal-leaning identities will form reciprocal blocks.[d]	Partially. Even though some indication of this was present, overall the pattern was more consistently absent than present.

Notes: Taken together, these propositions indicate a consistent identity interference structure should emerge: [a]stigmatized and challenging identities should form a core (H6), [b]instrumental supporters and institutional roles should form a semi-core (H7), [c]principle-based identities should form a periphery (H8), and [d]conservative- and liberal-leaning identities should form reciprocal substructures (H9), the overall structure should be a mixed core-periphery-reciprocal structure (H10).

verifying other identities. Because they do not impose or attract burdensome expectations, principle-based identities are not expected to participate in interference dynamics based on verification demands. Consequently, they are likely to occupy a peripheral position in the interference network.

H9: Ideologically conflicting identities will occupy reciprocal substructures in the identity interference network

https://doi.org/10.1017/nws.2025.10007 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Proposition 7 states that the greater the fundamental conflict in meaning between two identities, the more likely they are to interfere with each other. This form of interference is distinct from burden-based interference and is rooted in value contradictions and ideological opposition. Therefore, identities that embody fundamentally incompatible worldviews (e.g., liberal- and conservative-laden identities) are expected to form reciprocal substructures. Because these identities do not generally carry high or rigid verification burdens, the interference these identities send and receive should be localized, mutual, and driven by meaning-based conflict.

H10: The interference network will exhibit a mixed core-periphery and reciprocal structure

Taken together, Hypotheses 6 through 9 imply a mixed structure in the identity interference network, combining a core-periphery dynamic with distinct reciprocal clusters. I anticipate that a symmetric core will be formed by strenuous identities with high verification burdens (H6), a semi-core will comprise moderately burdened institutional roles (H8), and a periphery will contain low-burden identities such as principle-based ones (H9). In addition to these burden-based patterns, the network is also expected to contain reciprocal substructures composed of ideologically conflicting identities (H10). The broad structure reflects the joint contributions of interference rooted in verification demands and interference rooted in fundamental meaning conflict. Panel B of Figure 1 illustrates the hypothesized blockmodel, and Table 2 summarizes the propositions along with their associated connectivity and blockmodel patterns.

3. Data and methods

3.1 Sample

I employ a survey on a sample of U.S. adults, containing information on participants' identities and the perceived facilitation and interference between them. The data were collected through the online platform Prolific. Prolific prioritizes attracting engaged and attentive respondents and consistently refreshes its participant pool, resulting in higher-quality data compared to similar platforms (Peer et al., 2017). Additional measures were taken to ensure data-quality. Three attention checks prompted respondents to select predefined options (e.g., "Please select 'makes it slightly easier'") throughout the survey. Additionally, respondents with non-U.S. IP addresses were blocked from participating.

The initial sample included 388 participants. I removed 37 responses that failed one or more attention checks or showed signs of careless completion (e.g., having duplicate identities). The final sample comprised 351 responses. The data collection procedure employed a quota system to mirror the age, gender, and racial composition of the U.S. population. The average age of participants is 45.05 (SD = 15.92), 50.1% identified as female, 77.5% as White, and 14.24% as Black.

In a previous study using this dataset, Ramos & Restrepo Ochoa (2025) compared the sample to the 2018 General Social Survey, which is a nationally representative survey of the U.S. adult population. The Prolific sample closely resembles the U.S. population in age, race, and gender but includes a higher proportion of college-educated and politically liberal respondents. Readers should bear these differences in mind when interpreting the generalizability of the study's findings.

3.2 Network construction

To measure the set of identities held by respondents, each participant completed a series of rosters containing conventional identities from the following domains: family, memberships, stigmatized identities (e.g., a person with a mental health diagnosis), gender identification, political orientation, civic participation (e.g., activist), religion, and race/ethnicity. Each roster was presented separately and in randomized order, asking participants "Do you think of yourself as a(n): Select all that apply."[1] Collectively, the rosters included 72 identities (see Supplementary Material).[2] Then,

https://doi.org/10.1017/nws.2025.10007 Published online by Cambridge University Press

participants were presented with their selection of identities and asked to write up to five additional roles or social identities important to them.[3] The procedure aimed to yield a comprehensive identity set per each respondent.

Then, the survey captured general perceptions of interference and facilitation between identities. To minimize participant fatigue, participants whose identity set contained more than ten identities were asked to choose the ten most impactful identities in their life from their complete identity set (combining roster and free recall identities). Next, two items captured respondents' perceptions of facilitation and interference between their identities. Perceptions of identity facilitation and interference were measured separately, as identities can simultaneously facilitate and impede each other. Each pair of identities was presented in random order and participants indicated whether "Being [identity 1] makes being [identity 2] easier/harder" in their life, with response options: "Does not make it easier/harder at all," "Makes it a little easier/harder," and "Makes it a lot easier/harder." "Easier" was employed to capture facilitation and "harder" to capture interference.

Because the study hypotheses focus on societal-level patterns, individual survey responses were aggregated to create two between-individuals identity networks. In these networks, identities are nodes, and ties indicate how frequently one identity facilitate/interfere with another relative to their co-occurrence. Specifically, ties represent the percentage of respondents holding two identities for whom one identity facilitated/interfered with the other. For simplicity, I treat instances of facilitation and interference as binary (either they occur or they do not) regardless of whether identities facilitate/interfere with each other a little or a lot. By measuring instances of identity facilitation/interference relative to identity co-occurrence, I normalize tie values and provide an interpretable account of the degree to which identity facilitation/interfering ties manifest in the sample.

I include in the final identity networks only those identities held by at least 19 respondents. This decision involves a tradeoff: a higher cutoff reduces the number of identities for analysis, while a lower cutoff overall reduces the number of respondents contributing to each tie value. I chose a cutoff of 19 respondents to strike a balance, aiming for enough identities to examine the anticipated patterns and adequate sample sizes for each tie. Additionally, the cutoff of 19 instead of 20 respondents balances traditional gender roles, with six traditionally male/female roles represented.

Figure 2 presents the identity co-occurrence network derived from a cutoff of 19 respondents. The network contains 37 identities. Each cell indicates the number of respondents that simultaneously held the corresponding pair of identities. The identities span various domains including religious, family, political, stigmatized, and others. The median cell value is eight. Importantly, many small values are meaningful features of the network rather than artifacts of sample size limitations. Of the 61 cells with zero values, 36 represent combinations of traditionally male and female roles, which are highly unlikely to co-occur (e.g., brother and sister), and 11 denote mutually exclusive identity pairs (e.g., a single person and wife). Similarly, small values often reflect identities unlikely to co-occur, such as atheist and churchgoer. While larger sample sizes per cell would be ideal, the available data allow drawing meaningful conclusions. The final between-individual facilitatory and interfering identity networks analyzed here thus encompass the 37 identities depicted in Figure 2.

