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Affect and Group Attachments: The Role of Shared Responsibility

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This paper theorizes the role of shared responsibility in the development of affective group attachments, interweaving ideas from social exchange and social identity theories. The main arguments are that (1) people engaged in task interaction experience positive or negative emotions from those interactions; (2) tasks that promote more sense of shared responsibility across members lead people to attribute their individual emotions to groups or organizations; and (3) group attributions of own emotions are the basis for stronger or weaker group attachments. The paper suggests that social categorization and structural interdependence promote group attachments by producing task interactions that have positive emotional effects on those involved.

INTRODUCTION

This paper theorizes the role of emotion and affect in person-to-group attachments. Affect is one of three bases of attachment found in the literature on organizations, the other two being instrumental and normative (e.g., Kanter, 1968). The prime question posed here is: how and when do people develop *affectively-based* attachments to groups and, in the process, come to value the group identity *in and of itself.* This typically involves the transformation of an instrumentally-based person-to-group tie to an expressively-based person-to-group tie. Group attachments are defined here as the strength of the ties individuals have to a social unit (e.g., local group, larger organization, community). Such attachments presuppose an existing group membership or group identity (e.g., definitions of self and others in terms of the group membership). To specifically address the question above, I use and apply recent theories of emotion and affect in social exchange (Lawler, 2001; Lawler & Yoon, 1996; Lawler & Thye, 1999, 2006), and forge connections between social exchange and social identity frameworks.

Group attachments can be construed as a mechanism through which large, impersonal organizations generate and sustain high levels of group- oriented behavior such as commitment and citizenship behavior. These attachments to the organization may be even more important when members are physically separated and communicate from a distance, as is more and more common in the workplaces of today. Group attachments also may be important if the organization moves managers or employees frequently to different locations or if there are significant costs associated with turnover. Affective ties in which the organizational identity becomes self-defining for employees should have strong effects on employees' willingness to make personal sacrifices for the organization.

Affective attachments involve enduring feelings or sentiments about a group or organization. My theoretical analysis ties these attachments to transitory emotions or feelings. Specifically, there are four interrelated points based on a larger program of work (e.g., Lawler, 2001; Lawler & Yoon, 1996; Lawler & Thye, 1999, 2006). First of all, the affective attachments of people to groups develop from the episodic or transitory emotions or feelings they experience within the group. Second, recurrent social interactions or exchange are the fountainhead or underlying engine producing the transitory emotions and feelings. Third, under certain structural or task conditions transitory emotions, repeatedly experienced, are associated with or attributed to a group or larger organization. Fourth, group attributions of individual emotions or feelings produce more enduring affective sentiments about that group. More specifically, if people attribute transitory emotions to a common group affiliation then that group becomes an object of affective attachment if the emotions are positive, but an object of affective detachment if the emotions are negative (see Lawler, 2001). Simply put, people become more affectively attached to groups within which they repeatedly or regularly experience positive emotions or feelings, insofar as they attribute these emotions to the group (Lawler, 2001). When this occurs, the group membership or identity takes on greater intrinsic value.

Members of groups and organizations develop attachments of varying types and strength to other group members (i.e., person-to-person ties) and/ or to the group or organization as a social unit (person-to-group ties). This suggests an important contrast between *common-bond* groups, which are based on the attachments of members to each other, and *common-identity* groups, which are based on the direct ties of members to the group itself (Prentice, Miller, & Lightdale, 1994). People may remain in a group, therefore, primarily because of the ties developed with other members (e.g., coworkers, colleagues) or because of characteristics of the

group (e.g., values, identities). Some research indicates that groups based primarily on interpersonal ties or interpersonal cohesion generate weaker person- to-group attachments than groups based primarily on the common ties of individuals to the group (Brewer & Gardner, 1996; Prentice et al., 1994). The capacity of groups to mobilize members and to orient their actions toward collective goals is due in no small part to the strength of person-to-group attachments. I adopt a sharp distinction between interpersonal (person- to-person) and group (person-to-group) attachments, as proposed by the social identity tradition (Hogg, 2004; Kramer, 2006; Tajfel & Turner, 1986; van Vugt & Hart, 2004) and some sociological theory (Mead, 1934; Parsons, 1951). The implication is that actors can be strongly attached to the group without necessarily being strongly attached to its members.

That person-to-group attachments have important effects, independent of interpersonal ties, is indisputable. There has been substantial research on such effects over the last 10 years, most of it informed by social identity theory and organized under the rubric of "group identification" (e.g., Hogg, 2004; Kramer, 2006; van Vugt & Hart, 2004).[1] As a whole, such research indicates that strong person-to-group attachments lead individual actors to take account of and be more responsive to group interests, to conform to group norms, to trust other members of the group, and to contribute more in the face of social dilemmas. Person-to-group attachments may be a solution to social dilemma problems (e.g., Kramer & Brewer, 1984; McAuliffe, Jetten, Hornsey, & Hogg, 2003). If members are strongly attached to an organization, they should require less formal monitoring and, in this sense, person-to-organization ties reduce the transaction costs associated with maintaining compliance. To understand the sources of affective group attachments, I interweave basic ideas of the social identity tradition in psychology with

those of the social exchange tradition in sociology, and treat an emotional/affective process as a unifying mechanism or point of convergence for these traditions.

CONCEPTUAL BACKGROUND

My argument builds on Homans's (1950) classic work. He suggests that any group context can be analyzed in terms of the *activities* (tasks) people are engaged in, the *social interactions* (exchange) involved in the activities, and the *sentiments* (affect) generated by the social interactions. In Homans's (1950) analysis, frequent interactions around joint activities, among the same actors, were the basis for interpersonal sentiment and for enduring relations and groups. I take off from this framework and argue that *joint* activity and common emotional responses to it are bases for sentiments about group memberships and identities (see Lawler, 2006).

This paper specifically uses principles from two interrelated theories of emotion in exchange: the *theory of relational cohesion* (Lawler & Yoon, 1996; Thye, Yoon, & Lawler, 2002) and the *affect theory of social exchange* (Lawler, 2001, 2006). Together these theories explain how an instrumentally- based exchange can foster more relational, group-oriented behaviors (e.g., cohesion, commitment). The general line of argument is that, in the context of opportunities and instrumental incentives to form mutually- profitable exchanges, repeated exchanges make actors feel good whereas failures to exchange make them feel bad. When experienced repeatedly, these feelings tend to promote perceptions of unity or cohesion in relations and groups (Lawler, Thye, & Yoon, 2000; Lawler & Yoon, 1996), which then shape future exchanges and interactions. The most important condition or mechanism is the degree that

the joint tasks or activities generate a *sense of shared responsibility,* that is, the perception that members are jointly and mutually responsible for the results of the exchange or interaction (Lawler, 2001). The *affect theory of social exchange* argues that when structural conditions, such as how work is organized, generate greater sense of shared responsibility, individuals are more likely to interpret their feelings as jointly produced and due to the common group affiliation or identity. If the emotions are positive and attributed to the group, affective attachments to the group become stronger; if the emotions are negative and attributed to the social unit, affective attachments become weaker (Lawler, 2001). Whereas contemporary social exchange theories tend to focus on cognitions, such as risk and trust, as explanatory mechanisms, the *affect theory of social exchange* puts emotions and affect at the very center of social exchange explanations. This theory is the focus of this paper.

The term "social exchange" refers to interactions or relations among individuals within which each provides the other valued benefits. The exchanges may be implicit or explicit, negotiated or not negotiated, and the benefits can be anything, tangible or intangible that actors value. One can argue that virtually any social interaction involves an exchange of some sort and, thus, my *affect theory of social exchange* should be applicable beyond more strictly- or narrowly-defined exchange situations (Lawler, 2002). This paper develops some of these broader implications (see also Lawler, 2003; Lawler & Thye, 2006). The relational and emotional themes of the theory make it a viable framework for forging connections between the interpersonal and network focus of most social exchange theories (Cook, 2005; Molm, 2003) and the person-to-group focus of most social identity theories.[2]

To summarize, this paper applies and broadens the *affect theory of social exchange* to analyze how and when members of a group develop stronger affective attachments to their

group. A group attachment assumes an already existing group identity, and this makes it feasible

to integrate notions from social exchange and social identity to address this problem. The

mechanisms by which structures of exchange and group identities produce affective group

attachments involve repeated (successful) interactions, transitory emotions, and a sense of shared

responsibility. Before proceeding with the task of interweaving ideas from social exchange and

social identity theories, however, we need to define and discuss emotion and affect.

