

# An Organizing Framework for Collective Identity: Articulation and Significance of Multidimensionality

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The authors offer a framework for conceptualizing collective identity that aims to clarify and make distinctions among dimensions of identification that have not always been clearly articulated. Elements of collective identification included in this framework are self-categorization, evaluation, importance, attachment and sense of interdependence, social embeddedness, behavioral involvement, and content and meaning. For each element, the authors take note of different labels that have been used to identify what appear to be conceptually equivalent constructs, provide examples of studies that illustrate the concept, and suggest measurement approaches. Further, they discuss the potential links between elements and outcomes and how context moderates these relationships. The authors illustrate the utility of the multidimensional organizing framework by analyzing the different configuration of elements in 4 major theories of identification.

In this article we put forward a general conceptual framework for the analysis of collective identity. Although not proposing a theory per se, we offer a strategy by which individual theorists might better articulate the assumptions and the components of their theoretical formulations. In doing so, theorists should be better able to identify points of agreement and dissension between models and to move forward to the development of more integrative theories. It is our belief that by carefully articulating the multiple

individual-level elements that constitute collective identification, we arrive in a better position to analyze processes and predict outcomes of identification.

In taking on this task, we do not assume that there is a single, consensual definition of collective identity. Indeed, as a number of authors have noted (Brubaker & Cooper, 2000; Gleason, 1983), the use of identity in the social science literature has a long history and an active present. Some years ago, Gleason (1983) provided a historical account of the conceptual development and use of identity in psychology, sociology, and related disciplines. He ably tracked the psychological influence of Erikson and the sociological contributions of role theory and discussions of ethnic identity. Since Gleason's analysis, concepts of identity have continued to pervade the academic discourse. Within social psychology, Tajfel's (1978, 1981) social identity theory (SIT) and its theoretical cousin, self-categorization theory (SCT; Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher, & Wetherell, 1987), have become central to the discipline. Within sociology, identity is the key concept in theories of Stryker (1987), Burke (1980), and McCall and Simmons (1978). Conceptual and empirical work in anthropology and cultural studies (Eriksen, 2001; Holland, 1997) has pushed the concept of identity to the forefront of contemporary academic discussion as well. Further, political debates about identity politics (e.g., Gitlin, 1995) have helped to make identity a concept that breaks outside of academic discourse.

Although the range of interest in the concept of identity attests to its importance and relevance, there is a downside to the popularity as well. Often, as Brubaker and Cooper (2000) argued, the concept is called on to bear far more theoretical, empirical, and political weight than it can support. They observed that as identity crosses disciplinary fields, its usage can shift, referring to an enduring aspect of selfhood in one case, a set of interpersonal processes in another, and the aggregate-level product of political action in yet another.

The combination of broad relevance and disciplinary conventions creates a fair measure of confusion in discussions of collec-

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tive identity. As Liebkind (1992) observed in a discussion of ethnic identity, “some amount of theoretical and empirical coordination and cooperation is imperative” (p. 179) if a domain is to profit from a variety of theoretical inputs. Such is the nature of our effort here—to analyze the full range of meaning of *collective identity*, to place that concept in context, and to describe the theoretical gains that can accrue from a more articulated concept.

### Specifying the Task

We begin with a project of disentanglement. Starting from the assumption that collective identity as a person variable is fruitfully conceived as multidimensional, we identify and describe a set of individual-level elements, facets, or dimensions of collective identification. For each element covered, we note the similarity among different labels that have been used to identify what to us seem to be conceptual equivalents, and we provide examples of measures and studies that illustrate that concept. We close this section of the article with a brief discussion of several issues relevant to the conceptualization of collective identity: inconsistent terminology, strategies of measurement, variability, and the course of identity development.

In the remainder of the article, we address some of the implications and possible consequences of our multidimensional analysis for research and theorizing about collective identification in four key domains. First, we explore the interplay of the identified elements, to the extent possible given the existent data base. How do the dimensions covary with one another, and how might these elements combine to form collective identity profiles?

Second, we consider some of the outcomes that have been and could be linked theoretically to collective identity. In doing so, we stress the importance of distinguishing between behavioral involvement, which is an expression of collective identification, and outcomes, whose links to identity require some theoretical guidance. Outcomes discussed in this section include measures of physical and psychological well-being, academic achievement, interpersonal relations, organizational commitment, and civic and social engagement.

Third, we set the analysis of collective identity within a Person  $\times$  Situation framework. Although the centerpiece of the present analysis is the list of elements that are typically assessed at the level of the individual person, we strongly believe that collective identity is a contextualized phenomenon that cannot be studied in a vacuum. Further, we suggest that the specific relationship between one or more elements of collective identification and a given outcome can be moderated by social context.

Fourth, we show how our conceptual framework can benefit theory and research in the area. We do this in two ways. First, we draw on some of the major theoretical models of collective identification to illustrate the selective and differential use of identity elements in the formulation of theory. Second, we present specific studies that illustrate in empirical terms the kinds of methodological approaches called for by our framework. In both cases, we note that not all theories and studies of collective identification will necessarily require the inclusion of every element that we have identified.

### Defining the Terms

We begin with a definition of terms, both the denotation of *collective identity* and the distinctions between collective identity

and other related terms that are in common use within the social science literature (i.e., *social identity*, *personal identity*, *relational identity*, and *social roles*). Collective identification is first and foremost a statement about categorical membership. A collective identity is one that is shared with a group of others who have (or are believed to have) some characteristic(s) in common; in the words of Simon and Klandermans (2001), it is “a place in the social world” (p. 320). Such commonality may be based on ascribed characteristics, such as ethnicity or gender, or on achieved states, such as occupation or political party (Deaux, 1996; Sedikides & Brewer, 2001; Simon & Klandermans, 2001). This shared position does not require direct contact or interchange with all others who share category membership; rather, the positioning is psychological in nature. Finally, collective identity is defined here in terms of a *subjective* claim or acceptance by the person whose identity is at stake (Deaux, 1996). That is, although others may refer to one in terms of a particular social category, that category does not become a collective identity unless it is personally acknowledged as self-defining in some respect.

The term *social identity* has often been used in the literature to refer to this form of identification. From the SIT tradition, for example, Tajfel (1978) offered the often-invoked definition of social identity as “that part of an individual’s self-concept which derives from his knowledge of his membership of a social group together with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership” (p. 63). Somewhat similarly, from a more sociological tradition, Thoits and Virshup (1997) defined social identities as “socially constructed and socially meaningful categories that are accepted by individuals as descriptive of themselves or their group” (p. 106). We consider these definitions to apply to collective identity as used here, consistent with a number of recent writers who advocate a shift in terminology from *social identity* to *collective identity* (e.g., Brewer & Gardner, 1996; Sedikides & Brewer, 2001; Simon, 1997; Simon & Klandermans, 2001).

There are two primary reasons to prefer the term *collective identity* to the somewhat more commonly used *social identity*. First, as Simon (1997) pointed out, all aspects of the self are socially influenced: “They acquire their meaning and significance only within a context of social relations between people” (p. 321). Thus, to refer to an identity as social is not to distinguish it from other forms of identification, such as personal or relational, that are also inherently social in origin. Second, in reviewing the literature from various fields and subdisciplines, we find that the connotations of *social identity* are more numerous and potentially more problematic than are those of *collective identity*. Within social psychology, for example, SIT is the first association for many investigators (Tajfel, 1978, 1981). Although SIT has contributed much to the literature that we will review, our analysis of the concept is not tied exclusively or even primarily to that well-known theory. Thus, we do not, as one illustration, necessarily assume the in-group versus out-group comparison process that is fundamental to SIT (but see Brown, 2000). Using the term *collective* may eliminate some potential confusion. At the same time, we do not claim that *collective identity* is without ambiguity. Within the literature of social movements, for example, collective identity often implies some sense of political consciousness and collective action. We consider these features to be possible rather than essential elements of collective identity (much as Simon & Klandermans, 2001, used the term *politicized collective identity* to denote a special form of collective identification). Like Simon and

Klandermans (2001), we stress that we use collective identity as a psychological concept, referring to the individual rather than to a group. Because the definitional status of collective identity is a topic of some debate within the social movement literature (e.g., Polletta & Jasper, 2001; Snow, 2001), we hope that the present analysis will be useful in that arena as well.

Collective identity can also be distinguished from other concepts such as relational selves and social roles. Relational selves and social roles both assume some relationship with other individuals, but the emphasis in this case is on the specific nature of the relationship between oneself and another person, rather than on the more general category of membership. In the relational self as theorized by Andersen and Chen (2002), for example, an explicit distinction is made between “significant others in one’s life” and “social entities like groups or other social categories” (p. 619). The former—the relational self—refers to people with whom one is or has been emotionally invested and influenced by, such as spouses or close friends (what Sedikides & Brewer, 2001, referred to as “personalized bonds of attachment”); the latter can include people whom one has not even met but with whom some common attribute, such as gender, nationality, or occupation, is shared. Social roles also assume a one-to-one relationship between two people who hold designated positions in a social structure, such as between parent and child in the family or between supervisor and subordinate in an organization.

The final terminological distinction that needs to be addressed is that between *collective identity* and *personal identity*. Whereas collective identity is explicitly connected to a group of people outside the self, personal identity typically refers to characteristics of the self that one believes, in isolation or combination, to be unique to the self. Rather than being shared with a specifiable set of others, personal identity sets one apart from all others (see Sedikides & Brewer, 2001; Simon, 1997).

### The Need for a Multidimensional Analysis

As this discussion suggests, the theoretical terrain that the concept of identity occupies, in part or in whole, is vast. In each case, theorists have made certain assumptions about the contents and consequences of what we are calling collective identity, assumptions that are, perhaps inevitably, not always in accord with one another. It is this state of confusion and contradiction that led Brubaker and Cooper (2000) to argue for pruning back. Identity, they claim, “is too ambiguous, too torn between ‘hard’ and ‘soft’ meanings, essentialist connotations and constructivist qualifiers, to serve well the demands of social analysis” (Brubaker & Cooper, 2000, p. 2). We share their concern with the conceptual confusion surrounding the term but believe the concept needs to be better articulated rather than abandoned or severely restricted.

Key to this articulation, we believe, is the recognition that collective identity is a multidimensional concept. Collective identity, as it is variously used, connotes not only a belief in categorical membership (i.e., that one shares characteristics with a group of others) but also a set of cognitive beliefs associated with that category, such as stereotypic traits thought to be shared by category members or ideological positions that define the group’s goals. Collective identity also involves “value and emotional significance” (p. 255), in the words of Tajfel (1981). This affective aspect of collective identification can include how we evaluate a category and the perceived value placed on the category by others,

as well as the affective commitment and closeness we feel to other members of the category. Finally, collective identity has behavioral implications as well. Individual actions reflective of group membership, such as language usage in the case of ethnic identity or church attendance in the case of religious identity, are part of what we mean by collective identification.

This assumption of multidimensionality is not unique to us: numerous investigators have argued against unidimensional conceptualizations of collective identity and provided empirical support for their arguments (e.g., Ashmore, Jussim, Wilder, & Heppen, 2001; Deaux, 1996; Ellemers, Kortekaas, & Ouwerkerk, 1999; Jackson & Smith, 1999; Luhtanen & Crocker, 1992; Phinney, 1992; Sellers, Smith, Shelton, Rowley, & Chavous, 1998). Positing multidimensionality does not, however, necessarily lead to a consensus as to what the most important dimensions of collective identity might be (Ashmore et al., 2001). Several issues are relevant here. First of all, different theories place their emphases on different aspects of identification, highlighting some and ignoring others. Second, associations between various dimensions of collective identity are implicitly assumed but not explicitly described and empirically tested. Thus, an investigator might assume that a positive evaluation of an identity would be associated with frequent behaviors indicative of that identity without providing any empirical support for the assumption. A third problem is that across different programs of research, the same label can be used to refer to different concepts, or similar concepts are used with different labels. *Salience* is one example of a term with such a problematic history, as we discuss later. A fourth issue is that operational definitions are often linked only loosely to the intended construct (see the discussion of *implicit importance* in the material to follow). Given these inconsistencies, it is little wonder that theoretical predictions are often contradictory.

Our solution to these problems is the following analysis of the elements of collective identification. By offering a framework that specifies a set of key elements, defines the concepts, and considers their relations to one another as well as to specifiable outcomes, we believe that we provide a way of resolving existing theoretical controversies and guiding future research efforts.

### Elements of Collective Identity

One of our main goals in this article is to identify the distinct individual-level elements of collective identity. These elements, derived from our analysis of the literature, are presented in Table 1. In the following sections we define and describe each element, provide examples of its use in the literature, and offer conceptual and operational clarification as needed. The set of elements we present derives from our analysis of the existing theoretical and empirical work on collective identity, combining a top-down approach in which we look to the major theoretical approaches to identity with a bottom-up approach in which we consider investigations of specific identities, such as gender, race/ethnicity, political identity, and the like. It is important to note that we do not consider this to be an exhaustive literature review, as a meta-analytic approach would require. Rather, our goal was to identify those elements of identification that are most often incorporated in theoretical and empirical work, as well as to take notice of theoretical concepts that might not yet have been fully realized in empirical treatments.

Table 1  
*Elements of Collective Identity as Individual-Level Constructs*

Element	Definition
Self-categorization	Identifying self as a member of, or categorizing self in terms of, a particular social grouping
Placing self in social category	Categorizing self in terms of a particular social grouping
Goodness of fit/perceived similarity/prototypicality	A person's subjective assessment of the degree to which he or she is a prototypical member of the group
Perceived certainty of self-identification	The degree of certainty with which a person categorizes self in terms of a particular social grouping
Evaluation	The positive or negative attitude that a person has toward the social category in question
Private regard	Favorability judgments made by people about their own identities
Public regard	Favorability judgments that one perceives others, such as the general public, to hold about one's social category
Importance	The degree of importance of a particular group membership to the individual's overall self-concept
Explicit importance	The individual's subjective appraisal of the degree to which a collective identity is important to her or his overall sense of self
Implicit importance	The placement of a particular group membership in the person's hierarchically organized self-system; the individual is not necessarily consciously aware of the hierarchical position of his or her collective identities
Attachment and sense of interdependence	The emotional involvement felt with a group (the degree to which the individual feels at one with the group)
Interdependence/mutual fate	Perception of the commonalities in the way group members are treated in society
Attachment/affective commitment	A sense of emotional involvement with or affiliative orientation toward the group
Interconnection of self and others	The degree to which people merge their sense of self and the group
Social embeddedness	The degree to which a particular collective identity is embedded in the person's everyday ongoing social relationships
Behavioral involvement	The degree to which the person engages in actions that directly implicate the collective identity category in question
Content and meaning	
Self-attributed characteristics	The extent to which traits and dispositions that are associated with a social category are endorsed as self-descriptive by a member of that category
Ideology	Beliefs about a group's experience, history, and position in society
Narrative	The internally represented story that the person has developed regarding self and the social category in question
Collective identity story	The individual's mentally represented narrative of self as a member of a particular social category
Group story	The individual's mentally represented narrative of a particular social category of which he or she is a member

We began by reviewing the major theories of collective identity (e.g., social identity theory and identity theory) and reading review articles and books on collective identity published during the past two decades. Certain elements, such as evaluation and importance, came to the fore in this process, often in several of the theoretical frameworks, and are reflected in empirical tests of the respective theories. We also examined these theories for elements that are suggested or implicitly embedded in a theory but that in many cases have not been conceptually elaborated or empirically developed. Articulation of these elements allowed us to add dimensions that have rarely been examined in psychological research. An example of such an element is our *social embeddedness*.

In a second step, we collected empirical articles on specific forms of identification to ensure that dimensions that might have been explored in only one context could be considered for their

general applicability. This more targeted search was conducted by searching PsycINFO for empirical articles on, for example, lesbian and gay identity. Consideration of these articles sometimes provided elements that we think have relevance beyond the domain in which they were originally developed.

In a final step we subsumed elements that seemed to us to be similar or related into superordinate categories and eliminated some that we believed to be outcomes of collective identification rather than dimensions of it. An example of a dimension we believed is better conceived of as an outcome is out-group bias. Thus, we arrived at a comprehensive set of elements that goes beyond what other researchers have used.

We used a similar strategy to select the measures we discuss in this article. We first collected those scales of collective identification that are most widely used, as they provided a good starting

point for comparing our set of elements to existing operationalizations of each construct. We then selected examples that presented relatively pure measures of each of the elements that we are proposing. This criterion imposed a major limitation on the number of scales we could present and discuss in this article. The idea that collective identity is multidimensional and that such dimensions might be usefully distinguishable is relatively new, and few pure measures of the suggested dimensions exist. An additional goal was to identify unique ways of operationalizing collective identity. Thus, we included, where possible, measures that go beyond simple self-report. Finally, we attempted to assemble a set of identity instruments that represent different collective identities (e.g., ethnic/racial, gender, national, sexual, religious, organizational).

The resulting set of measures is thus not meant to be a comprehensive list of all or even most existing scales developed to assess collective identification. Given that many scales include multiple elements, they are not useful to our goals. Instead, we set out to find those measures that in our opinion are relatively pure and methodologically divergent attempts to operationalize the dimensions we identified.

Before proceeding, we need to raise one additional issue. In the discussion that follows, our focus is on the assessment of a single collective identity, such as being a woman, a Muslim, or an accountant. This chosen focus does not mean that we believe either that people have only one identity of importance or that multiple identities exist in isolation from one another. On the contrary, multiplicity of identity is a crucial issue for investigators of collective identification to address, and some have done so (see, e.g., Roccas & Brewer, 2002, on social identity complexity; Berry, 1990, and LaFromboise, Coleman, & Gerton, 1993, on biculturalism; and Crenshaw, Gotanda, Peller, & Thomas, 1995, on intersectionality). From our vantage point, however, an essential first step is the clarification of which aspects of collective identity are important and how those individual elements are to be defined and assessed. Once that multidimensional framework is established, the analysis of multiplicity and overlap of collective identities should be easier to address.