3.3 Analytical strategy

I employ deductive generalized blockmodeling (Doreian et al., 2005). This approach enables examining blockmodels that are prespecified from theory, which informs permissible block types and relationships both between and within positions. I analyze the network of identity facilitation and interference separately. For each identity facilitation and interference network, I obtain a series of blockmodels. I obtain blockmodels prespecified according to theoretical predictions

https://doi.org/10.1017/nws.2025.10007 Published online by Cambridge University Press

	activist	agnostic	atheist	Black	boyfriend	brother	caregiver	churchgoer	cisgender	conservative	daughter	domestic v. surv	environmentalist	father	female	feminist	friend	girlfriend	healthy person	husband	liberal	male	member cultural	member fitness	mother	p. mental health	p. disability	p. chronic ill	religious person	significant other	single person	sister	son	spiritual person	volunteer	White	wife
activist	0	3	4	3	0	1	3	1	1	1	4	4	7	1	9	7	9	1	4	1	8	1	1	0	5	10	4	3	2	2	4	4	1	4	3	3	1
agnostic	3	0	2	6	3	21	4	0	7	7	6	1	4	10	12	5	25	1	23	10	18	25	2	4	6	8	1	9	2	6	13	2	19	1	1	22	3
atheist	4	2	0	0	3	6	7	0	2	3	10	6	12	10	12	10	17	2	8	10	24	15	2	4	7	18	7	13	0	3	5	10	8	1	4	9	7
Black	3	6	0	0	0	15	11	4	6	5	12	2	6	6	21	8	27	1	24	5	17	19	4	4	13	6	2	6	13	1	11	16	13	21	5	0	7
boyfriend	0	3	3	0	0	15	1	0	0	4	0	0	3	3	0	1	17	0	13	0	8	10	1	7	0	3	2	1	3	0	0	0	14	2	2	10	0
brother	1	21	6	15	15	0	13	4	6	21	0	0	18	30	0	5	62	0	53	33	36	72	4	18	0	11	9	16	18	7	26	0	70	20	11	35	0
caregiver	3	4	7	11	1	13	0	7	3	16	37	6	10	14	42	11	69	4	38	13	18	18	8	5	51	15	11	22	22	4	8	46	15	37	18	16	34
churchgoer	1	0	0	4	0	4	7	0	0	8	7	0	2	5	8	3	16	1	11	8	0	5	3	0	8	1	2	3	15	1	2	10	8	11	7	2	6
cisgender	1	7	2	6	0	6	3	0	0	1	4	1	6	4	8	8	15	1	11	5	9	11	2	5	4	4	1	4	2	2	7	2	6	5	1	6	2
conservative	1	7	3	5	4	21	16	8	1	0	18	5	4	13	24	2	44	1	37	14	1	31	4	6	25	7	10	14	26	3	13	15	21	33	6	25	18
daughter	4	6	10	12	0	0	37	7	4	18	0	8	17	0	80	25	78	17	43	0	35	0	8	6	55	28	6	18	20	3	14	74	0	41	14	20	41
domestic v. surv	4	1	6	2	0	0	6	0	1	5	8	0	2	1	18	5	8	2	6	2	8	4	1	1	17	13	6	12	4	2	5	6	2	10	0	6	7
environmentalist	7	4	12	6	3	18	10	2	6	4	17	2	0	13	26	22	43	5	30	16	35	23	6	7	13	15	9	9	13	3	8	13	17	15	13	14	10
father	1	10	10	6	3	30	14	5	4	13	0	1	13	0	0	2	35	0	34	49	19	45	2	9	0	3	9	14	16	11	2	0	30	13	7	22	0
female	9	12	12	21	0	0	42	8	8	24	80	18	26	0	0	36	92	18	53	0	42	0	7	6	74	39	12	31	26	6	23	77	0	52	18	38	52
feminist	7	5	10	8	1	5	11	3	8	2	25	5	22	2	36	0	36	8	19	3	36	6	5	7	22	16	3	5	5	2	10	23	3	13	7	13	13
friend	9	25	17	27	17	62	69	16	15	44	78	8	43	35	92	36	0	17	113	38	72	77	17	26	76	41	22	43	50	14	48	82	71	81	31	66	52
girlfriend	1	1	2	1	0	0	4	1	1	1	17	2	5	0	18	8	17	0	6	0	6	0	2	1	4	10	2	4	2	0	1	15	0	6	2	7	0
healthy person	4	23	8	24	13	53	38	11	11	37	43	6	30	34	53	19	113	6	0	39	49	69	10	25	43	13	7	6	35	9	24	43	55	52	19	49	30
husband	1	10	10	5	0	33	13	8	5	14	0	2	16	49	0	3	38	0	39	0	23	51	3	10	0	4	7	14	15	11	0	0	34	15	8	28	0
liberal	8	18	24	17	8	36	18	0	9	1	35	8	35	19	42	36	72	6	49	23	0	47	6	17	27	27	14	20	14	4	24	38	32	22	11	31	13
male	1	25	15	19	10	72	18	5	11	31	0	4	23	45	0	6	77	0	69	51	47	0	9	19	0	16	14	28	28	9	34	0	77	31	10	55	0
member cultural	1	2	2	4	1	4	8	3	2	4	8	1	6	2	7	5	17	2	10	3	6	9	0	5	6	6	4	8	6	1	4	4	7	8	6	2	3
member fitness	0	4	4	4	7	18	5	0	5	6	6	1	7	9	6	7	26	1	25	10	17	19	5	0	5	3	4	1	5	2	5	4	23	11	4	12	2
mother	5	6	7	13	0	0	51	8	4	25	55	17	13	0	74	22	76	4	43	0	27	0	6	5	0	24	9	27	26	4	13	62	0	46	16	21	54
p. mental health	10	8	18	6	3	11	15	1	4	7	28	13	15	3	39	16	41	10	13	4	27	16	6	3	24	0	19	30	7	5	14	24	11	21	6	16	14
p. disability	4	1	7	2	2	9	11	2	1	10	6	6	9	9	12	3	22	2	7	7	14	14	4	4	9	19	0	20	6	3	9	6	12	12	2	12	4
p. chronic ill	3	9	13	6	1	16	22	3	4	14	18	12	9	14	31	5	43	4	6	14	20	28	8	1	27	30	20	0	12	4	18	18	18	21	6	23	15
religious person	2	2	0	13	3	18	22	15	2	26	20	4	13	16	26	5	50	2	35	15	14	28	6	5	26	7	6	12	0	4	12	22	18	23	9	16	17
significant other	2	6	3	1	0	7	4	1	2	3	3	2	3	11	6	2	14	0	9	11	4	9	1	2	4	5	3	4	4	0	0	4	6	5	4	6	4
single person	4	13	5	11	0	26	8	2	7	13	14	5	8	2	23	10	48	1	24	0	24	34	4	5	13	14	9	18	12	0	0	12	25	22	5	23	0
sister	4	2	10	16	0	0	46	10	2	15	74	6	13	0	77	23	82	15	43	0	38	0	4	4	62	24	6	18	22	4	12	0	0	37	16	17	46
son	1	19	8	13	14	70	15	8	6	21	0	2	17	30	0	3	71	0	55	34	32	77	7	23	0	11	12	18	18	6	25	0	0	27	8	31	0
spiritual person	4	1	1	21	2	20	37	11	5	33	41	10	15	13	52	13	81	6	52	15	22	31	8	11	46	21	12	21	23	5	22	37	27	0	11	21	30
volunteer	3	1	4	5	2	11	18	7	1	6	14	0	13	7	18	7	31	2	19	8	11	10	6	4	16	6	2	6	9	4	5	16	8	11	0	5	11
White	3	22	9	0	10	35	16	2	6	25	20	6	14	22	38	13	66	7	49	28	31	55	2	12	21	16	12	23	16	6	23	17	31	21	5	0	11
wife	1	3	7	7	0	0	34	6	2	18	41	7	10	0	52	13	52	0	30	0	13	0	3	2	54	14	4	15	17	4	0	46	0	30	11	11	0

Figure 2. Identity co-occurrence matrix[4].