Concepts of Affect and Emotion

The literatures on psychology and sociology of emotion reveal significant variation and

some inconsistency in how basic terms are used. I adopt a standard definition of emotion as

positive or negative evaluative states that have physiological, neurological, and cognitive

elements or manifestations (Izard, 1991; Kemper, 1978). The terms "emotion" and "feeling" are

used interchangeably here and in related works (e.g., Lawler, 2001; Lawler & Thye, 2006;

Lawler & Yoon, 1996). Affect is generally construed as an overarching concept, subsuming both

transitory feelings that respond to situational stimuli and enduring affective states that are often

termed moods or sentiments. Moods are diffuse feelings, without objects or targets, and

sentiments are enduring feelings attached to or about objects. In my approach, emotions and

feelings are episodic products of social interactions and affective attachments are enduring

sentiments about relations and groups.

In recent years, there has been a virtual explosion of research in the neuroscience of

emotion, some of which informs my approach to emotion. Damasio's (1999) pioneering work

distinguishes feelings from "feeling feelings." Feelings entail neurological states of the organism

that are wired, learned, and unconscious; they are not perceived or "felt" by the individual. When individuals "feel feelings," there is an awareness of the body's response to external stimuli and, more importantly, of the distinction between one's bodily organism and environmental conditions. One implication of this is that emotions produce organism-wide neurological effects, such that actors who feel good, feel good from head to toe and actors who feel bad, feel bad from head to toe. A second implication is that "feeling of feelings" is a fundamental source of consciousness of self (Damasio, 1999). An actor's rudimentary sense of self develops from the experience of emotions because of the information emotions provide about one's connection to environmental conditions or stimuli. Damasio has not analyzed social interaction in groups, but it is a relatively short leap to query whether the emotions people experience in social interaction with others can become associated with or attached to social units that bring them together or represent a larger context for their interaction. Social identity and social exchange theories each contain useful ideas for addressing how this might happen.

SOCIAL IDENTITY AND SOCIAL EXCHANGE

Talcott Parsons (1951) argued that person-to-person ties and person-to-group ties are fundamental dimensions of social order. To ask how social order comes about and is maintained is to ask about how person-to-person and person-to-group ties are interconnected. Social identity and social exchange theories approach this order problem from different starting points. Social identity starts from the idea that people categorize self and others and act differentially toward people who fall in different categories. Relations and groups are based on common social categories and, in particular, the social identities generated by these. Person-to-group ties or

affiliations involve common social categories or identities. Social exchange theory starts from the idea that people seek out and interact with others from whom they anticipate valued rewards and benefits (Molm & Cook, 1995). They form and maintain relations as long as they receive valued benefits that are not readily available elsewhere. Whereas relations and groups are instrumental in social exchange theory, they are non-instrumental or expressive in social identity theory. Moreover, social identity emphasizes the person-to-group dimension, and social exchange emphasizes the person-to-person dimension. I suggest below that the non-instrumental analyses of person-to-group ties in social identity theory are complementary to the instrumental analyses of person- to-person ties in social exchange theory.

Social Identity Theory and Research

Social identity theory characterizes groups and person-to-group ties in cognitive terms (Brown, 2000; Tajfel & Turner, 1986). A group exists on a psychological level when two or more people define themselves as members of [a group]."(Brown, 2000, p. 3). To be a group means there is an implicit, if not explicit, demarcation of and recognition that other groups or social categories exist. If two or more actors perceive themselves as a group, they will act in a group-oriented way (toward in-group and out-group members), even *without* interacting with each other and *without* collective goals. One of the most fundamental and provocative propositions of the theory is that social categorization (of self) is sufficient to generate group formation and group-oriented behavior. Group formation essentially entails an emergent group identity. Early - now classic - research by Tajfel and associates offered support to this proposition, where subjects do not interact or see one another, but are simply given nominal

labels and then asked to allocate rewards to in-group and out-group members (Tajfel, 1969; Tajfel & Turner, 1986).

In the social identity tradition, the underling conditions for group formation (i.e., a group identity) boil down to *perceived commonality* (i.e., being in the same category) and *perceived distinctiveness* (i.e., being different from other categories). Recognizing a common or shared group membership (category) induces psychological group formation and, by implication, forms or activates a group identity (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). Where the categories come from is given relatively little attention. The contribution is to show how subtle group effects are, how easy they are to generate, and the important consequences for relations within and between groups (Hogg, 2004; Turner & Reynolds, 2004). Extrapolating from this viewpoint, social interaction is not necessary for attachments to a group to form and shape behavior.

Several studies have suggested situational conditions under which social categorization-to-group-formation (group identity) effects are stronger or weaker. For example, Ellemers, Spears, and Doosje (1997) found that defining an individual task as a group task enhances the salience of the group category (in-group identity) which, in turn, promotes group attachment (commitment). Brown and Wade (1987) revealed that intergroup *cooperative interaction* around a common goal promotes the perception of a single overarching group that bridges in- and out-group boundaries (see also Dovidio, Gaertner, & Validzic, 1998; Gaertner et al., 1990). Rabbie and associates showed that group formation occurs especially when actors perceive underlying interdependencies (Rabbie & Horwitz, 1988); moreover, these perceptions develop from repeated interactions among members. Finally, Hogg and colleagues demonstrated that social categorization promotes group formation primarily when the social situation involves substantial uncertainty, suggesting that aside from its self-evaluation effects, social categorization is an

uncertainty-reduction mechanism (Grieve & Hogg, 1999; Hogg & Mullin, 1999). Extrapolating, the research suggests that stronger group identification or attachment should occur when group members have *shared, cooperative tasks or experiences,* when they face *high uncertainty*, and when they *perceive interdependence.* These conditions are typically present in social exchange contexts, which suggest the potential for building bridges across these theoretical traditions.

Overall, social identity theory adopts a relational approach to person- to-group ties or attachments, emphasizing the self-defining, self-enhancing, and uncertainty-reducing effects of group or organizational memberships and identities. It assumes that people form and maintain relations based on meaningful commonalities or similarities, but it relegates affective processes to a subsidiary role and downplays the effects of recurrent interactions among group members as well as the structural conditions giving rise to such interactions. These may be especially important to understand variations in group attachment, and social exchange theory can elaborate the structural and interaction conditions.

Social Exchange Theory and Research

Contemporary exchange theory in sociology has been informed largely by the structural (network) approach of Emerson (1972) and his emphasis on power and reward (profit) allocations. Since the mid-1990s, there has been increasing interest in the question of how enduring relations and groups develop in the context of social exchange because it is well-known that relations can endure even if better payoffs can be found or are readily available elsewhere (e.g., Uzzi & Lancaster, 2004). To deal with this, ideas have been imported from psychology, economics, or rational choice theories (Molm, 1997, 2003): one class of explanations for stable,

enduring relations centers on uncertainty, risk, or trust (Kollock, 1994; Molm, 2003), and a second class of explanations focuses on affect (Lawler & Thye, 1999; Lawler & Yoon, 1996). One can interpret "enduring relations" as implying a rudimentary person-to-unit (i.e., relation) attachment.

In an influential study of uncertainty reduction in exchange, Kollock (1994) conducted an experiment that compared two markets, one in which the quality of products was known (low uncertainty) and one in which the quality of products was not known (high uncertainty). He found that "commitments" (defined as repeated exchange among the same pairs of actors) occurred more often under conditions of high uncertainty. Repeated exchange with the same partners was an uncertainty-reduction strategy that could lead actors to forego or to miss better prices in the market. Research by Molm and colleagues has shown further that commitment and positive feelings about an exchange partner are stronger under conditions of higher risk because cooperation under these conditions fosters positive attributions about the partner's intentions (Molm, 2003).