The following discussion begins with a definition of each element that is followed by a section providing the reader with necessary background. We discuss relevant theory and research as far as they provide a rationale for why an element should be included. We identify subelements where such distinctions seem necessary and present additional labels, used by others, for the same element and explain how we decided on a preferred label. Next, we discuss measurement issues and provide examples of useful operationalizations of the proposed dimensions. Finally, we outline theoretical and empirical issues that might fruitfully be addressed by future work.

### *Self-Categorization*

The first and most basic element is self-categorization. This is widely recognized as the heart of collective identity: identifying self as a member of, or categorizing self in terms of, a particular social grouping (Deaux, 1996). Self-categorization is essentially the precondition for all other dimensions of collective identity (Phinney, 1995). To feel proud of being a member of a particular group, for example, I must first place myself into this category.

Social categorization has long been assumed to be an automatic process that engages as soon as people are given any basis for grouping an assortment of others into meaningful categories. This thinking is exemplified in SCT (Turner, 1987; Turner et al., 1987). According to SCT, human beings have a fundamental and automatic cognitive tendency to sort an array of social stimuli (individuals) into basic-level social categories on the basis of their similarity with or distinctiveness from other social stimuli present. Which characteristic of a particular social stimulus becomes the dimension for comparison may depend on properties of the stimulus (e.g., perceptual distinctiveness), the situation (e.g., common fate), and the perceiver (e.g., prejudice; see Brewer & Brown, 1998, for a review). In addition to dividing the world into social categories, individuals also place themselves into that category to which they perceive themselves to be most similar.

The dramatic psychological implications of mere social categorization were a primary interest of Henri Tajfel and his colleagues who investigated collective identity processes with a widely used experimental procedure known as the minimal group paradigm (e.g., Tajfel, Flament, Billig, & Bundy, 1971). They demonstrated that the arbitrary labeling of two groups, for example, as overestimators and underestimators, was sufficient to elicit in-group favoritism among their participants (Brewer, 1979; Diehl, 1990; Tajfel, 1982). According to SIT, which was developed in part to explain the minimal group paradigm findings (Turner, 1999), experiencing oneself as a member of a group provides participants with an instant and meaningful collective identity that is experienced as emotionally significant. That is, mere categorization is enough to trigger in-group-favoring behavior, in-group loyalty, and adherence to group norms.

In sum, studies conducted in the SIT–SCT tradition demonstrate situation-specific self-categorization in the presence of even the most arbitrary and seemingly meaningless categories. Because researchers working in this paradigm created new collective identities and assumed that these were easily adopted by the participants, self-categorization was not usually assessed explicitly but rather inferred from certain behaviors thought to be associated with social categorization (e.g., in-group favoritism).

However, as many others have noted (e.g., Huddy, 2001; Phinney, 1992), self-categorization outside the laboratory is not always as simple and direct as suggested by studies using the minimal group paradigm. Most important, a person has many choices for categorizing self in any given situation, and these choices may depend on different goals and motives that are salient at a particular time (Nagel, 1996; Phinney, 1996). Even among people who all see themselves as part of the same category, there may be disagreement about the best label for that grouping (see Philogène, 1999, for an example on the use of *African American* vs. *Black*). Finally, individuals can classify themselves at multiple levels within the same overall social category. For example, a woman who looks to be of Asian origin might be classified by a researcher as *Asian American*, but she herself might select the subgroup label *Korean* should this be an option. *Hispanic* is another case in point, a term that subsumes a variety of groups with Spanish heritage.

To ensure that collective identities of participants are measured appropriately (i.e., consistent with how they see themselves), researchers use a variety of approaches that explicitly assess self-categorization (e.g., Henderson-King & Stewart, 1994; Phinney, 1992; Shelton & Sellers, 2000; Zucker, 2003). Table 2 summarizes some representative measures of self-categorization. Phinney

Table 2  
*Some Representative Measures of Identity: Self-Categorization*

Author(s) and construct	Measure
Placing self in social category	
Phinney (1992): ethnic self-definition	“In terms of my ethnic group, I consider myself to be ____.”
Shelton & Sellers (2000): self-identification	Participants pick a word from a pair (e.g., <i>Black–feminine</i> ).
Henderson-King & Stewart (1994): group identity	Women are asked to choose from a list of groups (including women and feminists) those to which they feel they belong and then “Indicate how much you identify with (or feel a part of) that group” (1–5 scale).
Zucker (2003): behavioral measure of acceptance of the label <i>feminist</i>	“If you consider yourself to be a feminist, please answer the following question.”
Goodness of fit/perceived similarity/prototypicality	
Abrams (2000), Goslinga & Ouwerkerk (2000)	“I am a typical group member.”
Karasawa (1991): identification with school (ID <sub>group</sub> subscale)	“Would you think it is accurate if you were described as a typical student of this school?”
Triandis et al. (1990): Allocentrism–Idiocentrism Scale	Measures the perceived psychological distance of the self from several groups by asking participants to indicate the “distance” between self and group on a scale ranging from <i>we are as similar as possible</i> to <i>we are as different as possible</i> .
Perceived certainty of self-identification	
Mohr & Fassinger (2000): Lesbian and Gay Identity Scale (Identity Confusion subscale)	“I’m not totally sure that I’m a [lesbian/gay man].”

(1992), for example, recommended the simultaneous use of open-ended questions that allow participants to choose their own personal label for a given collective identity (“In terms of my ethnic group, I consider myself to be \_\_\_\_”) and close-ended questions that ask participants to choose among several prespecified options. Another measure that has been used to assess self-categorization is the Twenty Statements Test (Kuhn & McPartland, 1954), an open-ended measure that requests the spontaneous listing of a person’s self-attributes. In another approach, Zucker (2003) assessed self-identification as a feminist by asking participants to answer a particular group of questions only if they considered themselves to be a feminist. Thus, in agreeing to answer the questions, participants were categorizing themselves as feminists.

We agree with Phinney and others on the importance of asking participants about their collective identifications in an open-ended manner. However, such measures tell us only whether a person has placed the self inside a social category; they provide no information regarding how certain the person is of the categorization and whether he or she sees self as a prototypical group member (at the center of the category) or a more marginal group member (at the edge of the category).

Huddy (2001) pointed out that self-categorization is not always obvious to the person, especially under conditions where group boundaries are ambiguous or permeable. To illustrate, the boundaries of political groups are often vague, and people who are asked about their political orientation (i.e., Democrat vs. Republican) may feel reluctant to place themselves squarely into one category and instead indicate that they feel most at home where these two categories meet (e.g., a Reagan Democrat). Whenever people feel that they are not representative or prototypical group members, that their fit to the category may be less than good, or that they are

marginal group members, they may be hesitant to categorize self as a member of that group. In addition, people may be reluctant to accept full membership in a particular social category (and may thus not be willing to answer with a simple yes or no) when they fear that the category might be evaluated negatively (e.g., feminist).

The realization that self-categorization is often ambiguous and that individuals who place themselves into the same category vary widely in terms of their perceived goodness of fit to the category has led to the emergence of measures that assess categorization by asking people to judge how typical they are of the group (e.g., Karasawa, 1991) or how similar they perceive themselves to be to several groups (e.g., Gurin, Miller, & Gurin, 1980; Gurin & Townsend, 1986; Triandis, McCusker, & Hui, 1990). Another frequent approach is to ask respondents about their degree of identification: “How much do you identify with \_\_\_\_?” (e.g., items in Brown, Condor, Mathews, Wade, & Williams, 1986; Myaskovsky & Wittig, 1997; Terry, Hogg, & White, 1999). This last approach is problematic because existing measures of the degree or strength of identification tend to be multidimensional. They confound the assessment of the prototypicality of self-categorization with the assessment of the importance of the identification as well as with felt attachment, both of which we view as separate and distinct dimensions.

We believe that unconfounded questions measuring the goodness of fit of a person to a particular category are important to include in the assessment of collective identity, because they will allow the researcher to collect valuable information on those participants who might not otherwise self-categorize as a member of a certain group and because different levels of perceived prototypicality have been linked to distinct identity-relevant behaviors

(Noel, Wann, & Branscombe, 1995). Table 2 summarizes a few representative measures.

Finally, as suggested by Mohr and Fassinger (2000), collective identities are sometimes ambiguous because of respondents' subjective uncertainty on issues of identity. To deal with the issue of perceived certainty of self-identification, the authors created an Identity Confusion subscale as part of their Lesbian and Gay Identity Scale, which includes items such as "I'm not totally sure that I'm a lesbian/gay man" and "I keep changing my mind about my sexual orientation."

Another issue that arises in considering self-categorization is the degree to which collective identities are consciously recognized. In the case of undesirable categories, for example, a person may not publicly acknowledge or even consciously admit to possessing the identity. In various 12-step programs of rehabilitation, an initial requirement is that the participants claim the undesirable identity (e.g., "I am an alcoholic") in a manner that they have generally not consciously admitted previously. For the most part, identity researchers have relied on the conscious expression of identities, and that practice is reflected in the material we review here. However, recently some investigators have attempted to develop implicit measures of self-categorization and identification based on the widely used Implicit Association Test (IAT; Greenwald, McGhee, & Schwartz, 1998; Greenwald et al., 2002), which uses reaction times to measure the strength of association between two concepts. To measure gender identity, for example, participants are asked to sort words associated with the concept gender (male or female) and the concept self (self or other) into two categories. They sort stimuli that are representative of the categories "self" and "female" into one category by pressing the same predetermined response key while simultaneously sorting stimuli representing the opposite categories ("other" and "male") by pressing a different response key. To the extent that a person associates self with the category "women," the sorting task should be faster when "female" and "self" use the same response key and slower when "female" is paired with "other." Although implicit measures of collective identity offer an intriguing new tool to the researcher, current work does not yet address how implicit measures of self-categorization relate to explicit measures and how implicit and explicit measures relate to relevant outcomes.

In sum, researchers involved in the assessment of self-categorization should consider giving respondents the opportunity to fill out open-ended questions in regard to group membership, as this will allow the researcher to confirm that a respondent is answering any additional questions in reference to the phenomenologically "correct" social category. Open-ended questions may also yield important information regarding the person's social self-categorization that might otherwise be overlooked (e.g., preferred category label). Closed-ended questions can then follow up and explore aspects of self-categorization in more detail. Because it is safe to assume that group membership is often somewhat ambiguous (people vary widely in their perceived fit to the group prototype and/or in their certainty of identification), researchers may want to supplement the measurement of self-categorization with items that assess perceived goodness of fit and certainty of self-categorization. Finally, implicit measures of categorization can be added when researchers suspect that there may be variability in the extent to which collective identities are acknowledged in consciousness.

## Evaluation

Evaluation is perhaps the simplest way to think about identity, once basic categorization is established. By evaluation, we refer to the positive or negative attitude that a person has toward the social category in question. This usage follows the definition of attitude proposed by Eagly and Chaiken (1993): "Attitude is a psychological tendency that is expressed by evaluating a particular entity with some degree of favor or disfavor" (p. 1). In this case, the entity is a particular social category that one claims or acknowledges as one's collective identity.

Evaluation is conceptually independent of importance, which is discussed in the next section. Thus, it is possible for a person to consider an identity positive without that identity being terribly important. Identities in the process of being acquired, for example, might be regarded quite favorably (hence the choice to take them on) but not yet be so important relative to other identities that one holds. Similarly, a person might acknowledge an identity as being centrally important to the definition of self (e.g., a compulsive gambler or a smoker) without putting an entirely positive face on the identity.

The conceptualization of collective identities as varying on a dimension of positive to negative evaluation or favorability is relevant to a number of research literatures. Most obvious is the voluminous literature on self-esteem, which has been a staple of social psychological theorizing (e.g., M. Rosenberg, 1979). More closely tied to the concept of collective identity are analyses of stigmatization (Crocker & Major, 1989; Crocker, Major, & Steele, 1998; Goffman, 1963), which focus specifically on those categories of collective identification that are negatively evaluated by others and, under certain circumstances, even by self.

As the analyses of stigma have shown, one's own evaluation of a collective identity is not necessarily consistent with evaluations by others, contrary to the assumptions of earlier theories such as the "looking glass self" (Cooley, 1902). Consequently, we find it useful to distinguish between two forms of evaluation: (a) favorability judgments made by people about their own identities and (b) favorability judgments that one perceives others, such as the general public, to hold about one's social category. This distinction is made most clearly in the work of Crocker and her colleagues (Crocker, Luhtanen, Blaine, & Broadnax, 1994; Luhtanen & Crocker, 1992) and of Sellers and his colleagues (Sellers, Rowley, Chavous, Shelton, & Smith, 1997; Sellers et al., 1998; Shelton & Sellers, 2000). Sellers and his coworkers use the terms *private regard* and *public regard* to distinguish these two bases of evaluation. Similarly, Crocker and her colleagues include a private and a public subscale in their overall Collective Self-Esteem (CSE) measure. As defined by Sellers, private regard refers to the evaluation of one's social category as judged by the self (e.g., How positively or negatively do I view my identity as a psychologist?). Public regard refers to the perceived evaluation of others, that is, how positively or negatively I think people in general view my group. We consider these two types of evaluation separately.

*Private regard.* A typical example of the private form of evaluation is an item from the Sellers et al. (1998) Private Regard Scale: "I am happy that I am Black." Typically, some form of Likert scale is used to provide a range of evaluation. For example, responses to "I am happy that I am Black" would be judged on a 7-point scale, anchored by *strongly disagree* and *strongly agree*. Other examples of private evaluation are shown in Table 3. Spe-

Table 3  
*Some Representative Measures of Identity: Evaluation*

Author(s) and construct	Measure
Private regard	
Luhtanen & Crocker (1992): Collective Self-Esteem (CSE; Private Acceptance)	"In general, I'm glad that I'm a member of this group."
Sellers et al. (1997): Multidimensional Inventory of Black Identity (MIBI; Private Regard)	"I am happy that I am Black."
Huo et al. (1996): identification with a superordinate group [subgroup]	"I am proud to think of myself as a member of the organization I work for [my ethnic group]."
Stryker & Serpe (1982): satisfaction	"In my religious activities, I am very satisfied."
Public regard	
Luhtanen & Crocker (1992): CSE (Public Acceptance)	"In general, others think that the social groups I am a member of are unworthy."
Sellers et al. (1997): MIBI (Public Regard)	"In general, others respect Black people."

cific words to designate positive and negative evaluation vary somewhat. Adjectives used in statements include *glad*, *happy*, *proud*, and *satisfied*. Although slight connotative differences may exist between them, all would be expected to be endorsed if one were favorable toward one's identity. Similarly, disfavor is indicated by words such as *regret* or by the negation of positive states such as *worthwhile* or *proud*. An alternative visual method of assessing evaluation is the popular "feeling thermometer," in which the depiction of a thermometer is accompanied by a scale, typically varying from 0 to 100, to designate cold/negative to warm/positive.

*Public regard.* Measures of public regard are used less often than are measures of private regard. A straightforward example of public regard is again taken from the Sellers et al. (1998) scale: "In general, others respect Black people." A similar item from the CSE public scale is the following: "In general, others think that the social groups I am a member of are unworthy"; or, phrased for a particular group, "In general, others think that Unitarians are unworthy." Each of these measures asks the person to estimate the degree to which others value or devalue one's own group. As an example of the variations obtained on this type of evaluation, Crocker et al. (1994) assessed groups of White, Black, and Asian students with the CSE measure. They found significant differences in public regard among groups, with Whites having the highest score and Blacks having the lowest (a pattern different from measures of private regard, where Asians scored significantly lower than Whites and Blacks).

Measures of private and public regard are not always correlated with each other, thus justifying their separation into two components. Crocker et al. (1994), for example, reported a correlation of .02 between public and private CSE in a sample of Black students (compared with .50 and .59 for Whites and Asians, respectively). These data suggest that the two measures might be unrelated for groups that are devalued in society at large.

The degree to which an evaluation of a collective identity is consciously recognized is another issue worthy of consideration, especially when the collective identity is undesirable or not uniformly valued in society. As noted in the previous section, the IAT can be used as a measure of categorization, insofar as it assesses the strength of association between, for example, definition of self as male or female and terms referring to self versus other. As

Greenwald et al. (2002) described, it is also possible to use the IAT as a measure of evaluation. The logic of the task is similar to what was described earlier, the only difference being that as a measure of evaluation, the IAT is now programmed to assess the strength of association between a self-relevant category (e.g., gender) and either positive or negative attributes. In the example used by Greenwald et al. (2002), women who are asked to associate two cognitively compatible categories (*women* and *pleasant*) should respond more quickly than in a condition where the categories are not as compatible (*women* and *unpleasant*). The more compatible the categories are, the faster women will respond, and hence the more positive their nonconscious evaluation of the social category as revealed by the IAT.

### Importance

The third element listed in Table 1 is importance, specifically the degree of importance, from low to high, of a particular group membership to the individual's overall self-concept. Two forms of this element are distinguished: (a) *Explicit importance* is the individual's subjective appraisal of the degree to which a collective identity is important to her or his overall sense of self; (b) *implicit importance* is the placement, from low to high, of a particular group membership in the person's hierarchically organized self-system, where the individual is not necessarily consciously aware of the hierarchical position of his or her collective identities. The two proposed forms of importance parallel what Chatman, Malanchuk, and Eccles (2003) termed "explicit racial centrality" ("conscious appraisal of an identity element, in this case race or ethnicity, as an important or central part of the self-concept," p. 2) and "implicit centrality" ("the extent to which a given identity is chronically accessible in individuals' everyday, normative experiences as they relate to the self," p. 3).

Importance has a long history in scientific approaches to self and identity (cf. S. Rosenberg & Gara, 1985). In his chapter introducing self and identity as topics for scientific as well as philosophical analysis, James (1890) wrote of individual self-construals being arranged along "a hierarchical scale according to their worth" (p. 314). More recently, sociologists concerned with self and identity have proposed a number of models often lumped together under the rubric *identity theory* (formulations by Burke,

1980; Burke & Tully, 1997; McCall & Simmons, 1978; Stryker, 1980; Stryker & Serpe, 1994).<sup>1</sup> These theorists point to two forms of importance (though there are many differences in labels and operationalizations; see Stryker & Serpe, 1994, especially pp. 18–19). Stryker and Serpe (1994) referred to the first of these as “psychological centrality,” by which they mean the individual’s conscious appraisal of how central a particular self-definition (here, social category membership or collective identity) is to the person’s overall self-concept. Psychological centrality is conceptually similar to McCall and Simmons’s (1978) “hierarchy of prominence” (pp. 74–77, p. 262), M. Rosenberg’s (1979) notion of “centrality” (pp. 265–269), and Chatman et al.’s (2003) “explicit centrality.” We regard each of these as slight variations on what we term *explicit importance*.