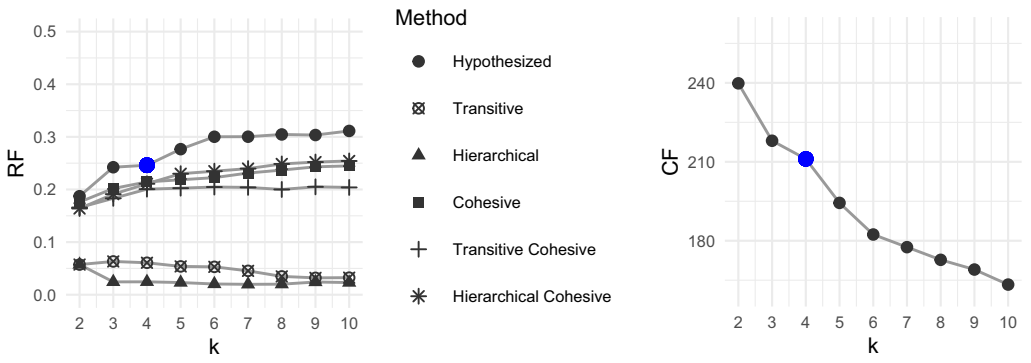
(Figure 1) as well as blockmodels that follow alternative structures: cohesive, transitive, hierarchical, transitive-cohesive, and hierarchical-cohesive (Figure 1). For each blockmodel type, I obtain blockmodel variations ranging from two to ten clusters (k)[5].

To account for the valued nature of ties, I use generalized valued blockmodeling (Nordlund & Žiberna, 2019; Žiberna, 2007) across specifications, with a relevance threshold of .50. This means that a tie is considered relevant when at least 50% of respondents who simultaneously hold two identities perceive they facilitate/interfere with each other. This is a substantively meaningful threshold as it captures consensus in the perception of facilitation and interference between identities. I compute values of the Criterion Function (CF) and Relative Fit (RF) (Cugmas, et al., 2021) to compare and select blockmodel solutions. Each RF value was calculated by considering 30 randomized networks. The number of random restarts was set to 1000. I employed the package "blockmodeling" (Matjašič et al., 2021) to implement these methods.

4. Results

In the identity facilitation network, 76% of the possible connections (excluding the diagonal) are present. This means that 76% of the pairs of identities present some degree of perceived facilita-

https://doi.org/10.1017/nws.2025.10007 Published online by Cambridge University Press



Panel A. Relative Fit (RF) Panel B. Criterion Function (F)

Figure 3. Relative Fit and Criterion Function values for identity facilitation.

tion. When ties are greater than zero, the average tie value equals .47 (median = .42). This indicates that, given that an identity facilitates another, the average percentage of people for whom the identity facilitates the other is 47%. The interfering identity network is less dense, and its ties are less strong. Its density equals .66, meaning that 66% of the identity pairs present some degree of interference in the sample. Given that some interference exists between two identities, the average tie value equals .32 (median = .24).

4.1 Facilitatory identity networks

Panel A of Figure 3 presents RF metrics across blockmodel types and number of positions (k) for the identity facilitation network. RF values for theoretically derived blockmodeling solutions are represented by circles in gray, with the RF value of the hypothesized blockmodel with four positions highlighted in blue. RF values indicate superior fit of the hypothesized blockmodel type compared to various alternatives. Even though the baseline hypothesized model proposed four positions, I opt for the prespecified blockmodel with six positions, aiming to balance model interpretability and parsimony. Even though CF values (Figure 3 - Panel B) show an elbow at the third position, RF values prefer the six-position solution. Additionally, examining blockmodels at different k reveals the six-position solution provides a more meaningfully interpretation compared with more parsimonious solutions. Increasing k beyond six results in partitions where one or two nodes represent instances of the six-position model instead of novel insights.

Figure 4 displays the image matrices and blockmodel solution identifying six positions based on structural equivalence. A mixed global structure emerges, consistent with H5, encompassing a symmetric core, a semi-core, a periphery, and several cohesive blocks. To guide the interpretation of specific hypotheses about these substructures, Table 1 summarizes the theoretical propositions, empirical expectations, and observed blockmodeling patterns. Supplementary analyses confirm that this structure is robust across model specifications using a range of k values, m values larger than .30, and blockmodeling types (see Supplementary Material for more details).

Five of the six identified positions align closely with theoretical expectations. The first position corresponds to the symmetric core predicted by H1. Principle-based identities, such as activist, feminist, liberal, religious person, and spiritual person, occupy this block. Consistent with Proposition 1, which links meaning alignment to mutual facilitation, principle-based identities send and receive facilitation widely across the network. Most target blocks receive average tie weights above .50. Facilitation toward traditionally male roles is slightly lower (.47), potentially due to greater variation within the receiving cluster. These widespread outgoing ties also support Proposition 2, which holds that identities with symbolic resources are more likely to facilitate

https://doi.org/10.1017/nws.2025.10007 Published online by Cambridge University Press

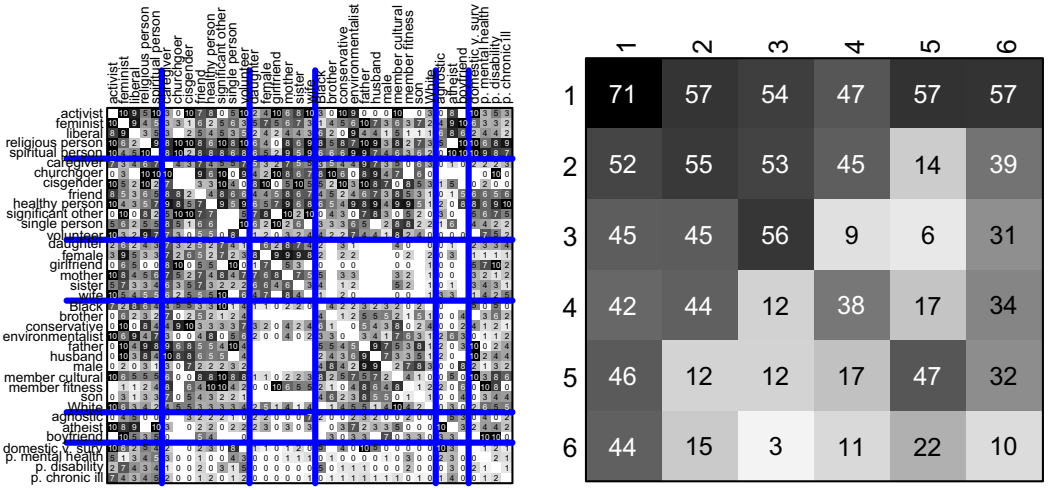


Figure 4. Blockmodeling results for identity facilitation. Cell values in the partitioned matrix (left) are divided by 10 and rounded to the nearest integer ($\approx 90 \rightarrow 9, \approx 100 \rightarrow 10, \approx 10 \rightarrow 1$).

others. Importantly, this symmetric core of principle-based identities is stable across all model specifications, including variations in the number of positions (k) and tie relevance thresholds (m) (see Supplementary Material).

Principle-based identities also receive considerable facilitation, with average tie weights above .40 from most other positions. For example, religious and spiritual identities show strong mutual facilitation (average tie weights = .90 and 1.00, respectively), while liberal and religious identities show lower facilitation (.20 and .30), reflecting weaker meaning overlap. In addition, principle-based identities display strong internal cohesion (average within-block tie weight = .71). As Proposition 4 predicts, principle-based identities receive less facilitation than they send, consistent with their relatively low verification burdens. Altogether, these patterns strongly support H1.

The second position corresponds to the semi-core described in H2 and is composed primarily of instrumental supporter identities: caregiver, churchgoer, cisgender, friend, healthy person, significant other, single person, and volunteer. These identities show moderate internal cohesion (block density = .55) and send facilitation to other clusters, including the core, institutional roles, and challenging identities. These patterns are consistent with Proposition 3, which states that identities with instrumental resources are more likely to facilitate others. Facilitation toward secular identities is minimal (.14), aligning with Propositions 1 and 4 due to limited meaning alignment and low verification burdens in that block.

Instrumental supporters also receive facilitation in ways that support theoretical expectations. They are moderately facilitated by traditional family roles (block densities = .44–.45), consistent with facilitation due to instrumental resource provision (Proposition 3) and moderate verification burdens (Proposition 4). In contrast, they receive little facilitation from challenging (.15) or secular (.12) identities, which provide fewer resources and show limited meaning alignment.