Elaborating the role of uncertainty and risk, Yamagishi and Cook have proposed *trust* as the *glue* around which exchange relations form and are held together (e.g., Cook, 2005; Yamagishi & Yamagishi, 1994). Defining trust as a *generalized* expectation for others, they argue that trust in others makes it possible for actors to take the necessary risks to establish new relationships, whereas institutional *commitments* inhibit such risk-taking. Commitments generate a bias toward staying in existing relationships and thereby lead actors to miss opportunities for new joint endeavors and mutually-beneficial exchanges. In an interesting series of studies, Cook and Yamagishi compare trust and commitment levels within Japanese and American business practices. They find that Americans have higher levels of generalized trust in others than

Japanese and, therefore, rely less on family and other institutional ties in their business activity. In social exchange theory and research, uncertainty, risk, and trust are all cognitive phenomena that point to the importance of expectations of cooperation by partners.

Overall, in contrast to the relational approach of social identity theory, social exchange theory adopts a transactional approach to person-to-person and, by implication, to person-to-group relationships, analyzing what benefits actors receive from others or the group and what benefits they provide in return to others or the group. Trust and positive affect are central, although the primary attachments of interest in this tradition are to other members rather than to the group. Nevertheless, the transactional focus of exchange theory and relational focus of social identity theory can be viewed as complementary. They point to analytically distinct exogenous conditions for group attachments, which are essentially two sides of the same coin. Fig. 1 represents a first step at interweaving some of the basic notions.

Insert Figure 1 Here

Social exchange theory explicitly assumes that structures of interdependence shape who is likely to interact with whom, and where among a set of actors, the strongest relationships are likely to form. Interdependencies have such effects because of the incentives to exchange that are built into the structure. Social identity theory implies that people who fall within similar social categories are more likely to have access to and interact with each other, and as they develop a common group identity they will treat each other more favorably. Although the exogenous conditions - social categorization (group identity) and structural interdependence - are analytically distinct, they also are interrelated in some contexts. As the figure portrays,

interdependencies can be a basis for social categories and social categories can foster

interdependencies. The next section specifies how and when social categories and structural

interdependencies generate affective group attachments.

THEORIES OF AFFECT IN EXCHANGE

This section addresses two related theoretical questions. First, what are the endogenous

processes linking these exogenous conditions to group attachments? Second, what one can get

from the transitory emotions, felt in exchange or interaction, to enduring attachments or

sentiments about groups? I draw relevant principles from *relational cohesion theory* and the

affect theory of social exchange. These are discussed, in turn, below.

Relational Cohesion Theory

The theory of relational cohesion proposes an emotional or affective explanation for

enduring relations in social exchange (Lawler & Yoon, 1996), which contrasts with the

uncertainty-reduction explanation above. Fig. 2 diagrams the theory. It argues that power

dependence conditions produce relational commitments through an *endogenous* process,

consisting of three moments or steps: (1) *the frequency of successful exchange*, (2) the *positive*

emotions or feelings that are generated by successful exchange, and (3) *perceptions of unity or*

cohesion in the exchange relation. The underlying theoretical rationale is that consummating

exchange (all other things equal) is an accomplishment or success, and positive individual

feelings result from this success and in turn lead to more inclusive perceptions of self and other[3].

The perception of unity or relational cohesion is the proximal cause of commitment behaviors such as staying in the relation, providing each other unilateral benefits (gifts), and engaging in new joint ventures that involve risk or require trust. In sum, the exchange *frequency-to-emotion-to-cohesion* process constitutes the intervening mechanism between structures of dependence or interdependence and behavioral forms of commitment.

Several experiments have supported the main predictions of relational cohesion theory for commitment behavior (Lawler & Thye, 2006; Lawler et al., 2000; Lawler & Yoon, 1996, 1998). Equal power (dependence) relations and those with greater total power (mutual dependence) in them promote commitment through the posited endogenous process: *frequency-to-emotion-to-cohesion.* Moreover, the mediation is complete, meaning that the impact of structural dependencies on commitment are indirect and operate through the emotions and feelings (e.g., Lawler & Yoon, 1996).

Insert Figure 2 Here

Other research findings also are noteworthy. First, research shows that the relational cohesion process operates under unequal power, even though it is clearly stronger under equal than unequal power (Lawler & Yoon, 1993, 1996, 1998). The only exception is when the low-power actor is virtually powerless (see Lawler & Yoon, 1998); here, the relational cohesion process does not operate at all. Second, the relational cohesion process is stronger when the exchange partners are *freely chosen* (i.e., exchange is voluntary), and weaker, yet still present, when exchanges are forced or induced by a network structure (Lawler & Thye, 2006). Third, the research repeatedly demonstrates that the effects of exchange frequency are independent or net

of payoff differences in negotiated agreements (for review see Thye et al., 2002), which suggests the importance of interaction or exchange frequencies in the formation of relations. Overall, evidence in support of relational cohesion theory is quite strong and consistent.

Relational cohesion theory can help to develop the integration of social identity and social exchange notions this process is incorporating into the model (see Fig. 3). Social categorization theory suggests a direct path to group identity (not shown) that reflects the depersonalization process of group formation and identification (Hogg, 2004; Tajfel & Turner, 1986); an indirect path to group formation and group identity is through the emotions generated by social interaction. Based on relational cohesion theory, this indirect path occurs to the degree that social categories shape rates of social interaction among group members, and these interactions in turn have positive emotional effects on actors. From exchange theories of risk and trust (Cook, 2005; Kollock, 1994; Molm, 2003), this occurs if the repeated interactions reduce exogenous uncertainties - an idea also supported by research demonstrating stronger social categorization effects on group formation under greater situational uncertainty (see Hogg & Mullin, 1999). Positive affect and uncertainty reduction may be dual processes, operating in parallel, complementary way to produce cohesion and commitment. This was documented in a study of three-person groups making decisions about whether to join a collective endeavor (see Lawler et al., 2000).

Insert Figure 3 Here

The model in Fig. 3 suggests that some effects of social categorization on group formation may be mediated by an affective process and, in social exchange, relational ties can

generate or signal an emergent group identity. Repeated success at coordinating behavior

(interaction) or exchanging valued benefits, not only makes people feel good, but also fosters a

stronger sense of unity (cohesion). This implies an emergent sense of *we* or collective identity or

the reaffirmation of an existing common identity. The *affect theory of social exchange* can build

on the model in Fig. 3 because it elaborates structural conditions for emergent group identities

and explains how emotions become associated with or attached to groups in this process (Lawler,

2001; Lawler & Thye, 2006).

The Affect Theory of Social Exchange

This section presents the main elements of the theory. I focus on the orienting assumptions about

interaction and emotion, and the central or core propositions. Whereas the initial formulation

(Lawler, 2001) focuses strictly on social exchange, I recast it here in more general terms as a

theory about affective processes in task-oriented social interaction.

Orienting Assumptions

Below are six underlying assumptions of the theory. These articulate and justify the broad

connections between social interaction and emotion and set the stage for theorizing conditions

that generate affect directed at the group. Where appropriate, direct or indirect empirical support

for the assumptions is briefly explained or noted.

   First, *social interaction involves joint tasks or activities that actors accomplish with other*

people. Even simple behaviors, such as getting on a bus, involve a joint task or activity. If there

is a line, each person needs to coordinate their moves to the door to avoid unwanted bumping, dirty looks, etc.; moreover, in dropping money in a slot (or using a metro card), riders interact with the bus driver who watches to see that they pay while they look to see if he knows they have paid. The subtle ways that interdependencies are manifest and play out in such simple everyday social interactions are treated in the classic work on symbolic interaction by George Herbert Mead (1934). In most research on groups, the implied *jointness* of tasks or activities is taken for granted and not subject to careful analysis. Such jointness can vary significantly, and this is important to my analyses.

