THIS IS A DRAFT PRE-PRINT CHAPTER. THE FINAL VERSION IS AVAILABLE IN:

The citation for this chapter is:

Barnard, A. (2023). Social dream-drawing: a socioanalytic method for studying identity work. In I. Winkler., S. Reisner., & R. Cascon-Pereira (Eds.). Handbook of research methods for studying identity in and around organisations: Usual suspects and beyond. (chapter 6; pp.71-86). Edgar Elgar. ISBN: 978 1 80220 796 5.

Social dream drawing: A socioanalytic method for studying identity work

<a> INTRODUCTION

The significance of identity in healthy psychological functioning is a primary reason for studying identity in various work and life contexts. Identity encompasses a person's subjective definitions of the self, based on the person's unique personality attributes, group memberships and social roles (Stets & Serpe, 2013). While the content of identity remains a valuable research focus, interest in the dynamics and processes of identity development has taken flight as the extant identity literature converges on the idea that an individual's identity is not only multiple, but fluid, dynamic and evolving (Caza et al., 2018; Brown, 2021). Identity research exploring the dynamics and processes of identity development is known as identity work, and from this perspective identity is conceptualized in processual terms (Sveningsson & Alvesson, 2003).

There are multiple approaches to identity work with most research methods favouring conscious and observable indicators of identity work (Caza et al., 2018; Hoedemaekers, 2010). Recognising that identity work entails both conscious and unconscious process dynamics (Beech et al., 2008), there is a call for more research to engage at the intersection of conscious and unconscious identity processing (Caza et al., 2018). This chapter presents social dream drawing (SDD) as a potentially valuable method for studying identity work because it draws on both the conscious and unconscious aspects thereof. SDD is rooted in socioanalytic methodology, which focusses on studying unconscious dynamics through methods aimed at surfacing and conscious processing of unconscious thoughts and experiences (Long, 2013).

The application of SDD to the study of identity work in this chapter, is firstly situated in identity theory, which focusses on conceptualising identity and identity work. With SDD being a novel method in identity research, the second section of the chapter is dedicated to ground SDD in socioanalytic methodology. The third section contains a detailed description of the method followed by a guide for data analysis. Application of the method to the study of identity work is then illustrated by an example in the fourth section. The chapter concludes with a critical reflection on the potential pitfalls and strengths of using SDD as a method for studying identity.

<a> IDENTITY WORK

Identity theory, one of the dominant approaches to identity research, studies the self as a social being in whom multiple identities derived from one's personal characteristics, group affiliations and social roles converge to form the confluence of self-meanings that constitutes a person's identity (Stets & Serpe, 2013). How one defines the self is therefore construed by the personas, positions or roles a person holds in a social structure and the person's understanding or meaning-making of concomitant self–other expectations (Brenner et al., 2018). Identities, whether person, group or role based (Burke, 2007), imply taking up congruent personas to adapt to changing global, societal and organizational circumstances and expectations (Watson, 2008). In this sense, individual identity is always socially constructed and relational, because it is influenced by the sociocultural meanings, language and normative ideas that influence the meaning a person attaches to their different identities (Beech et al., 2008). Importantly, identity theory is concerned with how one's multiple identities relate to the self-concept (Brenner et al., 2018) and aligns aspects of the self-concept with person identity (authenticity), group identity (self-worth) and role identity (self-efficacy) (Stets & Serpe, 2013).

Identity change is predicated on the need to maintain a congruent self-concept (Snow & Anderson, 1987) or identity standard (Burke, 2007). Such self-congruence can be explained by the need to verify one's self-understanding and the enactment of one's identity with the perceived person, group and role expectations of the self (Brenner et al., 2018). In the multiple, changing social contexts and groups that people belong to, identity tension and conflict arise when the individual experiences incongruence between self–other expectations (Burke, 2007). Such identity tension and conflict elicit the need to balance or integrate new, opposing, different and unique expectations of being, causing the individual to engage in identity work (Alvesson & Willmott, 2002). Identity work refers to the range of activities individuals engage in to create, present and sustain personal identities that are congruent with and supportive of the self-concept (Snow & Anderson, 1987). Building on this, Alvesson and Willmott (2002, p. 626) and Sveningsson and Alvesson (2003, p.1165) relate identity work to the process activities, such as "forming, repairing, maintaining, strengthening or revising" that individuals continuously engage in to produce a coherent and distinctive sense of self. The activities of identity work have been referred to as a form of sense-making, entailing the emotional, cognitive and social processes of constant self-reflection and self-verification in consciously and unconsciously deciding to assimilate and accommodate new ways of being (Petriglieri & Petriglieri 2010).

