

**Alicia Cast** was a gifted sociologist and social psychologist who passed away on February 22, 2024. She will be deeply missed. She was most renowned in sociology for her work on the role of emotions in identity formation, and relationships of identity to attitudes, behaviors, and social outcomes, including mental and physical health and patterns of inequality. She was theoretically sharp, quantitatively sophisticated, and analytically insightful.

Alicia's primary empirical focus was on examining how the self develops and changes in families. For a significant portion of her career, she analyzed data from a longitudinal study on newly married couples that she helped collect as a graduate student research assistant at Washington State University. Intrigued by what the early stages of marriage could teach us about ourselves and intimate others, she published eleven significant articles from this National Institute of Mental Health project, over half of which appeared in sociology's leading social psychology journal, *Social Psychology Quarterly*. In these articles, she informed the social psychology community of many important dynamics that emerge in new marriages.

She showed us how spouses with more power in a marriage control the definition of the situation, by, for example, imposing an identity onto their spouse and resisting the identity that the spouse seeks to impose. Her work also revealed how role-taking in the early years of marriage can result in more supportive and less disruptive interactions with the spouse.

She enlightened us about identity change, for example how one's gender identity changes with the birth of a child. She uncovered how individuals' self-views become, over time, more consistent with how their spouses view them, and how the views they adopt are equally likely to be both positive and negative. Importantly, her work also revealed how depression, over time, changes individuals' identities to become more negative.

Perhaps Alicia's most significant article was an innovative analysis of self-esteem as an important outcome of the identity verification process, one of the central processes in identity theory. She discussed how self-esteem can build up over time and serve as a "reservoir" that people can draw upon to help buffer the negative effects that emerge when identity non-verification is experienced. Published in one of the discipline's top journals, *Social Forces*, this article has been cited over 1,500 times.

Alicia was a central figure among identity scholars in social psychology. Using insights gleaned from her work on family interaction, she contributed to the development of identity theory in several ways. For example, in an article on the relationship between identities and behavior in marriage, she showed how behavior can influence the formation of an identity – rather than showing how identities guide behavior (a common understanding in identity theory). In other words, "doing" could influence "becoming" a particular kind of person. Another significant contribution arose from a series of publications on environmental farming practices through which she documented and developed a model of "farmer identities." And while identity theorists typically see emotions as an outcome of the identity verification process, Alicia's work on depression made identity scholars aware of how emotions can be a source of identity change. This research has been widely cited.

Alicia was devoted to her craft. She helped to make the sociological research community a better place. She was instrumental in initiating a weekend conference (supported by her own research funds) of key leaders in the identity community to develop what came to be the 2014 Identity Module (bank of central questions on one's identity) for the widely respected General Social Survey (GSS). The GSS had

never asked about one's identity, so this was groundbreaking and has had an enduring impact. Many scholars have been publishing research papers from the Identity Module since then. Alicia also took on multiple elected leadership roles in the American Sociological Association (ASA). After serving as Council member and Secretary/Treasurer of ASA's Sociology of Emotions Section, she assumed the role of section chair during a particularly difficult time – the pandemic. She also was intimately involved in the ASA Social Psychology Section, beginning as far back as her graduate school days.

Alicia's interest in sociology began as an undergraduate sociology major at Beloit College in Wisconsin. She then went to Washington State University and was exposed to a group of social psychologists (Burke, Gecas, Gray, Ihinger-Tallman, Stets, and Tallman), who would influence her future work on identities and family interaction. It was only natural that this was followed by a postdoctoral traineeship at Indiana University in the training program in Identity, Self, Role, and Mental Health, where she learned from other social psychologists such as Stryker and Heise. She loved her first post at Iowa State University. She was a Midwesterner at heart, given her Nebraska roots. But she became a cherished member of the sociology department at the University of California – Santa Barbara, where she loved and was loved by her faculty and staff colleagues and her graduate and undergraduate students.

Alicia Cast joined UCSB's Sociology Department in 2011. Beyond her many research contributions, she was an extraordinarily effective, inspiring, and devoted teacher and mentor, who was beloved and appreciated for her sensitivity, compassion, and generosity in and out of the classroom. She generously mentored a large number of Sociology Honors Students, many of whom went on to graduate school with her guidance. For several years, Alicia served as a highly effective Director of Undergraduate Studies, providing trusted leadership and mentorship to over 1,500 sociology majors. She also made lasting contributions to the PhD curriculum and graduate research through her work on the graduate program committee and her mentorship of graduate students. Outside of the department, Alicia was an exceptionally valued and generous campus citizen. She made significant contributions to the promotion of diversity, equity, and inclusion on campus while serving in many leadership roles for UCSB's Academic Senate.

The Santa Barbara community, the identity community, the social psychology community, and the emotions community are mourning the terrible loss of Alicia. In addition to these communities, many other scholars and friends were touched by Alicia's friendship, which was ineffable but deeply affecting, as is its loss. Her kindness, empathy, and generosity were a unique gift that will continue on as an inspiring example for us all. She was taken too suddenly and too soon. Her legacy is her work that will be cited for years to come. But perhaps more important is that she worked and lived with such grace, devotion, generosity, and love that we all will deeply miss witnessing this and her. We will hold her forever in our hearts.

Alicia is survived by her sons, Benjamin and Oliver Potoski of Santa Barbara, CA; her parents Larry and Beverly Cast of Elkhorn, NE, sister Melissa Cast-Brede and her husband Kent Brede, Omaha, NE; sister Shandra Cast and her husband Keith Eiler, Loveland, CO; her friend Karl Wright, friend Trudy Aufderheide, and her former spouse, Matt Potoski.