Second, *social interaction generates global feelings along a positive-negative dimension.* Virtually any episode of interaction should have immediate, global emotional effects such as *feeling good* or *feeling bad.* If the interaction is successful, the feelings are positive; if unsuccessful, the feelings are negative.[4] A distinction is made between "global" and "specific" emotions. This contrast stems from Weiner's attribution theory of emotion (Weiner, 1986). He posited that emotional responses occur on two levels. The immediate responses are global (he used the term "primitive") and involve automatic, unmediated positive, or negative responses to a situation. These are dependent on outcomes, but independent of cognitions and attributions (Weiner, 1986). The second level is that of specific emotions, which are attached to particular objects (i.e., self and other) and are generated by an attribution process. Specific emotions stem from *cognitive work* interpreting the sources or causes of these global emotions and feelings (Weiner, 1986). Global emotions are comparable to the "feeling of feelings" in Damasio's (1999) neurological analyses of emotions. Neuroscience research indicates that emotions are experienced and felt on multiple levels, and the global-specific distinction is a useful way to represent this (Damasio, 1999; LeDoux, 1996).

Third, global emotions are internal reinforcing or punishing stimuli. Rewards or reinforcements (as well as punishments) produce immediate internal organism-level responses, that is, feeling good or feeling bad. The immediacy of global emotions should render them powerful reinforcers. In Bandura's (1997) terms, these are self-reinforcements that constitute a distinct class of reinforcement. Moreover, recent research in neuroscience shows that rewarding stimuli activate different regions of the brain than punishments; correspondingly, feelings of happiness and sadness are associated with different brain activation patterns (Blood & Zatorre, 2001; Damasio et al., 2000; Small, Zatorre, Dagher, Evans, & Jones-Gotman, 2001). Such findings imply a significant correlation between subjective feelings and neurological events in the brain (Damasio et al., 2000).

Fourth, *actors in interaction strive to reproduce global positive emotions and avoid global negative emotions.* This is a motivational assumption that complements the third assumption above. Feeling good is something people want to re-experience and feeling bad is something they wish to avoid in the future. It is well known that emotions are potentially powerful forces in organizing and shaping patterns of behavior because of their motivational properties (Izard, 1991). Thus, if a work organization is a context for feeling good, people should be motivated to stay, to be more involved, to enact citizenship behavior, avoid absenteeism, etc. Meyer, Allen, and Gellatly (1990), in a review of work on organizational commitment, makes a telling comment, indicating that employees with instrumental commitment stay with an organization "because they need to;" those with normative commitment stay because "they believe they ought to;" and those with affective commitment stay because "they want to." The last reflects the motivational property of emotions.

Fifth, *global emotions produce "cognitive work" as an effort to understand the sources or causes of global feelings.* The source of global emotions, felt immediately and automatically, tends to be ambiguous and actors look to their environment for an explanation. An understanding of the global feelings is important to them because of assumptions 3 and 4; they need this understanding to figure out how best to promote positive emotional experiences and avoid negative ones in the future. Global emotions are a stimulus for cognitive work, and specific emotions emerge out of this cognitive work (Lawler, 2001).

There is considerable debate among psychologists about the interrelationships of and causal priority of emotion and cognition (e.g., Forgas, 2000). A key finding, of relevance to the affect theory of exchange, is that positive affect fosters *global processing* of information, meaning a focus on general features rather than specific details. For example, Gasper and Clore (2002) found that people in positive moods, who are attempting to solve a task, focus on the big picture (i.e., the "forest") and thereby engage in global processing, whereas those in negative moods engage in local processing and focus on the details (i.e., "trees"). These effects were documented across two experiments with different tasks (i.e., one had individuals reproduce a drawing from memory and the other asked them to interpret or classify interrelated geometric figures). Extrapolating, global processing of information about a group task may lead actors to give greater weight than otherwise to the group that is the context for the task activity with others.

Recent research in neuroscience and in organizational behavior reveals further that positive affect enhances cognitive flexibility. Ashby, Isen, and Turken (1999) show that positive affect induces dopamine secretions in the same regions of the brain as do rewarding stimuli. These dopamine secretions promote greater cognitive flexibility in how people approach a task

than negative affect. Those experiencing positive affect with dopamine release tended to view a task from different perspectives and be more adaptive and creative in solving the task. Similarly, a recent study of teams across a variety of organizations finds that positive affect generates more creative problem solving and that, while the emotions are transitory or short-lived, their effects on creativity continue for several days (Amabile, Barsade, Mueller, & Staw, 2005). Overall, these very different studies converge in suggesting that positive affect broadens how people approach problems and expands the range of information attended to or called forth from memory. This could increase the salience of groups or *groupness*.

Sixth, *given a joint task or activity in a group, the group itself becomes a possible target for emotional attributions, that is, actors may attribute their individual emotions or feelings to the group affiliation.* There are at least three reasons for this: (A) greater jointness makes it more difficult for members to allocate responsibility for the group results unequally across individual members, (B) if actors engage in global processing of information about the causes of these feelings (Gasper & Clore, 2002), the group is part the big picture or "forest" within which positive feelings are interpreted, and (C) to the degree that groups or group affiliations are stable, persistent aspects of the social environment, they are potentially attractive targets for emotion attributions (Weiner, 1986). Attribution processes typically involve a search for stable causes of behavior. However, the term "possible" in the above assumption implies an important issue for the theory: how do people choose among the possible objects or targets for their emotions?

Attributing Emotions to Groups

Table 1 contains a framework for linking different emotions to different social objects. The theory distinguishes four social objects: task, self, other, and social unit. This scheme integrates the global-specific distinction from Weiner's (1986) attribution theory of emotion, adopts a *differentiated approach* to emotions following Izard (1991), and treats pleasure as a fundamental dimension in accord with Russell, Weiss, & Mendelsohn (1989) affect grid. My purpose is to associate a key emotion or feeling with each object and to examine the implications. The framework is not designed to be fully comprehensive.

Insert Table 1 Here

The global emotions from task activity fall along a generalized pleasant- unpleasant dimension. If positive global feelings (pleasantness) are attributed to the other, it generates the specific emotion of gratitude toward other(s); if positive global feelings are attributed to self, the specific emotion is pride in self. If negative emotions from the task activity are attributed to the other(s), the specific emotion is anger toward others; if attributed to self, the specific emotion is shame in self. For group attributions of positive global feelings, the specific emotions are *affective attachment* to or *affective detachment* from the group as a unit. My theory suggests that group or social unit attributions of these individual feelings are the precursor to group affective attachments. The question remains: when do people make social unit or group attributions for their own individual feelings?

Attribution research in psychology does not include social unit or group attributions as defined here. That work focuses primarily on inferences about individual actors from those individuals' behavior (e.g., Jones & Davis, 1965), whereas my focus is on when people attribute their own emotional states to social units (groups, organizations, etc.). One pervasive pattern observed in attribution research is that individuals make self-serving attributions, for example, they give credit to self for success and blame the situation (or others) for failure. From this standpoint, successful task activity is likely to generate pride in self rather than gratitude toward others, and social unit attributions may not occur at all.

There is some social psychological research on *group attributions.* Its focus is on how qualities or attributes of groups or group memberships contribute to dispositional attributions to a person (Taylor & Tyler, 1986; Zaccaro, Peterson, & Walker, 1987), that is, when a person's behavior is attributed to its "group serving" relevance or impact. Research on group-serving attributions indicates that perceivers treat groups or group affiliations as real and as a potential source of stable behavior dispositions. A particularly important finding is that "group entitativity" (i.e., the perceived reality of a group) induces group-serving attributions for individual behavior (Yzerbyt & Rogler, 2001). In other words, the more real a group is to its perceivers, the more likely they are to infer qualities of one another based on the group membership. Thus, in attribution theory and research group attributions are a special case of self-serving attribution.

The perceived *reality* of a group is important to my theory as well, but the focus is somewhat different. Social unit (or group) attributions are inferences (attributions) *about a group* based on a person's *emotional experiences* within it; thus, social unit attributions of emotion reflect, reaffirm, or change the meaning and value of a group identity or membership. They may

set the stage for or strengthen group-serving attributions for individual behavior within the

group, but the object for social unit attributions remain the group as a unit, not as another

individual's behavior. Conceived in this way, social unit attributions may not only mitigate the

tendency of actors to make purely self-serving attributions, but also increase their tendency

toward group-serving attributions for individual behaviors and toward recasting self-serving as

group-serving. The central propositions of the theory indicate when social unit attributions of

individual emotion are most likely to occur.