Although this semi-core position is broadly stable, robustness tests (available in the Supplementary Material) indicate that some instrumental supporter identities appear in the core under more permissive cutoff thresholds. Additionally, being a healthy person, an instrumental supporter identity, more often than not is classified as part of the core. This finding suggests that certain instrumental supporters (e.g., those providing support across contexts) can achieve levels of facilitation comparable to principle-based identities. It also raises the possibility

https://doi.org/10.1017/nws.2025.10007 Published online by Cambridge University Press

that the conceptual distinction between symbolic and instrumental resources is more fluid than initially theorized.

Moving to institutional roles, two positions support H3, which posits that identities in the same domain will form cohesive structures. The third position includes traditional female roles (e.g., daughter, female, girlfriend, mother, sister, wife) and exhibits strong internal cohesion (block density = .56). These identities facilitate and are facilitated by core and semi-core identities (in line with Propositions 1, 2, and 3) and provide moderate support (.31) to challenging identities (in line with Proposition 4). Traditional female roles send minimal facilitation to secular identities (.06), reflecting limited meaning overlap (Proposition 1) and little verification need (Proposition 4).

The fourth position includes traditional male roles (e.g., brother, father, husband, son, male), along with a few identities inconsistently classified across model specifications (e.g., racial identities, environmentalist, conservative). Because these identities lack a stable grouping, analysis centers on the traditional male roles. This block forms a somewhat cohesive group (.38), sends facilitation to the core (.42 – in line with Propositions 1 and 2) and semi-core (.44 – in line with Proposition 3), and provides modest support to challenging identities (in line with Proposition 4). As with traditional female roles, facilitation to secular identities is low (.17), consistent with Propositions 1 and 4. All in all, these results support H3, which sustains institutional roles will occupy cohesive blocks. Robustness analyses confirm that these institutional blocks remain cohesive across specifications, supporting the stability of this role-based identity structure.

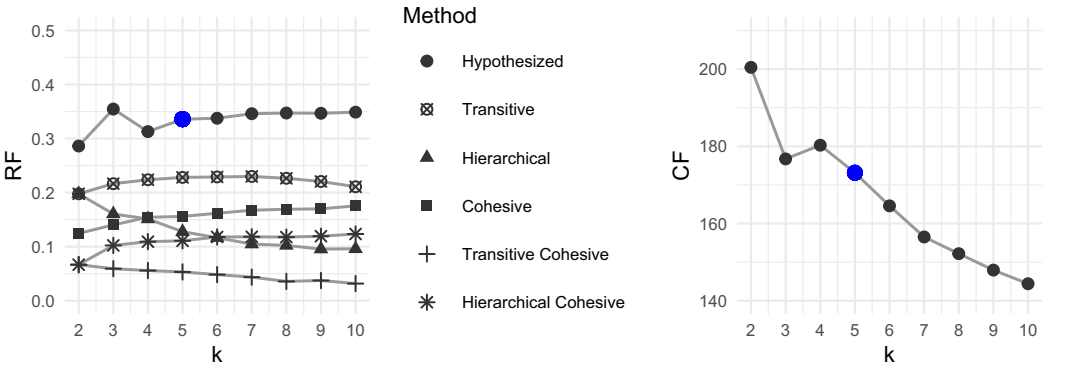
The fifth position, which was not predicted, includes atheist, agnostic, and boyfriend identities. This cluster appears inconsistently across model specifications and shows moderate internal cohesion (.47). Strong ties between atheist and agnostic identities (1.00 and .50) reflect strong meaning alignment (Proposition 1). These secular identities send targeted facilitation to select principle-based identities (e.g., atheist to activist = 1.00), again reflecting meaning overlap. They remain largely disconnected from other blocks, consistent with Propositions 2, 3, and 4, given their limited resources and low verification demands. Even though the relational patterns of these identities support theoretical propositions, robustness analyses reveal they do not consistently occupy this distinctive block across specifications. This inconsistency may reflect the relatively low levels of resources and verification burdens, as well as the more context-specific meaning alignments of these identities, which make them more flexible and less structurally anchored compared to other identity clusters.

The sixth position matches the periphery anticipated in H4 and consists of stigmatized and challenging identities: having a mental health diagnosis, living with a disability, living with a chronic illness/injury, and being a domestic violence survivor. Consistent with Proposition 1, these identities send some facilitation to principle-based identities (.44) but minimal facilitation to other blocks. They do not facilitate each other, consistent with Propositions 1–3. In contrast, they receive facilitation from nearly all blocks, in line with Proposition 4. Principle-based identities provide the most support (.57), followed by instrumental supporters (.39) and traditional gender roles (.31–.34). These patterns confirm that stigmatized identities, while unable to facilitate others, are regular recipients of facilitation. Robustness findings confirm the stability of this peripheral position across models.

Taken together, the blockmodeling results strongly support H5. The six structurally equivalent positions align with theoretical expectations grounded in meaning alignment, symbolic and instrumental resource flows, and verification burdens. The identified symmetric core (H1), semi-core (H2), institutional clusters (H3), and peripheral position of stigmatized identities (H4) combine to produce the expected mixed core-periphery and cohesive network structure anticipated in H5.

Robustness tests indicate that the pre-specified blockmodeling solution offers the best overall fit to the data compared with alternative blockmodel types. Additionally, the global structure is consistently recovered across pre-specified blockmodel configurations. This lends strong support to the validity and robustness of the theoretical framework. Additional details and results of these robustness tests are provided in the Supplementary Material.

https://doi.org/10.1017/nws.2025.10007 Published online by Cambridge University Press



Panel A. Relative Fit (RF) Panel B. Criterion Function (F)

Figure 5. Relative Fit (RF) and Criterion Function (CF) values for identity interference blockmodels.

4.2 Interference between identities

Figure 5 presents RF (Panel A) and CF (Panel B) values across blockmodel types and values of k. RF values for theoretically derived blockmodeling solutions are represented by gray circles, with the RF value of the hypothesized blockmodel with five positions highlighted in blue. The theoretically derived blockmodels present higher RF values compared to other blockmodel types. Robustness analyses (see Supplementary Material) confirm that pre-specified blockmodels provide a better fit to the data compared with alternative blockmodel types at different tie relevance thresholds. Nonetheless, both RF and CF values present an elbow at three clusters rather than at the hypothesized k of 5. In terms of k, the preferred solution is that of three clusters. However, I examine solutions with three, five, and seven positions to better understand the patterns in the network, noting that the seven-position solution presents RF values comparable to those at $k = 3$.

Figure 6 presents blockmodeling solutions and image matrices obtained using our theoretically prespecified blockmodels with three (Panel A), five (Panel B), and seven positions (Panel C). Each solution exhibits a version of a core-periphery structure, though the level of resolution varies by k. At $k = 3$, the core blends identities with varying levels of verification burden, whereas higher values distinguish more refined layers based on burden. While the hypothesized mutually interfering identity clusters are not detected in the three- or five-position models, the seven-position solution provides partial evidence of such clusters. In sum, the findings provide strong support for the hypothesized core-periphery structure but only limited support for the anticipated reciprocal substructures (H10).

The seven-position solution includes a symmetric core of challenging and stigmatized identities (H6), three intermediary positions consistent with H7, a periphery of low-burden symbolic identities consistent with H8, and two ideological clusters partially aligned with H9. Table 2 summarizes the theoretical propositions, empirical expectations, and observed blockmodeling patterns underpinning H6–H10. Robustness analyses (see Supplementary Material) confirm that the core-periphery structure is stable across a range of parameter settings (values of k and m). However, evidence for reciprocal interference between ideologically conflicting identities (H9) is more limited and appears only under select model configurations.

