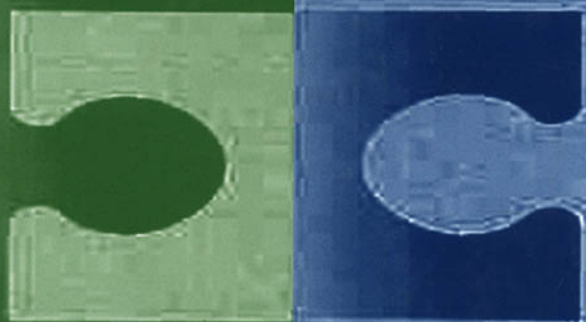# Identity Formation, Agency, and Culture

A Social Psychological Synthesis

James E. Côté
Charles G. Levine

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Cover design by Kathryn Houghtaling Lacey

To the memory of Sherry Apple, MD, who dedicated her life to saving the lives of so many, but whose own life was tragically cut short by a cruel twist of fate

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Contents

PART III: THEORETICAL AND EMPIRICAL ELABORATIONS FOR A SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY OF IDENTITY IN LATE MODERNITY

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Preface

The concept of identity is perhaps one of the most important ideas the social sciences have investigated in recent years. Even a cursory glance at the literature reveals a burgeoning interest in identity-related issues. For example, a PsychINFO search indicates a steadily increasing number of hits on the keyword "identity" (including ego identity, social identity, identity crisis, and ethnic identity). Prior to the mid-1980s, there are only 742 hits on identity keywords, but between 1985 and 1989 alone, there are 4,186 hits. Since then, the number of hits has risen to 5,650 between 1990 and 1994, and to 7,894 between 1995 and 1999. Moreover, since the mid-1990s, the following journals have been founded with "identity" in some form or manifestation as their focus: *Identity: An International Journal of Theory and Research; Identities: Global Studies in Culture and Power; The Journal of Aging and Identity; Post Identity;* and *Self and Identity.*

A key reason for this interest, we believe, is that recent cultural changes have made forming and sustaining a sense of identity more problematic for virtually everyone in, and affected by, Western culture. At the same time, some observers see these cultural changes as making identity formation and maintenance more challenging and promising. In either case, identity formation has changed in significant ways for many young people attempting to make their way into adulthood, so much so that we are witnessing a proliferation of identity-related problems, and even pathologies. Furthermore, identity problems seem to be exacerbated for many minority youth who lack access to the cultural resources that help majority youth construct more socially rewarded identities.

The magnitude of these problems has prompted us to write this book in the hope of helping the academic community better understand the difficulties and complexities of identity formation. In addition to building the basis of a theory with which to understand contemporary identity problems, we show in detail how the theory can be applied. In doing so, we hope to produce the first comprehensive source for those wishing to understand various identity issues, at both a theoretical and a practical level.

THE PLAN OF THIS BOOK

The task we undertake in this book is ambitious—some would say overly ambitious. We cover an enormous amount of literature that has hitherto been partitioned into some of the focused specialties and sub-specialties that characterize contemporary academia. However, as we strenuously argue, this division of intellectual labor has created a fragmented field that lacks a unifying, multidimensional taxonomy and a consensus about underlying assumptions (and how to evaluate those assumptions). Because of the enormity of the interdisciplinary task involved in pointing out potential links among all sub-specialties in the self and identity literature, we concentrate on, but do not restrict ourselves to, the literature on *identity formation*. Accordingly, we deal less with the self-formation, self-maintenance, and identity maintenance literatures. Instead, our goal is to convince interested readers of the utility of developing a more formalized theory of identity formation that is compelling to both psychologists and sociologists.

The style with which we approach this goal involves (a) "picking out" the range of possible approaches and ideas from which to draw, (b) "pushing along" the ones we prefer in meeting our overall goal, and then (c) later "picking up" those preferred approaches or ideas for elaboration and integration with other preferred approaches and ideas. This style of "sweeping" concepts along to pick them up later is useful, but also necessary, given the complexity of the literature and the fact that there is a necessary sequence in which ideas need to be presented in order to be properly understood.

To achieve a multidimensional understanding of identity, it is necessary to adopt an interdisciplinary perspective, and adopting an interdisciplinary perspective involves using technical terms that are common in one discipline, but uncommon in another. Accordingly, readers will find the meanings of certain terms readily apparent and others not apparent, but this situation will differ depending on their disciplinary background. To address this problem, we provide a glossary of terms familiar to sociologists but not psychologists, as well as terms familiar to psychologists but

not sociologists. In addition, we define a number of philosophical concepts in the glossary with which all social scientists should be familiar, but perhaps are not. We do this so the text will not become cluttered with distracting definitions. When a term is used that we feel might not be commonly used in either sociology or psychology, parenthetical reference is made to the glossary for further clarification.