Central Propositions

The most fundamental principle of the *affect theory* is that the *jointness* of the interaction

or exchange task determines whether actors perceive the group as a source of their global

emotions or feelings. Individuals ostensibly attribute individually-felt emotions to their relation

or group if the task is high in jointness. Jointness can vary on both an objective and subjective

level because tasks often can be framed and interpreted in different ways. For example, an

organization may define the tasks of a work group in joint or in individual terms and, in the

process, highlight individual or collective aspects of the task activity. A team may be organized

around individual tasks and responsibilities or joint tasks and shared responsibilities. Objective

structural or task conditions are important but so are the subjective definitions of tasks.

The *affect theory of exchange* (Lawler, 2001) offers a basic structural (objective) and a

basic cognitive (subjective) condition for social unit attributions. The structural dimension of

jointness is the degree that each individual's contributions to task success (or failure) are

separable (distinguishable) or non-separable (indistinguishable). This contrast is from Oliver

Williamson's analysis of work structures (Williamson, 1985, pp. 245-247). He used it to analyze the work conditions under which relational modes of governance predominate. The affect theory adopts Williamson's idea to understand when social unit attributions are likely.

The cognitive dimension of jointness is the degree that the joint activity or task generates a sense of shared responsibility for the results produced among members. If social interactions or exchanges among a set of actors generate a sense of shared responsibility, they are more likely to interpret their individual feelings as jointly produced in concert with these others, and therefore they are more likely to attribute their individual feelings to the group or group identity. The basic idea is quite simple: if employees perceive a shared responsibility for group performance, the group generates stronger affective attachments to the group. The effects of shared responsibility on attributions of positive versus negative emotions should be parallel: a sense of shared responsibility may lead to inferences that "we can get things done together" in the case of task success and positive emotions but inferences that "we do not work well together" in the case of task failure and negative emotions.[5] Three core propositions capture the logic of the theory, as follows (Lawler, 2001, 2006):

Proposition 1. The less distinguishable individuals' impact on task activity (non-separable), the more they perceive shared responsibility for the results of the task activity.

Proposition 2. The more individuals perceive shared responsibility for the results of the task activity, the more inclined actors are to attribute their global and specific emotions to the group.

Proposition 3. The more individuals attribute their positive emotions to a group, the stronger their affective attachment to that group; the more they attribute their negative emotions to a group, the stronger their affective detachment from that group.

Any structural or task conditions that vary the degree that individual efforts and contributions are distinguishable, objectively or subjectively, should produce these sort of effects. The original formulation of the theory (Lawler, 2001) indicated that different forms of exchange (negotiated, reciprocal, generalized, and productive) and different types of networks (positively- and negatively-connected) produce differential group attachments. Other structural conditions also may be specified. For example, equal power and greater mutual dependence should produce a greater sense of shared responsibility and stronger affective attachments, but, only to the degree that the individual contributions to the results are indistinguishable. Task interdependences may make collective results more salient and thereby promote a sense of shared responsibility. It is important to note, however, that high interdependence does not necessarily imply non-separable/ indistinguishable task efforts or contributions. Perceived interdependencies may involve clear reward contingencies between the behavior of individuals rather than the intertwining or fusion of individual contributions or efforts. Based on the theory, we need to examine interdependencies and ask whether individual contributions are distinguishable or indistinguishable within them.

Implications of the central propositions are exemplified by two provisional hypotheses about task structures or interdependencies that can be derived from them. First, additive tasks (where group results are an aggregate of individual performances) should strengthen the sense of individual responsibility, whereas conjunctive tasks (where the group result is a multiplicative

function of individual performances or behaviors) should strengthen the sense of shared responsibility. Thus, all other things equal, groups with conjunctive tasks should generate stronger affective attachments to the group than those with additive tasks. Second, discrete, specialized, independent roles draw attention to individual responsibilities, whereas overlapping, collaborative roles highlight shared responsibilities. This has some counterintuitive implications for the design of jobs. Job designs that promote shared responsibility should generate stronger affective attachments to an organization than those that focus solely on individual responsibility. Systems of accountability that target individual performance versus those that target group performance should have differential consequences for group attachments. In each of the cases, the *sense of shared responsibility* is the central explanatory principle and the primary mechanisms are affective.[6]

There is some supporting evidence for the notion that joint tasks and shared responsibilities generate group salience and weaken self-serving attributions in task situations. In a study of quotes from athletes and coaches after wins and losses, Zaccaro et al. (1987) found that self-serving attribution biases were weaker when the sport was group-based and involved joint, interdependent tasks and activity (e.g., baseball, football, basketball) than when it was individual-based (e.g., tennis or golf). Similarly, Forsyth and Kelley (Forsyth & Kelley, 1996; Kelley, 1967) conducted an experiment with a survival task and found that people not only experienced more positive affect when the group succeeded, but also gave the group more credit than themselves for its success. The implication is that greater task interdependence and shared responsibility reduces self-serving attributions for group success, which supports a key notion of the affect theory (e.g., see also Dovidio et al., 1998; Yzerbyt & Rogler, 2001).

In a recent study, Savitsky, Van Boven, Epley, and Wight (2005) also found that

allocations of responsibility or credit for a collective task depend on whether members view the

group as a unitary, undifferentiated whole or as set of coordinated individuals. Self-serving

allocations of responsibility were reduced if actors view the group, not only as a homogenous

whole, but also consider others in the group as individuals. That is, when others in the group are

individualized, credit is shared more and people take less responsibility for themselves. The

authors term this an *unpacking* effect on group perceptions. Their interpretation is that actors'

own contributions are more accessible to them, and that considering other's contributions,

individually, increases access to the other's contributions (Savitsky et al., 2005). The

implications are that, on the one hand, a sense of shared responsibility should be easier to

generate in groups where actors interact frequently and have ready access to each others' task

behaviors; but, on the other hand, depersonalization of the in-group members may make self-

serving attribution biases more difficult to overcome with social unit attributions. This is worthy

of attention in future research. A plausible hypothesis from the notion of depersonalization in

social identity theory is (Hogg, 2004): Depersonalization in groups reduces the degree that

individuals give credit to others for group performance and, therefore, weaken social unit

attributions of emotions and feelings. My theory suggests a group-attachment process that should

not produce such depersonalization because of the role of social interaction around a joint task in

which people have access to others behaviors.

Having overviewed the theory, how does the *affect theory of social exchange* elaborate or

add to the integration of social identity and social exchange theories, as represented in Fig. 3?

The sense of shared responsibility (and, by implication, task non-separability) should be a

moderator of the *frequency-to-emotion* and *emotion-to-cohesion* links, discussed earlier, and this

is portrayed in Fig. 4. If task contributions are indistinguishable and responsibilities for results shared, repeated interactions or exchange have stronger positive emotional effects; and also these positive emotions have even stronger effects on the sense of unity and cohesion. This suggests that the social unit is more salient, a more stable part of the persons' environment, and a more viable target for emotions felt.

Insert Figure 4 Here

Brief Summary

The affect theory of exchange assumes a group of individuals who are undertaking a joint task. They succeed or fail and this has emotional effects on them. Transitory emotions produced by this task activity are attributed to the group if the social structure produces a sense of shared responsibility. The theory treats these group attributions of emotion as individual-level effects that, in the aggregate, produce a prevailing perception of a larger, encompassing social unit (i.e., a group or organization). The main result is stronger group attachments and more group-oriented behavior (Lawler, 2001). Implied here is a local-to-global or micro-to-macro process in the sense that individual experiences and emotions make group members more responsive to an overarching group identity. In doing so, individual actors are essentially making a leap from their own individual experience to the larger group or organization. That is, the actors themselves are forging a micro-to-macro or local-to-global connection - cognitively, emotionally, and behaviorally.[7] The larger group context gives meaning to individual emotional experiences. The

next section suggests additional processes that bear on the connections that actors make between their individual experiences and the group or organizational context.

