Interaction, Emotion, and Collective Identities

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Advances in Identity Theory and Research edited by Peter J. Burke, Timothy J. Owens, Richard

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INTRODUCTION

This chapter poses the question: *How do emotional aspects of social interaction affect the emergence and salience of collective identities?* I assume that social interaction inherently involves an implicit or explicit joint task—namely to accomplish some result that can only be produced with others. The most fundamental "task" of social interaction can be construed as the coordination and alignment of behavior, such that actors successfully conclude the interaction episode. Essential to this task is a working consensus about definitions of self and other in the social situation, i.e., consensual self-other identities. A central component of my argument is that social interaction has emotional effects that vary with the success of actors at accomplishing this fundamental task. This paper theorizes the conditions under which emotional effects of social interaction promote collective identities that bridge or transcend self-other role identities.

A joint task implies at least two actors in interaction who are aware of each other and who orient their behavior to each other. Examples of joint tasks include two friends deciding how to spend an evening together in a mutually-satisfying way; two academic departments developing a cross-disciplinary program for students; or a couple dividing responsibility for child care. A more complicated example is a merger between two large corporations, which actually involves a vast array of more specific joint tasks that need to be accomplished for the merger to "come off." Regardless of the particular task content, social interaction inherently entails one of more *joint* tasks that may or may not be accomplished by the actors. I argue that the *jointness* of the interactional task is the fundamental basis for the emergence or activation of a collective identity. This ostensibly occurs when individual actors interpret their own feelings, emanating

from an episode of social interaction, in collective terms (see also Durkheim 1915; Collins 1981, 1989; Lawler and Thye 1999; Lawler 2001).

Emotions are defined as transitory positive or negative evaluative states that have neurological and cognitive features (Kemper 1978; Izard 1991). The focus here are emotions or feeling states that are detected and perceived by the actors. I assume that such emotions both stimulate and respond to cognition and, as a result, they are a component of actors' "definition of the situation." Important to my approach is a distinction, in Weiner's (1986) attribution theory of emotion, between *global* (i.e., "primitive" in Weiner's terms) and *specific* emotions (see also Lawler 2001). Global feelings are initial emotional responses such as pleasure, enthusiasm, displeasure, and sadness. Specific emotions have targets—self and other—and include shame, anger, gratitude, and pride. According to Weiner, global feelings are not under the control of actors; they simply happen to them (Hochschild 1979); whereas, the specific emotions develop from an interpretation (attribution) of the global emotions, thereby making more concrete the meaning of more global feelings. Following a recent "affect theory of social exchange," (Lawler 2001), I adopt this distinction and use it to show how the emotional aspects of social interaction are involved in role and collective identities.

To address the theoretical question above, I integrate ideas from exchange theories of commitment (e.g., Cook and Emerson 1984; Kollock 1995; Lawler and Yoon 1996) with ideas from structural identity theories (Stryker 1980; McCall and Simmons 1978; Burke 1991). The main claim from research on exchange is that repetitive exchange among the same actors enhances their commitment to one another over time (Kollock 1995, Lawler and Yoon 1996). The main claim from identity theory is that interactional or affective commitments determine the salience of different role-based identities (Stryker 1980; Stryker and Serpe 1994). The backdrop

for this paper is a deduction from these two claims—namely, that repetitive exchange should

affect the salience of actors' identities. Repeated interaction to solve joint tasks generates

emotions that objectify and make salient actors' common or collective identities. Broadly, an

underlying objective of this paper is to identify, analyze, and build on points of similarity and

complementarities between exchange and symbolic interaction perspectives on how micro orders

develop (see Lawler 2002).

BACKGROUND

One of the most enduring contributions of symbolic interaction in sociology is an

unequivocal and single-minded focus on social interaction as a foundation of social life. No other

sociological tradition takes social interaction more seriously or accords it more power or force in

the social world. Interaction is highly problematic and thus there is much "cognitive" or

"interpretive" work for actors as they enact their action plans and adapt them continuously. This

general image of social interaction is consistent with our assumption that interaction is inherently

a joint task, however the task of interacting, as conceived by symbolic interaction theory, can be

rather daunting. Many symbolic interactionists conceptualize social interaction as so tenuous,

fluid, and unpredictable, that it is not clear how people could have the reserves of energy to

continually "construct interaction" almost *de novo* (Blumer 1969). Careful attention to *social

context*, however, mitigates this "excessive fluidity" problem. The social context provides

language, standard meanings, background expectations, rules, and roles, expectations, and so

forth; these elements of the context make social interaction possible and the construction of

identities easier. *Contextualizing* social interaction has been a pervasive problem for symbolic interactionist theory.

This problem can be traced George Herbert Mead's (1934) classic analysis of the "generalized other." Mead posited that people develop ties or relationships not only with specific others but also with symbolic social units (groups, communities, societies). The concept of generalize other was Mead's way to give social interaction context. In fact, there is an affinity between Mead's notion of specific and generalized others to Parsons' (1951) argument that person-to-person and person-to-group ties are dual sources of social order. Of special relevance to this paper, Mead's analysis suggests the importance of distinguishing self-other ("role") identities, that are primarily person-to-person, and collective identities, that are primarily person-to-group (see Stryker 2000).