The second form of importance distinguished by identity theorists in sociology is salience. Stryker and Serpe (1982) proposed that identities are arranged in a “salience hierarchy”:

This hierarchical organization of identities is defined by the probabilities of each of the various identities within it being brought into play in a given situation. Alternatively, it is defined by the probabilities each of the identities have of being invoked across a variety of situations. (p. 206)

Stryker and Serpe (1994) defined salience as “a readiness to act out an identity as a consequence of the identity’s properties as a cognitive structure or schema” (p. 17). In cognitive social psychological terms, Stryker and Serpe’s (1994) salience is akin to chronic accessibility (Fiske & Taylor, 1991, pp. 264–265).<sup>2</sup> Stryker and Serpe (1994) emphasized that, in contrast with psychological centrality, people are not necessarily aware of the salience of their collective identities. Salience serves as the basis for the second proposed form of importance, implicit importance.

Psychologists also have recognized and featured the idea of collective identities varying in importance, most often looking at explicit importance. Less typical is Seymour Rosenberg’s (1988, 1997; S. Rosenberg & Gara, 1985) examination of implicit importance. He and his colleagues developed a conceptual framework and empirical procedure for assessing implicit importance as the hierarchical arrangement of an individual’s multiple selves. A participant rates each of his or her selves (including collective identities) on a set of features (traits, feelings, and behaviors; e.g., “When you are in the self/identity \_\_ [e.g., woman], are you \_\_\_\_ [e.g., strong]?”). The resulting Selves/Identities  $\times$  Features matrix is analyzed by an algorithm (HICLAS; De Boeck & Rosenberg, 1988; De Boeck, Rosenberg, & Van Mechelen, 1993) that clusters the identities (and simultaneously and separately the features) and produces a hierarchical arrangement of clusters that follows set theoretic requirements. As a consequence, identities in higher clusters (supersets) involve a wider range of application in terms of associated features. S. Rosenberg uses the term *elaboration* to refer to hierarchical placement. This general procedure and the specific construct of elaboration nicely capture the proposed implicit importance, because collective identities higher within the HICLAS display are associated with a larger and more diverse set of “enactments” (S. Rosenberg & Gara, 1985, p. 94) and thus are more likely to be chronically accessible. Further, consistent with Stryker and Serpe (1994), participants are not necessarily aware of the elaboration scores of the various selves making up their self-system.

Examples of measures of collective identity importance are shown in Table 4. Perhaps the purest operational definition of explicit importance is the Identity subscale of the CSE measure (Luhtanen & Crocker, 1992). Luhtanen and Crocker (1992) see this subscale as assessing “importance to identity,” which they define as “importance of one’s social group memberships to one’s self-concept” (p. 304). Although Luhtanen and Crocker originally used the subscale for a person’s social group memberships taken as a whole, both they (Crocker et al., 1994) and others (e.g., Contrada et al., 2001; Ethier & Deaux, 1994) have used the subscale to assess an individual’s appraisal of specific ethnic group memberships. In constructing their Multidimensional Inventory of Black Identity, Sellers et al. (1997) used the four Luhtanen and Crocker items, plus others inspired by Phinney’s (1992) Affirmation and Belonging subscale of the Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure (MEIM), to create their Centrality subscale. Thus, this subscale includes multiple elements of collective identity as here conceived.

Another approach to assessing explicit importance is to simply ask respondents to rate one or more collective identities in terms of importance to self-concept. Stryker and Serpe (1994), who termed this *psychological centrality*, operationalized it as follows:

Subjects were asked “to compare each activity [five subparts of the college student role/identity; e.g., academic, athletic/recreational] and indicate which is more important in the way *you think about yourself*. You are not being asked to say which is ‘most’ important, *only which activity is ‘more’ important to how you think about yourself.*” (p. 21)

Cassidy and Trew (2001) asked respondents not for comparative judgments but instead to rate each of a set of collective identities on a single unipolar scale—“not at all important” to “very important” (to the person’s “sense of self,” p. 53).

Most work measuring what we are terming implicit importance has been conceptualized within Stryker’s (1980; Stryker & Serpe, 1982, 1994) identity theory as *salience*. A common operational definition is to ask respondents to imagine meeting someone for the first time and to indicate which piece of information (collective identity) about self would be told first, second, and so on (see, e.g., Stryker & Serpe, 1982, p. 210). Stryker and Serpe (1994) recognized that this operational definition only partially and imperfectly captures the construct (see especially p. 26). Another example is provided by Gurin and Townsend (1986), who assessed what they termed *cognitive centrality* by asking female participants “how often in their everyday life they thought about being a woman” (p. 142). Stryker and Serpe’s (1982) and Gurin and Townsend’s assessment procedures are direct self-reports and thus involve conscious appraisal. As a consequence, neither operational definition optimally assesses implicit importance as here conceived.

<sup>1</sup> For summaries and comparisons between these theories and SIT and SCT, see Deaux and Martin (2003), Hogg, Terry, and White (1995), Stets and Burke (2000), and Thoits and Virshup (1997).

<sup>2</sup> Stryker and Serpe (1994) retained the underlying idea that salience reflects “the probability of being invoked in a given situation or in a series of situations” (p. 17). Thus, for Stryker and his coworkers, salience is importance in terms of the self-system as embedded in a particular social system (from face-to-face role relationships to the broader society). We believe that it is preferable to conceptually separate importance from social embeddedness (which we cover later in this article).

Table 4  
*Some Representative Measures of Identity: Importance*

Author(s) and construct	Measure
Explicit importance (variously termed <i>significance, strength, centrality, importance, prominence</i> )	
Luhtanen & Crocker (1992): Collective Self-Esteem (Identity subscale)	“Being [X] is an important reflection of who I am.”
Sellers et al. (1998): Multidimensional Inventory of Black Identity (Centrality subscale)	“In general, being Black is an important part of my self-image.”
Stryker & Serpe (1994): psychological centrality	Compare activity pairs and say which is more important “to the way you think about yourself.”
Cassidy & Trew (2001; adapted from McCall & Simmons, 1978): psychological centrality	Rate the importance of the identity on 10-point scale from <i>not important at all</i> to <i>very important</i>
Implicit importance (variously termed <i>salience, centrality, elevation, importance</i> )	
Stryker & Serpe (1982): salience?”	“What one thing would you tell a stranger about yourself?”
Gurin & Townsend (1986): cognitive centrality	“How often in your everyday life have you thought about being a woman?”
M. Rosenberg & Gara (1985): elevation	Participant lists selves (including collective identities) and features (traits, feelings, and behaviors) and then rates each self on each feature. A computer algorithm (HICLAS; De Boeck & Rosenberg, 1988) then clusters both selves and features and links these two structures. Degree of elevation of a self (including a collective identity) is how high up in the self’s hierarchy the self-definition is.
Kuhn & McPartland (1954): Twenty Statements Test	“Who am I?”

Chatman et al. (2003) developed a better index of implicit importance. They

obtained a frequency count of the number of times individuals spontaneously mentioned race in response to open-ended survey items unrelated to race or ethnicity. “Who is your hero?” and “why do you admire that person?” are examples of these open-ended items. (p. 9)

This procedure assesses the chronic accessibility of race/ethnicity, and does so in an indirect manner. Chatman and her colleagues (2003) acknowledged that their measure may not tap whether “race was chronically accessible to respondents *as a self-construct* [italics added]” (p. 16). An important question for future research is whether the Chatman et al. (2003) index correlates with other measures of implicit importance, such as S. Rosenberg and Gara’s (1985) elaboration measure.

Two major issues should be addressed concerning measurement. First, given that implicit importance is not necessarily assumed to be in conscious awareness, it would be desirable to develop other measures that directly get at this notion. One possibility is to use experience-sampling methods such as diaries or beepers. For example, the Gurin and Townsend (1986) item could be adapted such that when respondents are beeped, they are prompted to describe their most recent interpersonal exchange and asked, “To what degree was your definition of self as a [male/female] relevant in this interaction?” (1 = *not at all* to 5 = *extremely*). Parallel items could be generated for race, ethnicity, religion, and organizational collective identities. These multiple situational judgments could be summed and mean responses computed by the investigator to assess individual differences in the chronic accessibility (implicit importance) of gender (or racial, ethnic, religious, organizational)

identity. Second, for both forms of importance, should the measurement procedure involve comparative judgments (given that importance follows from an assumption of a hierarchy of multiple self-construals), or are absolute judgments of importance (as in Cassidy & Trew, 2001) acceptable? Further, how should the comparisons be made—directly, as done by Stryker and Serpe (1982), or indirectly, following S. Rosenberg and Gara (1985)? Given that people are not necessarily aware of implicit importance, it is likely best if indirect procedures are used.

How are the two proposed forms of importance empirically related? Overall, we think that they will be positively related under the assumption that people have at least a general sense of which collective identities are a relatively major part of self in contrast with those that are invoked only infrequently. However, we also expect that the aggregate correlation will be modest in size and that there will be substantial variation in the association as a function of type of identity (Stryker & Serpe, 1994) and across individuals (S. Rosenberg & Gara, 1985). Chatman et al. (2003) found implicit racial centrality to correlate .13 to .15 with three measures of explicit centrality. S. Rosenberg and Gara (1985) provided preliminary evidence about individual differences in the association between implicit and explicit importance. In a study of 12 professional women who were members of an organization for female scholars, 8 showed a positive relation between elevation in the HICLAS display (implicit importance) and directly rated importance (explicit importance), 2 showed essentially no relation, and 2 had a negative correlation. The 2 women for whom there was a negative relation were actively reexamining their careers, and thus occupational role/identity was low on explicit importance but high on implicit importance.

### *Attachment and Sense of Interdependence*

A sense of belonging or emotional attachment to the group is a fourth major element of collective identification. It is the affective involvement a person feels with a social category or the degree to which the fate of the group is perceived as overlapping with one's personal fate. This dimension has come to the forefront of much recent theorizing and debate because research suggests that the emotional-affective aspect of belonging to the group may be independent of categorization and evaluation and, on its own, a strong predictor of important group outcomes (Hinkle, Taylor, Fox-Cardamone, & Crook, 1989; Jackson, 2002; Karasawa, 1991). The emotional-affective aspect of belonging is significant on theoretical grounds as well. Baumeister and Leary (1995) proposed that human beings are driven to form positive, lasting, and stable relationships because of a basic and fundamental need to belong. According to their theory, we become members of groups and conform to group norms at least in part to satisfy this need to belong (Baumeister & Leary, 1995; see also Simon & Klandermans, 2001). Not surprisingly, people often get emotionally attached to the groups they see as part of their self-concept, just as they get attached to close relationship partners (E. R. Smith, Murphy, & Coats, 1999). It has even been suggested that identification with important reference groups should be reconceptualized as forming a close relationship with these groups in a way that leads to the inclusion of the groups in the self (Aron & McLaughlin-Volpe, 2001; Tropp & Wright, 2001). The power of this need for attachment to important reference groups is illustrated by our tendency to develop affective ties even to symbols that represent these groups, such as flags, land, cities, and buildings. In support of these ideas, E. R. Smith et al. (1999), in their application of attachment theory to in-group identification, found that global in-group identification measures (ones that include several of the elements specified in this article, such as categorization, explicit importance, and personal regard) tap an individual's longing for support by and closeness to the group.<sup>3</sup>

In our review of the various instruments of collective identity, we encountered several closely related measures that seem to tap aspects of group attachment and tend to load on the same factor (Jackson, 2002): the feeling of strong ties to or bonds with the group; an emotional attachment or felt closeness to the group; a sense of interdependence or interconnectedness; the perception of shared fate with other members of the group; and self-group merging. Common to all of these measures is their implied extension of the self to the social group. However, the proposed connection between group and self is much more than simple self-categorization or the perception of self as similar to other members of the group. It contains more elaborated cognitive elements, such as the perception of interdependence or a shared fate with other group members, as well as affective elements, such as felt closeness to and concern about other group members.

*Interdependence and mutual fate.* The development of a sense of interdependence requires more than the perception of others as belonging to the same social category. An art collector, for example, will not generally see herself as interdependent with other art collectors. Interdependence is fostered by an awareness of a common or shared fate, defined as the "perception of the commonalities in the way group members are treated in society" (Gurin & Townsend, 1986, p. 140). People develop a sense of mutual fate when they become aware that they are treated as a group member

rather than as an individual, that their fates and outcomes are similar despite individual differences, and that individual mobility depends, at least in part, on group membership (Gurin & Townsend, 1986).<sup>4</sup>

Interdependence or the perception of common fate has been operationalized by questions such as "Do you think that what happens to women generally in this country will have something to do with what happens in your life?" and "Do you think that the movement for women's rights has affected you personally?" (Gurin & Townsend, 1986) and "My fate and my future are bound up with that of Armenians everywhere" (Der-Karabetian, 1980). Measures of interdependence are summarized in Table 5.

*Attachment and affective commitment.* Ellemers et al. (1999) described this element as the emotional component (as opposed to the evaluative component) of group membership: a sense of emotional involvement with the group or affective commitment, an affective or affiliative orientation toward the group (Abrams, Ando, & Hinkle, 1998). Affective commitment has been shown to uniquely predict in-group bias, and affective commitment can exist in the absence of positive in-group evaluation (Ellemers et al., 1999; see also Jackson, 2002; Jackson & Smith, 1999).

Researchers have taken two distinct approaches to assessing the affective attachment people feel toward in-groups. One approach is to ask respondents to indicate the degree to which they feel that they have a common bond with or ties to the group (e.g., Cameron & Lalonde, 2001; Deaux & Reid, 2000; Doosje, Ellemers, & Spears, 1999) or whether they have a strong sense of belonging or attachment to the group (e.g., Phinney, 1992). A second and more

<sup>3</sup> Although conceptualized here as attachment to the group (as opposed to attachment to the group's members), we acknowledge that for most group identities both group attachment and member attachment may be important dimensions of identification. Hogg (1992), for example, distinguished between social attraction, defined as a depersonalized attitude that results from self-categorization, and personal attraction, which he associated with close interpersonal relationships. Prentice, Miller, and Lightdale (1994) made a similar distinction between common-bond groups (defined as groups that are primarily based on member attachment) and common-identity groups (defined as groups that are based on direct attachment to the group). Across two studies, they found that correlations between group attachment and member attachment were very high for both types of groups (in their Study 2,  $r = .82$  in common-bond groups, and  $.70$  in common-identity groups). Thus, member attachment and group attachment appear to be highly interdependent, and it may not be possible to distinguish easily or reliably between these two constructs.

<sup>4</sup> The idea that people come to see themselves as interdependent with other in-group members even under the arbitrary constraints of the minimal group paradigm has been discussed by Rabbie and his colleagues (Rabbie, 1991; Rabbie, Schot, & Visser, 1989). They argued that participants perceive the minimal group paradigm as a situation of interdependence with other in-group members in which individual group members discriminate in favor of the in-group because they believe that other in-group members will reciprocate (Rabbie & Horwitz, 1988). Evidence in support of this model comes from several experiments that show that participants in minimal group studies are much less likely to favor the in-group when they are given a reason to believe that their fate is not intertwined with that of other in-group members, for example, when they expect to receive rewards from out-group members (Locksley, Ortiz, & Hepburn, 1980; Rabbie & Schot, 1990) or when they are told that both in-group and out-group members, on whom they depend for rewards, have proven to be fair and not to discriminate (Diehl, 1989).

Table 5  
*Some Representative Measures of Identity: Attachment and Sense of Interdependence*

Author(s) and construct	Measure
Interdependence/mutual fate	
Gurin & Townsend (1986): sense of common fate	"Do you think that what happens to women generally will have something to do with what happens in your life?"
Der-Karabetian (1980)	"My fate and my future are bound up with that of Armenians everywhere."
Jackson (2002): affective ties	"Regarding my in-group, it is accurate to say, 'United we stand, divided we fall.'"
Affective commitment	
Attachment/closeness Phinney (1992): Affirmation–Belonging	"I have a strong sense of belonging to my own ethnic group."
Perceived acceptance and support Tyler & Blader (2001): Respect	"Do others in the work setting respect the work you do?"
Contrada et al. (2001): Group Membership	"I feel accepted by members of my ethnic group."
Interconnection of self and others	
E. Smith & Henry (1996): merging of self and in-group	Reaction-time paradigm in which participants make timed self-descriptiveness judgments. Merging of self and in-group is measured as faster judgments of traits on which participants match the perceived characteristics of the in-group.
Mael & Tetrick (1992): cognitive merging of self and the group	"When I talk about this organization, I usually say 'we' rather than 'they.'"
Kinket & Verkuyten (1997): ethnic group introjection	"If someone said something bad about Turkish people, would you feel almost as if they had said it about you?"

indirect operationalization of attachment to the group is to ask how strongly a person feels accepted, valued, respected, and supported by the group. Tyler and Blader (2001), for example, discussed respect by the group (conceptualized as status within group) as a potentially important component of identity (see also Branscombe, Spears, Ellemers, & Doosje, 2002). Respect signals acceptance of self by the group or a positive evaluation by other group members, which should be connected to feelings of self-worth and generate an emotional bond with the group. One item in the Tyler and Blader (2001) Respect Scale is "Do others in the work setting respect the work you do/value you as a member of your work group?" Wong, Eccles, and Sameroff (in press) measured emotional connection to one's ethnic group by asking whether respondents felt supported by people of their own race/ethnicity and whether their racial/ethnic group provided them with a close community of friends. Similarly, Contrada et al. (2001) measured mutual (affective) attachment between group members and their ethnic group by asking about feelings of acceptance by and support from other members of their ethnic group. They also measured rejection by one's own ethnic group with items such as "I feel rejected by many members of my ethnic group" (see also Postmes & Branscombe, 2002). What these approaches have in common is their operationalization of attachment to the group as a sense of feeling valued, accepted, and supported by the community or group to which one belongs.<sup>5</sup>

Many measures of collective identity include questions about attachment, belonging, and bondedness. Table 5 summarizes a few representative measures. However, few pure measures of this element exist (but see Jackson, 2002). For example, Phinney's (1992) Affirmation and Belonging subscale mixes items

that assess belonging with items tapping pride and personal regard, and Sellers et al. (1997) include items tapping importance and belonging (our affective attachment) in their Centrality subscale. This choice apparently reflects the belief by some researchers that affective attachment is not separable from centrality or evaluation. Our view is that affective attachment is a conceptually distinguishable element of collective identity, and how it relates to other elements is an issue for theoretical elaboration and empirical test.