Elaborations of the Theory

Two individual-to-group processes elaborate the role of the shared- responsibility mechanism in the theory: (1) the spread of emotion (emotional contagion) across people and (2) the interrelationship of multiple nested attachments to local and larger groups or organizations within which the local ones exist.

Spread of Emotions in Groups

Emotions tend to spread from person to person in social situations. This has been empirically documented in a number of recent studies of affect and mood in work settings (Barsade, 2002; Brief & Weiss, 2002; George, 1995, 1996; Kelly & Barsade, 2001; Sy, Cote, & Saavedra, 2005). Research on *emotional contagion* by psychologists has suggested that there are two fundamental interaction processes through which emotions spread. First, people tend to mimic and synchronize nonverbal expressions of emotion, for example, a smile by A leads to a smile by B. Second, such physiological changes, generated by mimicry and synchronization, have feedback effects that produce the corresponding emotion internally. Thus, if A feels good and smiles at B, B will smile back and then experience similar feelings (Hatfield, Cacioppo, & Rapson, 1993).

Recent research on behavior in organizations leads to a number of general inferences or conclusions about the spread of emotions in work groups. First, when people interact over time, their emotions and moods (felt and expressed) tend to converge. People adjust their emotions to those of others, and those with lower status tend to adjust more than those with higher status (Anderson, Keltner, & John, 2003). Second, in groups with stable memberships and high task interdependence, there is more convergence of affect across individuals in the group (Bartel & Saavedra, 2000). This finding demonstrates group-level effects and is consistent with role of shared responsibility in my theory. Third, research on work groups and teams indicates that emotional contagion among members generates prevailing affective states or tones at the group level with important consequences, for example, positive affective tones enhance cooperation and reduce conflict (Barsade, 2002; Brief & Weiss, 2002). From such work, it is reasonable to hypothesize that emotional contagion is stronger when tasks generate a sense of shared responsibility.

Aside from spreading among people within a group, emotions also can spread across unrelated situations and tasks. This is indicated in the theorizing of Collins (2004) on the transfer of emotional energy from one situation to another, as well as the research of Isen and colleagues (e.g., Isen, 1987) on positive affect. Isen shows that if a person is in a state of positive affect, regardless of its source, they will interact differently with others who have nothing to do with the affect they are experiencing. That is, if person A is feeling good in situation B, but then enters situation C, then that person will carry the emotion over to situation C, which then has an impact on others in that new situation. Collins's (2004) theory of interaction ritual chains makes a related point. He argues that people derive emotional energy (uplift, confidence) from interactions and carry them to other interactions with different people. One can argue that

emotions and moods not only connect people in a given situation or group, but also spread to

other situations or groups to the degree that individuals in a given group are carriers of affective

tones or moods produced in and by that particular group. This is one way that emotions attached

to subgroups can spread to other subgroups or to the larger group or organization, and also why a

leader who exudes enthusiasm can have widespread effects in an organization.

These ideas about the spread of emotions can be incorporated into the *affect theory of*

social exchange. Specifically, a sense of shared responsibility should foster the spread of positive

emotions across individuals in a group because people are likely to express emotions and to

carefully attend to each other's emotional expressions. This, in turn, should enhance mimicry and

synchronization effects (see Hatfield et al., 1993). Once emotions spread across actors, they

foster a group-level affective tone which, in turn, should have feedback effects on the sense of

shared responsibility. The group-level affective tone then becomes an integral part of what group

members accomplish together. The following proposition is implied:

Insert Figure 5 Here

Proposition 4. Greater sense of shared responsibility produces more spread of emotions

across individuals; and, the spread of emotions generates a group-level affective tone

which, in turn, has feedback effects on the sense of shared responsibility.

These relationships are diagrammed in Fig. 5. The upshot is that the sense of shared

responsibility promotes the spread of emotions across members as well as the corresponding

affective tone at the group level; this further enhances the sense of shared responsibility and propensity toward social unit attributions.

Nested Group Attachments

Organizations have members with multiple group commitments to work groups, teams, departments, divisions, professions, unions, or other associations. A particularly interesting case is where an immediate, local group is nested within a larger more encompassing group, for example, a department in a corporation, a local union within a national union, a neighborhood within a community. If a work group is nested within a larger organization, can we predict which unit is likely to be the most salient target for emotions felt from task activity? Will feelings be attributed to the larger, encompassing group or to the local group? This issue of nested groups captures a problem corporations tend to face in generating or sustaining organizational commitments of employees. Paradoxically, delegating decision making, empowering employees, using self-managed teams may generate stronger attachments to local units than to larger units; if so, such practices may strengthen silos and balkanization despite the fact that their purpose is to do otherwise.

I previously theorized this problem in an analysis of multiple group or organizational attachments (see Lawler, 1992; Mueller & Lawler, 1999). The main idea proposed was that people become more attached to groups and organizations that give them the greatest sense of control (i.e., self-efficacy). The reason is that a sense of control produces positive feelings, and these are attributed to the group or organization that provides the control. All things being equal, people are more likely to attribute a sense of control and resulting positive feelings to proximal

or local groups, while attributing a lack of control and negative feelings to more distal groups (Lawler, 1992). The theoretical rationale for this is that local, proximal groups have an interaction advantage as the social place where subjective meanings, interpretations, and attributions are formed. The implications are that group members are inclined to credit their local, immediate groups for good experiences and blame their larger more distant groups for bad experiences. The following hypothesis is suggested: *positive emotions stay locally-focused and negative emotions tend to be pushed outward to larger and more distant groups* (for further analysis see Lawler, 1992; Turner, 2002).

Based on the *affect theory of social exchange,* structures or tasks that generate more sense of shared responsibility should lead people to interweave their own (self) efficacy with the efficacy of the group (i.e., collective efficacy). Specifically, they perceive the group activity as a means to self-efficacy; self-efficacy is mediated by the group activity and success (Lawler, 2001, pp. 345-346). If the sense of shared responsibility is experienced primarily at the local level, the tendency for positive emotions to be focused on the local group should be accentuated, as should the tendency to shift negative emotions to the more distant group. Thus:

> **Proposition 5.** To the extent that members of a group, nested within an organization have a strong sense of shared responsibility for task results, positive emotions are more likely to be attributed inward to the local, immediate group, whereas negative emotions are more likely to be attributed outward to the larger group or organization.

Applied to a work unit within an organization, this effect could be reduced, forestalled, or even reversed if the vision, strategies, and policies at the organizational level produce a stronger

sense of shared responsibility there than at the local level (see Lawler, 1992). Many policies and

practices of corporations could be interpreted in these terms. One simple example is the practice

of redefining employees as partners or associates.

CONCLUSIONS

Understanding fundamental bases of group attachments, especially emotional/affective

ones, seems important and timely. Changes in the employment contract and globalization of

workplaces are modifying standard, historic relationships between people in the workplace and

between them and their group or organizational affiliations. These pose challenges to

organizations that derive benefits from low turnover and from having employees who

intrinsically value the organizational affiliation; they also pose challenges for employees who

value group identities, associated with a particular employer or work organization, or who derive

a strong sense of belonging from an enduring organizational affiliation. If employees are

geographically and culturally distant from one another and from their organization, how and

when will they develop attachments at the group or organizational level? If the employer

organization is committed to promoting the *employability* of its employees (i.e., imparting

transferable experiences and skills) but not to continued employment, how can that organization

generate strong attachments in return from its employees? The implicit or explicit social

exchanges that form the foundation for employment contracts are under significant stress.

Relational ties between employees and employers are being replaced with purely transactional

ties. One can argue that such employment and workplace trends weaken organizational

attachments, change the meaning of organizational membership, and reduce the importance and

value of the organizational identity. This paper suggests how organizational attachments may be generated from the bottom up, that is, from joint activities and tasks of employees.