Findings support H6, which predicted that stigmatized and challenging identities would occupy a cohesive and symmetric position. This block includes caregiver, a person having a mental health diagnosis, a person living with disability, and a person living with chronic illness/injury. These identities form a highly cohesive block (.89) and interfere extensively with other burdened identities. They send strong interference ties to burdensome identities (.74), traditional family roles (.67), low-burden roles and voluntary identities (.65), and conservative-laden identities (.52).

https://doi.org/10.1017/nws.2025.10007 Published online by Cambridge University Press

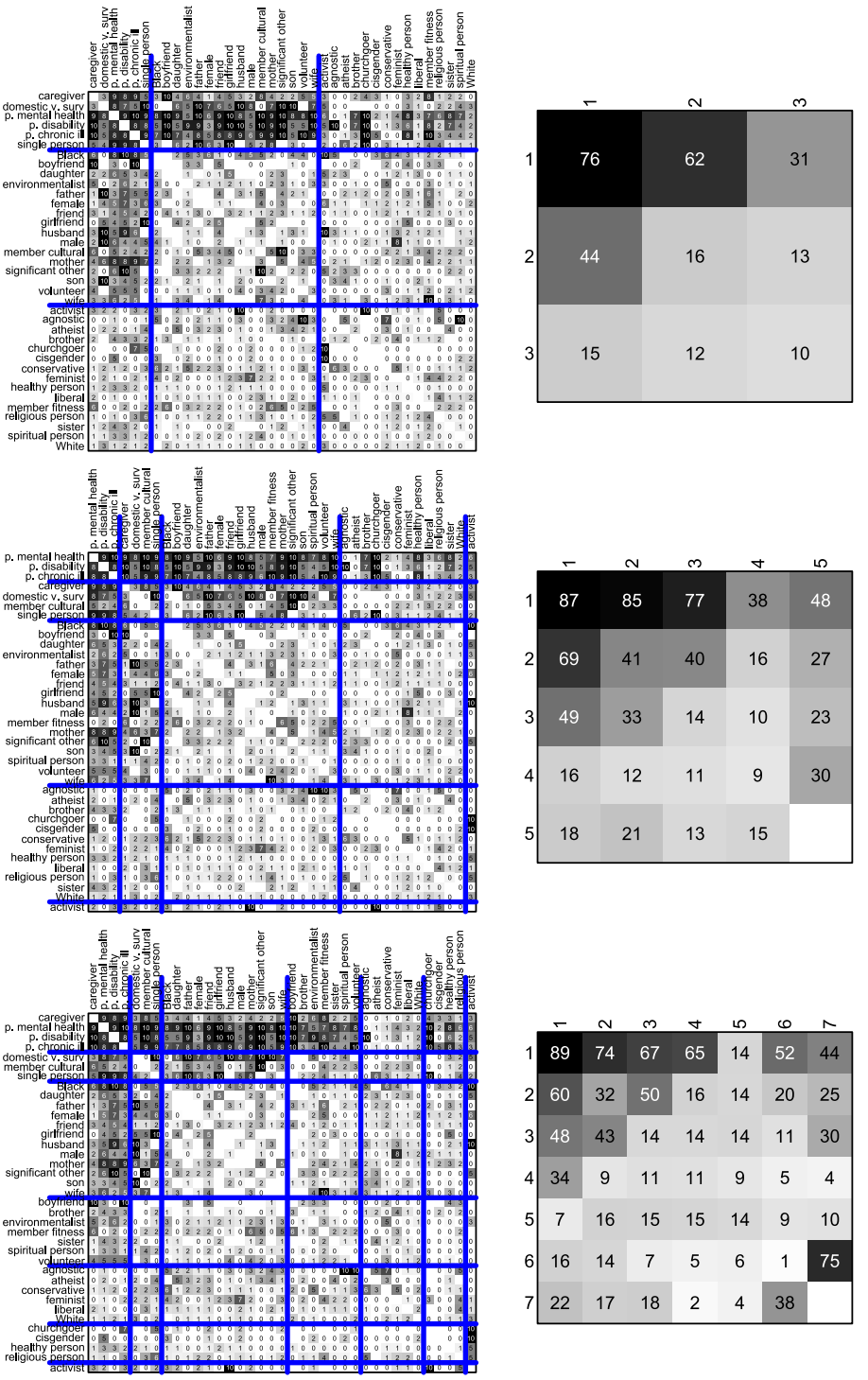


Figure 6. Blockmodeling results for identity interference. Cell values in the partitioned matrix (left) are divided by 10 and rounded to the nearest integer ($\approx 90 \rightarrow 9$, $\approx 100 \rightarrow 10$, $\approx 10 \rightarrow 1$).

https://doi.org/10.1017/nws.2025.10007 Published online by Cambridge University Press

They also receive substantial interference from positions with similarly high or moderate verification burdens. These patterns align with Propositions 5 and 6, which assert that interference is shaped by the presence and level of verification burdens. Robustness analyses (available in the Supplementary Material) show a symmetric core of stigmatized identities remains consistent across all model specifications.

Results also support H7. Identities with intermediate verification burdens consistently form semi-core or intermediary positions across blockmodel solutions. The seven-position model identifies three such clusters: burdensome identities, traditional family roles, and low-burden roles and voluntary identities. Robustness analyses (see Supplementary Material) indicate that while the exact composition of these groups varies slightly across specifications, their relational structure and role as semi-core positions remain stable.

The second position includes domestic violence survivor, member of a cultural organization, and single person. While internally less cohesive (.32), these identities exchange considerable interference with challenging and family-role identities (in line with Propositions 5 and 6). The relational profile of burdensome identities aligns with the reality that single parents or domestic violence survivors face unique difficulties, especially when combined with institutionally incompatible identities such as being a mother. Societies are generally structured around the assumption that motherhood is accompanied by marriage or partnership, placing hardships on those deviating from the norm. Membership in cultural organizations sends and receives interferences from the same positions as being a domestic violence survivor or a single person, but with weaker tie weights. The pattern is consistent with Propositions 5 and 6, which indicate that higher levels of burden are associated with higher levels of interference to and from other identities.

The third position is composed of traditional family roles across genders (e.g., father, mother, husband, wife), along with racial and gender identities like Black or African American, male, and female. This cluster is loosely cohesive (.14). Unsurprisingly, the most pronounced interferences traditional family roles send and receive are those involving challenging and stigmatized identities. Block densities for interferences involving family roles and burdensome identities range from .43 to .50. Minimal interference is observed between family roles and low-burden identities, supporting the argument that verification burdens shape both outgoing and incoming interference (Propositions 5 and 6).

The fourth position contains low-burden roles (boyfriend, brother, sister) and voluntary identities (environmentalist, fitness group member, spiritual person, volunteer). In line with Proposition 6, these identities carry minimal burden yet still show interference from and to high-burden identities. For instance, they send interference to challenging identities (.34) and receive substantial interference from them (.65). However, they exhibit almost no interference (.02 to .1) with similarly low-burden roles, consistent with Propositions 5 and 6. All in all, the second, third, and fourth positions support H7, which anticipates that identities with intermediate verification burdens consistently form semi-core positions.

Results support H8, which posits that identities with minimal verification burdens will occupy a peripheral position. The fifth position includes symbolic identities such as agnostic, atheist, conservative, feminist, liberal, and White. These identities are easy to exit, involve minimal or flexible demands, and are often contextually concealable. Block densities involving these identities range from .04 to .16, confirming their peripheral role in the interference network. The peripheral role of identities with minimal verification burdens (especially principle-based or ideological identities) is robust across model specifications (see Supplementary Material), aligning with Propositions 5 and 6.