The substantive material we present here has been filtered through a social psychological perspective that we believe is inherently integrative of the levels of analysis involved in a comprehensive understanding of identity formation (the personality and social structure perspective). This perspective helps us put concepts in order by level of analysis, so that we can work on a common taxonomy. However, readers should be aware at the outset that this perspective does not constitute a full theory of identity formation. Such a theory awaits further empirical assessment of those concepts, and their interrelations, identified here.

To achieve these goals, we have divided the book into three parts that build on each other. Part I comprises five chapters that critically analyze the self and identity literatures, and culminate in recommendations regarding what concepts need to be "swept along" into Part II. In these chapters we sort out the self and identity literatures, selecting the most felicitous concepts associated with identity formation. We also find that this part of the journey encounters other perspectives that have been adopted in approaching self and identity issues, namely, postmodernism, feminism, culturalism, and critical materialism. We evaluate these perspectives in an attempt to determine what elements and assumptions we might adopt in achieving the overall goal of our project.

In Part II, we focus on identity formation, showing in chapter 6 one way to develop a formal—and testable—theory of identity formation based on the original work of Erik Erikson, the "father" of the identity concept. In chapter 7 we use Erikson's original formulations as a basis for developing the sociological relevance of his ideas by placing identity formation in cultural and historical context. Part III, comprising three chapters, moves beyond Erikson by building on his ideas and elaborating them to make them more relevant to contemporary societal and life-course conditions. Chapter 8, dealing with contemporary societal conditions, discusses identity formation in the context of resources made available to people, and acquired by them, in terms of various ways of coping with the conditions of late modernity. Chapter 9, on life-course conditions, examines the normative-ethical requirements of identity formation as a life-long process culminating in a sense of integrity at life's end. We conclude with chapter 10, presenting vigorous humanistic recommendations regarding how to fully develop and understand the untapped potential of human identity formation.

We invite the reader to take the intellectual journey we provide in this book, promising that by the journey's end she or he will be more informed about the problems and prospects of human identity. And, we encourage scholars to take up the task we have begun of developing a formal theory of identity formation that is of intellectual and practical significance in addressing the basic conditions of human existence represented by the concept of identity and its formation.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

A CRITICAL ANALYSIS
OF APPROACHES TO SELF
AND IDENTITY

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Identity Theory
in Perspective

For most of human history, forming an adult identity was by all accounts a relatively straightforward process. The average person simply assumed and fitted into the culturally prescribed roles that his or her parents and grandparents had themselves adopted. Those who did not do so might have been banished from their community, or at least sanctioned in some way. Of course, those in positions of authority and power may have had more choice in the latitude of their identities than others, but even their options were limited by restrictive social customs and the narrow range of roles available in the rudimentary economies.

This situation was characteristic of premodern societies that spanned the period of human evolution from simple tribal through feudal social organizations. Given their importance for human evolution and social adaptation, these forms of society are crucial reference points or baselines from which we can understand emergent identity problems associated with contemporary late modern societies. As humans have attempted to adapt to modern and late modern forms of social organization, where choice has replaced obligation as the basis of self-definition, identity formation has become a more difficult, precarious, and solitary process for which many people are unprepared in terms of their phylogenetic background.

For most of human history, identity formation was not a matter of individual choice and negotiation, so problems associated with these activities were not common. Accordingly, in this historical sense, humans have not been accustomed to living in societies where they are continually confronted with high levels of choice over fundamental matters of personal meaning. It is in this context that we can understand how humans living in

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late modern societies are still attempting to learn how to deal with this challenge. In other words, the process of forming an adult identity has become dramatically different for most people in Western societies, and many people have not developed the means for coping with a process that allows them to make choices, the consequences of which they may have to live with for the remainder of their lives.

Although many people welcome the ability to choose, they may not be so happy with having to assume the responsibility for the outcome of those choices (note the widespread avoidance of taking responsibility for one's actions). Available social models of adult identities do not always help those coming of age because many such models are ambiguous or their relevance becomes quickly outdated (Côté, 2000). In fact, difficulties with identity formation processes are so widespread they are now being considered "normal" in many respects. These normal difficulties include people being: unsure about what they believe in; uncommitted to any course of future action; open to influence and manipulation; and unaware that they should pass a sense of meaning on to their children. In all of these cases, people lack a sense of self-definition rooted in a community of others, which was the basis of human identity throughout history. Moreover, even forms of identity formation that can be considered "pathological" may not be recognized as seriously harmful to the person or community. For example, the American Psychiatric Association at one time recognized a general "Identity Disorder," but subsequently redefined it as "Identity Problem" (cf. the DSM-III and the DSM-IV). We are just beginning to understand personality problems such as the Borderline Personality Disorder and the Dissociative Identity Disorder, but these are often tolerated in communities and/or misdiagnosed when a person seeks medical assistance. It will clearly take some time before we come to grips with the nature of identity formation and the important issues associated with it. We hope this book is a step in the right direction.