Identity theory acknowledges that identity work contains unconscious and conscious elements and processes (Alvesson & Willmott, 2002; Stets & Serpe, 2013), yet integrating these elements is frequently overlooked in identity work research (Caza et a., 2018). Engaging both the unconscious and conscious elements of behaviour lies at the core of socioanalytic methodology. Studying identity work from a socioanalytic stance focuses on how individuals' covert emotional needs shape their sense of self in a social system (Cilliers, 2017; Petriglieri & Petriglieri, 2010). Socioanalysis recognizes that identity tension results from contradictory self–other identity meanings that frequently manifest unconsciously and emphasizes the anxiety that stems from this perceived incongruence (Cilliers, 2017). Studying identity work through the socioanalytic method of SDD, thus focuses on exploring unconscious identity tensions and the resolution thereof by bringing into awareness its emotional consequences and the emotional, cognitive and social processing that individuals apply when consolidating meanings that define the self (Petriglieri & Petriglieri, 2010). Before explaining SDD in detail, its underlying socioanalytic methodology is discussed.

<a> SOCIOANALYTIC METHODOLOGY

Socioanalysis is an evolving social science in which individuals, groups, organizations and societies are studied from a systems psychoanalytic perspective (Long, 2013). Socioanalysis was originally suggested by Bain (1999) as an action research activity combining epistemological and methodological assumptions from psychoanalysis, systems thinking and related theories such as group relations, organizational behaviour and social dreaming. In the field of socioanalytic research and consultancy, various methods have evolved such as organizational role analysis, role biography, social dream matrix, social photo matrix, photo voice, the listening post and SDD (see Long, 2013; Mersky & Sievers, 2019; Stamenova & Hinshelwood, 2018). The epistemological focus is on the unconscious and on applying abductive logic to knowledge generation (Long & Harding, 2013).

<b> The Unconscious

Following the psychoanalytic tradition, socioanalysis highlights the unconscious, emphasising three aspects, namely the interaction between the unconscious and the conscious (Shepherd, 2018), the associative unconscious as a key element in constructing meaning (Mersky, 2015) and the unconscious as a dynamic collective thinking resource (Long & Harding, 2013).

Understanding behaviour from a socioanalytic view requires *access to both the unconscious and conscious aspects of thinking* (Shepherd, 2018) because understanding is believed to lie in the space between raw emotional experience and conscious thinking (Bion, 1970). Regarding identity work, this implies the surfacing of unconscious anxieties and defences that mirror identity tensions and conflicts and exploring how these are dealt with. Focusing on synthesising unconscious and conscious thinking in this way, facilitates an understanding of identity and identity work aspects that may otherwise remain indiscernible or unexplained (Petriglieri & Petriglieri, 2010).

The unconscious in socioanalysis is regarded as a social phenomenon and "is devoted to understanding how subjectivity works collectively" (Long 2013, p. 307). Socioanalytic methodology acknowledges the collective unconscious but foregrounds the notion of the *associative unconscious* (Long & Harding, 2013). Whereas the collective unconscious represents the shared meanings held by individuals in a social context, the associative unconscious refers to individuals not necessarily sharing identical meaning, but associative understandings. This entails that each individual carry some meaning that may differ from the other, but collectively contributes to a fuller understanding and insight (Long & Harding, 2013).

In regarding *the unconscious as a rich thinking resource* (Long & Harding, 2013), socioanalysts recognize how its expression in dreams, visual and written artwork, jokes and metaphors uses symbolic and metaphoric meaning as a link to conscious understanding (Mersky & Sievers, 2019). Socioanalytic methods such as SDD draw on the psychoanalytic idea that drawings and dreams are powerful analytical tools representing the symbolic language of the unconscious (Long & Harding, 2013). As with other socioanalytic methods, in SDD the intention is to elicit thoughts from the unconscious and surface these into awareness so that they can be reflected on critically and consciously (Shepherd, 2018). Synthesising deep, symbolic thinking with purposeful conscious thinking about a specific topic of interest provides a rich basis for individual and organizational insight (Mersky, 2017).

\<b\> Abduction and Working Hypotheses

Working with the unconscious in the above-mentioned manner lends itself to C.R. Peirce's abductive process of knowledge creation (see Frankfurt, 1985), as noted by Long and Harding (2013, p. 19): "The associative unconscious is a crucible for abductive logic and creativity". In

working with the unconscious, the researcher needs to make meaningful connections from seemingly disconnected, yet associated, thoughts, emotions, symbols and ideas to generate knowledge and help people make sense of their experiences (Mersky, 2015). Abduction is a logic of creative discovery and insight to make sense and meaning of intriguing human experiences (Long & Harding, 2013). Abduction, results in tentative knowledge and mirrors a dynamic and ever-evolving process of sense-making in which possible and preliminary conclusions are reached (Mersky, 2015). Peirce also links abduction to pragmatic knowledge generation, that is generating possible understanding in an interactive or experiential manner (Frankfurt, 1958). Similarly, socioanalytic methods are described as action learning research methods, because researcher and participants engage interactively and experientially in a process of sense-making and discovery of meaning (Shepherd, 2018).