*Interconnection of self and others.* Studies of organizational identification often emphasize a sense of oneness with an organization (Abrams et al., 1998; Ashfort & Mael, 1989; Mael & Tetrick, 1992) and define what we term collective identity as "the degree to which people cognitively merge their sense of self and

<sup>5</sup> A related construct that has been central to small group research is cohesiveness, variously referring to "solidarity, cohesion, comradeship, team spirit, group atmosphere, unity, 'oneness,' 'we-ness,' 'groupness,' and belongingness" (Hogg, 1992, p. 1). Although measures of group cohesiveness often resemble those described here to assess aspects of an individual's identification with a social category, the concept itself is one that is theorized at the level of the group. Thus, as Hogg (1992) noted, "Although it makes perfect sense to describe a group in terms of its cohesiveness, it is not so meaningful to do so at the individual level" (pp. 6–7). A further construct that is frequently used in the study of small face-to-face groups is attraction to group, defined as "an individual's desire to identify with and be an accepted member of the group" (Evans & Jarvis, 1986, p. 204) and as a feeling of belongingness (Stokes, 1983).

the group” (Tyler & Blader, 2001, p. 210).<sup>6</sup> Self–group merging is typically operationalized with items that tap a person’s experience of the group as part of the self, such as “When someone criticizes [this organization], it feels like a personal insult” and “When I talk about [this organization], I usually say ‘we’ rather than ‘they’” (Mael & Tetrick, 1992, p. 817). These two sample items illustrate that self–group merging has both affective and cognitive components. A related construct was discussed by Kinket and Verkuyten (1997), who used the term “ethnic group introjection” (p. 338) to refer to this merging of self and group. According to M. Rosenberg (1979), *introjection*

refers to the adoption of externals (persons or objects) into the self, so as to have a sense of oneness with them and to feel personally affected by what happens to them. For the group identifier, the distinction between my group and me is unclear; the fate of the group is experienced as fate of the self. (p. 179)

Thus, introjection is assumed to be associated with commitment, emotional involvement, and feelings of belonging and has been shown to be independent of positive evaluation (Kinket & Verkuyten, 1997): A positive evaluation does not necessarily mean high ethnic group introjection. However, high introjection is almost always associated with positive evaluation.

E. Smith and his colleagues recently tested the idea that collective identification involves the extension of the self to include relevant social groups (Coats, Smith, Claypool, & Banner, 1999; E. Smith, Coats, & Walling, 1999; E. Smith & Henry, 1996). Inspired by the seminal study of Aron and his colleagues in the domain of close relationships (e.g., Aron, Aron, Tudor, & Nelson, 1991, Experiment 3), E. Smith and his colleagues used a reaction time procedure to demonstrate that people confuse self-descriptive traits with traits thought typical (or stereotypical) of the in-group (E. Smith & Henry, 1996; see also E. Smith et al., 1999; Tropp & Wright, 2001). No such effect was found for traits that described a relevant out-group. Consequently, E. Smith et al. (1999) argued that there is substantial support for the idea “that close relationships and group membership both involve some sort of merging of self and other” and that “this process may deeply influence cognition, affect, and behavior in relationships and group contexts” (p. 881).

### *Social Embeddedness*

Social embeddedness is the degree to which a particular collective identity is implicated in the person’s everyday ongoing social relationships. Social embeddedness is considered to be high when it would be costly and painful to abandon a particular collective identity because a majority of one’s social contacts and relationships reinforce this identity.

The primary inspiration for this hypothesized identity element is Stryker’s “commitment” variable, which “is defined by the social and personal costs entailed in no longer fulfilling a role based on a given identity (Stryker, 1980). These costs are understood as a function of the strength of ties to others in social networks” (Stryker & Serpe, 1994, p. 19). Stets and Burke (2000) used the phrase “structural embeddedness or commitment” (p. 231). This implicit equating of the two concepts, together with our concern that commitment has other, quite different meanings in the identity literature,<sup>7</sup> leads us to suggest the label *social embeddedness* rather than commitment.

As an element of collective identity, social embeddedness is more sociological than some of the other elements we have identified, in that it is a property of the person considered jointly with the social environment. On the one hand, social embeddedness is measurable at the level of the individual, and there are likely to be substantial individual differences in its occurrence. At the same time, interpretation of such measures must take into account the opportunity structures that the environment provides for connecting to others on the basis of one’s collective identity (Deaux & Martin, 2003).

Stryker and Serpe (1994) operationalized commitment<sup>8</sup> by asking about the number of organizations joined that reflect the identity in question and the number of friends made while engaged in identity-relevant activities. Additional operationalizations of social embeddedness are possible. For example, “Of your ongoing work relationships, how many (or, what proportion) are with people from your own [ethnic/religious/racial/gender] group?” The same basic query can be repeated for family, leisure activities, volunteer activities, and the like.

How is social embeddedness different from affective attachment? The former is more objective and external, whereas the latter is more subjective and internal. Affective commitment denotes how close the person feels to a particular social category. Social embeddedness, in contrast, refers to the degree to which an individual’s collective identity is embedded in social networks and interpersonal relationships. When social embeddedness is high, most of the person’s everyday social connections involve people of the social category in question; with low social embeddedness, the person has few or no regular social contacts and relationships with others of the group. As an example, a deaf student who chooses to attend Gallaudet University, who lives on campus, and most of whose friends are deaf would likely score high on both affective attachment and social embeddedness for the deaf identity. In contrast, a deaf student who attends Louisiana State University because her mother was an alumna, who lives in a sorority with only hearing students, but who feels most accepted and comfortable with deaf people, would likely be low on social embeddedness, although high on affective attachment.

### *Behavioral Involvement*

Following Eagly and Chaiken (1993), who posit that attitude can be assessed by behavioral as well as cognitive and affective indicators, we propose behavioral involvement as a key element of collective identity. Behavioral involvement is defined as the degree to which the person engages in actions that directly implicate

<sup>6</sup> Although Tyler and Blader (2001) specifically used the term *cognitive* and apparently conceptualize self–other merging as a cognitive phenomenon, we see their measure as conceptually similar to others that are defined in affective terms as well. Also, self–other merging is typically assessed with questions that ask about the respondents’ feelings (e.g., “When someone criticizes my group, it feels like a personal insult”).

<sup>7</sup> For example, consider the meaning of *commitment* in the Erikson–Marcia tradition (e.g., Phinney, 1995, pp. 60–61), as well as the use of *commitment* in work on close relationships (Berscheid, 1985).

<sup>8</sup> Stryker and Serpe (1994) distinguished two forms of commitment: interactional and affective. The here-proposed social embeddedness is based on the former—how one’s collective identity is enmeshed in ongoing social networks (at home, in the neighborhood, at work, and so on).

Table 6  
*Some Representative Measures of Identity: Behavioral Involvement*

Author(s) and construct	Measure
Phinney (1992): Ethnic Behavior subscale of the Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure	"I participate in cultural practices of my own group."
De la Garza et al. (1995): Latino/Latina cultural identity	Spanish proficiency (e.g., language spoken at home, Spanish writing capability) Spanish language preference (e.g., language preference for TV and radio)
Williams & Lawler (2001): Religious Behaviors Scale	Church Involvement subscale measures religious commitment expressed through church attendance, Bible study/religious education, social activities, service, and financial support. "How often do you participate in a church-sponsored activity?" Personal Faith subscale measures religious commitment through activities outside of church (private prayer, reading the Bible, basing one's actions on faith, discussing faith with others, helping others as an expression of faith). "How often do you spend time in private prayer or spiritual meditation?"

the collective identity category in question. To foreshadow our later discussion of outcomes, indices of behavioral involvement do not involve theoretical networks that link one domain to another. Rather, behavioral involvement is a clear expression of the identity itself, requiring no additional theorizing to make the connection. (This statement does not exclude the influence of situational and contextual factors on the behavioral expression of an identity. These influences can affect the expression of all elements of identification; see below regarding Cook & Selltiz, 1964.)

One measure of behavioral involvement (see Table 6) is the Ethnic Behaviors subscale of Phinney's (1992) MEIM, which includes items such as "I participate in cultural practices of my own group, such as special food, music, or customs." Time in role, an outcome variable favored by identity theorists such as Stryker, is also viewed as an index of behavioral involvement. Other indices of behavioral involvement might include displaying one's group membership by wearing certain apparel (e.g., a university sweatshirt), waving a national flag, or donating time and resources to organizations that promote the collective identity.

For some collective identities, particularly those related to ethnicity and nationality, language is an important form of behavioral involvement. As an example of language as a measure of behavioral involvement, De la Garza, Newcomb, and Myers (1995) included both Spanish proficiency (e.g., language spoken at home, Spanish writing capability) and Spanish language preference (e.g., language preference when watching television or listening to the radio) as part of their assessment of Latino/Latina identity. Indeed, some authors have argued that ethnic identity is largely maintained through language (see Giles, 1977; Gumperz, 1982). Conversely, in discussions of the assimilation process of immigrants, acquisition of the language of the host country is often used as a marker of the acquisition of a new national identity (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001).<sup>9</sup>

Like social embeddedness, behavioral involvement entails consideration of the person and the opportunity structure that the setting provides. Time spent in one's occupational identity, for example, is influenced not only by personal orientation but also by external factors such as the official policy on the work day or work

week and informal norms about how late one should work at the office. Behavioral involvement and social embeddedness are probably correlated. At the same time, the constructs are conceptually distinguishable: Social embeddedness refers to the objective state of one's social networks, whereas behavioral involvement denotes the extent to which one's actions involve the social category.

In their analysis of attitude measurement, Cook and Selltiz (1964) identified several nonattitudinal person and situation factors (e.g., social desirability needs, external pressures) that influence assessed attitude, and their analysis applies equally well to measures of collective identity. Their analysis serves as a caution that indices of behavioral involvement do not necessarily constitute unambiguous indices of collective identification. A person may use social and observable behaviors (e.g., attending church services) to publicly announce his or her group membership to the world and, in particular, to other members of the group. Thus, these behaviors can serve to gain entrance to and acceptance within the group, show solidarity with the group, and so on. However, that same behavior may be influenced by other factors quite separate from collective identification. A student may attend church services every Sunday, for example, because she sees herself as a good daughter and wants to please her parents rather than because of her religious convictions and commitments.

<sup>9</sup> Some might argue that hurting the "other group" should be included as a behavioral index of collective identity. In SIT and related formulations, in-group favoritism of necessity puts the other group at a disadvantage and, thus, hurts the out-group. At the same time, the idea that collective identity processes lead neatly and directly to hurting the other group has not been well supported (Brewer, 2001; Brown, 2000). Further, and on conceptual grounds, behavior toward the out-group is not a direct indicator of orientation toward the in-group. Thus, we argue that it makes more sense to conceive of out-group harm as a possible outcome of collective identification and reserve behavior as a measure of collective identity only for actions that are clearly directed at the group of identification.

### Content and Meaning

Thus far, the measures of identification we have discussed have dealt with relatively simple dimensional properties that are relatively easy to assess and, as a result, have been studied extensively. (Two exceptions are social embeddedness and behavioral involvement, which typically require a more elaborated set of questions or observations.) In turning our attention to content and meaning, we introduce elements of identity that are less easily subsumed in a single scale. The concern here is with the semantic space in which an identity resides—a space that can include self-attributed characteristics, political ideology, and developmental narratives. A variety of assessment strategies are available for probing these richer and thicker features. Some approaches may rely on quantitative scales but offer a set of ideological options, for example, rather than a single dimension of endorsement. Other explorations of identity meaning may turn to more qualitative forms of inquiry, using interviews to elicit detailed historical narratives of time and place. In this section, we review three kinds of content that have been considered in investigations of collective identity: (a) self-attributed characteristics, (b) ideology, and (c) narrative.

*Self-attributed characteristics.* Self-attributed characteristics refer to the extent to which traits and dispositions that are associated with a social category are endorsed as self-descriptive by a member of that category. Perhaps the most actively researched area of traits as identity content is that of gender identity, as represented, for example, by various measures of masculinity, femininity, and androgyny (e.g., Bem, 1974, 1981; Spence & Helmreich, 1978). In this approach, respondents are provided with a list of group-related characteristics and asked to rate the degree to which each trait is characteristic of their identity.

From the perspective of SCT (Turner et al., 1987), self-stereotyping or autostereotyping refer to the attributes (e.g., traits, attitudes) associated with a social category. It is posited that when a specific social category is salient, the individual will view him- or herself in terms of the characteristics of the category members in general (or, in the terms used by SCT researchers, will “depersonalize”).

Many collective identities, such as gender, age, ethnicity, and political identities, have widely held stereotypes associated with them. Some of these stereotypic associations may become part of one’s own identification with that social group. Thus, if professors as a class are assumed to be highly intelligent, then an individual professor may be assumed by herself, as well as by others, to be intelligent by virtue of that category membership. Whether all of the group traits are endorsed by the individual, as SCT suggests, remains a matter of some dispute, but the importation of meaning from more broadly held cultural representations to the self seems inarguable (see also Breakwell, 2001; Duveen, 2001). For us the crucial point is that people are likely to vary in the extent to which they define themselves in terms of consensual or stereotypical group-related attributes, and this variation may predict outcomes.

One of the most developed approaches to assessing traits associated with categories is the hierarchical classification method developed by De Boeck and Rosenberg (1988). With this ideographic methodology, people are asked to generate a set of traits and/or behaviors that they associate with a particular identity category they have previously named as self-descriptive. Attributes that are shared between different identity labels become the basis for development of an identity hierarchy, in which the

person’s set of identities is represented in graphical form. In another fairly complicated methodology, developed by Weinrich (1983), individually generated data are used to create group profiles that reflect the shared meaning of a social category—that is, the attributes that a group believes are implied by category membership and are likely to be shared by category members.

In most of this work, the emphasis has been on personality traits as self-descriptors, consistent with psychologists’ general interest in dispositional properties. It is, of course, quite possible to extend the coverage to physical descriptors, behaviors, and values, all of which have some likely association with identity categories (Ashmore, 1990; Deaux & Lewis, 1984; Spence & Helmreich, 1978). Another example of the use of self-attributed characteristics is provided by E. Smith and his colleagues, who used both traits and interests/preferences (e.g., participants indicated their liking for things such as parties, tattoos, science, and beer) to explore collective identity, although their major interest was not on the content per se (Coats et al., 1999; E. Smith et al., 1999; E. Smith & Henry, 1996).

*Ideology.* Ideology makes reference to beliefs about experience and history of the group over time. Gurin and Townsend (1986) used the term *group consciousness* to describe this set of beliefs: “[Group] consciousness refers to the member’s ideology about the group’s position in society” (p. 139). As articulated by Gurin and Townsend and others, group consciousness is multidimensional, including components of collective discontent over a group’s relative power, resources, or prestige; appraised legitimacy of the stratification system; and a belief in collective action. Gurin and Townsend noted that these ideologies will vary depending on the position of one’s group in the dominance hierarchy of a society. In the upper strata, ideologies are formulated to justify and maintain the advantage; in the lower strata, legitimacy of the system is more likely to be challenged.

Gurin and Townsend (1986) assessed these three types of ideology with reference to gender consciousness. They also identified three dimensions of identity (similarity, centrality, and common fate) and predicted specific patterns of relationships between the identity elements and the ideology elements. (Their three identity dimensions correspond to our self-categorization, explicit importance, and sense of interdependence, respectively.) Thus, their approach was to distinguish between ideology and identification, problematizing the relationship between these two concepts rather than assuming their linkage. In the perspective offered here, ideology is included in our collection of identity components, but like Gurin and Townsend, we consider the relationship between components one that needs to be explored rather than assumed.

Several measures have been developed to assess the ideological positions that members of a group might hold. Some of these measures are shown in Table 7. Typically the investigators developing these measures have assumed that members of a group, who might be equally identified with the group in terms of importance, will nonetheless vary in their ideological beliefs.