Our point here is not to glorify premodern societies, but rather to use them as a point of comparison for understanding identity problems. Indeed, premodern societies had their own problems, including widespread poverty, short life spans, uncontrollable epidemics, poor medical knowledge, and the like. Clearly, we are not calling for a return to premodern societies, nor are we saying that late modern societies are all bad. However, as humans have solved certain problems of survival with technological advancements, new unanticipated problems associated with the meaning of existence have emerged, including how to deal with the greater latitude of choice that life-sustaining technology has given us. The issue of how to deal with technological advancements in terms of a set of humanistic ethics weighed heavily on Erik Erikson, and his deliberations of this thorny issue can be found in many of his writings.

SOME TYPICAL IDENTITY FORMATION STRATEGIES IN LATE MODERNITY

In order to more concretely illustrate how the task of identity formation has changed, and the "normal" problems now associated with it, we introduce here a tentative "working typology" of five identity strategies that seem to capture the range of contemporary life-course trajectories. For heuristic purposes, we have named these strategies as follows: Refusers, Drifters, Searchers, Guardians, and Resolvers (cf. Josselson, 1996; Klapp, 1969). This typology is based on a synthesis of the identity formation literature and will be elaborated on in chapter 4 after we review this literature. We offer this typology here to illustrate the following: (a) historically speaking, there are now a greater number of ways in which "adult" identities are formed; (b) adult identity formation can be rather chaotic; and (c) for virtually everyone, this process now involves an individualized "strategy" that may be carefully and consciously planned or may be part of a continual struggle with one's inner conflicts and resources, or lack thereof.

Refusers typically develop a series of defenses with which to "refuse" entry into adulthood. These include a series of self-defeating cognitive schema that lock them into child-like behavior patterns characterized by a dependency on someone or something else. They may remain with their parents well into their 30s (or for their lives); they may refuse to acquire occupational skills, and thus remain dependent on government benefits, the proceeds of crime, or an underground economy; or they may find a mate or a group of friends that *enables* them to stay perpetually in a preadult status. In terms of their character formation, Refusers were likely given little structure and encouragement as children regarding engagements with their social environments, and as adolescents they were likely given little guidance regarding ways in which they could develop themselves intellectually, emotionally, or vocationally (cf. the literature on permissive parenting; Steinberg, 2000). Thus, Refusers have few personal resources with which to actively engage a community of adults. In what should be their adult years (their 20s and 30s), they engage in a number of behaviors that sabotage their standing in any adult community. For example, they may engage in heavy drug or alcohol use; they may not maintain steady employment even when there may be no barriers to this; and they may periodically act out in immature ways (e.g., temper tantrums). Of course, Refusers could likely have been found in communities throughout Western history (cf. Erikson's, 1968, concept of the negative identity), but our contention is that this way of handling the demands of adult identity formation is increasing in late modernity (Côté, 2000). This type of person seems most likely to take refuge in one of the many youth street gangs now

proliferating in urban centers, or in a drug-oriented youth culture, rather than to confront the task of taking on adulthood responsibilities and/or attempting to overcome socioeconomic obstacles through legitimate means.

Although Drifters are similar to Refusers in their lack of integration into a community, they do have more personal resources at their disposal. These resources could include higher levels of intelligence, family wealth, or occupational skills, yet the Drifter seems unable or uninterested in applying these resources in a consistent and continuous manner. The Drifter may feel that conforming may be a "cop out," or may be "selling out;" or the Drifter may simply feel that he or she is "too good" to "toe the line." Whatever the reason, the effect is more or less the same: a chronic "preadult" behavior pattern characterized by poor impulse control, shallow interpersonal relationships, and little in the way of commitments to an adult community. This way of handling the demands of adult identity formation also seems to be increasing in late modernity (cf. Goossens & Phinney, 1996; Marcia, 1989a).