Ultimately, socioanalytic inquiry applies Pierce's abductive philosophy of science to create what is referred to as "working hypotheses" (Frankfurt, 1958; Long, 2013; Mersky, 2015; Mersky & Sievers, 2019). Working hypotheses are defined as interpretations reflecting possible, rather than probable, suggestions to explain phenomena (Frankfurt, 1985). Through abductive logic, meaning-making in SDD entails a form of reasoning that allows the researcher or consulting psychologist to make useful inferences from data generated in practice (Mersky, 2015). An SDD session provides an interactive forum where participants can reflect on a topic in a way that synthesizes creative unconscious thought with conscious collective processing. In doing so, participants engage with, experience and demonstrate identity work activities (Barnard, 2018) and in studying identity, an SDD session stimulates and facilitates identity work within the context of an identity-related topic, for example students exploring their leadership identity (Pule & May, 2021). An SDD session can be compared to what Petriglieri and Petriglieri (2010) call an identity workspace and Mersky (2017) calls an action research method.

<a> SOCIAL DREAM DRAWING

Rose Mersky developed SDD for organizational consulting and research purposes (Mersky, 2008, 2012, 2015). The objective of SDD is to enhance individuals' thinking about difficult organizational and professional issues by surfacing their unknown thoughts into awareness and facilitating collective creative thinking for possible resolutions (Mersky, 2008). Essentially, the SDD method entails an interactive work session with a small group of participants, in which individual dream drawings are used as a stimulus for the group to collectively generate ideas about a specific topic

(Mersky, 2008). The purpose is not to focus on the individual dreamer (Pule & May, 2021) nor to analyse the dream (Barnard, 2019). It is intended to use participants' dream drawings as impetus to evoke emotional experience, which can then be used to generate collective meaning and knowledge of a topic (Pule & May, 2021).

Because SDD is one of the more recent methods in the socioanalytic field and in its infancy as a method applied to identity work, I next detail its procedure. Then, because SDD literature is not clear about a specific data analytic methodology, the section concludes with how I approach data analysis.

<b> The Social Dream Drawing Procedure

SDD is described according to what happens prior to an SDD session, the strategies used in SDD, and the systematic procedure followed during the session.

<c> Preparing for the social dream drawing session

Generally, a few people, preferably three or four, sharing a similar concern or interest, are invited to participate in an SDD work session (Mersky & Sievers, 2019). Participants are purposefully selected in line with the research objective when SDD is used for research purposes. Prior to the actual session, participants are informed about the purpose and nature of the SDD session, their participation and the role of dream drawings in the session. From an ethical perspective, to ensure informed consent, participants should be informed whether the session is part of a research or consultancy project. It is also important to inform participants that the session will not be used to analyse them or their dreams, but that the dream drawings are used as stimulus to generate discussion about the topic. Participants are therefore also informed about the session topic, as relevant to the research or consultancy project. In identity work research, a topic could for example be "Women in leadership". Participants are requested to draw a picture of an actual dream they had whilst sleeping, either recently or one they remember well (Mersky, 2008). Dreams are a way of stimulating and connecting participants' interest in the session topic and help them to relate their personal experiences to the issue at hand. Sharing dreams can be an intimate, sometimes exposing experience. According to Mersky (2008) drawing one's dream makes it easier to share deep personal experiences because drawing transforms the inner experience into a tangible object that can be looked at and worked with.

<c> Strategies used in social dream drawing: Free association and amplification

Before describing the procedure of the SDD session, it is important to understand the strategies of free association and amplification. During the SDD session, the pre-prepared dream images constitute the first and basic stimulus for reflecting on the predetermined session topic. Free association and amplification are additional strategies to access thoughts in the unconscious and make them available for conscious reflection and processing (Mersky, 2017). Freud developed free association as a way of accessing unconscious thinking by expressing one's inner unprocessed responses to dream material (Mersky, 2019). Free association results in any instant thoughts or ideas that come to mind when viewing dream images during the SDD session (Mersky, 2012). Amplification stems from Jung's work on dreams and is a way of encouraging participants to connect the dream images to current sociocultural and work-life experiences (Mersky, 2019) such as familiar cultural or political elements, current news, events, music and lyrics, literature and films (Mersky, 2017). In SDD, free association and amplification elicit impromptu thoughts and ideas that intuitively come to mind in relation to the dream drawing and its presentation. Mersky (2019) notes that through free association and amplification, the unconscious as a creative thinking resource is stimulated because unknown thoughts become available for conscious thinking and processing.