In a recent edited volume, linking identity and social movement theories, Stryker (et al 2000) puts forth several definitions that guide this paper. An identity is defined as "…an internalized set of meanings attached to a role played in a network of social relationships ..." (p. 6). Identities are structurally based in positions or roles, and the salience of identities varies (Stryker 1980). "Role identities" capture the generic meaning of identities in structural symbolic interaction (see also McCall and Simmons 1978). Collective identities are "emergent, shared beliefs about membership, boundaries, and activities ..." of a group (p. 6). They are constructed in social interaction, organized around or directed at shared interests and purposes, and activated by specific issues, experiences, or tasks. Collective identities are tenuous and impermanent but, once formed or activated, they orient and organize social interaction among those who share the given collective identity. In other words, collective identities involve a sense of "we-ness;" they

bridge the more enduring structurally-based identities that generate a sense of "me-ness" (Thoits and Virshup 1995; Snow and Me Adam 2000).[1]

The work of structurally oriented symbolic interactionists, such as Stryker (1980), Burke 1991, and Heise (1979), carefully nest social interaction in the roles actors occupy. I suggest that such identities are an important backdrop for interactions that generate and sustain overarching collective identities. Role identities are based on structural interdependencies. A parent cannot enact and sustain his or her role identity as a parent without the "help" of offspring, just as the role identity of child cannot be enacted and affirmed without the parent. The parent has to enact the role of parent and the child has to treat the parent like a parent; moreover the parent has to see that the child is treating them as a parent, and the child has to see that the parent is acting like a parent. Role identities, while strongly structural, can only be enacted and affirmed jointly with others and, in this sense, they are joint tasks in themselves (McCall and Simmons 1978).

To summarize and elaborate, there are several differences between role and collective identities, important to my analysis. First of all, role-identities are relatively fixed in the social structure; the roles enacted are in part "made" by the actor's but the force of the larger structure on the behavior of the actor's remains strong (Stryker 1981; Turner 1962, 1978). Collective identities are relatively fluid, evolving features of self-other definitions. They accentuate social characteristics held in common, interpret and affirm shared experiences, and give meaning to group memberships (Melucci 1995; Klandermans and de Weerd 2000). Stryker's (1980, 1981;

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[1] Role and collective identities are distinguished from personal and social identities. A personal identity is a definition of self on personal dimensions or characteristics (e.g., honest, hard-working), whereas a social identity is a definition in terms of meaningful social categories (e.g., gender, race, education). Group identities are treated as social categories in the social identity literature (Tajfel and Turner 1986). Following Stryker 2000) and others (Thoits and Virshup 1995), we treat them as collective identities.

Stryker and Serpe 1994). Second, role definitions generally contain fundamental cultural expectations for occupants, and these are exogenous. Collective identities and associated expectations are endogenous and develop around common tasks, goals, and interests. They can be construed as "localized" overarching symbols of common activities and experiences based partly on the emotions felt and shared with others (see Collins 1989). Third, collective identities are the basis for "weak ties," that cross or bridge existing structural dimensions or cleavages; whereas role identities imply strong ties forged and maintained in part by social structures. Collective identities can be viewed as an important source of non-institutional connections among roles.

This chapter theoretically links the emotional effects of social interaction to the development of collective identities. Social interaction has emotional consequences for individuals (positive or negative), and to the degree that these emotions are attached to a social unit, membership in that unit becomes a salient collective identity. Collective identities are connected to role identities, in part because enacted role identities can have the same emotional effects as consummated exchange. Reaching a consensual definition of self and other is a joint task, similar in form to negotiating an explicit exchange, and we expect the emotional effects to be similar as well. To theorize the emotion-to-collective identity process, the analysis draws heavily from the social exchange perspective, in particular the theory of relational cohesion (Lawler and Yoon 1993, 1996; Lawler, Thye, and Yoon 2000; Thye, Yoon, and Lawler 2002) and a recently formulated "affect theory of social exchange" (Lawler 2001, 2002). Broad areas of convergence between exchange and symbolic interaction perspectives frame the theoretical analysis, and I now turn to these.

Social Exchange and Symbolic Interaction Approaches

Social exchange and structural symbolic interaction make different fundamental assumptions about people and social interaction. Exchange theorists assume self-interested actors who respond to rewards (payoffs) and costs (punishments). Actors are dependent on one or more others for access to outcomes they value; and structures of interdependence determine who is likely to interact and exchange with whom (Molm and Cook 1995). Social interaction is a process through which actors provide valued benefits to one another. *A successful* interaction, therefore, is one in which actors provide each other more benefits than they can achieve from alternative others.