The Searcher, in contrast to the previous two strategies, has not given up on finding a validating adult community; instead, the Searcher cannot seem to find a community that satisfies his or her often unrealistically high criteria of functioning. Searchers are habitually driven by a sense of dissatisfaction with themselves and this dissatisfaction can be projected onto others. Unable to find perfection in themselves, and unable to find perfection in a community, the Searchers are locked into a perpetual journey for which there can be no end. They may have sought out role models who have claimed perfection, but when these models are found to be imperfect, the Searchers may grow tired of them. Or, the Searcher's own imperfections—in contrast to those of the role model—may create a sense of despair that drives the Searcher to look elsewhere.

The Guardian, in contrast to those three strategies, has likely experienced a well-structured childhood in which the values of the parent and/or community have been thoroughly internalized. This structure gives the Guardian a set of personal resources with which to actively engage the adolescent environment and move fairly quickly into adulthood. However, this internalized structure can be impervious to influence and change, leaving the person vulnerable in several ways. First, the person can neglect to undergo certain developmental experiences that help him or her to grow emotionally or intellectually. Second, the person can over-identify with the parent, making it difficult for him or her to individuate as an adult (cf. the literature on authoritarian parenting; Steinberg, 2000). And, third, as an adult, the person may be unduly rigid in terms of his or her own self-development and relations with others. In late modernity, change is a fact of life and a large variety of lifestyles and opinions will be encountered; to deal with these in a rigid manner can lead to all sorts of

hardship for oneself and for others (cf. Josselson, 1996). Traditional, premodern societies generally prescribe this identity strategy among their members, whereas the three strategies discussed earlier can be seen as anomic consequences of the disjunctive socialization process that are becoming increasingly common in late modern societies.

Finally, the Resolver actively engages himself or herself in the process of forming an adult identity, taking advantage of the opportunities in late modern societies *in spite of* the anomic character of these types of societies. This strategy involves actively developing one's intellect, emotional maturity, and vocational skills rooted in one's general competencies and interests. It also involves learning about the world and going out in the world to actualize one's budding abilities. Of course, many people have the potential to be Resolvers but find themselves held back for one reason or another (e.g., various commitments, like having a child, or having parents who are unable to invest in their education). However, even within these constraints, a certain amount of active engagement is usually possible; in fact, unless one is pulled by the processes that are felt by, say, Refusers or Guardians, attempting this strategy in some way may be unavoidable in late modern society, which actively stimulates this form of identity formation in certain ways (e.g., educational systems in which large proportions of populations participate well into the tertiary levels). Whatever the circumstances, those who are disposed to this identity strategy will find themselves yearning to grow in certain ways and will likely do so with whatever means are at their disposal. The impetus for this strategy is likely rooted in an internalized childhood cognitive structure and made possible during the transition to adulthood by a conducive motivational mindset associated with a desire to reach one's potential (cf. Côté & Levine, 1992, and the literature on authoritative parenting; Steinberg, 2000).

Sociological factors like social class, gender, and ethnicity are not necessarily relevant to our understanding of the nature of these identity strategies, although empirical analyses may show different proportions of them in different demographic categories. For example, a Drifter can come from a wealthy background, be a woman, and a minority group member. Similarly, a Resolver could be a minority woman from a working-class background. Our point is that identity formation in late modernity is not as restricted by social ascription as it was in premodern society. Indeed, active identity formation strategies such as those of the Resolver seem to be key if a person is to either overcome socioeconomic obstacles and become upwardly mobile or maintain the high social status of his or her parents. In other words, simply having wealthy parents, or being from an upper class, no longer guarantees that one's adulthood status reproduces that of one's parents. However, it appears that Refusers, Drifters, and Searchers seem most likely to experience downward mobil-

ity, whereas Resolvers and Guardians seem most likely to experience up-
ward mobility and/or replicate the social status of their parents (see the in-
dividualization process, chapter 4).

As we can see from the preceding paragraphs, regardless of the identity
strategy undertaken, the citizen of late modern societies will likely en-
counter continual problems in the formation of an adult social identity
and in the maintenance of that identity once it is formed. Moreover, social
identities are becoming increasingly transitory and unstable in late mod-
ern society (e.g., it is estimated that the current generation coming of age
will experience up to six career changes during adulthood; Foot, 1996).
Even those social identities that are maintained throughout adulthood will
require a certain amount of management in order to sustain validation for
them from others. For instance, the person will have to ensure that proper
images are created and recreated in interaction with significant others.
This form of identity management seems to apply to roles as common as
parenthood (e.g., being "fit" or being "good" in terms of shifting stan-
dards of child care, like discipline techniques) and as specific as one's oc-
cupational specialization (e.g., being "marketable," "selling oneself," and
being "non-redundant"). In short, under increasingly anomic social con-
ditions and diminishing consensus regarding traditional and contemporary
norms, the formation and maintenance of an adult identity can be problem-
atic for all citizens of late modern societies. Indeed, there is ample reason to
believe that this situation is worsening for many people (Côté, 2000).