<c> The procedure followed during a social dream drawing session

An SDD session is structured along two broad stages with a clear session topic. The first stage focuses on processing each of the participants' dreams through three reflective steps. This stage can last between 2 to 3 hours allowing equal time for each dream drawing. The second stage concludes the session with an overall reflection on insights derived and lasts 30 minutes (see Mersky 2008, 2017). Time spent depends on the researcher, the context of the project, the number of participants and time available. A complete SDD session with four participants may therefore take approximately 2,5 to 3,5 hours. The two stages are detailed below:

Stage 1: Reflective processing of individual dream drawings: In the first stage of the SDD session, participants sit in a circle and individual pre-prepared dream drawings are presented one by one. For each dream drawing the group's thinking about the dream is encouraged following three steps: i) presenting the dream drawing; ii) free association and amplification; and iii) generating insights about the session theme. One participant starts by placing their dream drawing in the

middle of the group circle for all to see and tells the story of the dream. The other participants can ask clarifying questions about the dream and the drawing. In step two, the facilitator/researcher invites all participants, including the dreamer, to offer free associations and amplifications for the dream drawing and its story. The strategies of free association and amplification are usually explained to the group prior to the session and again while busy with the first dream drawing. In the third and last step, participants switch seats in the circle and are asked by the facilitator/researcher to offer and discuss possible insights emanating from the dream material in relation to the topic. As dreams, free association and amplification engage participants in the sphere of unconscious emotional experience, the act of switching seats creates a clear shift from working with unconscious material to conscious thinking and sense-making (Mersky, 2017). After the first dream has been discussed, the second one is facilitated in the same way and then the third and the fourth.

Stage 2: Thematic reflection on the SDD session as a whole: In the second and concluding stage of the SDD session, after all the dreams have been dealt with, the facilitator/researcher invites the group to discuss and reflect on the dream material and the discussions that were generated during the first stage, and to identify any trends, patterns and unique learnings that emerged for them in relation to the topic of the SDD session (Barnard, 2018).

Data generated during an SDD session include the actual dream drawings or photos thereof and a transcription of an audio-recording.

<b> Analysing Social Dream Drawing Data

To date, Mersky's work has predominantly focused on the development of SDD as a method, and guidance on the analysis of SDD data is not particularly clear. I follow a hermeneutic phenomenological approach (Barnard, 2018, 2019), which emphasizes subjective experience, co-constructed meaning and aims to uncover concealed aspects of social phenomena that are not often talked about, described or noticed (Crowther et al., 2017). Hermeneutic phenomenology allows for emergent creative meaning-making, which aligns with the abductive logic fundamental to socioanalysis (Long & Harding, 2013).

Analytical strategies in hermeneutic phenomenology typically process data iteratively through the three stages of naïve reading, structural thematic analysis and comprehensive understanding

(Lindseth & Norberg, 2004). During the *naïve reading* of data, the intention is to achieve a close familiarity and intuitive overall understanding by viewing, reading and re-reading the data. The result is a summarized overview of the storyline that the researcher recognizes in the data, and this constitutes a benchmark for reflecting on meanings derived in consequent analytical steps. Applying the naïve reading while viewing and reading through SDD data transcripts, I tend to ask myself the following: i) What was the dream about? ii) What were the free associations and amplifications about? and iii) What were the discussions and reflections about in relation to this dream?

The second stage constitutes a structured thematic analysis in which sections of essential meaning are highlighted in the verbatim data and paraphrased and condensed in the researcher's own words. Subsequently, related meanings are categorized and synthesized into themes descriptive of the research topic. During this structured thematic analysis stage, I focus on: i) What does the dream material reveal or elicit about the research phenomenon in this specific context? ii) What patterns of meaning emerge from the dream material and the group's reflective discussion of it that help to better understand the research phenomenon? and iii) How are identity work phenomena evident in the dream material and in the group's processing thereof?

The third concluding phase is referred to as the comprehensive understanding or the composite description of the research phenomenon. Here the intention is to convey a meaningful proposition explaining the research phenomenon by synthesising the themes and their interrelatedness. In socioanalytic terms, synthesized meaning results in the formulation of working hypotheses about the research phenomenon (Long, 2013). During this stage, I consider: i) What working hypotheses can be formulated about the identity tensions experienced? and ii) How are identity tensions coped with or processed in attempting to resolve them (processes or activities of manifest identity work)?

<a> AN ILLUSTRATION OF IDENTITY RESEARCH THROUGH SOCIAL DREAM DRAWING

The case illustrated here was done in the context of a research project exploring how women sustain wellbeing through identity work within the context of the multiple roles they hold in society. An SDD session was held with four white, Afrikaans-speaking South African women in their mid-forties. They all worked either part time or full time and were married with two or three schoolgoing children. The women represented the middle-class, white, Afrikaans-speaking, Christian

household, in which their husbands are regarded as the primary breadwinners. The four women all had tertiary qualifications and were involved in community and school outreach projects. Three dreams are shared here as a case example. The objective of the SDD session was to elicit and facilitate discussion on the session topic of *Women doing and being different roles in everyday life*. The research objectives were to surface and explore identity tensions and generate understanding about the identity work processes they applied to resolve these tensions within a coherent sense of self. The analysis of the SDD follows the three stages of naïve reading, structural thematic analysis and a comprehensive understanding.