I theorize that the sense of shared responsibility is a central condition for group attachments, and that positive affect is the mediating mechanism through which shared responsibility generates strong group attachments. The main argument can be summarized as follows. In work groups individuals tend to exchange knowledge, expertise, and experiences in order to accomplish their individual and collective tasks. These exchanges of information are particularly important when employees engage in joint tasks that they cannot accomplish alone. An organizational structure may bring them together in the first place to interact and solve problems, but in the course of doing such tasks, individuals are likely to experience positive or negative feelings, for example, pleasure, uplift, confidence, enthusiasm, displeasure, downtrodden, insecure, and boredom. When they succeed at the task they feel good and when they fail they feel bad. The greater the jointness of the task and the stronger the sense of shared responsibility for it, the more likely they are to view their individual emotions and feelings as jointly produced; and, therefore, the emotions become a basis for stronger or weaker affective attachments to the group. Overall, the *affect theory of social exchange* explains how and when the transitory emotions from task successes becomes a basis for enduring affect about a group identity or organizational affiliation.

In broader theoretical terms, this paper suggests how social exchange processes at the heart of any social interaction can be linked with ideas about social categorization and social identity. Social identity theories take a decidedly non-instrumental and cognitive approach to group formation and group attachments, whereas social exchange theories take a decidedly instrumental and behavioral approach to group formation and group attachments. This paper

points to areas of convergence and complementarities across these approaches and uses these to forge some important connections. The unifying explanatory theme entails an endogenous process, linking structures to enduring affective attachments to a group; the process involves recurrent task interactions that have emotional effects on individuals. Thus, if a social structure generates a strong sense of shared responsibility, the emotional and relational effects are similar regardless of whether the interactions of group members stem from the instrumental conditions assumed by social exchange theory or the shared social categories assumed by social identity theory. This paper offers a way to build emotion and affect into fundamental social identity and social exchange notions and to explain how and when people form and sustain strong or weak affective attachments to a group.

NOTES

1. The terms "group identification" from the social identity literature and "group attachment" in this paper have important similarities and differences. Both assume the existence of a group category or identity and refer to the strength of the individual-group tie. However, the term "group attachment" is broader and captures objective, structural ties (e.g., through networks, interdependencies, or payoffs to the individual) as well as subjective ties, either cognitive or emotional. In the social identity tradition, group identification is typically limited to subjective, cognitive ties. An *affective* group attachment in my theory is essentially group identification with an emotional foundation or what Ellemers et al. (1997) refers to as "group commitment."

2. Among theories of human development, Bowlby's (1969) attachment theory examines how bonds (attachment) develop by a child to a parent. He assumes that humans have a fundamental need for attachment. This idea is developed more generally in recent work on the need for belonging (e.g., Baumeister & Leary, 1995). Needs for attachment or belonging may underlie some principles of my theory, but this would not alter the principles themselves.

3. The theory does not analyze the dispositional affect of individuals in interaction or the affective states they bring to the situation. These currently fall under the "all other things equal" clause of the theory but warrant theoretical attention in the future.

4. The theory does not make a priori assumptions about what constitutes "success" because this is likely to be situational. "Successful interaction," getting on and off a bus in a crowd, may be matter of how well actors coordinate their behaviors and how

cooperatively (e.g., quickly and politely) they adjust their behavior when coordination breaks down. Repeated unsuccessful interaction (e.g., bumping, shoving, frowning, expressions of anger) would generate negative emotions and little sense of cohesion. In the context of a group identity, this would reduce attachment to it.

5. Negative emotions, such as anger and fear, generally have stronger immediate effects on actors than most positive emotions, in part because they are "hotter." Differences in intensity between positive and negative emotions should not alter the propositions or basic processes posited by the theory, but the strength of the relationships specified by the propositions could differ by emotional valence. For example, the emotional effects of frequent group task success may be less intense than the emotional effects of frequent task failure.

6. These hypotheses are intended to illustrate some potentially provocative implications of the theory for precise and exact role definitions, job designs, and measures of accountability. The theory implicitly suggests that prevailing approaches to the design of roles, jobs, and accountability could forestall or undermine the development of affective group attachments. However, there are several unanswered questions. For example, if responsibilities not only are shared, but also are vague or confusing, how can a group avoid a lack of coordination, internal conflict over responsibilities, and related negative feelings? If a sense of shared responsibility is so strong that individual performances cannot be judged by them or others, how can individual merit be rewarded and individual performance motivated? Clearly, there is a need for theoretical and empirical work on the conditions under which these hypotheses apply.

7. For measurement purposes, this means that aggregation or averaging of individual emotional responses and perceptions of shared responsibility is a viable way to test the theory, as currently formulated. Repeated interaction should promote a convergence of their responses insofar as they can observe or interpret each others responses. Thus, difference or variance measures should be useful supplements for aggregation measures in testing the theory.
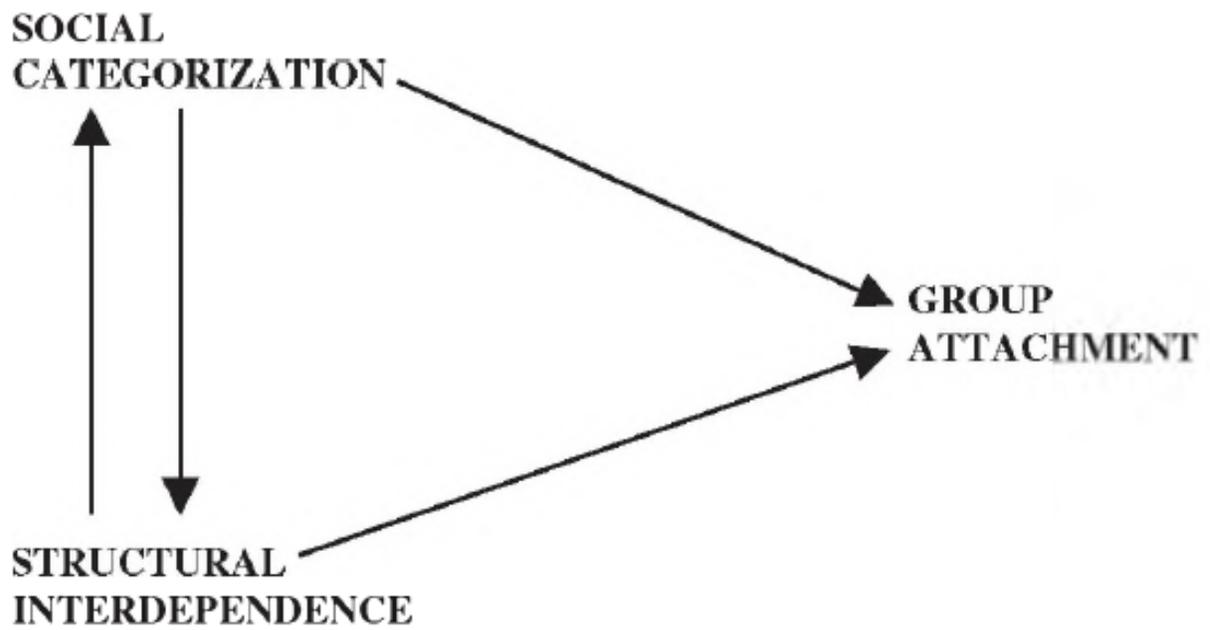
Figure 1

SOCIAL CATEGORIZATION

STRUCTURAL INTERDEPENDENCE

GROUP ATTACHMENT

Fig. 1.   Social Identity and Social Exchange.

Figure 2

STRUCTURAL DEPENDENCE	→	EXCHANGE FREQUENCY	→	POSITIVE EMOTION	→	PERCEIVED COHESION	→	COMMITMENT BEHAVIOR

Fig. 2. The Theory of Relational Cohesion (Adapted from Lawler and Yoon (1998)).