A FRAMEWORK FOR STUDYING IDENTITY
FORMATION, AGENCY, AND CULTURE

The framework we adopt in this book stems from the *social psychological*
tradition in sociology called the "personality and social structure perspec-
tive" (House, 1977). House argued that as a field of study, social psychol-
ogy actually has "three faces." Only one of the faces corresponds with most
people's conception of "social psychology," namely, the version found in
mainstream psychology departments, which he called Psychological Social
Psychology. However, House identified two social psychological traditions
in sociology that constitute the other two faces: symbolic interactionism
(SI) and the personality and social structure perspective (PSSP).

The PSSP seems most suitable to the task of developing a comprehen-
sive understanding of identity for several reasons, foremost of which is its
explicit recognition of the relevance of three levels of analysis. In fact,
from the personality and social structure perspective, a comprehensive
theory of human behavior *requires* that these three levels, and their inter-

relations, be identified and analyzed. In our case, we are specifically interested in a comprehensive theory of human identity formation.

The three levels of analysis inherent to the PSSP are: personality, interaction, and social structure. From this perspective, the level of *personality* involves the intrapsychic domain of human functioning traditionally studied by developmental psychologists and psychoanalysts, and is referred to variously as the psyche, the self, cognitive structure, and so forth, depending on the school of thought. The level of *interaction* refers to the concrete patterns of behavior that characterize day-to-day contacts among people in families, schools, and so on, typically studied by symbolic interactionists. Sociologists often refer to this as the micro level of analysis. Finally, the *social structural* level refers to the political and economic systems, along with their subsystems, that define the normative structure of a society. This last level of analysis is most commonly referred to as the macro-sociological level of analysis.

We introduce Fig. 1.1 here to help readers gain an initial grasp of the PSSP. Figure 1.1 illustrates the three levels of analysis along with their interrelationships, which are signified with a series of four arrows representing the continual iterative flow of influence among the three levels. The influence of social structure on day-to-day interactional processes involves socialization and social control processes represented by arrow 1. Arrow 2 is meant to show how exposure to day-to-day interaction with others culminates in the internalization of social structural norms and values, as mediated by the person's ego synthetic abilities, while arrow 3 illustrates the
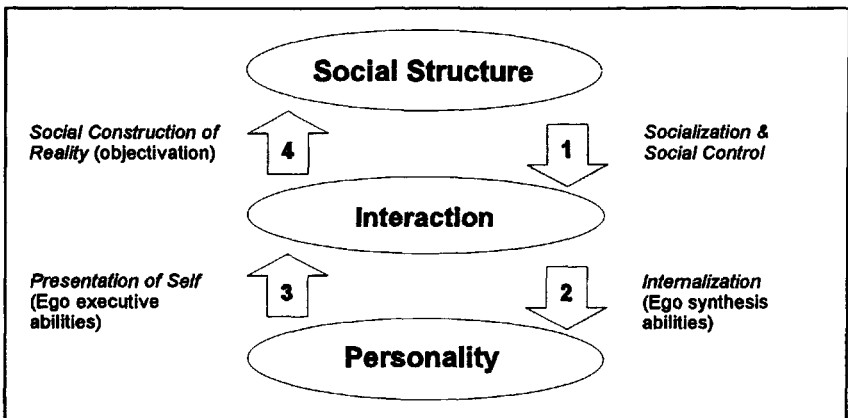
FIG. 1.1.   The Personality and Social Structure Perspective (PSSP) model: Three levels of analysis constituting social behavior.

person's ego executive abilities in producing self-presentations (the ego and its abilities are discussed in chapter 6). Finally, the person engages in daily interactions with others (arrow 4), an important consequence of which is the social construction of reality, and what Berger and Luckmann (1966) called "objectivation" (see the glossary). Through these iterative processes, social structures are maintained or altered, interactions are normalized or disrupted, and personality is formed or transformed. This is an admittedly sketchy introduction to this perspective; however, it constitutes a backbone of this book, and throughout this book we will provide extensive explanations of it for readers.

In attempting to develop a multidimensional understanding of identity, the PSSP model is both parsimonious and heuristically useful. For example, this perspective suggests the following taxonomy: (a) that the term *social identity* designate the individual's position(s) in a social structure; (b) that the concept of *personal identity* denote the more concrete aspects of individual experience rooted in interactions; and (c) that the notion of *ego identity* refers to the more fundamental subjective sense of continuity that is characteristic of the personality. Accordingly, the PSSP model shows that identity terminology can be classified into coherent taxonomies and can help us map out different facets of the interdisciplinary terrain of human identity. Throughout this book we illustrate the PSSP step-by-step, to demonstrate its relevance in understanding the relationships among identity formation, agency, and culture.