<b> Naïve Reading

The first dream drawing (Image 1) was about sitting back-to-back with a stranger, holding a notebook containing bible verses and looking over her shoulder to realize with surprise that the strange man had different yet very similar notes. Free associations and amplifications included references to striped prisoner uniforms and judgement day. The dream material and free associations and amplifications led to a discussion about the fear of making new connections outside accepted social conventions, feeling imprisoned by gendered and normative social boundaries and feeling guilty for judging others. The women noted a wish for new and broader horizons, but also recognized how they, in what they did and who they were, frequently extended restrictive boundaries to transform their social context.

Image 1
Comparing notes with a stranger

The second dream drawing (Image 2) was about a wife receiving flowers from her husband's workplace and being surprised but pleased that his colleagues had sent it. Free associations and amplifications included references to the cross, crossroads, flowers on a grave and water lily. The dream material and the free associations and amplifications led to a discussion about the way women sacrifice themselves in work and in life, the feeling that their roles are downplayed, the striving for acknowledgement and appreciation, finding acknowledgment of the self through meaningful and religious endeavours and how women give meaning and hope in their families and society.

Image 2

Flowers from my husband's work

The third dream drawing (Image 3) was about stepping out of an apartment window onto a spiral staircase while being watched from behind by her family and from below by colleagues. To her shame, the wind lifts her dress and the people below see her undergarments; yet she continues to move down. Free associations and amplifications included references to Marilyn Monroe, Alice in Wonderland going down the rabbit hole and Jacob's ladder. The dream material and the free associations and amplifications led to a discussion about feeling vulnerable and exposed, being torn between family security and work expectations, and feeling courageous and excited to explore the unknown potential of her competence. Spiritual connotations to Jacob's ladder led to reflections on how different work-life roles provide meaning and purpose, despite struggles endured.

Image 3

Going down the open spiral staircase

<b> Structural Thematic Analysis

Reflecting on the dreams holistically, a theme about identity tension and two about identity work connect across the dreams. The themes are discussed with substantiating verbatim data.

<c> Identity tension: Performance and survival anxiety

The first theme relates to identity tension and derives from the difficult and conflicting emotions that were expressed. These provided clues to the tension originating from the multiple and conflicting expectations in their role and social identities. Identity tensions are described as

survival and performance anxieties located in the self, leading to self-doubt and a consistent struggle to integrate person, role and social identities.

Survival anxiety surfaced in the expressed fears, guilt and feeling imprisoned by contextually rooted religious and gendered beliefs. Reflecting on the first dream, one participant said "*I feel guilty when I dream of sitting and knitting under a tree, with no one telling me what I must do. Because, I mean it is our purpose on earth to bear children and be wonderful wives to our husbands*". Another remembered "*My mother frequently said she was not good enough, she was pathetic. I hear myself repeating this, 'see how pathetic you are', and I judge myself.*" The gendered role restrictions felt by women are exacerbated because they are cemented in religious beliefs: "*It seems as if I am not loyal [to my husband and children] … the spiritual part puts a burden on me because I do not get to everything. There are so many things I have to do… .*"

Performance anxiety also revealed identity tension and was evident in feeling undervalued, unrecognized, vulnerable, exposed and stretched in relation to women's work-life roles. A woman spoke about the wonder of receiving recognition (flowers from her husband's work) yet feeling unsure whether they were meant for her: "*I wondered if they were for me and what they were for.*" Another noted "*I am thinly stretched like the table, spider-web thin*", and "*When I think about my life and it is actually going well, I feel like a table and the table is bending. I feel as if I am at a breaking point*". Identity tension surfaces in the work overload that results from the multiple role expectations, but also in their experience of the conflicting expectations that underlie any role. One participant spoke about this, juxtaposing her struggle to be both strong and dependent: "*You know you have this role in which you have to be strong and hold everything together. You must have backbone and sometimes be like a sergeant major. My husband wants this in me, he wants me to cope, but he also wants me to be soft and vulnerable. Vulnerability is important for intimacy… Our strength is needed but it is also a problem and I struggle to make that switch.*"

Identity tensions appear to be caused by self-judgement, stemming from engrained socio-religious beliefs. The effect of the identity tension seems first to manifest as self-doubt and second in the struggle to integrate different parts of the expected self. Engaging consciously with these emotions gave women self-awareness of the identity tensions they entertain because of trying to conform to perceived social expectations.

<c> Identity work: Emotional and cognitive processing towards self-congruence

13

The women's identity work became evident in the way the discussions of each dream evolved and, overall, from speaking about conflicting emotions to progressively expressing more positive emotions because of the two identity processing tasks. The identity work processes identified were self-authorisation of person identity and authentic self-expression and integration. The identity tensions were resolved through these (evidence of emotional and cognitive identity processes) towards the attainment of identity integration and self-coherence.