In contrast, symbolic interactionists assume actors who ascribe meaning to self and other in the context, and act in accord with these meanings. At the outset of an interaction episode, meanings or definitions are provisional. Actors develop initial expectations by applying "names" to self and other (Stryker 1980). These then are further refined in the interaction, as actors define themselves with reference to the particular other and the other with reference to themselves. These self and other definitions are interdependent. A *successful* interaction, therefore, is one in which actors establish and act in terms of consensual definitions of self and other.

In exchange theory, social structures entail exogenous incentives, whereas in structural symbolic interaction, social structures are objectified definitions of self and other with both exogenous and endogenous aspects. From exchange theory, actors pursue rewards and avoid punishments in the context of structural constraints and opportunities. In symbolic interaction, actors pursue meaning and the affirmation of self-other identities in the context of socio-cultural roles (Stryker 1980, 1981). In both theoretical perspectives, underlying interdependencies are the

structural foundation for interaction, cognitive processes intervene between structure and behavior, and some form of consensus or concurrence is the relevant outcome.

I focus here on a particular tradition of symbolic interaction: *identity theory*. Turner's (1962) classic work treats the self in terms of roles that entail structural givens but principally are "made" by the actors in interaction with others. McCall and Simmons (1966, 1978) develop an explicit "role-identity model" that assumes the self is composed of a set of role-based identities with some being more prominent (central) than others. They argue that identities are imagined, idealized role behaviors or performances, and that these require continual legitimation and affirmation. The focus of McCall and Simmons is the dramaturgical dynamics of the joint activity in which identities are negotiated and renegotiated.

Stryker's (1980) approach strengthens the structural theme in Turner's (1962) work, arguing that identities are based in roles that carry with them "names" and associated cultural expectations. Heise (1979) develops an affect-control theory of the self in which the "naming" of each other is role-, group-, or individual-based. His is a relational approach in which people bring fundamental identities to any situation, and redefine situational identities in this context. Maintaining consistency between fundamental (trans-situational) identities and transient (situational) identities is a core tendency produced by the emotional response to inconsistency. Burke (1991) develops a cybernetic model of identity that emphasizes reflexivity and feedback. His focus is how individuals' process and react to reflected appraisals and how identities therefore evolve and change over time in relationships. The comparison of reflected appraisals with identity standards is central to this argument. With all of the above theoretical approaches to identity, actors integrate fixed, structural features of the situation (roles) with actions and reactions of others (reflexivity) and develop definitions of self and other for that situation.

In this context, my theoretical argument is built on four areas of convergence between exchange theorists (Emerson 1972, 1981) and structurally-oriented symbolic interactionists (Stryker 1980, 1981). First, social interaction is assumed to be problematic. For symbolic interaction, the key "task" facing each actor is defining the situation, especially who they and the others are or will be in the situation. For exchange theory, the main problem is uncertainty about the other's and even one's own intentions, goals, and constraints (Emerson 1981; Cook and Emerson 1984). While these notions are complementary, the symbolic interactionist conception is broader than and can subsume the uncertainty problem of exchange theory. Identities and identity affirmations are key ways to handle the uncertainty problem posed by exchange theory, because having a consensual view of self and other renders the behavior of each predictable.

Second, social interaction occurs in the context of structural constraints and opportunities, involved in interdependent roles (Stryker 1980) or positions (Emerson 1981). For exchange theory, benefits or outcomes are interdependent, while for symbolic interactionists, identities are interdependent. Reward structures are the foundation for interdependencies in the former, and role structures are the foundation for them in the latter. Just as the outcomes of social exchange are joint social products of the interaction, the identities affirmed and shaped in an interaction are joint social products. For both theoretical perspectives, structures are exogenous, but also modified or changed in the course of social interaction.

Third, for each theory, choice is a central activity for individuals (see Emerson 1981; Stryker 1981). From exchange theory, actors choose partners (if alternatives exist) and make choices about what to give and what to expect the other to give. From symbolic interaction theory, actors choose which identities to act in terms of and how exactly to enact them in a concrete social situation, e.g., a parent decides whether to spend the afternoon with his or her

children or with friends (Stryker 1980; McCall and Simmons 1978). The nature of these choices

is different. Choosing a partner in exchange does not necessarily imply a choice of identity

because the choice could be among others with the same identity (e.g., a graduate student

choosing a faculty advisor); whereas, choosing an identity does not necessarily imply a particular

partner with whom to interact.

Insert Figure 1 Here

The diagram in Figure 1 captures the fundamental points of convergence between

symbolic interactionist and social exchange approaches, that this paper builds on. From the

figure, social structures create interdependencies among actors that lead them to interact with one

another. Roles and positions are key elements of the social structure, joint tasks and products are

key aspects of interdependence, and social interaction entails a negotiation of both identities and

outcomes. The "negotiation" of identities or of exchange terms has a reciprocal effect on social

structure (McCall and Simmons 1978; Wilier 2000). This reciprocity of interaction and structure

reflects the larger dynamic of self and society, assumed by symbolic interactionists (Stryker

1980), and of micro and macro processes, assumed by exchange theorists.