The Sellers et al. (1997) ideology scale, the Multidimensional Inventory of Black Identity (MIBI), as one example, contains four subscales, each of which represents a “philosophy about the ways in which African Americans should live and interact with our society” (Sellers et al., 1998, p. 27). Specifically, the four ideologies are termed Nationalist, Oppressed Minority, Assimilation, and Humanist. In each case, the subscale draws on a variety of domains of activity, including political and economic develop-

Table 7  
*Some Representative Measures of Identity: Ideology*

Author(s) and construct	Measure
	Race-related ideology
Sellers et al. (1997): Multidimensional Inventory of Black Identity	
Assimilation	"Blacks who espouse separatism are as racist as White people who also espouse separatism."
Humanist	"Black values should not be inconsistent with human values."
Oppressed Minority	"Black people should treat other oppressed people as allies."
Nationalist	"Black people should not marry interracially."
Vandiver et al. (2002): Cross Racial Identity Scale	
Pre-Encounter Assimilation	"I think of myself primarily as an American and seldom as a member of a racial group."
Pre-Encounter Miseducation	"Blacks place more emphasis on having a good time than on hard work."
Pre-Encounter Self-Hatred	"I sometimes have negative feelings about being Black."
Immersion–Emersion Anti-White	"I have feelings of hatred for all White people."
Internalization Black Nationalist/ Afrocentricity	"Black people cannot truly be free until our daily lives are guided by Afrocentric values and principles."
Internalization Multiculturalist Inclusive	"I believe it is important to have both a Black identity and a multicultural perspective, which is inclusive of everyone."
	Gender-related ideology
Henley et al. (1998)	
Conservatism	"Women should not be assertive like men because men are the natural leaders on earth."
Cultural feminism	"Women's experience in life's realities of cleaning, feeding people, caring for babies, etc. makes their vision of reality clearer than men's."
Liberal feminism	"The availability of adequate child care is central to a woman's right to work outside the home."
Radical feminism	"The workplace is organized around men's physical, economic, and sexual oppression of women."
Socialist feminism	"Capitalism and sexism are primarily responsible for the increased divorce rate and general breakdown of families."
Womanism	"Racism and sexism make double the oppression for women of color in the work environment."

ment, cultural and social activities, intergroup relations, and perceptions of the dominant group. Cross and his colleagues have offered a similar set of ideological positions, though in this case conceived as a model of the developmental progression of individual racial identity (the Cross Racial Identity Scale [CRIS]; see Cross, 1991, 1995; Vandiver, Cross, Worrell, & Fhagen-Smith, 2002; Vandiver, Fhagen-Smith, Cokley, Cross, & Worrell, 2001; Worrell, Cross, & Vandiver, 2001). This model includes several forms of what is termed *pre-encounter* (conceptualized as stages in which the person either does not define self in terms of a racial identity or views this identity in negative terms) and, of more relevance to this discussion of collective identity, positions that emphasize anti-White, Black nationalism and Afrocentricity, or multiculturalism. Stage models have also been developed with reference to feminist identity (e.g., Downing & Roush, 1985). Also within the domain of gender, Henley and her associates (Henley, Meng, O'Brien, McCarthy, & Sockloskie, 1998) developed a Feminist Perspectives Scale with six ideological positions: one a conservative (traditional, nonfeminist) position, and five forms of feminism (liberal, radical, socialist, cultural, and womanist/women of color). Table 7 summarizes these measures.

The degree to which the subscales in each measure represent distinct views of the political terrain varies somewhat. In the case of the CRIS, for example, correlations between scales are mostly low to moderate. On the Henley et al. (1998) Feminist Perspectives Scale, the conservative position correlates negatively with all of the other five scales, which tend to be moderately to highly correlated among each other (.47 to .87 in Study 1; .06 to .74 in Study 2; Henley et al., 1998). For our purposes, a major interest is the degree to which these scales (and the subscales) are tapping aspects of identity not assessed in other dimensions already considered. Although there are some cases where the distinction between ideology and one of our other elements is not completely clear (e.g., the Pre-Encounter Self-Hatred Scale on the CRIS as a measure of ideology maps closely onto to our evaluation dimension), for the most part these measures introduce unique issues of content and meaning.

We might also consider the degree to which measures of ideology for different groups can be compared. Are there commonalities, for example, in the political options available to African Americans and to women, as exemplified by the MIBI and CRIS on the one hand and the Feminist Perspectives Scale on the other?

Consideration of these three specific measures suggests there are some points of common ground. The Socialist Feminism subscale shares a perspective with the MIBI's Oppressed Minority subscale, in that both emphasize the ways in which a variety of minority groups have common experiences of oppression. Although obviously differing in content, the emphasis on the distinctive values of one's group is evident in the Cultural Feminism subscale, the MIBI Nationalist subscale and, perhaps to a lesser extent, the CRIS Internalization/Afrocentric subscale.

These points of convergence suggest that there might be some limited set of themes that define a group's ideology, varying among, perhaps, an emphasis on assimilation, separatism, and intergroup contact and conflict. Another type of distinction that might be useful in making comparisons between groups is the degree to which beliefs are culturally embedded (i.e., based on cultural heritage and historical events) and the degree to which they are socially embedded (i.e., based on current shared experiences, particularly those relating to social disadvantage and inequality; see Chatman, Malanchuk, & Eccles, 2001, for further discussion of this distinction). Such common dimensions, should they be demonstrated, would make the test of interrelations between identity elements across social categories an easier task.

At the same time, like the measures of narrative to be discussed in the following section, collective ideologies have many idiosyncratic aspects, and those unique features need to be acknowledged. Variations within group in this case become more important than comparisons between groups. Particularly when trying to link aspects of identification to predictions of subsequent action, a concern with group-specific ideological content may be essential.

*Narrative.* As an individual-level collective identity element, narrative denotes the internally represented story that the person has developed regarding self and the social category in question. This has not been the focus of much psychological work on collective identity, but it has become a major approach to understanding personal identity (Gergen & Gergen, 1988; McAdams, 1997). Additionally, narrative is a substantial and growing approach to self/identity in sociology (Brockmeier & Carbaugh, 2001, pp. 12–13), political science (Patterson & Monroe, 1998), anthropology (Ochs & Capps, 1996), and especially cultural studies (Brockmeier & Carbaugh, 2001), as well as in analyses of stigmatized minorities (Romero & Stewart, 1999). There are glimmerings of narrative approaches in collective identity work (e.g., Ashmore et al., 2001; Kelman, 2001), and we believe that more fully exploiting story approaches to group identity will bear considerable fruit. As can be seen in Table 1, we distinguish two types of narrative that may be important to conceptualizing collective identity: *collective identity story* (or, story of me as a member of my group) and *group story* (or, story of my group).

"Story of me as a group member" is the individual's mentally represented narrative of self as a member of a particular social category. As with any narrative, a collective identity story includes thoughts, feelings, and images about the past (my past as a member of the group), the present (where the person is now and the role that social category membership plays in that current reality), and the future (where the person hopes or fears he or she will likely go in the future).

Of the many possible facets of a collective identity narrative, we underline degree of elaboration. "Story of me as a group member" is likely to be very elaborated for some people (especially immigrants and those from stigmatized groups) and quite unelaborated,

or very thin, for others (especially those from dominant groups for whom group memberships are not "problematic" and thus taken for granted). We assume that narrative, which certainly is qualitative, can also be quantitatively measured, just as aspects of ideology can be so assessed.

Although to our knowledge no one has fully operationalized collective identity story as we describe it here, we offer the following examples to illustrate this construct. Timotijevic and Breakwell (2000) obtained life narratives from 24 immigrants to Britain from the former Yugoslavia. Open-ended interviews probed the participants' multiple collective identities pertinent to their situation (such as ethnic identity [e.g., Serb, Croat], national identity [Yugoslavian], and various phrasings of their immigrant identity [e.g., visitor, asylum seeker]), as well as their story of how they came to leave their former homeland and how they were experiencing and enacting their collective identities in their new country. By means of interpretive phenomenological analysis (J. A. Smith, 1996), the authors identified themes in the interview responses (e.g., who was responsible for the conflict in the former Yugoslavia).

The edited volume *Women's Untold Stories: Breaking Silence, Talking Back, Voicing Complexity* (Romero & Stewart, 1999) contains many excellent examples of the construct collective identity story. These include several chapters on the intersection of gender and ethnicity, such as Nagata's account of Japanese American women who were sent to internment camps during World War II and Xiong and Tatum's report of a Hmong American woman's activism.

"Story of my group" is the individual's mentally represented narrative of a particular social category of which he or she is a member. Liu, Wilson, McClure, and Higgins (1999) referred to this as "in-group ontogeny" (p. 1026), and Tololyan's (1986) "projective narrative" captures a similar idea. Kelman (2001) used the term *national narrative*, which he defined as "an account of the group's origins, its history, and its relationship to the land" (p. 191). Although this definition stresses the past, Kelman (2001) sees national identity as encompassing "[the group's] past history, *current purposes, and future prospects* [*italics added*]" (p. 191). Ashmore et al. (2001) used the term *group narrative*, which they described as "a group-level analog to life story and personal narrative at the individual level" (p. 236).

Story of my group includes the person's ideas, emotions, and mental pictures about the past of the group, including the group's origins (e.g., for some African Americans, "We were brought to this country against our will as slaves almost four centuries ago") and historical ups and downs (e.g., for some Serbs in the former Yugoslavia, "The Turks massacred our people at the Battle of Kosovo in 1389"); the present status and condition of the group (e.g., for some Republicans in Northern Ireland, "The British continue to run our lives and insist on protecting the English in the country"); and the likely future (e.g., for many Israelis and Palestinians, "With all the violence, I don't see that we will ever have peace here, and they will continue to kill us"). A group story not only can contain actual historical people, events, and periods but also might include mythical constructions of the past (Tololyan, 1986, p. 101).

The following examples provide a sense of group narrative as an element of collective identification. By means of open- and closed-ended questions, Liu et al. (1999) obtained perceptions of the

history of Aotearoa/New Zealand held by both Maori (Polynesian-descended) and Pakeha (European-descended) participants. Although not assessed as a story, such historical perceptions form a crucial component of an individual's story of his or her group's past (the major historical events and periods and how these are defined and evaluated). On the basis of many years working with both Israelis and Palestinians in problem-solving work groups, Kelman (2001) identified the key elements of each group's story as understood by individuals.

There are, in addition, social representations of each group's story. These are conveyed in official government statements and are expressed in the media, educational and legal systems, and the like. The dominant groups in a society are able to craft master narratives (for their own group and for others) that bolster existing status and power differentials by both hiding and highlighting. For example, the master narrative about Black-White relations in the United States highlights "positive" events such as the Civil War (which is often phrased as a war against slavery) and the Civil Rights Movement (which is depicted as a nonviolent social movement by Blacks that caused Whites to see the error of prejudice and to undertake corrective actions that have leveled the playing field). This same master narrative, however, hides the brutal details of slavery, the grinding indecency of Jim Crow laws, the long history of lynchings (Dray, 2002), and the very existence of racial pogroms such as occurred in Tulsa, Oklahoma in 1921 (Hirsch, 2002). In our proposed framework, the social representations of group story and the accompanying social realities such as power differentials are part of the context in which individuals develop, experience, and enact their collective identities (see discussion of context below).

Researchers interested in expanding our understanding of the collective identity element narrative might consider developing standardized procedures for assessing collective identity narratives. To date almost all research has used interviews, often relatively unstructured. One possibility would be to devise a semi-structured format, perhaps modeled after the Life Story Interview procedure developed by McAdams (1985, 1993; McAdams, Diamond, de St. Aubin, & Mansfield, 1997) to assess individuals' personal life stories. Another more difficult but likely very productive option would be to develop a standardized self-report questionnaire. Both of these possibilities might be guided, in part, by the procedures of Liu et al. (1999). To ascertain perceptions of the past and present, participants could be asked about key historical events, periods, laws, people, social movements, and the like (e.g., for Whites and Blacks in the United States, these include the hidden as well as the highlighted elements in the cultural master narrative—slavery, lynchings, and pogroms as well as the Civil War and the Civil Rights Movement, Markus Garvey as well as Martin Luther King). In addition, questions could be asked about patterns through history (e.g., "Over the past \_\_\_ years, has the economic/political/social status position of Black people in America improved a lot, improved a little, stayed about the same, worsened a little, worsened a lot?"). In terms of the future, items could be crafted to get at perceptions of optimism versus pessimism about the lot of African Americans and the state of relations between Whites and Blacks. Finally, questions could be framed to get at respondents' ideas about how the past, present, and future are linked (or seen as relatively independent).

### *Key Issues for Consideration*

Our description of identity elements raises a variety of questions that need to be addressed in future work, both to establish the utility of the present framework and to put it to work in the service of scientific progress. In this section, we address a number of these issues. First, we comment on our process of differentiating and labeling of elements. Second, we discuss measurement issues involved in the assessment of identity elements. We then discuss individual differences in the variability versus stability of the experience and expression of collective identity elements. Finally, we briefly consider development of collective identity.

*Labeling.* In the course of our survey of the literature, it became apparent that (a) different terms are often used to refer to psychologically similar or identical concepts and (b) the same term is often used to refer to psychologically different concepts. In our taxonomy, we try to clarify the semantic picture by retaining the terms that are most commonly used and avoiding terms that are most ambiguous. We suggest labels that, in our opinion, best capture the construct in question, and we decide against labels that even if often used are problematic.

To illustrate the problems, we offer a few brief examples. First, there is the case of different terms that refer to the same construct. We have labeled one of the elements in our taxonomy *importance*. (Here we refer only to explicit importance.) This concept is commonly included in studies of collective identification, but it appears in various guises. Terms that we believe are, for the most part, identical in their connotations include *significance*, *strength*, and *centrality*. In each case, the core concept appears to refer to some degree of explicit endorsement of an identity as important to the self. We decided in favor of *importance* instead of *significance*, *strength*, or *centrality* because of frequency of usage and clarity and precision of meaning. *Significance* is seldom used and raises the unrelated and potentially confusing issue of statistical significance. The term *strength* is widely used, but (a) conceptually it implies more than hierarchical placement of an identity in the self-system, suggesting—in addition to importance—such elements as goodness of fit, affective attachment, and likely more, and (b) following the conceptual generality and vagueness of the term, strength is generally operationalized as a multidimensional construct. *Centrality* is often used, but it uses a less apt metaphor. Importance implies a low to high single dimension. Centrality calls to mind a two-dimensional image in which being less central could involve distance from the center in any one of 360 different degrees of variation. Also, the terms *central* and *peripheral* are not as easy for the modal person to understand as is the notion of low to high importance.

*Salience* is perhaps the best example of the other form of confusion, namely the use of the same term to refer to different concepts. Within Stryker's identity theory, salience hierarchy refers to the probability of an identity being invoked in a situation (Stryker & Serpe, 1982) or to a "readiness to act out an identity" (Stryker & Serpe, 1994, p. 17). Within a general social cognition paradigm, more familiar to psychological social psychologists, salience is often subdivided into chronic and acute forms, the former more similar to the Stryker definition in its emphasis on stable dispositions and the latter referring to situational variations in the degree to which an identity is activated (Fiske & Taylor, 1991). Sellers and his colleagues (Sellers et al., 1998) proposed salience as one dimension of African American racial identity but

defined it in situational terms as “the extent to which one’s race is a relevant part of one’s self concept *at a particular moment or in a particular situation* [italics added]” (p. 24), thus making the situation (or the interaction between person and situation) the unit of analysis. Because of the considerable variation in the use of the term *salience* (recognized by Sellers et al., 1998, as well; see their Footnote 4, p. 24), we chose not to include the term as one of the key elements in our analysis (but some aspects of the concept are included in our discussion of implicit importance).

Such divergent meanings for the same term are problematic in terms of our goal to identify a set of dimensions that can be used with consensus. At the same time, the overlap suggests points of ambiguity for the underlying theories as well. It is beyond the scope of this article to engage in theory construction. Nonetheless, in making our definitions clear and in noting areas of inconsistency, we hope to contribute to clearer theoretical formulations in the future.

*Measurement strategies.* It will be desirable to assess elements of collective identity via procedures beyond the currently favored direct self-report questions that ask respondents to summarize patterns of thought, feeling, or behavior. Cook and Selltiz (1964) identified both why this expansion of assessment methods is desirable and what alternative procedures might be used. Regarding the former, each general form of measurement has its unique strengths and weaknesses. Self-report is strong because people can report a great deal about themselves in an economical fashion. At the same time, self-report techniques assume that people are *able* to know their internal thoughts, feelings, and patterns of action and that they are *willing* to report these. Both assumptions, of course, can be unwarranted, and this is especially true of personally and socially important topics (Cook & Selltiz, 1964; Greenwald et al., 2002).

Cook and Selltiz (1964) suggested the following alternative methods of assessing attitude, which are also appropriate for measuring the proposed elements of collective identity: observation of overt behavior, responses to partially structured stimuli, objective task performance, and physiological assessments. Although self-report is a behavior, it is action without consequences. When using the observation of overt behavior approach, one assesses the person’s actions in real-world contexts where behavior has implications for self and others. Observation of overt behavior might be used to assess several proposed elements (e.g., social embeddedness) by use of peer reports (e.g., Funder & Colvin, 1991). Responses to partially structured stimuli, or projective techniques, get at attitude or collective identity as respondents nonconsciously project their evaluations or identifications into responses to very loosely defined tasks. The interview procedure used by Chatman et al. (2003) to assess implicit centrality importance is like a projective technique, though the stimuli are more structured than classic projective measures, such as the Thematic Apperception Test. In objective task performance measures, the respondent is doing some task (e.g., memorizing a list of words), and attitude or collective identity is revealed by systematic biases in performance. In recent years, a variety of cognitive task performance measures such as the IAT have been developed to assess nonconscious attitudes and stereotypes, and they can be fruitfully applied to selected facets of collective identification. Diary keeping and other experience sampling methods also can be used to indirectly assess some components of collective identity.

In physiological assessments, it is the person’s bodily response that indexes an underlying attitude. To date, most such procedures measure degree of arousal and thus are most appropriate for the proposed personal evaluation element of collective identity (but degree only, not direction). However, with advances in social psychophysiology (Cacioppo, Berntson, Sheridan, & McClintock, 2000; Cacioppo, Petty, Losch, & Crites, 1994) and social cognitive neuroscience (Ochsner & Lieberman, 2001), physiological approaches to collective identity assessment will undoubtedly grow.

*Variability.* People have relatively enduring dispositions/attributes/orientations and at the same time can vary in how they experience these. Further, we suggest that there are individual differences in the degree of variability of the above-described collective identity elements that will help in predicting important outcomes.<sup>10</sup> It is possible to think of each of the elements identified in Table 1 as having both an average and variability. This is certainly easiest to imagine for evaluation, but we believe that it is possible to conceive of average and variability even for such elements as narrative and ideology.

We regard variability as having two related components: variance and range. Variance is an index of how much variability a person experiences around his or her average level of, for example, “private evaluation of my group.” Range has two subcomponents: how high a person goes and how low a person goes. It is important to emphasize that both variance and range apply to each element described above, and it is possible for some elements to have high variability while others have low variability.