At the level of social identity, the individual is most influenced by cultural factors and social roles, with varying degrees of pressure to fit into the available identity "molds" created by these influences. Social identity is predicated most on secondary relationships, although it can be affected by primary relationships (e.g., often social roles are granted on the basis of an individual's "personality" or personal style, as in appropriate presentations of self), and self-relationships (e.g., the individual must sustain a personal sense of continuity to maintain social roles).

At the level of personal identity, individuals find a fit between the prescriptions of their social identity and the uniqueness and idiosyncrasies of their life history (or learning history). As well, personal agency and biological dispositions (e.g., potentials, desires, etc.) can create an identity "style" at this level, producing an individuality (within the bounds allowed by the society and one's place in it). Personal identity is most affected by primary relationships, but can be affected by secondary- and self-relationships.

Finally, at the level of ego identity, the individual is most immediately affected by intrapsychic factors (e.g., relations among the psychic structures) and biological dispositions. The sense of ego identity is thus strongly affected by self-relations (especially in terms of basic mental health requirements), but is also predicated on primary and secondary

"other" relationships for validation and confirmation (i.e., the ego needs these relationships to develop and maintain its strength).

THE IMPORTANCE OF LOCATING AGENCY

A perennial debate in the social sciences involves the extent to which behavior is the result of external, social, political, and economic forces, on the one hand, or internal, individual, willful potentials, on the other. In sociology, this controversy is referred to as the "structure–agency debate." While not logically necessary, this debate is also often tied to arguments about whether the sociological or the psychological level of analysis is the "right" one to employ. The social psychological analysis of identity that we develop later points to a resolution of both dimensions of this debate showing that *both* levels are useful (as opposed to being simply right or wrong), depending on what is being analyzed. We attempt to demonstrate that "identity" is a function of both external (social) and internal (agentic) factors, and that both the sociological and psychological perspectives are essential for a comprehensive understanding of the complexities of human self-definition.

A primary reason for the persistence of this debate in sociology may be that many sociologists have been trained to focus on the normative structure of societies as explanations for behavior patterns. This training dates back to Durkheim (1895/1964), who, in his attempt to distinguish sociology from psychology, argued that the "proper" purview of sociologists lies with the study of "social facts" (persistent manifestations of normed patterns of thinking and behaving), and that psychological explanations were unnecessary or misleading (House, 1977, citing Durkheim's work). For a good portion of the 20th century, then, sociologists shied away from explanations that implicate internal thought processes and self-directed behavior. With the exception of some minor dissent (e.g., Parsons, 1962; Wrong, 1961), the "structural" paradigm dominated sociology in North America. Unfortunately, a resolution to this debate is not to be found in psychology either, because psychologists have tended to see social structures as simply products of human needs and traits rather than as having a level of existence in their own right. We deal directly with the merits and limitations of the sociological and psychological approaches in chapter 4.

In the past couple of decades, the structure–agency debate has been rekindled after the structural paradigm was challenged by those who wished to re-introduce the "individual" into the discipline of sociology. Much of this challenge claims that sociology must acknowledge the notion that people are capable of "agentic" or intentional behaviors, even though they are often constrained by normed social structures (either subtly through

socialization and enculturation or coercively through force). A major objection to this challenge from some sociologists is that it will undermine the discipline's "identity;" that sociology will be transformed into a social psychology. In the present analysis, we do not need to explore this debate, or its ramifications, in detail. However, recognition of it helps us to understand one reason why identity has been theorized at different levels of analysis, with theorists of various camps being unaware of, or hostile to, the work of others. Thus, controversy over the issue of agency helps to explain why we have parallel traditions in psychology and sociology that need to be integrated if we are to understand human identity in a comprehensive manner. It is toward gaining this comprehensive understanding that this book is devoted.

CONCLUSION: ELEPHANTS AND AUTOMOBILES

Although interest in the concept of identity dates back to mid-century in both sociology and psychology, we have noted that the study of identity has followed separate paths in each discipline. A primary reason for this seems to be disciplinary specialization. In rudimentary terms, psychologists are more interested in what happens to individuals, and sociologists are more interested in what happens to societies. But there are more complex reasons for the divergent paths taken, as we argue next.