BASIC THEORETICAL ARGUMENT

An Expanded Model

This section builds on the convergent model, portrayed by Figure 1, in two ways. The first is by adding the idea that roles and positions are socially embedded in overarching social units, e.g., small groups, organizations, communities, and societies. The importance of the group context is an obvious point, but it has not been subject to much explicit theorizing in either the social exchange tradition or the structural tradition of symbolic interaction- ism. Exchange theorists treat *networks* of exchange as the larger context of primary concern with only occasional reference to social units with membership boundaries, shared goals or activities, and sustained interaction among members. For structural symbolic interaction, roles are embedded in the larger society, and initial definitions of self and other are tied to the cultural meanings of the role "names" (e.g., parent, husband, co-worker). Role identities are a juncture at which there is a mutual reciprocity between the larger society and social interaction, but the relevant social units are left in the background.

Insert Figure 2 Here

My theoretical argument is that through an emotional-affective process, social interaction generates stronger or weaker attachments to a given social unit (e.g., relationship, network, organization, community, society) and *indirectly* to the role identities one enacts in that social unit or group (Lawler 1992; Lawler, Thye, and Yoon 2000). Stryker and colleagues (e.g., Stryker

and Serpe 1994) theorize and empirically show that interactional and affective commitments to a role enhance the salience of that role for the actor and leads her to enact it more often, when opportunities arise. I propose that if actors are more strongly and affectively attached to a group, they will be even more committed to the roles that they occupy within that group. In this context, the enactment of role identities can generate and affirm collective identities, i.e., enacting "me's" may promote a sense of "we," in the terms of Thoits and Virshup (1995).

The second addition to the model (see Figure 2) indicates that the "me-to-we" process operates through the emotional effects of social interaction, as these emotions have feedback effects on group attachments. Following recent theory and research on relational cohesion in social exchange (e.g., Lawler and Yoon 1996), we hypothesize that social interaction has emotional effects on individual actors tied to the degree that the interaction successfully aligns actors' behavior. The resulting emotions involve global feelings of pleasure/displeasure, elation/enthusiasm, comfort and confidence, sadness or depression, and so forth (see Weiner 1986; Izard 1991; Collins 1981, 1989). If the interaction is "successful," the emotions felt are positive; if the interaction is "unsuccessful," the emotions felt are negative. These global emotions constitute an important mechanism that generates or renders salient a collective identity.

Feedback Loops

As the feedback loops in Figure 2 indicate, a collective identity forms or becomes salient when there is a feedback loop from the emotion experienced in social interaction to the group or larger social unit. If the emotions individuals experience are associated with the group, this

should effect how actors feel about their membership in that group—i.e., the feedback loop is present (see also Collins 1981). This association should occur if actors perceive the group as responsible for the interaction that makes them feel good or feel bad (Lawler 1992, 2001). Positive individual feelings from interaction yield stronger group attachments, and negative feelings yield weaker group attachments (see Lawler 1992; Lawler and Yoon 1996; Lawler 2001, 2002), i.e., positive or negative feedback loops. Moreover, groups that are repeatedly a context for positive emotional experiences should take on more intrinsic value, and those that are a context for negative emotional experience should have less value to actors. Thus, the global emotional effects of interaction can enhance or diminish the value of a group membership or affiliation. The argument offered here is complementary to Stryker's—specifically, that identity commitments are stronger when the role identities are embedded in groups to which actors are affectively attached.

Social exchange and symbolic interaction theories offer different perspectives on how and when the feedback loop from emotion-to-group occurs? Based on exchange theory, the feedback loop would be contingent on the reinforcing properties of the emotions produced by social interaction (Lawler 2001). Feeling good is rewarding in itself and feeling bad is punishing in itself, i.e., emotions are internal rewards and punishments (Bandura 1997). Thus, actors should be motivated to reproduce the positive feelings and avoid the negative feelings just as they continue behaviors that are reinforced and eliminate those that are punished (Emerson 1972a).[2]

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[2] Traditional Skinnerian notions that Emerson used as a foundation for exchange theory suggest that internal emotional responses would not add anything to the impact of extrinsic reinforcements and punishments, i.e., they are epiphenomenal (Lawler 2001). More recent models of social learning (Bandura 1997) attribute an independent role to internal (self) reinforcements, and emotional responses can be viewed as an instance of self-reinforcement.

The tenets of symbolic-interaction indicate that people will interpret these internal stimuli, as they do other stimuli, and respond to their interpretation, rather than to the stimuli, as such (Mead 1934; Blumer 1969). The ambiguous nature of initial global feelings, experienced by the actors, is an important impetus for such interpretive efforts, and because these emotional responses are not under actors' control, they tend to look outside of themselves to interpret them. The range of social stimuli (i.e., self, other, relation, group, or society) to which they might be attributed is vast, and this makes the interpretive processes pivotal to when the feedback loop from emotion to group occurs. In sum, exchange theory suggests a reinforcement basis for the actors motivation to understand the source of their feelings, while symbolic interaction suggests that "vocabularies of motives" involved in definitions of self, other, and society (generalized others) are the prime basis for actors' understanding.