Because we are not aware of any work on variability of collective identity, we use findings from the literature on the stability of global personal self-esteem to illustrate why the variability of collective identity elements is potentially important. To measure the stability of self-esteem, investigators first collect multiple assessments of state self-esteem and then compute the standard deviation of these scores (e.g., Kernis, Paradise, Whitaker, Wheatman, & Goldman, 2000). Self-esteem stability as assessed by Kernis and his colleagues is only modestly related to mean level of self-esteem and to M. Rosenberg’s Stability of Self Scale (Wright, 2001). Applied to collective identification, we can speculate that the stability of a collective identity element is only modestly related to average levels of that collective identification dimension and that stability is related to important identity-relevant outcomes. Of particular potential relevance to collective identity, Kernis and Waschull (1995) provided evidence that individuals who have high but unstable self-esteem are most likely to respond defensively to ego threats. This is consistent with Baumeister, Smart, and Boden’s (1996) argument that harm doing derives not from low self-esteem but instead from “inflated, unstable, or tentative beliefs in the self’s superiority” (p. 5) when this sense of self is threatened. This line of reasoning is very similar to Staub’s (2001) suggestion that societies that have a “self-concept of superiority” (p. 168)—

<sup>10</sup> In this discussion, we consider variability within individuals, in terms of fluctuations between situations or across time. It would also be of interest, however, to consider variability between individuals, asking questions that dealt with the variation of a particular element (or several elements) within a given sample. Thus, for example, one might explore the degree to which the importance of a national identity varied within a sample of U.S. citizens, before and after an event such as September 11, 2001, hypothesizing either increased or decreased variability depending on the theoretical model being used.

that is, a highly positive view of one's group coupled with feelings of vulnerability and uncertainty—are more prone to genocide and mass violence. Thus, it may be that people with extremely positive and highly variable group evaluation are especially prone to committing intergroup violence.

The proposed construct of variability could be further developed if the following issues were addressed. First, regarding the question of why there might be high or low variability in any given element (whether variance or range), both personal factors and environmental factors may be involved. In terms of personality variables, self-monitoring and internal-external locus of control (Snyder & Ickes, 1985) may be related to variability. Each of these aspects of personality may predispose some people to consistency in experience and enactment of collective identities across time and settings, whereas others may alter themselves to fit differing situations or be nonstrategically buffeted about by changing environmental conditions. As another possibility, identity certainty (Swann, 1990) may predispose individuals to seek out people and places such that the proposed collective identity elements are experienced in a relatively consistent (low variability) manner. In looking at environmental factors, we might want to ascertain the average environment in which the person finds him- or herself. A person who lives, works, plays, and shops in relatively homogeneous environments with regard to the social category in question (and thus scores high on social embeddedness with low variance) will likely experience relatively low levels of variability on other elements. Also, variability may be affected by the social norms that pervade these average environments, especially when people have to negotiate multiple, possibly competing norms regarding their social category and regarding cross-category relationships.

Second, approaches used currently to assess self-esteem stability could be used to measure identity stability as well. For example, investigators can calculate the variability of a given collective identity element from discrete judgments by participants. Using experience sampling methods (e.g., diary or beeper studies), respondents could be asked to record on multiple occasions information about how they categorized themselves in each interaction, the level of public and private regard in that interaction setting, and how important the social category was in the particular situation (Savin-Williams & Demo, 1983, used such an approach to assess variations in personal self-esteem). Another approach is to ask participants to provide variability data directly. Instruments modeled after M. Rosenberg's (1979) Stability of Self Scale could be constructed for the collective identity elements proposed here. It is also possible to ask respondents directly to give estimates of range. Ashmore and Del Boca (1987) did this successfully with multiple dimensions of self-perceived physical appearance. Their procedures could be adapted to index the range of many of the elements of collective identity.

*Development of collective identity.* The approach in this article has been distinctly social psychological. With the exception of our consideration of variability, we have treated collective identity at a single point in time. This was done as a needed simplification so that we could lay out in sufficient detail our proposed framework. In this brief section, we acknowledge that to fully understand the contents and processes of collective identification, it will be necessary to add a detailed consideration of collective identity over and through time, both for society and for the individual.

How individuals define self socially and experience and enact collective identities varies as a function of historical time. As an

example of this interplay between collective identification and historical context, we can look to the work of Stewart and Healy (1989) on women's identity formation. Comparing three cohorts of women who were born at different times during the 20th century (approximately 1910, 1920, and 1927), these investigators found that events occurring during the transition to adulthood had more impact than events earlier or later and that the nature of these critical events influenced attitudes about work, family, and the political role of women. Although this study did not assess collective identity specifically, in the ways suggested here, it does provide a perspective that is useful.

The fleshing out of the proposed framework will also require consideration of time in terms of the individual's progression through the life course. How do children learn about social categories? How do adolescents and young adults come to include social group memberships within their overall sense of who they are? How do adults integrate (or not) their role-based selves such as parent and employee with their self-definitions as a member of collective groups? Developmental psychologists have gathered considerable evidence regarding these questions, and recently there have been calls for multidimensional approaches to collective identity development research that are compatible with the general approach here advocated (Ruble et al., in press).

### Interplay of Collective Identity Elements

Our approach in this article has been one of deconstruction, attempting to identify and define discrete components of collective identity in order to see how each piece works separately. Once distinguished, we hope it will then be possible to combine elements in ways that can be specified, in advance, to be related to particular outcomes of interest. As a first step toward this goal, it is necessary to explore how each element relates to other elements of collective identity.

In this section we discuss studies that provide information on the relations between elements of collective identity as conceptualized in this article. Our analysis is limited to elements that have been consensually defined and for which relatively pure measures have been used. Further, these comparisons are limited to elements that can be assessed quantitatively and hence are amenable to statistical analysis. Because most researchers have in the past used multielement measures of collective identity, the available data are limited to the small number of studies that use unidimensional measures of private regard, public regard, importance, attachment, and ideology.

The available correlations among these elements of collective identity reveal a considerable range of covariation. The correlations between public regard and explicit importance tend to be small or in the negative range, indicating that importance of a collective identity to an individual's overall self-concept is at most weakly associated with the perception that one's group is evaluated positively or negatively by others (e.g., Crocker et al., 1994; Deaux, Reid, Martin, & Bikmen, 2003). Most other correlations are in the moderate range. Measures of ideology in our sample of studies tend to correlate modestly (approximately  $r = .20$ ) with private regard (Gurin & Townsend, 1986; Vandiver et al., 2002). More extreme ideologies (e.g., Liss, O'Connor, Morosky, & Crawford's, 2001, "radical feminism" and "conservatism" or Henderson-King & Stewart's, 1997, "feminist analysis") tend to

have somewhat stronger correlations with importance ( $r_s = .34$  to  $.41$ ).

Given that self-esteem protection/enhancement is a powerful self-motive (cf. Baumeister, 1998, pp. 688–691), one might expect that importance would be positively related to both private regard and the affective aspect of sense of interdependence (belonging, attachment). Correlations between importance and private regard are indeed positive and range from a low of  $.32$  to a high of  $.55$  for a variety of ethnic groups (e.g., Crocker et al., 1994; Deaux, Reid, et al., 2003; Henderson-King & Stewart, 1997; Hinkle et al., 1989; Liss et al., 2001). One exception occurred in a study of recent immigrant groups, in which correlations were more modest, though still positive, ranging from  $.21$  to  $.30$  (Deaux, Reid, et al., 2003). Regarding the expected positive correlation between importance and sense of interdependence/attachment, Tropp and Wright (2001) reported a correlation of  $.27$ . These correlations point to considerable variability in the relationship of the discussed elements and lead us to suspect that group members can evaluate their group positively even in the absence of a strong sense of identification (importance) or attachment to the group and vice versa.

Correlations between attachment and private regard are also moderate, ranging from  $.27$  in a study of organizational identification (Bergami & Bagozzi, 2000) to  $.44$  in a study that asked participants to report on their most important group affiliation (Jackson, 2002). These correlations suggest that affective commitment can exist in the absence of positive in-group evaluation and vice versa (see also Ellemers et al., 1999).

None of the observed correlations among elements are consistently high (above  $.60$ ). This suggests that although the correlations among elements are usually of moderate size and in the expected direction, collective identity is not a unidimensional construct. Given the range of correlations observed so far, we concur with others that collective identity must be considered to be multidimensional (Ashmore et al., 2001; Deaux, 1996; Ellemers et al., 1999; Jackson, 2002; Phinney, 1992; Sellers et al., 1998). It seems quite likely that the relationships among identity elements will vary as a function of the particular collective identity (e.g., religion, gender, race) under investigation, the characteristics of the subject population (e.g., first- vs. second-generation immigrants), and contextual variables (e.g., competitive vs. cooperative intergroup interdependence), as well as the particular elements being considered.

One approach used to investigate the interplay of collective identity elements is to create distinct profiles of identities. Using cluster analysis, Chatman et al. (2001) identified six distinct patterns of ethnic identity among a sample of African American youths and showed that these identity profiles differentially predicted attitudes and race-related behaviors. To illustrate, they identified a profile labeled “proud” that was characterized by high levels of pride (our private regard), low levels of importance, and moderate levels of cultural connectedness (similar to our ideology); respondents who exemplified this profile were significantly less biased in their peer preferences than were participants fitting most of the other profiles. Another of their profiles, labeled “culturally connected,” was high on all three variables (importance, pride, and cultural connectedness); respondents fitting this profile were significantly *more* biased in their peer preferences than most other groups. In a related effort that builds on ideas from the literature on attachment styles, Jackson and Smith (1999) predicted

that people would differ in the way in which they relate to social groups. Using factor analysis, they identified two profiles of identification (secure and insecure), analogous to the two basic attachment styles, and found that each profile consisted of a distinct pattern of collective identity elements and was related to distinct identity-relevant outcomes (e.g., intergroup bias). For example, participants who were classified as having a secure identity—characterized by high in-group attraction (a combination of our personal regard and affective attachment), a strong sense of personal independence (not an element of collective identification), and a cooperative orientation toward out-groups (similar to our ideology)—were more likely to evaluate the relevant out-group positively than were participants classified as having an insecure identity—characterized by high attraction and high interdependency (our mutual fate) coupled with the perception that the interests of the in-group are incompatible with those of the out-group (ideology).

These studies suggest that collective identity elements do, in fact, combine in various and sometimes unexpected ways to create unique profiles of collective identification. Research on this issue has only just begun, yet we are confident that this type of approach is extremely useful for furthering our understanding of collective identity and improving our ability to predict important outcomes.

Another issue relevant to a discussion of the interplay of elements is the likelihood that there are higher order constructs that involve several of the proposed elements. This thinking is reflected in the existence of measures that already represent combinations of elements, such as pictorial measures of self–group overlap or merging. The Inclusion of Ingroup in the Self Scale (IIS), developed by Tropp and Wright (2001), for example, uses a Venn-diagram metaphor of self and group as a series of overlapping circles in order to assess psychological merging of self and in-group. In a series of five studies and across several samples varying in ethnicity and gender, they demonstrated that the IIS taps a person’s sense of psychological interconnectedness with the in-group. Specifically, the IIS was strongly associated with a number of collective identity elements: the degree to which participants saw themselves as typical group members (our goodness of fit), evaluated their group favorably (our private regard), and considered membership in the in-group as an important part of their self-image (our explicit importance). IIS scores were also strongly related to how close respondents felt to other in-group members and how much they felt understood by them (our affective commitment). Finally, the IIS predicted support for collective action on behalf of the group (our behavioral involvement). Thus, the IIS appears to capture multiple elements of collective identity, including cognitive, affective, and behavioral elements (Tropp & Wright, 2001; see also Perreault & Bourhis, 1999, for a similar scale).

Schubert and Otten (2002) recently introduced a similar pictorial measure (Overlap of Self, In-Group, and Out-Group; OSIO), which they conceptualize as tapping a person’s sense of perceived inclusion in the group. In contrast to Tropp and Wright (2001), who did not consider the intergroup context, Schubert and Otten argued that the meaning of being a member in a given in-group varies as a function of the relationship between in-group and out-group. The OSIO consists of seven diagrams in which the social category or group is depicted by a circle, and the person, by a much smaller circle. The diagrams show the two circles representing self and group first clearly separated, then moving closer,

touching, overlapping, and finally the larger circle (representing group) completely surrounding or including the smaller circle (representing self). Participants are instructed to “choose the picture that best represents your closeness to the group of \_\_\_\_”; they complete three such measures, one in which the group circle represents the in-group, one in which the group circle represents the out-group, and one in which the two circles are of equal size and represent in-group and out-group. The advantage of this measure, according to its authors, is that it more realistically depicts the perceptual reality of being included in a group than the IIS and that it allows the researcher to simultaneously assess in-group identification and intergroup perceptions. The OSIO scale was strongly correlated with a global measure of identification (i.e., one containing multiple elements as specified in this article) and the degree of perceived similarity to the group (our goodness of fit). The degree to which the measure tapped a group’s positive evaluation (our private regard) and its emotional significance (our affective commitment), however, varied with changing intergroup contexts. Specifically, only when the intergroup context was presented as conflictual (as opposed to cooperative) was the correlation between the OSIO and private regard significant.

It is important to keep in mind that pictorial measures may be especially sensitive to variations in context: As Schubert and Otten (2002) pointed out, the interpretation of their OSIO scale depends in part on the intergroup context. Also, attempts to pinpoint which aspects of collective identity are captured by the IIS, for example, yielded sizable correlations with a large number of elements (Tropp & Wright, 2001), suggesting that the measure may capture several different elements.

### Outcomes

In discussing outcomes, we refer to the range of behaviors, events, and conditions that may be predictable from collective identity and whose occurrence and variability are in large part the *raison d’être* for studying collective identification. As noted earlier in our discussion of behavioral involvement as an element of collective identification, we believe that a line can be drawn between behaviors that instantiate an identity and behaviors that are the consequences of an identity (although admittedly that line is not always easy to draw). In our view, an outcome of identification is something whose relationship to identity is not automatically or obviously implied but which must be linked by some model of psychological process and theoretically derived. Thus, wearing a T-shirt that identifies oneself as a member of a fraternity or sorority can be considered a measure of behavioral involvement, directly implied by the categorization. In contrast, derogation of an out-group is not a necessary consequence of identification (cf. Brewer 2001; Brown, 2000). But collective identity can be linked to out-group discrimination within the context of Tajfel’s (1978, 1981) social identity theory by principles of social comparison and group differentiation.

This distinction between behavioral involvement and outcome is not always evident in the identity literature, but we believe that it is an important distinction to make if the concept of collective identity is to be maximally useful. It is, for example, rather straightforward to predict that one element of identification (e.g., importance) will be related to another element (e.g., some form of behavioral involvement such as volunteering time to one’s group). As we discussed earlier, such associations are probably moderated

by a number of situational and contextual variables. At the same time, questions about the relationship between them are more likely to be framed in terms of when they will be related rather than whether they have a connection. In contrast, investigators sometimes fail to make explicit the logic underlying a predicted link between some element of identification and an outcome that is not directly implied by the concept—for example, the connection between identity importance and personal self-esteem. It is this lack of explanation that keeps the boundary between behavioral involvement and outcome somewhat murky—a condition that we hope can be improved by our analysis.

Outcomes of identification can be predicted and assessed at a variety of levels—personal, interpersonal, group, or intergroup—depending on the theoretical questions of interest. Outcomes can also vary in their evaluative implications: They may be positive, as in the case of academic achievement, or negative, as exemplified by gang violence and social disruption.<sup>11</sup> Here we describe just a few of the outcomes that have been linked to collective identification. These selections in no way exhaust the possible outcomes that elements of collective identity conceivably predict; rather, they simply illustrate some of the connections that past investigators have made.

### *Physical and Psychological Well-Being*

A variety of psychological theories have suggested connections between one’s identification with a group and state of well-being, often based on the premise that people will incorporate the views and evaluations of others in their definitions and evaluations of self. Thus, it is reasoned, a person who identifies with a group that is stigmatized by society at large will, as a consequence, come to accept that evaluation of the group and then internalize it in the form of negative self-evaluation. Generally, this form of outcome is assessed at the individual level of analysis, considering how group identification affects some measure of personal self-esteem or psychological well-being. In fact, this predicted link between group stigmatization and lower self-esteem has often not been supported (cf. Crocker & Major, 1989), and other theoretical formulations have been required.

Alternatively, some investigators suggest, particularly in the case of ethnic identity, that identification serves as a buffer to the potentially stressful effects of race discrimination and hence that the importance of identity should predict more positive psychological and physical health (Sellers, Caldwell, Schmeelk-Cone, & Zimmerman, 2003). Here the necessary theoretical work requires stipulating how the buffering function of identity operates, a task that might be facilitated by comparing different identity elements (e.g., public regard might be related to a tendency to perceive more discrimination in one’s daily life; social embeddedness might be related to the availability of coping strategies for dealing with discriminatory treatment).

It should be noted that these outcome measures of self-esteem and well-being are distinct from the element of evaluation as presented earlier. As an element of identification, the measure of evaluation is directed at the specific collective identity of interest.

<sup>11</sup> It is important to note that whether an outcome is considered positive or negative may vary considerably depending on who the perceiver is: One person’s terrorist, for example, can be another person’s freedom fighter.

In contrast, the outcomes considered here are more global assessments of individual well-being (i.e., "I am a good person" as opposed to "I think my group is good"). These outcome measures of physical and psychological health are linked to identity by virtue of a theoretical network rather than being partial definitions of the identification itself. Once again, the need for conceptual precision is underlined.

### *Academic Achievement*

Individual performance in school settings, both K–12 and university, is another individual-level outcome that has frequently been associated with identification. Ethnic identity has been most often linked to this outcome, but some investigators have considered more circumscribed, context-relevant identities such as "jock" and "brain" (Barber, Eccles, & Stone, 2001; Eccles & Barber, 1999). The work of Eccles and her colleagues provides a nice illustration of this use of identity as a predictor of academic outcomes. They proposed a theoretical network in which activity involvement on the part of adolescents is linked to identity exploration and development. In their model, the peer group prototype for a category helps to define the content of the selected identity and in turn influences outcomes. They found, for example, that students who identified as "brains" in high school were more likely to have graduated from college by the age of 24. Other outcomes assessed in these studies included use of alcohol and marijuana and various indices of psychological adjustment.