Although the specific use of the term "identity" is rare in sociology before the 1940s, roots for the idea can be traced through early sociological interest in "self and society." Scholars in the United States produced much of this early literature. This has been attributed to a number of factors, foremost of which is the fact that the United States is "a nation of immigrants," where questions of national identity have regularly emerged in public discourse (Weigert, Teitge, & Teitge, 1986). Accordingly, new immigrants had to confront repeatedly the question of what it meant to be "American," especially during and after wars with distant nations, some of which were homelands for portions of the citizenry. At the same time, citizens have found themselves in a democratic experiment that has, for generations, emphasized individual freedoms and rights, placing the onus on individuals to also assume responsibility for their own fates. Fuelled by Horatio Alger stories of doing well by making the right choices and working hard, questions of character have been ripe for sociological analysis for some time. More recently, countries around the globe have caught up to the American concern with identity issues, and identity has now become a popular concept for understanding the impact of the economic, social, and political upheavals of the 20th century.

Into this nation of immigrants came another immigrant who was to give Americans a unique way of understanding themselves. Erik Erikson left pre-World War II Europe with a unique mix of skills and insights, including a checkered youth, artistic skills, a knowledge of Montessori teaching methods, and a close acquaintance with Sigmund and Anna Freud. Erikson's impact in psychology is described in more detail in chapter 2. In sociology, he was to have a more indirect influence, but one nonetheless (Weigert et al., 1986). Sociologists and anthropologists had for some time been theorizing with concepts like self and "character," often making connections between "culture and character" (e.g., Benedict, Honnigmann, Kluckholn, Margaret Mead, Riesman, Mills, Smelser). These early scholarly activities laid the basis for the personality and social structure perspective utilized in this book (House, 1977).

In their review of the sociological literature on identity, Weigert et al. (1986, p. 29) argued that Erikson's writings on identity in the 1940s and 1950s gave the social science community a "reasonably value-neutral and interdisciplinary term." Unfortunately, partly because of professionalization and specialization, the disciplines of sociology and psychology have since become increasingly isolated from one another, as have some subdisciplines within each discipline. Consequently, the body of literature on identity from this period forward is considerably fragmented and suffers from the absence of a unifying taxonomy or common language. Currently, there are few joint research projects undertaken by psychologists and sociologists.

In spite of their common roots, then, over the past several decades the psychological and sociological approaches to identity have constituted independent frameworks. Indeed, they have operated in virtual isolation from one another, producing separate literatures, with little cross-referencing between the two. Within sociology, a fragmentation has also occurred, as we see in chapter 3. To help us understand this fragmentation, two analogies can be used.

A Hindu folk tale provides an apt homology regarding the impact of professionalization and specialization on the study of identity. In this tale, each of three blind men insists that his tactile experience of an elephant provides *the* correct description. The first blind man, feeling only the elephant's tail, insists that the elephant is a rope; the second, feeling only the elephant's trunk, contends that it is a snake; the third man, touching only a leg, asserts that the elephant is a tree. As they argue over whether it is a rope, a snake, or a tree, the elephant walks away. We are writing this book with the lesson of this folk tale in mind, hoping that others will learn the lesson as well. None of the three men were wrong, nor were any right in any absolute way. Each had a point that made some sense, although it was

based on an incomplete examination of the elephant and was therefore only partially formulated. However, had they taken the time to compare their perceptions, they would have arrived at a more complete understanding of the elephant.

The lesson at hand is that we all need to be mindful when telling each other what we think "identity" is and how it should be understood. We must also listen to what the other has to say. In taking this stance, we hope this book will stimulate the type of dialogue that Erikson encountered half a century ago, and help us develop a better understanding of what "identity" is. Mindful of the Hindu folk lesson, our starting point, then, is that "identity" is not simply one thing that can be fully understood from only one vantage point.

A second lesson can be gained with another comparison that helps us appreciate why there are "natural" disciplinary differences between psychology and sociology, and hence different levels of analysis used in explaining behavior. From this concrete analogy, we will see why abstract social structural explanations are not reducible to individual actions, and vice versa, and why both should be maintained in terms of their own integrity.

By merit of their disciplinary mandates, as already suggested, psychologists are more interested in what happens "inside" individuals (the level of personality, according to the PSSP), and sociologists are more interested in what happens "inside" societies (the level of social structure, according to the PSSP). Neither is wrong in doing this; rather, each simply focuses on a different level of analysis by merit of its own "character." Although the two levels are related in certain ways, they are not reducible to one another, as the following comparison of different forms of knowledge about the "behavior" of the automobile shows.