The expanded model, if viewed dynamically, has several noteworthy implications. There are two avenues by which structural role identities are modified or shaped: (1) through the self-other definitions developed in the interaction (i.e., *directly* through the feedback from interaction to structure), or (2) through the emotional/affective consequences of the social interaction (i.e., *indirectly* by promoting or undermining group attachments). The first avenue, by also increasing the level of interdependence, could enhance the strength of the emotions produced by future interaction. There could be a threshold of interdependence beneath which the emotional/affective consequences do not occur; but once the threshold reached, social interaction should generate emotions that increasingly promote group attachments (in the case of positive emotions) or diminish them (in the case of negative emotions).

Overall, we argue that emotions produced by social interaction are rewarding or punishing to actors and thus motivate interpretive processes to understand them. In accord with

exchange theory, actors strive to experience good feelings again and avoid the bad feelings; and, in accord with symbolic interaction, actors attribute meaning to the emotions by fitting them into the *social* context, that is, by interpreting them in terms of relevant social objects, i.e., self, other, and the social unit. Symbolic interaction makes it clear why social objects, such as self and other, might be targeted in actors' interpretive processes, but it is not clear about how and when overarching collectivities or groups are targeted (see Stryker, Owens, and White 2000 for recent work on this issue). An "affect theory of social exchange," recently developed (Lawler 2001), can be adapted to deal with the latter issue.

ELABORATION OF THEORETICAL ARGUMENT

The affect theory of social exchange builds on the theory of relational cohesion and related research (e.g., Lawler and Thye 1999; Thye, Yoon, and Lawler 2002). The empirical evidence on relational cohesion consistently supports the theoretical argument as follows. More frequent exchange among the same actors has been shown to generate more positive feelings about their joint activity (i.e., the negotiation of exchanges). Successfully reaching agreements makes them feel pleasure/satisfaction, and not reaching agreements makes them feel displeasure/dissatisfaction. Positive global feelings, in turn, foster a sense of cohesion in their relationship (Lawler 1993, 1996) or group (Lawler, Thye, and Yoon 2000); and, the result is commitment behavior, such as giving each other gifts, staying in the relationship despite alternatives, and being more inclined to participate in a joint venture involving the risk of malfeasance by the other (Lawler and Yoon 1993, 1996, Lawler, Thye, and Yoon 2000). This emotion-based commitment process is stronger when actors have equal rather than unequal

power or dependence and when they are highly interdependent (Lawler and Yoon 1996, 1998).

The key moments in the relational cohesion process— *exchange-to-emotion-to-cohesion*—have

considerable empirical support.

Lawler and associates (Lawler and Yoon 1993, 1996; Lawler and Thye 1999; Lawler,

Thye, and Yoon 2000; Thye, Yoon, and Lawler 2002) infer from the evidence that repeated

exchange promotes "incipient group formation" or micro social orders (Lawler 2002) which is

tantamount to a sense of "we-ness" in Thoits and Virshup's (1995) terms. There is indirect

evidence for this in the patterns of behavioral commitment (i.e., more relationship- or group-

oriented behavior) and from questionnaire data (i.e., more value attributed to the social unit,

greater perceived group-ness). The logic behind this is that emotions, felt individually, make

actors aware of and responsive to relevant group affiliations or memberships, i.e., promote

psychological group formation in social identity terms (Tajfel and Turner 1986; Isen 1987).

Collins (1981, 1989) develops a similar argument for the emotional effects of social interaction,

in general.

An important question is: When do collective or group affiliations and identities become

salient? The fundamental answer, offered by the "affect theory of social exchange (Lawler

2001)," is that this should occur when one or more social units are perceived as a primary source,

cause, or context for the emotions felt—positive or negative—as a result of an exchange.

However, this answer raises another question: What social conditions lead actors to implicate

social units in their emotional experiences? It is these conditions that should underlie the

emergence or activation of collective identities. Collins (1981) argues that this is an inherent

consequence of recurrent joint activities among the same people. Such activities ostensibly create

shared emotional experiences that objectify group affiliations or memberships. In identity terms,

this also should make collective or group identities more salient. The "affect theory of social exchange" (Lawler 2001), however, implies that the effect of emotions on identity salience is contingent on and varies with the nature of the joint activity.

Joint Activities or Tasks

The "affect theory of social exchange" identifies two properties of joint tasks that are important to the collective objectification and identity process, one structural and one perceptual. The *structural* dimension is the degree that individual contributions to the task cannot be identified and distinguished. This has been termed, "non-separability" by Williamson (1985:245-247) in his analysis of governance structures. Williamson argues that when labor is organized in this manner, the result is a greater sense of common endeavor and fate among employees. I propose a parallel argument for social interaction in general (Lawler 2001).