Figure 3

SOCIAL CATEGORIZATION

STRUCTURAL INTERDEPENDENCE

Social Interaction

Positive Emotions

Group Attachment
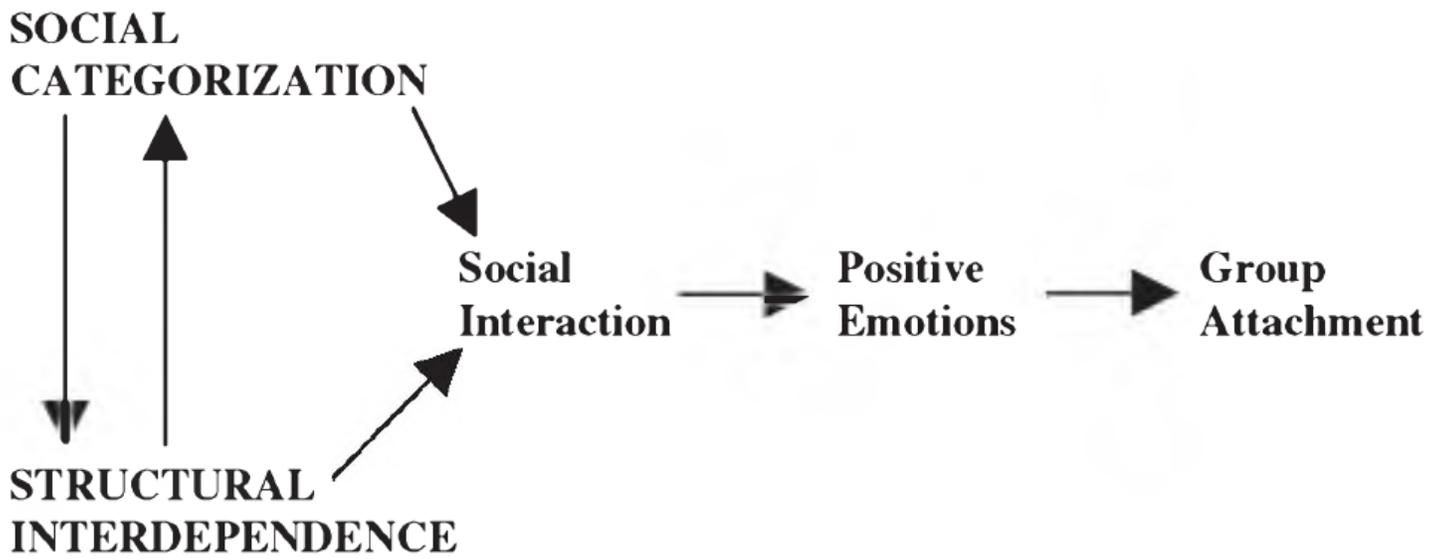
Fig. 3.   Integrated Model Expanded.

Figure 4

**Shared
Responsibility**

**SOCIAL
CATEGORIZATION**

**Social
Interaction**

**Positive
Emotions**

**Group
Identity**

**STRUCTURAL
INTERDEPENDENCE**
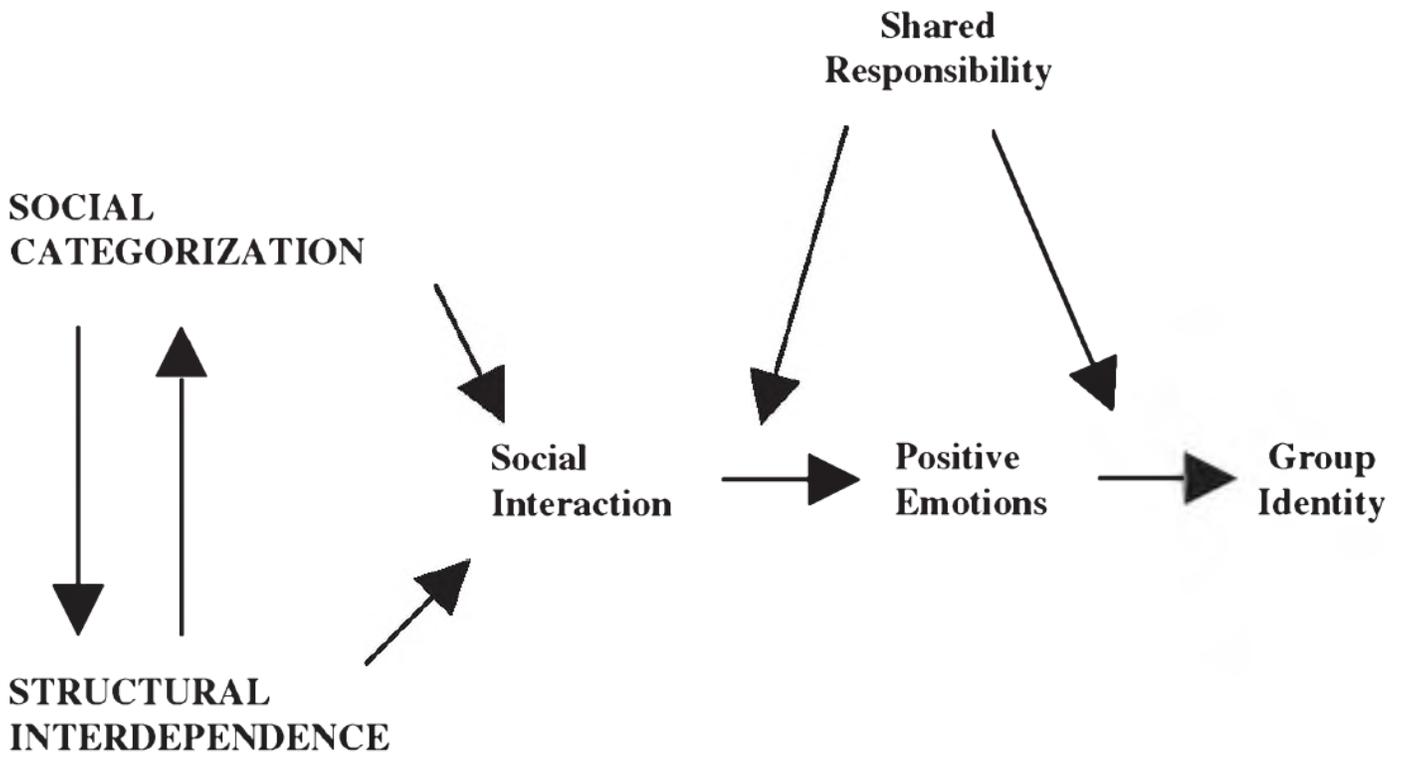
Fig. 4.   Moderating Effects of Shared Responsibility.

Figure 5

Shared

Responsibility

Spread of Emotions

Group Level Affective Tone
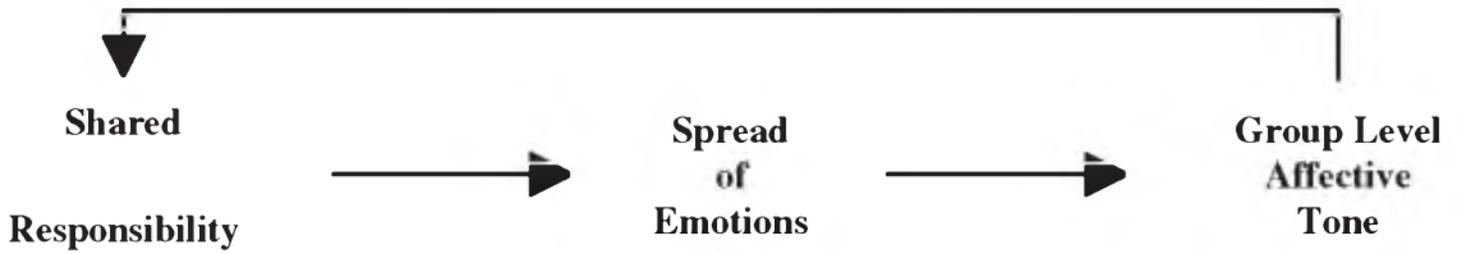
Fig. 5. Spread of Emotions (Proposition 4).

Table 1

Table 1. Emotions Directed at Each Object.

	Valence of Emotion	
Social Object	Positive	Negative
Task	Pleasantness	Unpleasantness
Self	Pride	Shame
Other	Gratitude	Anger
Social unit	Affective attachment	Affective detachment

Note: Reprinted from Lawler (2001).

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