Support for H9 is more limited. The sixth block includes conservative-aligned identities: churchgoer, cisgender, religious person, and healthy person. These identities receive moderate interference from stigmatized identities (.52), particularly from caregiver and individuals with health-related burdens. Conservative identities also receive interference from the activist identity (.38), which aligns with expectations given ideological contradiction. The block sends strong

https://doi.org/10.1017/nws.2025.10007 Published online by Cambridge University Press

interference back to activist (.75), mostly from churchgoer and cisgender, offering partial support for Proposition 7.

The seventh position contains only the activist identity. This identity sends and receives interference from the conservative-laden block, which includes ideological opposites. While these patterns reflect mutual interference and partially support H9, they are not consistent across blockmodel solutions. In the five-position model, liberal and conservative symbolic identities are grouped together, and in higher-resolution models, clear ideological clusters with mutual interference are not consistently identified. Robustness analyses confirm that reciprocal interference among liberal and conservative identities appears inconsistently.

Overall, results provide strong support for a core-periphery structure of interference, shaped by levels of identity verification burdens (H6–H8). Support for the reciprocal ideological substructure (H9) is partial and conditional, emerging only under specific blockmodel configurations. Additional evidence, model comparisons, and visualizations from robustness analyses are provided in the Supplementary Material.

5. Discussion

In this article, I explore the dynamics of facilitation and interference between identities at a societal level. Building on existing identity literature, I identify key factors driving these dynamics and propose hypotheses about the global structure that should result. I test these hypotheses using original survey data along with blockmodeling techniques.

The results provide strong support for the hypothesized structure of identity facilitation. H1 is confirmed: principle-based identities occupy a cohesive and symmetric core, consistent with Proposition 1 (meaning alignment), Proposition 2 (symbolic resources), and Proposition 4 (verification burdens). H2 is overall supported: instrumental supporter identities tend to occupy a semi-core, sending facilitation more selectively in line with Proposition 3 (instrumental resources) and receiving moderate facilitation consistent with Propositions 1 and 4. H3 is supported through the identification of cohesive blocks composed of traditional institutional roles, aligning with all four propositions. These roles facilitate one another due to meaning alignment (Proposition 1), and provide or receive facilitation depending on symbolic and instrumental resources (Propositions 2 and 3) and verification burdens (Proposition 4). H4 is confirmed: stigmatized and challenging identities form a peripheral position, sending minimal facilitation due to a lack of symbolic or instrumental resources (Propositions 2 and 3), but receiving substantial facilitation in accordance with their high verification burdens (Proposition 4). Taken together, these patterns support H5 and reveal a robust mixed core-periphery and cohesive structure driven by the combination of meaning alignment, resources, and verification burdens.

The results provide strong support for a core-periphery structure in the identity interference network and partial support for a reciprocal ideological substructure. H6 is supported: stigmatized and challenging identities occupy a symmetric interference core, both sending and receiving interference consistent with high verification burdens (Propositions 5 and 6). H7 is also supported: identities with moderate verification burdens form semi-core or intermediary positions that send and receive moderate interference, including burdensome identities and traditional family roles. H8 is confirmed: identities with minimal verification burdens, such as principle-based and ideological identities, occupy the periphery and are largely disconnected from the interference dynamics, in line with Propositions 5 and 6.

Support for H9, which predicted reciprocal clusters of ideologically conflicting identities, is partial. While some mutual interference is observed (particularly between activist and conservative-aligned identities) this pattern is inconsistent across blockmodeling solutions. Thus, Proposition 7, which asserts fundamental meaning conflict leads to mutual interference, receives only limited support. Collectively, the findings validate the predicted core-periphery structure and

https://doi.org/10.1017/nws.2025.10007 Published online by Cambridge University Press

suggest that interference dynamics might be primarily driven by verification burdens rather than meaning misalignment.

My approach and findings advance the study of identities in several ways. To my knowledge, this is the first empirical examination of the structure of identity facilitation and interference networks. By adopting a relational and network approach, I make the global structures of these dynamics more tractable. The findings are consistent with current theoretical arguments and revisit older ideas about the role of resource supply and verification burdens in identity dynamics. The study highlights that facilitation and interference are not solely about shared or conflicting meanings; resource supply and verification burdens also play important roles. Additionally, the distinction between fundamental and contextual conflict opens new avenues for exploring widespread versus localized identity contradictions.

The findings also inform debates on specific types of identities, such as principle-based identities, which have been conceptualized as having a broad influence on the adoption and expression on other identities (Hitlin, 2003; Tsushima & Burke, 1999). The results support the idea that even challenging and stigmatized identities can facilitate principle-based identities. Additionally, I expand the range of identities considered, including stigmatized identities often overlooked in identity theory, yet essential for understanding identity dynamics at both individual and societal levels.

Nonetheless, the study has limitations. First, I lack data on key variables related to the propositions, such as identity meanings, resources provided, and verification burdens. Even though I find identity structures consistent with my theoretically derived propositions, the lack of data on key variables limits my ability to more directly assess such propositions. Future research should prioritize the development and collection of measures that capture identity meanings, the types and levels of symbolic and instrumental resources identities provide, and their verification burdens. While such measures are currently unavailable and difficult to construct, future studies could employ surveys or computational text analysis to estimate these variables and evaluate the mechanisms proposed here more directly.

Once such measures become available, exponential random graph models (ERGMs) can be used to directly test the propositions advanced in this study. The propositions rest on the idea that ties between identities are not independent but shaped by structural and attribute-based dependencies. Identities are theorized to facilitate or interfere with each other based on attributes such as verification burdens, symbolic and instrumental resources, and on alignment or contradiction in meanings. These mechanisms give rise to structured interdependencies, such as reciprocity and attribute-based mixing driven by nodal attributes such as verification burdens and resource profiles. The propositions advanced here predict specific structural configurations that future research can model directly through ERGMs, including node-level covariates and structural terms.

Second, and relatedly, the use of blockmodeling as the analytical strategy presents some tradeoffs. Blockmodeling is a valuable technique for uncovering global structural patterns in networks, such as cores, peripheries, and cohesive blocks. Like other clustering methods, however, it is somewhat sensitive to parameter choices, and individual node assignments may vary across model specifications. While robustness tests in this study indicate that the aggregate structural patterns remain remarkably stable, I observed some variation in node-level classification. A further limitation is that blockmodeling may obscure within-block heterogeneity or overlook node-level factors that drive tie formation. In contrast, ERGMs are designed to estimate tie-level probabilities based on nodal attributes and local structural effects. As such, blockmodeling and ERGMs can serve complementary purposes: blockmodeling is well suited for identifying macro-level configurations, while ERGMs provide a more granular view of the mechanisms shaping identity connections. I hope this work encourages future researchers to build on this foundation (whether through blockmodeling, ERGMs, or other approaches) to keep advancing a network-based understanding of identity structures.

https://doi.org/10.1017/nws.2025.10007 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Third, findings suggest that, while analytically useful, the distinction between symbolic and instrumental resources may not be always easily separated in practice. In many cases, the symbolic and instrumental dimensions of an identity are intertwined or mutually reinforcing. For example, an identity may provide instrumental support (e.g., access to support networks) precisely because it is symbolically legitimate in certain contexts (e.g., being a religious person). Future research could examine how these resources interact: whether they reinforce one another, operate independently, or trade off, as well as whether identities that offer both types of resources simultaneously occupy distinct positions in facilitation networks. Along the same lines, future research could explore more specific types of instrumental resources identities offer (e.g., financial, time, skills) and more precisely how they lead to different facilitation patterns.