The *perceptual* dimension of joint tasks is the degree that the task fosters a sense of shared responsibility among the actors. In the theory (Lawler 2001), these perceptions are tied to and caused by objective, structural conditions of "nonseparability." The argument is that perceptions of shared responsibility for the results of recurrent interaction episodes lead actors to view their individual feelings as mutually and interdependently generated. Such jointly produced feelings create a sense of something larger, enduring, and transcendent; this could be a relationship, group affiliation, or a social category with cultural meaning. Under such conditions, common affiliations or memberships and related collective identities should become more salient than otherwise and constitute a plausible interpretation for the jointly generated emotional

experiences. The feedback loop from emotion to group attachment (see Figure 2), therefore, is stronger and the collective identity more salient.[3]

Shared responsibility should have even stronger effects to the degree that these perceptions mitigate the well-known tendency of actors to make self-serving attributions for success or failure—namely that people credit self for good results and blame the other for bad results (e.g., Weiner 1986). There are good reasons for predicting countervailing effects for perceptions of shared responsibility. If the contributions of each individual's behavior are difficult to distinguish, it is also more difficult for self-serving attributions of the emotions to dominate. Individual and collective experience is more intertwined when structural conditions entail tasks with the property of nonseparability. In this context, repeated interaction—because of the emotions generated and the desire of actors to experience positive and avoid negative feelings—should activate collective identities.

A larger theoretical rationale for the joint task-to-shared-responsibility effects on collective identity is suggested by the "affect theory of social exchange." Lawler (2001) argues that successfully-completed joint tasks affirm individuals' sense of self-efficacy while also suggesting to actors that their own efficacy is mediated by their involvement in the collective or group activity, i.e., self efficacy is "socially mediated." The more actors perceive a shared responsibility for social-interaction outcomes, the more they perceive their own individual efficacy as being tied to collective efficacy. This leads to a major inference: *If self and collective efficacy are interwoven by social interaction, collective identities become salient and shape role*

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[3] To test the effects of a joint activity or task, one could use either objective measures of nonseparability (task interdependence) or perceptual measures of shared responsibility. The latter reflects the social-constructionist feature and is the proximal cause of collective or group identity, but for practical and theoretical reasons, either could serve as a proxy for the nonseparability-to-shared-responsibility process.

identities, in particular the expectations attached to them. Perceptions of shared responsibility have collective-identity effects in part because they reflect an interconnection of self and collective efficacy.

The *relative* salience of role and collective identities may stem, in part, from the connections actors' perceive between self and collective efficacy.[4] On the one hand, if these are in tension, it is reasonable to suspect that role identities will be most salient. By definition, role identities foster a sense of "me-ness" (Thoits and Virshup 1995); they can be construed as socially sanctioned and legitimated frameworks of self-interest. In addition, under these conditions, there would be no counterweight against self-serving attributions for success/failure and resulting emotions. On the other hand, if self and collective efficacy are unrelated, both role identities and collective identities can exist side-by-side and be relatively independent. An example is a friendship group consisting of people who work together in the same organization but in which joint activities are solely nonwork-related.

Their work identities may be the original basis for nonwork collective activities, but the latter could conceivably take on a life of their own, especially under conditions (shared responsibility) that generate a collective identity.

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[4] Stryker (2000) argues that one of the problems with the uses of identity in the social movement literature is the tendency to either assume only collective identities are operating or to fuse, by theoretical assumption, group, social-category based, and role-based identities. We subscribe to Stryker's (2000) position and argue that the *affect theory of social exchange* helps understand how closely connected or distant are collective and role-based individual identities for actor.

Emotions Directed at Self and Other

Role identities are a structural basis for self-serving attributions of emotions. Such attributions affect the specific emotions likely to develop from actors' interpretation of the global feelings (see Weiner 1986; Lawler 2001). The affect theory of social exchange emphasizes four specific emotions: *pride* or *shame* directed at self and *gratitude* or *anger* directed at the other. If only role identities are salient, pride in self for successful interaction may be stronger and gratitude toward the other weaker; similarly, failure would generate greater anger toward the other and less shame in self. With salient role identities, emotional attributions across self and other are essentially zero-sum. However, given a joint task and a sense of shared responsibility for it, a successful interaction fosters *both* pride in self and gratitude toward the other; whereas, unsuccessful interaction produces both shame in self and anger toward the other (see Lawler 2001 for more discussion). Pride in self and gratitude toward the other go together, as do shame and anger, implying a nonzero sum relationship between the emotions directed at self vs. other. Collective identities emerge from and, in turn, promote a nonzero sum relationship between emotions directed at self and other.