A study by Deaux, Steele, et al. (2003) showing the relationship between ethnic identification of West Indian immigrants and performance on an academic achievement test is another example. In this case, the theory of stereotype threat (Steele, 1997; Steele, Spencer, & Aronson, 2002) provided the conceptual basis for predicting performance outcomes from measures of ethnic identification. Other outcomes that could be of interest in the domain of academic achievement include class attendance, consultation with teachers and professors, choice of curriculum, and the use of university resources (e.g., libraries, computer facilities).

### *Interpersonal Relations*

SIT provides a classic case of a theory that relates the collective identification of individuals to their reactions and behaviors toward others and, in particular, others who represent members of other identity groups. Thus, in the minimal group paradigm, participants are asked to allocate rewards to themselves and to another individual who is a member of a designated out-group. As predicted by principles of social comparison and intergroup differentiation, it is typically found that one allocates more reward to one's own group than to the other group.

Other interpersonal outcomes that might be predicted by collective identity include prejudice and discrimination toward a member of an out-group, prosocial behavior directed toward a member of an out-group, and the formation of personal relationships with a member of an out-group. In these examples, interpersonal outcomes are assessed at the individual level, considering the behavior of one person toward another. It is also possible, however, to consider a variety of interpersonal outcomes that might be assessed at a group level. For example, one might link average levels of collective identification among group members to the prevalence

of friendships, the pattern of social networks, or the incidence of aggression and criminal activity between members of different groups.

### *Organizational Commitment*

Recently, a number of investigators have considered the role of collective identification in organizational contexts (e.g., Hogg & Terry, 2001). Among the work-related outcomes that have been related to level of identification are employee turnover, absenteeism and sick leave, and productivity. Tyler and Blader (2001), for example, used measures of identification to predict the likelihood of engaging in what they termed *extra-role behaviors*, which included such things as hindering one's supervisor (inversely related) and volunteering to help orient new employees. Both Tyler and Blader (2001) and Abrams et al. (1998) found that measures of organizational identification predicted turnover intention (i.e., those who are less strongly identified with the organization are more likely to indicate an interest in leaving the company).

As noted by Van Dick and Wagner (2002), organizational identification can be conceptualized in a number of different ways. For example, one could focus on a person's identification with the company as a whole, with some particular unit or position within the company (e.g., word processors, accountants, welders), or with a profession that is not restricted in its definition to the particular organization (e.g., psychologist). Alternatively, some investigators have considered how a conceptually independent identity, such as gender or ethnic group membership, might operate in an organizational context. These distinctions are important ones, and they relate to our earlier point concerning the distinction between behavioral involvement, as an element of identification, and conceptually independent behaviors that can be analyzed as outcomes of identification. Thus, intentions to leave or stay with the company might best be considered measures of behavioral involvement of an organizational identity while at the same time being interesting outcomes of ethnic or gender identification that would be moderated by particular structural conditions within the company.

### *Civic and Social Engagement*

Although some activities in which a person might engage can be most appropriately considered indices of behavioral involvement (e.g., signing a petition in favor of Israel sponsored by a Jewish organization if one is Jewish; donating to the United Negro College Fund if one is African American), other behaviors that can be described as civic or social engagement are not necessarily linked to the identity concept per se and hence must be predicted on the basis of some theoretical notions. Within the political science literature, a common outcome variable is voting behavior, wherein a particular identity group (e.g., ethnic, gender) is linked to participation in the election process. To the extent that a candidate explicitly represents one's own identity group, we would regard the behavior as an index of behavioral involvement. Often, however, the connection between identity group and candidate or referendum is not so apparent and may be more subtly mediated by self-interest in the positions or likely votes of a candidate. In such cases, the resultant political behavior might be most appropriately considered an outcome of identification.

Other examples of civic or social engagement as possible outcomes of collective identification might include volunteering time and effort for community causes, becoming a member of a school or community board, or participating in public protests or demonstrations. As in the case of other domains, one can choose to assess the outcome at the level of individual behavior, or one can develop aggregate measures that will predict group-level outcomes. In the latter case, outcomes might include volunteer rates of community members or the percentage of parents involved in the school system, each of which could be compared across communities rather than assessing individual differences within communities.

The above examples are intended to be illustrative rather than exhaustive of the types of outcomes that collective identification might predict. Clearly the choice of possible outcomes, either singly or in combination, depends on one's theoretical predispositions as well as on the general domain of phenomena in which one is interested. Our goal is not to elaborate specific hypotheses about how particular elements of collective identity relate to outcomes. That we leave to others. Rather, our aim in this article is to provide a comprehensive catalog that researchers can use in principled ways to decide which elements of collective identity to include in their attempts to account for personally and socially important outcomes.

### Person in Situation in Context

A basic proposition of our framework is that collective identity must be considered in social context. We further argue that it is fruitful to differentiate situation from context. Each is described, and the ways in which context influences and conditions both collective identity and situation are discussed.

#### *Distinguishing Situation From Context*

Situation is spatiotemporally specific. It is a particular concrete physical and social setting in which a person is embedded at any one point in time. Some examples of situation are as follows: on the first day of school, just after lunch, a student in a fourth-grade classroom being the only African American among many Whites; a man, fresh from law school, being interviewed for his first job by a woman; in October 2001, in a political science class at a university in New York City, an Arab American discussing with non-Arab Americans the September 11 attack.

Context is the surround for situations (and individuals in situations). Context is the *general and continuing* multilayered and interwoven set of material realities, social structures, patterns of social relations, and shared belief systems that surround any given situation. For example, the above-described situation involving an Arab American student is embedded in a particular university, a specific city, a particular country, and the world at large. The Arab American student is also embedded in other contexts: family, peer group, and perhaps religious group. These contexts are certainly not static, but at the same time, each is relatively enduring in terms of the constituent things, people, relations among people, social structure, and the like.

The collective identity perspectives that emphasize situations constitute an intriguingly disparate set of social scientists and humanists. Situations are the focus of SIT and SCT, and the preferred methodological approach is to manipulate some aspect of

the situation that theoretically primes an intergroup (vs. interpersonal) coding of self and simultaneously makes salient a particular collective identity for self in the situation (e.g., a Scarlet Knights banner on the wall of the lab nonconsciously causes the participant to see self as a Rutgers University student). Situations are also the major focus of many symbolic interactionists (Gleason, 1983) and those in sociology, anthropology, and the cultural studies who emphasize how collective identities are created and negotiated in face-to-face interaction (Eriksen, 2001; Gordon, 1994; Holland, 1997; Howard, 2000; Nagel, 1996). Finally, psychological social psychologists who emphasize impression management also focus on individuals in face-to-face interaction situations (e.g., Schlenker & Weigold, 1992).

The general idea that individual thought, feeling, and behavior depend on social context is widely shared, though it is seldom fully exploited by social psychologists concerned with identity (Kinket & Verkuyten, 1997, 1999). Following Tajfel (1969), most often context is simply regarded as the source of content concerning social categories (e.g., society provides the stereotypes concerning social groups). We build on developmentalists such as Bronfenbrenner (1979, 1994) and Jessor (1993) in laying out a more extended logic of identity in situation in context.

Contexts vary in their inclusiveness from relatively small and local to very large and general. Returning to the fourth-grade classroom example above, that situation is embedded within the following contexts: a school and school system, a neighborhood and a city/suburb/town, a state and region of the country, a country, a region of the world, and the world. Further, the individual pupil is embedded within contexts from family and kin group to peer group and so on. How narrowly or broadly one draws lines between and around contexts is not a simple task. Contexts can also be overlapping. As Jessor (1993, Figure 1) indicated, school and neighborhood are partially overlapping. How one empirically specifies contexts will depend on the researcher's goals and the feasibility of various partitions.

Each context has material, social structural, and sociopsychological components. Regarding the material facet of contexts and continuing with the same classroom example, the classroom, the school, and the school district consist of people and things (e.g., Are there many or few African Americans in the school and school district overall? Is the classroom/school/school district physically in good or poor shape?). The social structural facet of context comprises the formal positions, rules, and procedures (e.g., Is ability grouping the accepted procedure for organizing classes? What proportion of those in power positions in the school/school district are African American?). The sociopsychological component of contexts includes (a) patterns of interpersonal behavior (e.g., At lunch do minority and majority group students eat in separate or mixed groupings? How many students have other-ethnic-group friends?); (b) shared beliefs (e.g., Is ethnicity seen as a major or minor divide in the school? By majority group students? By minority group students?); and (c) informal rules and procedures (e.g., Do the school/school district faculty/administrators believe in a multicultural approach to education? If yes, what are the informal norms about how this actually gets implemented in classes?).

### *Context Influences and Conditions: Individual and Situation*

A crucial point for our analysis is the proposition that how an individual experiences and enacts his or her collective identity in any given situation depends on the contexts surrounding the person in the situation. This is true for each of the elements that we have identified. This proposition goes substantially beyond what has been done to date in treating collective identification as a contextualized phenomenon. Most extant work focuses on how the (immediate) situation makes a particular collective identity salient (priming) and assumes that the broader social context (generally, society as a whole) provides the raw stuff of collective identities (What are the social categories? What are the rules for category assignment? What is the content of roles and stereotypes about a given category?).

Our argument is that surrounding contexts also directly impact and moderate the effects of both situations and collective identity. Regarding collective identity, we propose that context conditions categorization, evaluation, and all of the other elements in our scheme. (Also, as noted above, our framework suggests that contexts are crucial in learning collective identities as one goes through the life course.)

As an example of the influence of context on situation, consider the classroom example introduced earlier. The extreme numerical minority (or token) situation will have different personal and social meanings as a function of the surrounding contexts. Being in a minority in a specific classroom will be different if the school bulletin boards have Black as well as White faces, if an African American principal is at the door to greet the pupil and her parents, if the reading books have a variety of ethnic types, and so on. The only Black pupil in such a classroom will likely experience less situational salience of ethnicity, and if and when race is situationally salient, her African American identity will likely be experienced more positively than if these conditions are not present.

In considering how contexts shape the ways in which the child experiences and enacts her collective identity in a particular situation, we illustrate with the narrative element. For any given individual in a situation, it is possible and useful to distinguish *at each level of context* such things as (a) presence or absence of identity-relevant story or stories (e.g., Is the story of African Americans present in texts or bulletin board displays? Are they displayed only during Black History Month?); (b) how the stories, if present, are communicated (e.g., publicly? approvingly?); (c) content (e.g., evaluation and potency; e.g., both Serbs and Irish Republicans in Northern Ireland have group stories that feature being pushed around by other groups); (d) quality of the story in terms of organization and coherence. This list is not comprehensive and should be refined by viewing how McAdams (1997) and others have analyzed individual life stories.

At the most specific level, family, groups have different stories about themselves. Hughes and Chen (1999) reported work on this regarding African Americans, and White (2001) described how his Irish Republican activists were socialized in families that inculcated a detailed story of the oppression of their group by the English. Families differ in how often group stories are told, by whom the stories are told, and the content of the stories (e.g., differences are likely to exist between upper class and working-class versions of history).

At a somewhat more inclusive level, that of the school or school district, there is likely to be considerable variation in what group stories are present and how they are told. In some schools, just one basic story may be predominant (“we Americans”), whereas in other schools the stories of many different ethnic groups may be featured in texts, lessons, and bulletin boards. Also, what are the shared beliefs of the faculty and administrative staffs? If a multicultural formal education is offered, is it supported by the teachers and others, or is it simply “part of the job”? At more inclusive levels—state, regional, or country as a whole—how is a group’s story portrayed in the media and in legal and other social–political–economic systems? This raises the issue of who has the power to tell their story (Shotton & Gergen, 1989); this is, in some ways, the heart of identity politics.

In the preceding, we have emphasized context elements most directly related to the narrative element. There are, however, context variables that are likely to be important for many, if not all, of the posited elements of collective identity. As a start toward a list of these, we propose the following:

1. *Representation*: Are there other members of my group in the context? If so, is it token representation or some substantial number or proportion?

2. *Evaluation*: Is my group depicted and regarded favorably?

3. *Power/status*: Do members of my group have positions of authority or not?

4. *Personal relations between groups*: Are there friendships and romantic relations across group lines?

This last point is often overlooked and yet may be particularly important, because it may set the stage for individual citizens to accept or reject collective identity stories proffered by leaders. For example, Eriksen (2001) argued that Serbs accepted their leaders’ suggestion that the conflict with Kosovo was a religious war because, even though they and their Muslim neighbors were quite similar in a cultural sense, they did very little intermingling in terms of friendships and intermarriages. As a consequence, the idea that “they” are radically different and “we” should fight and kill them resonated with the everyday lived experience of them as foreign even though they were culturally similar and geographically close.

In addition, context variables that are not so directly linked to intergroup relations may be fruitfully considered. These include political variables (e.g., form of governance), economic factors (e.g., poverty rates for the country as a whole and for different social categories), and cultural values and norms (e.g., individualism–collectivism; cf. Staub, 2001).

The foregoing analysis suggests that when feasible, researchers would be advised to collect data at each of the context levels as it pertains to each individual-level identity element and then to include these components in, most likely, a hierarchical linear model analysis, because individuals will be nested within situations and contexts. As noted above, these context variables will include both material and demographic facts (e.g., number of classrooms with computers, per capita expenditures, number and proportion of groups of people in a school or neighborhood or state), social structural variables (e.g., official rules and procedures), patterns of interpersonal behavior (e.g., number of cross-group marriages), and shared beliefs (e.g., surveys of teachers or the community as a whole).

### Putting the Pieces Together

The major goal of this article is to identify the necessary and sufficient building blocks for the scientific analysis of collective identity. Thus, we have spent most of the preceding pages describing the individual pieces of this complex phenomenon. In this section, we start putting the pieces together. We do so in two complementary ways: conceptual/theoretical and empirical/methodological. First, we analyze four major individual-level theories of collective identity in terms of the proposed overarching framework. Second, we describe specific research paradigms that illustrate the kind of empirical approach called for by the framework.

#### *Using the Framework for Theoretical Comparisons*

We illustrate the usefulness of our approach by describing each of four prominent theories of collective identity in terms of our framework: SIT (Tajfel & Turner, 1979), SCT (Turner et al., 1987), Identity Theory (IT; Stryker, 1980, 2000), and Cross's (1971, 1991) stage theory of nigrescence. Table 8 summarizes our analysis. An X in the table indicates that the particular collective identity element is featured in the specific theory.<sup>12</sup>

*SIT.* Table 8 indicates that SIT features just three of the nine basic elements identified in our framework. Of these three, the heart of SIT is self-categorization. According to Tajfel and Turner (1979, 1986), putting oneself into a collective category is sufficient to set in motion processes leading to important intergroup outcomes, including the tendency to favor the in-group over the out-group.

According to SIT, people are motivated to claim positive collective self-definitions. Further, society specifies which social categories are more or less valuable. The evaluative sub-element public regard captures the person's perception of how his or her group is seen by others. If one is in a consensually valued group, and as a consequence, public regard is strongly positive, then in-group favoritism and high personal regard are the expected outcomes. If, however, one self-categorizes as a member of a societally devalued group wherein public regard is distinctly negative, the individual is motivated to change the situation. What form the individual's coping takes depends on the perceived legitimacy and permanence of group boundaries, which in our framework are facets of the ideology element. Coping could involve self-serving cognitive strategies such as changing the basis of intergroup comparison (if boundaries are seen as legitimate and impermeable), "passing" or actually moving into the other group (if boundaries are seen as legitimate and permeable), and collective action, such as seeking societal change (if boundaries are seen as illegitimate and impermeable; see Thoits & Virshup, 1997). In sum, SIT emphasizes self-categorization, public regard, and ideology,<sup>13</sup> with self-categorization seen as the crucial causal factor.

Critiques and revisions of SIT can also be situated within the proposed multidimensional organizing framework and gain some added clarity in so doing. Consider Rabbie's (1991) alternative explanation for in-group favoritism in terms of assumed reward interdependence. According to Rabbie, the processes and outcomes described in SIT do not occur because of self-categorization per se but because of an additional identity

consideration: "We are in this together and we will be treated alike." Thus, the processes can be interpreted as being due to the perception of mutual fate (one facet of our attachment/sense of interdependence element) rather than to only the element of categorization.

Although not emphasized in most SIT research, the present framework helps clarify just how collective identification is contextualized according to Tajfel and Turner (1979). SIT assumes a societal context that specifies both a hierarchical arrangement of groups (societal group valuation) and a dominant (widely shared and structurally supported) ideology concerning groups and intergroup relations (including issues of legitimacy and permanence). Further, according to SIT, the immediate situation determines whether the person adopts an interpersonal or intergroup self-construal. The theory details what happens when situational factors induce an intergroup self.

*SCT.* The third column summarizes the focus of SCT on self-categorization and self-attributed characteristics. Placing the individual in context as specified in our framework, SCT posits the following causal sequence: The immediate setting (our situation) shapes—primarily via the principle of metacontrast—how the person socially categorizes self (self-categorization: placing self in social category), which in turn causes depersonalization or defining self and acting in terms of the group stereotype (our self-attributed characteristics). According to Turner and his colleagues (1987), placing the self into a social category is based not just on situational factors but also on past experience, which we regard as chronic accessibility of the category, hence the X for implicit importance in the table. In terms of what we term *outcomes*, most SCT work has been directed at intragroup "dependent variables" such as cooperation and cohesiveness (Thoits & Virshup, 1997, pp. 116–117).

Just as SIT presumes but does not emphasize context, SCT assumes that there are socially shared or cultural stereotypes of groups. Presumably it is one such social representation that the person adopts as self-defining under appropriate situational conditions and by means of the mechanism of depersonalization. As in SIT, it is not argued that all behavior is group based. According to SCT, depending on the situation, the individual can categorize self along a continuum of inclusiveness from "me as one of all humans" to "me as member of [a specific group]" to "me as a unique person." Again, Turner and his colleagues (1987) are most concerned with what happens at the middle level of self-definition.