Fourth, the data used in this study represent the first effort to measure facilitation and interference between identities in this way, meaning there was no prior data on estimates or expected variability to guide sample size planning. This limitation affected the types and specificity of identities that could be included in the analysis. Some key identities, such as occupational categories and non-binary gender identities, were excluded due to sample size constraints. Additionally, the sample is not representative of the U.S. population, which may limit the generalizability of the findings. Despite these limitations, this study provides an initial empirical foundation on identity facilitation and interference, which I hope will inform future studies, including their sample size considerations. Future research could include larger, representative samples and/or alternative designs to include a wider range of identities.

Including finer granularity of identities may also help test additional theoretical ideas in detail. This study focused on broad categories (e.g., being a religious person, being a volunteer). Because of this, there are fewer constraints on these identities ability to form direct ties with one another. These properties align with structural equivalence, which groups nodes based on similar direct ties. In contrast, regular equivalence groups nodes based on shared patterns of ties to similar types of others, rather than directly to each other. Future studies focusing on more fine-grained identities that are instances of more general categories (e.g., specific religious affiliations, types of stigma, or occupations), might use regular equivalence and assess whether the structures revealed using regular equivalence is consistent with the structures found in this study.

Additionally, studies could investigate identity networks within specific subpopulations to reveal systematic patterns of inequality in identity facilitation and interference. For example, future research could examine whether the structure of identity facilitation differs across groups defined by race, gender, class, or immigration status. This would allow researchers to test whether certain sociodemographic groups face more limited facilitation or greater interference across their identity networks, and whether certain identity configurations buffer or exacerbate these effects. Such analyses could also reveal whether certain types of identities (e.g., principle-based or institutional roles) play more or less supportive roles depending on the subpopulation. These findings would help clarify how identity dynamics are embedded within broader structures of social inequality. Exploring the links between identity structures and societal outcomes, such as social stability and stratification (Goode, 1960; Smith-Lovin, 2007), could further advance our understanding of identity dynamics and their implications for social cohesion and inequality.

The study of identities is central to sociology, yet the lack of tools to capture identity structures has hindered theory-building. This study offers a new empirical approach to uncover the patterned ways in which identities relate to one another through facilitation and interference. By using blockmodeling, this study lays the groundwork for future research on how identity structures are organized and how they influence individuals' experiences and societal stability.

Acknowledgements. I thank Nicolas Restrepo Ochoa for their early support in securing funding and collecting data for the broader project from which this article draws. The author made use of ChatGPT-4 (https://chatgpt.com/) to aid in proofreading this article. ChatGPT-4 was accessed and used during June – August 2024.

https://doi.org/10.1017/nws.2025.10007 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Supplementary material. The supplementary material for this article can be found at https://doi.org/10.1017/nws.2025.10007.

Funding information. This research was supported by Duke University's Worldview Lab.

Competing interests. The author declares that there are no competing interests.

Data availability statement. The data and code that support the findings of this study are available at https://github.com/mcramosf/id_structures_NWS (DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.16902182).

Notes

1 One possible approach would have been to combine the information of both facilitatory and interfering networks into a single signed network and use blockmodeling approaches designed for such networks. I stay away from this approach because my interest is in understanding the patterns within each layer. The hypotheses developed align with this goal. I do not aim to examine balance processes.
2 Respondents were also asked to list their current occupations (three blank spaces were provided).
3 We use this wording to elicit additional roles and social groups while avoid collecting personal identities. Pretests indicated that participants who listed additional identities provided roles and social identities (instead of personal identities) in their responses.
4 An attentive reader might observe that 'girlfriend' and 'single person,' typically considered mutually exclusive, co-occurred. The respondent who reported both identities explained that she felt she held both roles at the time of the survey.
5 When fitting theoretically-driven blockmodels with fewer clusters than hypothesized, I simplify the structure to preserve a core-periphery arrangement.

References

Amstad, F. T., Meier, L. L., Fasel, U., Elfering, A., & Semmer, N. K. (2011). A meta-analysis of work-family conflict and various outcomes with a special emphasis on cross-domain versus matching-domain relations. *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*, *16*(2), 151–169. doi: 10.1037/a0022170.

Burke, P. J. (1991). Identity processes and social stress. *American Sociological Review*, *56*(6), 836–849.

Burke, P. J. (1996). Social identities and psychosocial stress. In H. B. Kaplan (Ed.), *Psychosocial Stress: Perspectives on Structure, Theory, Life Course, and Methods* (pp. 141–174). Academic Press.

Burke, P. J. (2003). Relationships among multiple identities. In P. J. Burke, T. J. Owens, R. T. Serpe, & P. A. Thoits (Eds.), *Advances in Identity Theory and Research* (pp. 195–216). Kluwer Academic/Plenum Publishers.

Burke, P. J. (2004). Identities and social structure: The 2003 Cooley-Mead Award AddRess. *Social Psychology Quarterly*, *67*(1), 5–15. doi: 10.1177/019027250406700103.

Burke, P. J. (2006). Identity change. *Social Psychology Quarterly*, *69*(1), 81–96. doi: 10.1177/019027250606900106.

Burke, P. J. (2020). Identity dispersion: flexibility, uncertainty, or inconsistency? In R. T. Serpe, R. Stryker, & B. Powell (Eds.), *Identity and Symbolic Interaction* (pp. 89–117). Springer. doi: 10.1007/978-3-030-41231-9_4.

Burke, P. J., & Cerven, C. (2019). Identity accumulation, verification, and well-being. In *Identities in Everyday Life* (pp. 17–33). Oxford University Press.

Burke, P. J., & Harrod, M. M. (2005). Too much of a good thing? *Social Psychology Quarterly*, *68*(4), 359–374. doi: 10.1177/019027250506800404.

Burke, P. J., & Stets, J. E. (1999). Trust and commitment through self-verification. *Social Psychology Quarterly*, *62*(4), 347–366.

Burke, P. J., & Stets, J. E. (2023). *Identity Theory: Revised And Expanded* (Second Edition). Oxford University Press. doi: 10.1093/oso/9780197617182.001.0001.

Cassidy, G. L., & Davies, L. (2003). Explaining gender differences in mastery among married parents. *Social Psychology Quarterly*, *66*(1), 48–61. doi: 10.2307/3090140.

Cast, A. D. (2004). Well-being and the transition to parenthood: An identity theory approach. *Sociological Perspectives*, *47*(1), 55–78.

Cast, A. D., & Burke, P. J. (2002). A theory of self-esteem. *Social Forces*, *80*(3), 1041–1068.

Cugmas, M., Ferligoj, A., Škerlavaj, M., & Žiberna, A. (2021). Global structures and local network mechanisms of knowledge-flow networks. *PloS One*, *16*(2), e0246660.

Cugmas, M., Žiberna, A., & Ferligoj, A. (2021). The relative fit measure for evaluating a blockmodel. *Statistical Methods & Applications*, *30*(5), 1315–1335.

Doreian, P. (1999). An intuitive introduction to blockmodeling with examples. *Bulletin of Sociological Methodology/Bulletin de Méthodologie Sociologique*, *61*(1), 5–34.