The specific emotions, directed at self and other, reflect individual inferences about their own role and their relationship to others with complementary roles. A supervisor and subordinate in an organization, who repeatedly interact and produce positive results, may make attributions to their relationship or group, but also to self and other. The supervisor feels good about herself (pride) but also a sense of gratitude toward the subordinate, and vice versa. Gratitude expressed by one to the other would enhance the pride felt by the other. A pride-gratitude cycle, in which the actors essentially share the credit for their joint activities and the resulting emotional benefits,

should enhance further the salience of the particular role identities, but not necessarily at the expense of a collective identity emergent around their joint activities. Pride-gratitude cycles build relationships or groups and, by implication, foster associated collective identities, whereas shame-anger cycles weaken overarching social units and associated collective identities.[5]

Dynamics underlying specific emotions elaborate how role identities can generate overarching collective identities that in turn reciprocally impact role expectations. Assume, as explained earlier, that developing consensual self-other role identities is a fundamental underlying joint task in social interaction. If a working consensus is reached, global pleasant feelings result, and these are ostensibly interpreted with reference to social units in which the roles are enacted, and in part with reference to the expectations of their role. Consensual self-other definitions affirm and make salient one's role identity and generate feelings of pride, but, under the conditions articulated here, they also generate gratitude toward each other. In this sense, perceptions of shared responsibility for joint tasks sets the stage for role-based interactions to generate collective identities and foster the mutual expression of positive feelings (or negative feelings).

A final point is that a collective identity, when salient, should motivate actors to undertake collectively oriented behaviors, because self-efficacy is socially mediated. However, based on Gecas (1986), self-efficacy is one of only three motivational dimensions of the self, the others being esteem, and authenticity. Gecas states, "... by virtue of having a self concept the individual is motivated to maintain and enhance it, to conceive of it as efficacious and

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[5] Negative emotions, jointly felt and shared, can be a source of collective-action frames and group identity if directed at third parties (Gamson 1995). For example, Taylor (2000) studies self-help groups for post-partum depression and shows how individuals in these groups jointly transformed guilt and shame into pride by the fact that they dealt with their ordeal and anger toward gendered concepts of motherhood.

consequential, and to experience it as meaningful and real." (1986: 138). Applied to the "affect

theory of social exchange," a joint task that affirms the efficacy of the individuals also should

enhance self-esteem and "authenticity." Thus, I infer that *collective identities should have the*

greatest salience when they not only mediate actors' individual sense of self-efficacy but also

generate self-esteem and self-affirmation (i.e., authentication).

THEORETICAL PROPOSITIONS

My theoretical analysis in this paper suggests a number of central claims or propositions,

and these are summarized below.

1. Success at social interaction with another produces simple everyday emotions.

    Because the emotions are rewarding/punishing but also global and ambiguous, actors

    are motivated to interpret what are their causes, where they come from? This becomes

    part of the actors "definition of the situation" (Lawler and Thye 1999).

2. If interaction with the same others repeatedly generates such feelings, actors are

    prone to interpret and attach the emotions to self, other, or the social unit (Lawler and

    Yoon 1996; Collins 1981). Stable patterns of emotion attributions tend to develop in

    the context of repeated interaction.

3. Attributions to the social unit are most likely when the task is joint and entails high

    interdependence. Under these conditions, the relevant social unit (e.g., relation,

    group, organization) is perceived as a cause of emotions felt by an actor (Lawler,

Thye, and Yoon 2000; Lawler 2001) and, as a result, the collective group identity is activated.

4. Attributions to self and other are most likely when actors can easily separate their contributions to or involvement in the interaction. Under these conditions, role identities become salient and interpretive processes lead to more specific emotions: pride or shame in self, gratitude or anger toward the other (Lawler 2001).

5. If specific emotions of pride in self and gratitude toward the other are nonzero sum, these role-based emotions strengthen the salience of the collective identity, whereas if pride and gratitude are negatively related, self-serving attributions weaken collective identities.

6. Role identities are intertwined with collective identities to the degree that actors' sense of self-efficacy is tied to and mediated by their joint activities or tasks. This is more likely when the interaction tasks foster a sense of shared responsibility for the results of the interaction.

7. Role identities strengthen collective identities when role occupants are highly dependent on each other, interact frequently, and engage in joint tasks in which their individual contributions are non-separable; conversely, collective identities strengthen role identities especially when enacting joint tasks enhances individuals' self efficacy, self esteem and self affirmation (authenticity). These reciprocal effects operate through an emotional/affective process, specified by relational cohesion theory (Lawler and Yoon 1996; Thye, Yoon, and Lawler 2002).

8. The most salient identities are those that actors interpret as the strongest source of positive feelings in social interaction, whereas the least salient identities are those

actors interpret as the strongest source of negative feelings in interaction. Thus, the emotional effects of social interaction and actors' interpretation of these affect the salience of multiple identities.

CONCLUSION

This chapter aims to understand how and when social interaction in the context of role identities generates a collective identity. Collective identities are viewed as emergent, shared beliefs about person-to-group memberships or affiliations. They emerge from and within interaction, and they are organized around particular activities or tasks. Durkheim (1925), in his classic study of religion in a preliterate society, suggested that collective activities (ritual) generate feelings of elation or effervescence that affirm actors' membership in a group and are important sources of solidarity. Collins (1975, 1981, 1989) generalizes this idea in his theory of "interaction ritual chains," by arguing that a common focus and common mood in social interaction fosters a sense of something larger, i.e., a common group membership or affiliation. Finally, Lawler and associates (Lawler and Yoon 1996; Lawler and Thye 1999; Lawler, Thye, and Yoon 2000; Lawler 2001, 2002) indicate that such emotional effects explain how and when repetitive exchange among the same actors will generate commitments to a relation or group. Based on this prior work, I argue here that interaction-to-identity processes are mediated by emotions and feelings, and these shape actors identification with and attachment to a social unit.