Self-authorisation of person identity: The women's discussions progressed towards recognising their agency in resolving the identity tensions noted above. They became aware of their role in subscribing to socially engrained beliefs that conflict with self-beliefs and restrict their sense of competence and self-confidence. They became more aware of their agency in choosing who and how to be, as reflected in sentiments such as "*I want to be both and*". Reflections on the second dream led them to recognize that they "*are at a crossroads to choose and find meaning*". This demonstrated the women's recognition of their agency and led to expressing self-value and a sense of emancipation by means of self-authorising: "*We have choices, and nobody said that choosing A or choosing B was going to be without difficulties. In the choices we make we must know our lives are not going to be easy because of whatever choice we made. Your life and your choices are not easier or more difficult than mine.*" Self-reflective work in the SDD generated self-awareness of personal needs and desires and a recognition of their importance. This led to a stronger self-authorisation of the person identity.

Authentic self-expression and integration: A strong existential theme was evident in the dream about the gift of flowers, with connotations of life and death and sacrifice, but also hope, fertility and rebirth, as symbolized by the water lily. These life-giving symbols were reflected in the women's discussion on how they contributed to society ("*what we do as women is go out in the community and hold the community's balls in the air*") and enabled others to succeed ("*how you catch balls for me that I cannot catch and how I catch balls for you*"). In reflecting on their contributions not only to their inner family circle and their work, but also to society at large, the women found their voice and their confidence increased, as is evident in one woman's story about speaking up at her husband's year-end Christmas function: "*It was a formal function for all the directors and in the speeches, they were saying thank you. So, I put my hand up and I said I just wanted to say thank you to all the women who enable their husbands to do the work they do.*" The tensions brought about by splitting work and family roles (dreams 2 and 3) seem to be

overcome in the third dream discussion. Here, initial performance anxiety is experienced both in the family and the work role ("*they were looking at me from behind and up from below*"), but the ladder symbolically connects the two roles as the woman "*descends the open staircase that gives access to both roles*". The identity work moves to a possible resolution of identity tensions in that the women realize their roles are connected within them and by their choice. They progressed to a point where their thoughts reflected constructive engagement with their performance anxiety (feelings of shame, dream 3), recognising their own worth (feeling surprised and happy, dream 3) and experiencing a sense of authentic self-expression and integration (the courage to explore competence and self-efficiency, dream 3). One participant noted: "*I see the blood drip and I see the strength of it. I identify with the pain and with the power.*"

<b> Comprehensive Understanding

In generating a comprehensive understanding the researcher formulated two working hypotheses about the identity tensions and the identity work that women do to cope with multiple work-life roles. Other propositions and explanations are also possible, especially since the data produced in an SDD session are rich and abundant. The working hypotheses reflect a context-specific understanding about the preceding case example: *Women's self-judgement relate to their social identities, reflected in cultural and religious beliefs about being a woman. They experience identity tension when realising their personal beliefs and needs differ from the social expectations and connotations of the gendered role. To resolve identity tensions, they self-authorize their person identity and engage in authentic self-expression and integration*. In terms of identity theory and the value of identity work, a second proposed insight can be formulated: *Women experience survival and performance anxiety when they take up various roles at work and in life. The anxiety manifests in the identity tensions they experience between their social, personal and role identities. When women become aware of identity tensions they move towards resolving them. Such self-awareness leads to a conscious recognition of their agency and self-worth. When doing identity work, women reflect consciously on the work-life roles they fulfil and are enabled to celebrate their inner strengths and their contribution to society.*

<a> CRITICAL EVALUATION

In conclusion, I reflect on the value of SDD by reviewing the literature on its applications to date and by highlighting its strengths as a socioanalytic method for studying identity and identity work.

Finally, I consider potential challenges and make some recommendations for researchers to consider when deciding whether the use of SDD in their identity research is appropriate and viable.

<b> Application of Social Dream Drawing

Although Mersky's work refers to SDD as working with organizational, collective and professional issues, the relevance of the method for the study of identity in the work context is evident throughout her writings. In one of the first publications on the method, she describes SDD as a method "designed to access the unconscious of role holders through drawings of their dreams" (Mersky, 2008, p. 35). Later, Mersky (2013) notes that SDD provides a safe collective thinking space for the individual to experiment with "aspects of one's identity and personality in role" (p. 163). Moreover, although not pertinently situated as identity or identity work studies, she emphasizes that her research demonstrates that participation in SDD can be a valuable individual learning experience for anyone during work and life role transitions (Mersky, 2012, 2017). In her research, SDD has been applied in consulting with individuals about personal and professional role identity issues (Mersky, 2012, 2013, 2017) and in constructing sociocultural identity meanings (Mersky, 2015; Mersky & Sievers, 2019). Apart from Mersky's work, very limited SDD research has been published. Pule and May (2021) published a study using SDD to study the role identity of student leaders. In my own work, I have applied SDD to the work role identity of women researchers (Barnard, 2019) and to the identity work of women reflecting on their multiple work-life roles (Barnard, 2018).