Doreian, P., Batagelj, V., & Ferligoj, A. (2005). *Generalized Blockmodeling*. Cambridge University Press.
Foladare, I. S. (1969). A clarification of "ascribed status" and "achieved status". *The Sociological Quarterly*, *10*(1), 53–61. doi: 10.1111/j.1533-8525.1969.tb02061.x.
Fredriksen-Goldsen, K. I., & Scharlach, A. E. (2006). An interactive model of informal adult care and employment. *Community, Work & Family*, *9*(4), 441–455. doi: 10.1080/13668800600925084.
Freese, L., & Burke, P. J. (1994). Persons, identities, and social interaction. *Advances in Group Processes*, *11*, 1–24.
Gallagher, M. (2017). Obligatory and voluntary identity discrepancies, self-evaluation, and psychological distress. *Society and Mental Health*, *7*(2), 51–68. doi: 10.1177/2156869317695214.
Gallagher, M., Marcussen, K., & Serpe, R. T. (2022). Multiple identities and sources of reflected appraisals in identity theory. *Social Psychology Quarterly*, *85*(2), 142–163. doi: 10.1177/01902725221081798.
Goode, W. J. (1960). A theory of role strain. *American Sociological Review*, *25*(4), 483–496.
Greenhaus, J. H., & Powell, G. N. (2006). When work and family are allies: A theory of work-family enrichment. *The Academy of Management Review*, *31*(1), 72–92. doi: 10.5465/AMR.2006.19379625.
Hitlin, S. (2003). Values as the core of personal identity: Drawing links between two theories of self. *Social Psychology Quarterly*, *66*(2), 118–137.
Hitlin, S. (2011). Values, personal identity and the moral self. In S. J. Schwartz, K. Luyckx, & V. L. Vignoles (Eds.), *Handbook of Identity Theory and Research*. Springer.
Kirchmeyer, C. (1992). Nonwork participation and work attitudes: A test of scarcity vs. expansion models of personal resources. *Human Relations*, *45*(8), 775–795. doi: 10.1177/001872679204500802.
Kirchmeyer, C. (1993). Nonwork-to-work spillover: A more balanced view of the experiences and coping of professional women and men. *Sex Roles*, *28*(9-10), 531–552. doi: 10.1007/BF00289679.
Lorrain, F., & White, H. C. (1971). Structural equivalence of individuals in social networks. *The Journal of Mathematical Sociology*, *1*(1), 49–80.
Marcussen, K., Gallagher, M., & Ritter, C. (2019). Mental illness as a stigmatized identity. *Society and Mental Health*, *9*(2), 211–227.
Marks, S. R. (1977). Multiple roles and role strain: Some notes on human energy, time and commitment. *American Sociological Review*, *42*(3), 921–936.
Marks, S. R., & MacDermid, S. M. (1996). Multiple roles and the self: A theory of role balance. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, *58*(2), 417–432. doi: 10.2307/353506.
Matjašič, M., Cugmas, M., & Žiberna, A. (2021). Blockmodeling: An R package for generalized blockmodeling. *Metodološki zvezki*, *17*(2), 49–66.
Miles, A. (2014). Addressing the problem of cultural anchoring: An identity-based model of culture in action. *Social Psychology Quarterly*, *77*(2), 210–227. doi: 10.1177/0190272514524062.
Mui, A. C. (1992). Caregiver strain among Black and White daughter caregivers: A role theory perspective. *The Gerontologist*, *32*(2), 203–212. doi: 10.1093/geront/32.2.203.
Nordlund, C., & Žiberna, A. (2019). Blockmodeling of valued networks. In *Advances in Network Clustering and Blockmodeling* (pp. 151–187). John Wiley & Sons.
Peer, E., Brandimarte, L., Samat, S., & Acquisti, A. (2017). Beyond the Turk: Alternative platforms for crowdsourcing behavioral research. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, *70*, 153–163. doi: 10.1016/j.jesp.2017.01.006.
Quach, E. D. (2020). Work and the family in later life: The effects of role stressors, role enhancement, and role conflict on self-perceptions on aging. *International Journal of Aging and Human Development*, *90*(2), 135–151. doi: 10.1177/0091415018812404.
Ramarajan, L. (2014). Past, present and future research on multiple identities: Toward an intrapersonal network approach. *The Academy of Management Annals*, *8*(1), 589–659. doi: 10.1080/19416520.2014.912379.
Ramos, M. C., & Restrepo Ochoa, N. (2025). Identity networks as a new frontier: Conceptualizing, mapping, and analyzing identity structures and their impact on well-being. *Social Psychology Quarterly*, *88*(2), 205–226. doi: 10.1177/01902725241292328.
Reid, J., & Hardy, M. (1999). Multiple roles and well-being among midlife women: Testing role strain and role enhancement theories. *The Journals of Gerontology Series B: Psychological Sciences and Social Sciences*, *54B*(6), S329–S338. doi: 10.1093/geronb/54B.6.S329.
Riley, A., & Burke, P. J. (1995). Identities and self-verification in the small group. *Social Psychology Quarterly*, *58*(2), 61–73.
Small, S. A., & Riley, D. (1990). Toward a multidimensional assessment of work spillover into family life. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, *52*(1), 51–61.
Smith-Lovin, L. (2007). The strength of weak identities: Social structural sources of self, situation, and emotional experience. *Social Psychology Quarterly*, *70*(2), 106–124.
Stets, J. E. (1995). Role identities and person identities: Gender identity, mastery identity, and controlling one's partner. *Sociological Perspectives*, *38*(2), 129–150. doi: 10.2307/1389287.
Stets, J. E., Angelo, E., Fields, B. C., & Burke, P. J. (2024). Identity nonverification, coping, and depression and anxiety during the pandemic. *Society and Mental Health*, *14*(3), 198–215. doi: 10.1177/21568693231213089.

https://doi.org/10.1017/nws.2025.10007 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Stets, J. E., & Burke, P. J. (2014). Emotions and identity nonverification. *Social Psychology Quarterly*, *77*(4), 387–410. doi: 10.1177/0190272514533708.
Stets, J. E., & Carter, M. J. (2011). The moral self: Applying identity theory. *Social Psychology Quarterly*, *74*(2), 192–215.
Stets, J. E., & Carter, M. J. (2012). A theory of the self for the sociology of morality. *American Sociological Review*, *77*(1), 120–140.
Stets, J. E., & Cast, A. D. (2007). Resources and identity verification from an identity theory perspective. *Sociological Perspectives*, *50*(4), 517–543. doi: 10.1525/sop.2007.50.4.517.
Stets, J. E., & Harrod, M. M. (2004). Verification across multiple identities: The role of status. *Social Psychology Quarterly*, *67*(2), 155–171. doi: 10.1177/019027250406700203.
Stryker, S. (1968). Identity salience and role performance: The relevance of symbolic interaction theory for family research. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, *30*(4), 558–564.
Stryker, S. (1980). *Symbolic Interactionism: A Social Structural Version*. Benjamin Cummings Publishing Company.
Stryker, S. (2000). Identity competition: Key to differential social movement participation?. In S. Stryker, T. J. Owens, & R. W. White (Eds.), *Self, Identity, and Social Movements*. University of Minnesota Press.
Stryker, S., & Burke, P. J. (2000). The past, present, and future of an identity theory. *Social Psychology Quarterly*, *63*(4), 284–297.
Thoits, P. A. (2013). Volunteer identity salience, role enactment, and well-being. *Social Psychology Quarterly*, *76*(4), 373–398. doi: 10.1177/0190272513498397.
Tiedje, L. B., Wortman, C. B., Downey, G., Emmons, C., Biernat, M., & Lang, E. (1990). Women with multiple roles: Role-compatibility perceptions, satisfaction, and mental health. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, *52*(1), 63–72. doi: 10.2307/352838.
Tsushima, T. M., & Burke, P. J. (1999). Levels, agency, and control in the parent identity. *Social Psychology Quarterly*, *62*(2), 173–189. doi: 10.2307/2695856.
Voydanoff, P., & Donnelly, B. W. (1999). Multiple roles and psychological distress: The intersection of the paid worker, spouse, and parent roles with the role of the adult child. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, *61*(3), 725–738. doi: 10.2307/353573.
White, D. R., & Reitz, K. P. (1983). Graph and semigroup homomorphisms on networks of relations. *Social Networks*, *5*(2), 193–234.
Žiberna, A. (2007). Generalized blockmodeling of valued networks. *Social Networks*, *29*(1), 105–126.

Cite this article: Ramos M. C. (2025). The structure of identity facilitation and interference. *Network Science* **13**, 1–25. https://doi.org/10.1017/nws.2025.10007