My argument in brief is that perceptions of mutual, shared responsibility for interaction is an underpinning of collective identities, whereas perceptions of individual responsibility are an underpinning of role identities. The former generates a sense "we," the latter a sense of "me"

(Thoits and Virshup 1995). In this context, identities that are perceived by actors as a frequent source of positive emotional experience (and infrequent source of negative feelings) should be valued more than those that generate infrequent positive or frequent negative feelings. This idea is applicable to structurally based identities as well as to emergent collective identities. By implication, the salience of multiple identities, available to actors in a given context, depends on the degree that actors associate their identities with social interactions that, on a global level, make them feel good (or bad), and that on a specific level, make them feel pride or shame in self and gratitude or anger toward the other.

Broadly, the implications of this paper are that social interaction is a source of a collective identity under several conditions: (1) The interaction entails a joint task in which actors have difficulty separating or distinguishing their individual contributions or responsibilities for its success or failure. (2) The social interaction affirms actors' self-efficacy, but because this occurs through collective activities that neither can accomplish alone, self-efficacy is intertwined with collective efficacy. (3) The interaction generates positive or negative global feelings, and actors' interpretation of these feelings generates specific emotions (e.g., pride, gratitude) directed at self and other. Overall, if actors interpret their individual emotions in terms of what they share or have in common, a collective identity becomes more salient.
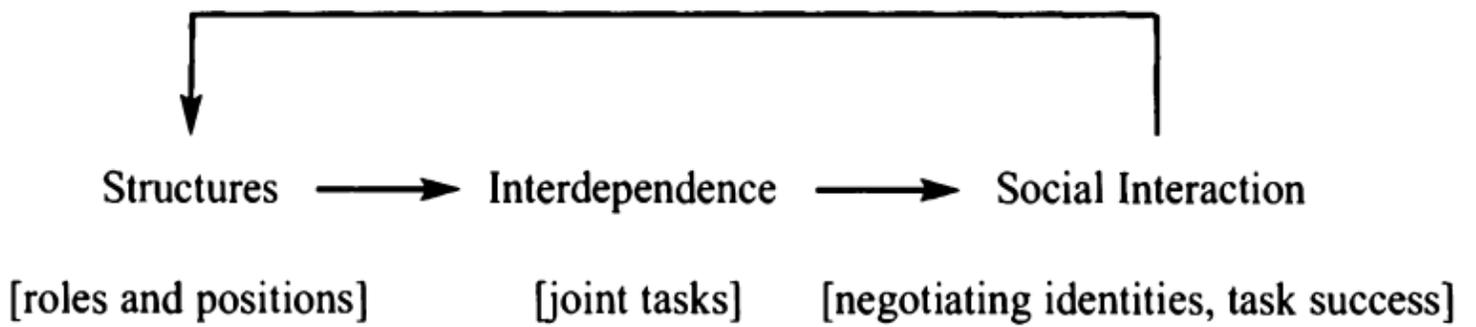
Figure 1

Structures ⟶ Interdependence ⟶ Social Interaction

[roles and positions]   [joint tasks]   [negotiating identities, task success]

Figure 1. Convergence of Symbolic Interaction and Exchange Theory.

Figure 2

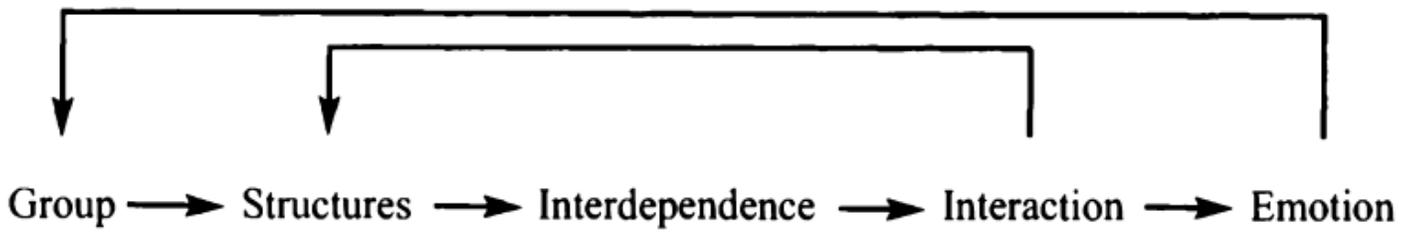Group ⟶ Structures ⟶ Interdependence ⟶ Interaction ⟶ Emotion

Figure 2. Expanded Model of Convergence.

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