*IT.* In contrast to SIT and SCT, which were developed by psychological social psychologists, IT derives from the symbolic

<sup>12</sup> The presentation of just four models obviously leaves out many theoretical frameworks. Some of the omitted do not feature the individual: for example, social constructionism (Cerullo, 1997) and boundaries (Lamont & Molnar, 2002; Sanders, 2002). Others are not explicit and elaborated theories but instead describe a general approach to identity (e.g., sociobiological, psychoanalytic; Brewer & Brown, 1998, pp. 561–562) or just one very specific construct or motivation pertinent to collective identification (e.g., uncertainty reduction; Brewer & Brown, 1998, p. 562).

<sup>13</sup> Not all SIT-driven studies have ideology as a component (e.g., studies based on the minimal group paradigm).

Table 8  
*Individual-Level Elements Featured in Four Theories of Collective Identity*

Element	Tajfel & Turner's (1979) social identity theory	Turner et al.'s (1987) self-categorization theory	Stryker's (1980, 2000) identity theory	Cross's (1971, 1991) nigrescence model
Self-categorization				
Placing self in category	X	X	X	X (2, 3, 4, 5)
Goodness of fit				
Perceived certainty				
Evaluation				
Private regard				X (3)
Public regard	X			X (3)
Importance				
Explicit importance				X (3, 4, 5)
Implicit importance		X	X	X (2, 3, 4, 5)
Attachment and interdependence				X (4, 5)
Social embeddedness			X	X (3)
Behavioral involvement			X	X (3)
Self-attributed characteristics		X		X (3)
Ideology	X			X (3, 4, 5)
Narrative				

*Note.* An X means that the theory features the element. In addition, for Cross's (1971, 1991) model the number(s) in parentheses indicate the stage or stages that emphasize the element.

interactionist orientation in sociology (Gecas, 1982).<sup>14</sup> The most prominent IT formulations are by McCall and Simmons (1978) and Stryker (1980, 2000), though several related models have been proposed (e.g., Burke, 1980). As shown in Table 8, IT emphasizes implicit importance and social embeddedness and ignores the other elements (though as noted earlier, Stryker recognized explicit importance, which he termed *psychological centrality*).

As with SIT and SCT, Stryker (1980, 1987, 2000) regards identity as contextualized but in quite a different way from these other formulations. According to IT, society specifies the major positions and associated roles that people use to socially define self. Within this social structure (our context), Stryker posited that interactional commitment (our social embeddedness) to a role identity causes salience (our implicit importance), which in turn drives role choice (our behavioral involvement). Relative to SIT and SCT, Stryker's model emphasizes social structure at the level of context and downplays situation; this is especially true in comparison with SCT regarding the power of situations. At the level of the individual, IT privileges interpersonal role-based social interaction, whereas SIT and SCT give more importance to the cognitive act of self-categorization.<sup>15</sup> Stryker did not address outcomes as here specified. Instead, he most often used "time in role" as his preferred to-be-predicted variable; in the proposed framework, time in role is viewed as behavioral involvement, an element of collective identification. Others, however, have used identity theory to explore mental health outcomes (e.g., Thoits, 1991).

*Stage theories.* Cross's (1971, 1991) model of nigrescence was one of the first formal stage theories of collective identity, and it continues to be the most influential. Thus, we describe his formulation as the prototype for the set of stage theories of collective identification (ethnicity: Phinney, 1989, 1990; feminist: Downing & Roush, 1985). As Table 8 suggests, stage theories—which account for how collective identifications develop and change over the life course—involve most of the elements identified here.

According to Cross's (1971, 1991) model, individual African Americans must navigate five stages on the path to an integrated

sense of racial/cultural self. The first stage is *pre-encounter*, during which the person does not see race as a significant component of self-concept; in terms of the present overarching framework, this stage is characterized by extremely low explicit importance. In Stage 2, *encounter*, the person experiences one or more powerful events that highlight his or her race, and this leads to the conscious consideration of being a Black person and what this means for personal identity. In Stage 2, the immediate situation makes race salient, which causes greatly heightened explicit importance and cognitive work associated with self and race. Although Cross does not explicitly address this point, it is likely that in Stage 2, individuals begin to perceive that their personal outcomes are yoked to the fate of their group (our interdependence and mutual fate subcomponent of attachment/sense of interdependence).

<sup>14</sup> According to Gecas (1982), symbolic interactionism has two major variants: processual and structural. Identity theory derives from the structural tradition. Those who approach the self-concept via the processual perspective emphasize the situation and explore how identities are defined and negotiated by means of social interaction. The most prominent scholar in this tradition is Goffman (1959). As Gecas (1982) summarized this position, "Identity from a processual interactionist perspective is situated, emergent, reciprocal, and negotiated. Furthermore, processual interactionists view the self-concept as inseparable cause and consequence of social interaction" (p. 11). As a consequence, the present framework does not well accommodate this perspective. The conceptual scheme we offer emphasizes multiple individual-level facets of collective identification. These are seen as relatively enduring person variables, and the processual approach simply does not involve such constructs. Further, whereas the proffered organizing framework views contexts and situations as supporting actors (primarily as moderating the impact of individual-level identity on outcomes), the processual approach views the immediate situation as the major "causal factor," although most practitioners would likely object to the language.

<sup>15</sup> Although Stryker downplayed the situation component of our framework, the closely related role-based IT of McCall and Simmons (1978) emphasizes this, especially how role interactants attempt to negotiate a mutually satisfying role relationship.

Stage 3, *immersion–emersion*, involves moving beyond thinking about race to “acting Black” and displaying one’s racial group membership. This stage represents a point of in-betweenness, a form of ambivalence amplification that results in an exaggeration of views—both extremely positive views of African Americans and strong negative evaluations of Whites. In terms of our framework, Stage 3 is characterized by high private regard (and low public regard), high social embeddedness (seeking out other African Americans), high behavioral involvement (adopting African dress and going to African cultural events), high explicit importance (“I am Black and proud of it”), espousing a “pro-Black, anti-White” belief system (our ideology), and—concerning self-attributed characteristics—an exaggerated emphasis on defining self in terms of the positive stereotypic attributes of African Americans (e.g., “soul”). As Table 8 suggests, Cross (1971, 1991) has selected an apt name for this stage—immersion–emersion means being highly involved, in thought, feeling, and behavior, with being a Black person and identifying self that way.

Stage 4, *internalization*, involves a more balanced view of race, as well as feeling more comfortable about one’s sense of Blackness. This stage is not so easily captured by our framework, although it certainly involves less extreme private regard and probably a tempered public regard as well. It is possible that what Cross sees as greater comfort with one’s group membership might be akin to the felt attachment dimension of our framework. Finally, a more balanced view of race we interpret as a form of ideology. According to Cross (1991), however, it is not until the *internalization–commitment* stage (Stage 5) that racial identity is used as a consistent guide to action, and not just behavior, to show that one is Black. In terms of our framework, the final stage of the nigrescence model means that collective identity directs behavior pertinent to what we term *outcomes*. These outcomes could include actions that promote personal physical and psychological health, efforts to improve one’s community, and participation in social movements seeking to improve societal conditions.

*Theoretical insights.* In its articulation of the elements of collective identification, our framework illuminates the ways in which existing theories (both those covered here and others that might be analyzed) are selective in their coverage. Each theory that we have reviewed includes only a partial set of the total range of elements that we have identified. We do not claim that every theory of identification must incorporate all of the elements. At the same time, we believe that a full account of collective identification must in some way speak to each of these constituent elements, whether through a single theory or by the juxtaposition of several theories.

Table 8 shows how the four selected theories differ in their conceptual emphasis. Additionally, although not detailed here, these theories foreground different contextual moderators and point to different outcome variables. Theoretical debates among identity theorists may implicitly assume a common ground. As this framework makes clear, however, different theories address different facets of the complex phenomenon of collective identification.

Table 8 also highlights elements that are missing from the major theories that we have analyzed. Most notable are the self-categorization components of goodness of fit and certainty of categorization, and the meaning component narrative. Regarding the former, most existent models consider self-categorization to be nonproblematic; SIT goes further, in conceiving of this cognitive

action as simple and clear. The present analysis suggests that any comprehensive understanding of collective identification will need to consider cases in which the person does not see the self as a prototypic and certain group member. Turning to narrative, if we are correct that group stories are an important component of collective identification, then a needed theoretical task is to determine how narratives of the past, present, and future of “my group” are related to existing theories and how such mental structures guide social behavior to impact outcomes.

Another important direction for future conceptual development is the specification of causal paths involving the elements identified here. Each of the four major theories described above posits a different causal ordering of the elements included in the proposed multidimensional framework. It is likely that each theory is correct under certain circumstances; an important next step is to explicate the likely causal paths and how these are moderated by both the context factors here delineated and person variables.

Our framework demonstrates how each of the four selected theories highlights some individual-level elements and hides others, stresses certain facets of context and situation and deemphasizes others, and seeks to account for certain outcomes and not others. Each current theory can be seen as part of the answer to understanding how individuals define self vis-à-vis collective groups. How these might be fit together is a crucial task that we hope the current framework advances.

### *Research Paradigms Consistent With the Framework*

In this section, we put together the primary pieces of our framework (collective identity elements, context, and outcomes) by describing three research approaches that exemplify our framework and that could become research paradigms for future research. The first approach clusters cases to identify groupings of elements that specify identity types that predict outcomes; the second develops measures of theoretically derived elements and assesses causal paths to outcomes; and the third assesses multiple identity elements and assesses causal paths as well as gives consideration to how these are moderated by context.

*Cluster cases to identify groupings of elements that specify identity types that predict outcomes.* The identification of ethnic identity configurations by Chatman et al. (2001) exemplifies one method by which scientists might productively study the multiple elements of collective identity when predicting outcomes. Within a sample of eighth-grade African American respondents, Chatman et al. (2001) assessed four collective identity elements: ethnic pride (our private regard), importance (our explicit importance), and two aspects of ideology—connection to cultural heritage (assessed by four items, such as “People of my race/ethnicity have a culturally rich heritage”) and ethnically based social challenges (i.e., the belief that African Americans must work especially hard to succeed in American society)—plus several indices of personal well-being and achievement. They used clustering to identify groups of respondents who were similar in terms of their profile of scores across the four individual-level elements of ethnic identification and investigated how these different identity types (groupings of respondents based on scores across the multiple elements) differed in terms of the outcome measures. Chatman and her colleagues (2001) were able to identify six different types of respondents in terms of how the identity dimensions were configured. They were

also able to demonstrate that these identity types were differentially related to important outcomes.

Looking at psychological adjustment (a summary measure including, among others, measures of depression, resiliency, and self-esteem), Chatman et al. (2001) found that adolescents who were labeled “culturally connected” reported the highest levels of adjustment. Specifically, well-adjusted adolescents tended to score high on three of the elements of identification assessed in this study: personal regard, explicit importance, and cultural connectedness (similar to our ideology). At the same time, they scored low on the measure assessing perceptions of ethnically based social challenges (also an aspect of ideology).

Chatman and her colleagues (2001) also found that different combinations of elements of identification became important when looking at different outcomes. When considering grade point average (GPA), for example, those adolescents fared best who were high on personal regard, explicit importance, and cultural connectedness and also especially high on perception of race-based challenges. However, this same group (labeled *fully identified*), although doing well academically, was not well adjusted psychologically and frequently engaged in problem behaviors. Thus, being strongly identified in multiple ways and at the same time believing that one must work especially hard to prove oneself because of one’s race seems to be psychologically stressful and yet, at the same time, motivates students to work hard in school. As discussed above, those respondents who were high on importance, personal regard, and cultural connectedness but who did not believe they had to prove themselves because of their race (labeled *culturally connected*) fared best in terms of psychological adjustment. They seemed to benefit from a lack of awareness that they could be discriminated against because of their race.

*Develop measures of multiple theoretically derived elements and assess causal paths to outcomes.* Sellers and his colleagues have undertaken a program of research that illustrates this approach and that also follows from the logic of the proposed organizing framework. Sellers et al. (1998) articulated a multidimensional model of African American racial identity. They identified three individual-difference dimensions: racial regard (our evaluation), with private and public regard subdimensions; centrality (analogous to our explicit importance); and ideology. In addition, Sellers et al. (1998) identified a situation-specific aspect of identity—that is, racial salience—which corresponds to the situation component of the framework proposed here. Sellers and his collaborators are clear that racial identity must be understood within the context of American society in general. Also, Sellers et al. (1997) developed a self-report instrument with separate scales to measure each of the hypothesized individual-difference dimensions. Thus, the MIBI includes a Centrality Scale, two Regard subscales (Public and Private), and an Ideology Scale with four subscales: Assimilation, Humanist, Oppressed Minority, and Nationalist.

Sellers, Chavous, and Cook (2003) took the crucial next step—linking identity to an important outcome. Specifically, they investigated the role of multidimensional racial identity in predicting how well Blacks did in college. They found that identity centrality moderated the link of ideology to GPA. For those low in centrality (explicit importance), there was no association between any of the four ideologies and GPA. On the other hand, for respondents scoring high in centrality, endorsement of an oppressed minority ideology was positively associated with academic performance,

and belief in assimilation and nationalist ideologues was negatively associated with GPA.

*Assess multiple individual-level identity elements and assess causal paths as well as how these are moderated by context.* An important piece of the present framework is context, and we propose that knowledge of context may importantly increase a researcher’s power to predict outcomes. To illustrate how scientists might test this proposition we describe an empirical approach used by Kinket and Verkuyten (1997, 1999). These authors studied 10–13-year-old children in many classrooms in several schools in eight cities in Holland. Consistent with the present framework, they assessed multiple individual-level facets of ethnic identity. In addition, and crucially for the present point, they also assessed several aspects of the context for these children. For example, on the basis of teacher reports, the percentage of Dutch (the majority group) children was computed for each classroom. Hierarchical regression was then used to investigate the impact on various outcome indices of both individual-level identity elements and context variables.

Kinket and Verkuyten (1997) found that self-categorization and private regard were strongly influenced by several contextual factors (e.g., proportion of majority group students in classroom, the presence of a multicultural curriculum, and teachers’ responses to ethnic harassment). Both Turkish and Dutch children were more likely to spontaneously self-identify in terms of their ethnic group membership when Dutch children were a small minority in the classroom. Evaluations of children’s ethnic identities (our personal regard) were more positive in classrooms in which teachers were perceived to respond to (rather than ignore) ethnic harassment and where children talked more frequently about the culture of both the home and the other country. It is important to note that these context variables were assessed at the classroom level and are not simply another set of individual-difference variables. (In other studies, even though context may have been recognized as an important moderator, it has often been measured at the level of the individual person.) Interestingly, introjection (merging of self and group) was not affected by any of the contextual factors assessed in this study, indicating that some elements of collective identity may be less context contingent than others.

Although Kinket and Verkuyten (1997) did not assess outcomes, they did so in a second study. Using the same general approach and research setting, Kinket and Verkuyten (1999) investigated ethnic identity and intergroup evaluations in context. They found that intergroup evaluations were influenced both by attributes of the child and by aspects of the social context. Further, the link between intergroup evaluations and private regard (the only facet of collective identification used in this investigation) was moderated by contextual variables: “Relative group size did not affect ingroup favoritism directly, rather it was found that only children who constituted a numerical majority revealed a positive association between identification (our private regard) and ingroup favoritism” (Kinket & Verkuyten, 1999, p. 219).

Taken together, the two Kinket and Verkuyten (1997, 1999) studies nicely illustrate one type of research we believe is needed: research that assesses multiple individual-level elements of collective identification and also multiple aspects of social context and uses these to predict diverse outcomes. We hope our review will inspire others to follow this model.

### Concluding Thoughts

We have presented an organizing framework for the analysis of collective identity that both assesses where we are and provides guidelines for where we might go. The development of this framework is based on the assumption that collective identification is a multidimensional concept. Deriving from this assumption is the belief that it would be productive, and indeed is essential, to articulate the various dimensions of the concept. In so doing, we have encountered a terrain both vast and rocky. Collective identity is a concept used by many theorists and researchers to capture many different phenomena as they relate to many different groups. Not surprising, then, are the numerous examples of contradictory definitions, conflated concepts, and mismatches between theory and operationalization. Our goal with this article was to sort through this literature and to offer some resolution.

In the framework presented here, we have laid out a set of elements that in our view, on the basis of the data available at this time, are discreet and important aspects of collective identification. We acknowledge that some of the distinctions between elements are sharper than others. Subsequent research will determine whether two dimensions covary to such an extent that a single concept is sufficient; alternatively, extensive variation within a single element may call for further differentiation. Thus, although we do not suggest that the current framework is timeless in its form, we believe that it is the best assessment at the present time.

The utility of this framework is illustrated in our analysis of four major theories of collective identification. In asking how each theory deals with the specified set of elements, we are able to locate points of convergence between theories as well as areas of uniqueness. Recognizing these points of overlap and discrepancy allows us to be much clearer in our theoretical analyses of collective identity and may enable us to push theories further or, in some cases, to define and accept restricted boundaries of applicability. One suggestion that emerges from our analysis of four theories is the greater comprehensiveness of a developmental model of identification. Thus it is Cross's model of nigrescence that taps the most elements from our framework. Future work with other theoretical frameworks might well benefit from additional consideration of the developmental process.

Issues of stability and change are just one set of questions that arise from a consideration of the collective identity literature. Not only is the developmental sequence of interest, but so too are more situational dynamics, as we suggest in our discussion of variability. Another issue that we recognize (but do not deal with in this article) is that of multiplicity of identity. In this framework, we consider the elements as they apply to a single identity, isolated from other aspects of self. Yet in reality, people typically acknowledge a set of identities, perhaps a half dozen or more, that converge and combine in various ways. Patterns of multiplicity or intersectionality are a topic in their own right. We believe, however, that attention to the elements identified here can aid in addressing these more combinatorial issues. Also in need of further development is the analysis of context and the ways in which elements of identification may be modified or expressed differently when both proximal and distal circumstances change.

The ultimate value of our framework will be tested in future research and theorizing. We hope that scientists with diverse theories of collective identity will "try on" the framework offered here. Does it help to clarify theoretical debates? Does it generate

researchable questions? Does it enable researchers to be both more precise and more comprehensive in their analysis of collective identification? Affirmative answers to these questions will be the validation of the framework.

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