<b> The Value of Social Dream Drawing for Studying Identity Work

People daily engage in the self-evaluation, self-verification and self-adjustment processes of identity work, frequently without consciously knowing they do. Yet research emphasizes the value of doing identity work, implying a need for purposefully facilitated identity work interventions (Barnard, 2018, 2019). As with other socioanalytic methods, SDD offers the benefits of an action research method because it can be applied simultaneously as an intervention and a research activity (Mersky & Sievers, 2019). Action research embraces the epistemological notion of knowledge creation in action based on participants' practically acquired experience with the intention of bringing about change or transformation. By facilitating an SDD session in relation to identity-relevant topics, participants engage in self-reflective meaning-making about the identity

tensions they experience, and as the collective discussion unfolds, identity work becomes evident in the emotional and cognitive processing of their identity issues. Identity change, or the potential for it, becomes evident during the SDD session, as participants develop self-awareness, self-authorisation, self-regard and authentic self-expression (Barnard, 2018).

While SDD offers an intentional or purposeful opportunity for identity work, it is also a method that draws on unconscious knowledge about the self. Dreams have strong personal significance and connecting with one's dreams is a way of linking to the affective thinking space in which the self is the predominant actor. Through SDD the researcher/facilitator initiates and facilitates a process of deep self-reflection that integrates the creative and innovative thinking that the unconscious mind is known for, with conscious thought and reflection. The dream material involves thinking about the self in a novel way, exploring previously unthought fears and anxieties in a collective space, and bears the fruit of new self–other insights for the potential resolution of identity conflicts.

The collective thinking space that SDD offers is noteworthy when used in identity research. The dream drawing is used as a stimulus for collective thinking. Associative thoughts and feelings are offered, thoughts are collectively generated relevant to the topic resulting in self-insight and a wealth of research data. Collective thinking and meaning-making underscore the value of SDD for studying identity work, because identity theory is rooted in theoretical perspectives that emphasize a socially constructed conceptualisation of the self.

<b> Challenges and Recommendations

Due to the intimate nature of dreams, sharing them with others is self-exposing and some participants are initially hesitant. The hesitance is seen in defensive behaviour such as "I cannot draw" or "I don't dream" or "I never remember my dreams". It is therefore important to establish rapport and set participants at ease with detailed preparation and informed consent protocols. Participants should be informed about the purpose of the session; about the use of dreams, free association and amplification; and about what is expected of them as participants. I have also found that it takes time at the start of the session to explain the procedure and the role of the dream in the session, and to focus attention on the session topic. Additionally, in the role of researcher/facilitator, I usually prepare a dream drawing myself and sometimes use it to ease participants into the session. Ultimately, it is important to set participants at ease by explaining to

them that neither they nor their dreams will be analysed or interpreted, but that the dream drawings will be used as a creative way to stimulate thinking about the session topic.

I have found that participants relax after the presentation of the first dream. They frequently become very excited about participating in the sharing of a dream, which brings about the challenge of keeping the session procedure within the time constraints. Participants can become so enthused by the creativity and meaning of their free associations and amplifications that it is sometimes difficult for them to disengage from this stage and move on to the topic-focused reflection stage. To address this challenge, it is useful to create a physical boundary between these two stages by changing seats. The physical change in position in regard to the drawing seems to enable a fresh perspective when cognitively processing the collective insights on the session topic.

One should always consider the time-consuming nature of an SDD session without discouraging participation. I have found that SDD sessions have incremental value for identity work when the same participants engage in this self-reflective opportunity more than once over a longer period. A series of SDD sessions with the same participants enables one to gauge how identity tensions move over time and allows participants to become aware of these tensions, empowering them to continue to work with how they adjust and cope. Repeated exposure to SDD furthermore educates participants on the method and they become more familiar with psychological concepts and tactics such as free association and amplification.

Initially, people find it difficult to engage in free association and amplification and they tend to want to interpret dreams, especially when they know the dreamer. It is therefore often necessary to bring the group back to the task of free association and amplification, either directly or by modelling the activity and offering free associations and amplifications as examples. The more people *do* free association, the more accustomed and comfortable they become with offering the intuitive and impulsive thoughts, memories and connotations evoked by the dream material. It seemsr that participants in academia (e.g. researchers), or in disciplines of psychology, work with SDD with more ease because they already have a sense of what it entails to freely associate with something. It is therefore very important to consider who your participants will be and to prepare background information and preparatory instructions in an honest, simple, clear and non-threatening manner.

Once participants start to engage in an SDD session, they have space to reflect on the self, they identify with one another in various ways, and this leaves them feeling stronger, supporting the idea that identity work has healing value when it is actively and consciously engaged in.

REFERENCES

Alvesson, M., & Willmott, H. (2002). Identity regulation as organizational control: Producing the appropriate individual. *Journal of Management Studies*, *39*(5), 619–644.

Bain, A. (1999). On socio-analysis. *Socio-Analysis, 1*(1), 1–17.

Barnard, A. (2018, July 10). Well-being, more than a dream: Women constructing metaphors of strength, *Frontiers in Psychology, 9*, 1186.

Barnard, H.A. (2019). Developing researcherhood: Identity tensions and identity work of women academics reflecting on their researcher identity. *Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung/ Forum: Qualitative Social Research, 20*(3), Art9, 22 pages.

Beech, N., MacIntosh, R., & McInnes, P. (2008). Identity work: Processes and dynamics of identity formations. *International Journal of Public Administration*, *31*(9), 957–970.

Bion, W.R. (1970). *Attention and interpretation*. London: Tavistock [reprinted London: Karnac, 1984].

Brenner, P.S., Serpe, R.T., & Stryker, S. (2018). Role-specific self-efficacy as precedent and product of the identity model. *Sociological Perspectives*, *61*(1), 57-80.

Brown A.D. (2021). Identities in and around organizations: Towards an identity work perspective. *Human Relations,* 1-33.

Burke, P.J. (2007). Identity control theory. *The Blackwell Encyclopaedia of Sociology*, 2202-2207.

Caza, B.B., Vough, H., & Puranik, H. (2018). Identity work in organizations and occupations: Definitions, theories, and pathways forward. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, *39*(7), 889-910.

Cilliers, F. (2017). The systems psychodynamic role identity of academic research supervisors. *South African Journal of Higher Education*, *31*(1), 29-49.

Crowther, S., Ironside, P., Spence, D., & Smythe, L. (2017). Crafting stories in hermeneutic phenomenology research: A methodological device. *Qualitative Health Research*, *27*, 826–835.

Frankfurt, H.G. (1958). Peirce's notion of abduction. *The Journal of Philosophy*, *55*(14), 593-597.

Hoedemaekers, C. (2010). 'Not even semblance': Exploring the interruption of identification with Lacan. *Organization*, *17*(3), 379-393.

Lindseth, A., & Norberg, A. (2004). A phenomenological hermeneutical method for researching lived experience. *Scandinavian journal of caring sciences*, *18*(2), 145-153.

Long, S. (2013). Introduction: Socioanalytic methodology. In Susan Long (Ed.), *Socioanalytic methods: Discovering the hidden in organisations and social systems* (pp.xix-xxx). Karnac.

Long, S. & Harding, W. (2013). Socioanalytic interviewing. In Susan Long (Ed.), *Socioanalytic methods: Discovering the hidden in organisations and social systems* (pp.xix-xxx). Karnac.

Mersky, R.R. (2008). Social dream-drawing: A methodology in the making. *Socio-analysis*, *10*(2008), 35-50.

Mersky, R.R. (2012). Contemporary methodologies to surface and act on unconscious dynamics in organisations: An exploration of design, facilitation capacities, consultant paradigm and ultimate value. *Organisational and Social Dynamics, 12*(1), 19-43.

Mersky, R.R. (2013). Social dream-drawing: Drawing brings the inside out. In Susan Long (Ed.), *Socioanalytic methods: Discovering the hidden in organisations and social systems* (pp.153-178). Karnac.

Mersky, R.R. (2015). How can we trust our research and organisational praxes? A proposed epistemology of socioanalytic methodologies. *Organisational and Social Dynamics, 15*(2), 279-299.

Mersky, R.R. (2017). *Social dream-drawing (SDD): Praxis and research* (Doctoral thesis, University of the West of England).

Mersky, R.R. (2019) An Integrative Theory of Dreaming Underlying Social Dreaming. In: Long, S. & Manley, J., eds., *Social Dreaming: Philosophy, Research, Theory and Practice*. Oxford: Routledge, pp. 69-80.

Mersky, R.R., & Sievers, B. (2019). Social photo-matrix and social dream-drawing. In *Methods of Research into the Unconscious* (pp. 145-168). Routledge.

Petriglieri, G., & Petriglieri, J.L. (2010). Identity workspaces: The case of business schools. *Academy of Management Learning & Education*, *9*(1), 44-60.

Pule, N.T., & May, M. (2021). Insights on student leadership using social dream drawing: Six propositions for the transformation role of South African student leaders. *Transformation in Higher Education*, *6*, 11.

Shepherd, G. (2018). 'From where I'm looking it just seems like two people have missed the boat…': understanding set behaviour from a socioanalytic perspective. *Educational Action Research*, *26*(5), 682-696.

Snow, D.A., & Anderson, L. (1987). Identity work among the homeless: The verbal construction and avowal of personal identities. *American Journal of Sociology*, *92*(6), 1336-1371.

Stamenova, K., & Hinshelwood, R. (2018). *Methods of research into the unconscious: Applying psychoanalytic ideas for social science.* Routledge.

Stets, J., & Serpe, R. (2013). *Identity theory*. In J. DeLamater and A. Ward (Eds.), Handbook of Social Psychology (pp.31-60). Springer

Sveningsson, S., & Alvesson, M. (2003). Managing managerial identities: Organizational fragmentation, discourse and identity struggle. *Human Relations, 56*(10), 1163-1193.

Watson, T.J. (2008). Managing identity: Identity work, personal predicaments and structural circumstances. *Organization*, *15*(1), 121-143.