Most automobiles are powered by internal combustion engines. A few people (mechanics and engineers) have an extensive knowledge of these engines, and they can tell us how they are built (structure) and how they run (process). But, the engine-experts rarely know more than the average person about traffic patterns. A mechanic does not normally possess advanced knowledge about the complex patterns that traffic can take (structure) or how they can change (process). Nor can a mechanic usually explain any better than the average person why certain types of accidents take place with predictable frequency, why traffic jams occur at certain times and not others, or why gridlock is a problem in some cities and not others.

However, there are a few people who are experts in the field of traffic and safety, and they do have explanations for these non-mechanical phenomena. They likely do not have an extensive knowledge of auto mechanics, however; in fact, such knowledge would play little role in their expla-

nations of traffic flow. The common denominator in this example is the car and how it "behaves," but we are talking about two different levels of analysis, even though there are areas of interrelation (engine capacity, mechanical failures, pollution produced, car/truck size, etc). To put this another way, an extensive knowledge of auto mechanics does little to explain traffic patterns, and an extensive knowledge of traffic patterns does little to explain the workings of the internal combustion engine.

To return to our disciplinary discussion, psychologists study mental processes and related individual actions, whereas sociologists study social structures and related individual actions. Their common interest is in how people behave (individual actions), but this does not mean that social structures can be reduced to (i.e., fully explained by) mental processes, or that mental processes can be reduced to social structures. Although there are areas of interrelation (via the level of interaction, according to the PSSP), these mental processes and social structures exist at two different levels of analysis. To confuse these issues is to commit an error of "reductionism," sometimes called "psychologism" and sometimes called "sociologism," depending on the direction the reduction takes.

As we examine the contributions of psychologists and sociologists throughout this book, we will see that some have behaved like one of the blind men, insistent that they have the definitive answer about what is "real," or that they are content to process limited, specialized knowledge of their subject matter. We will also see that some believe that their level of expertise is the "best" with which to understand crucial aspects of human identity, and that they need not bother themselves with other levels of understanding. Our hope in writing this book is to show how to avoid both errors by providing an interdisciplinary, multidimensional theory of identity as it pertains to human agency and culture, and to set an example of how a more comprehensive theory of identity can be formulated. We do so by approaching the multidimensionality of identity from the personality and social structure perspective (PSSP) that identifies three levels of analysis and we point out how the various approaches to identity can be understood in terms of each of these three levels.

Psychological Approaches to the Concept of Self and Identity

The study of self and identity in psychology has followed two traditions. One emphasizes the formation of identity during the transition to adulthood and the other concentrates on the processes of self-maintenance. Although there are points of overlap, the study of identity formation is within the realm of developmental psychology, whereas the study of the self is a sub-discipline of Psychological Social Psychology referred to as self-psychology. Given our primary concern with identity formation processes, we first discuss the developmental aspects of identity formation and then move to those elements of self-psychology that are most relevant to identity formation.

IDENTITY FORMATION

The Foundation: Erikson

Erik Erikson's influence on the study of identity formation in adolescence is widely recognized. This influence includes the axiom that the major psychosocial task linking childhood with adulthood involves developing a viable adult identity. By focusing on psychosocial development, Erikson (e.g., 1968) recognized the psychological, as well as social and personal, dimensions of identity, thereby planting the seeds for a comprehensive, multidimensional theory of identity formation. Moreover, Erikson imbedded a stage of identity formation within a life-course framework that introduces other psychosocial dimensions related to identity formation,

like intimacy, generativity, and integrity, all of which have normative-ethical implications for adult functioning (dealt with in detail in chapter 9).

In the context of psychosocial functioning, we can extract three interrelated dimensions from Erikson's work on identity formation: the subjective/psychological dimension, or ego identity *qua* a sense of temporal–spatial continuity and its concomitants; the personal dimension, or a behavioral and character repertoire that differentiates individuals; and the social dimension, or recognized roles within a community. For Erikson, these components need to come together during the identity stage, and when they do not, or as they are doing so, an identity crisis is evident. Such an identity crisis is characterized by a subjective sense of identity confusion, a behavioral and characterological disarray, and a lack of commitment to recognized roles in a community. Accordingly, resolution of the identity stage is facilitated when the three dimensions dovetail: when a relatively firm sense of ego identity is developed, behavior and character become stabilized, and community-sanctioned roles are acquired (cf. Côté & Levine, 1987).

This psychosocial formulation of identity allowed Erikson to study a variety of cultures, where he found great variation both in how adolescence is structured and in the tasks associated with identity formation. However, it is not widely recognized that in some of his works, he was addressing the situation in American culture, where resolution of the identity stage has for some time been predicated around choice and individuality during a protracted and loosely structured adolescence. This issue is important in terms of the direction taken by the empirical research that was inspired by Erikson's writings about American culture, where commitments can be based on choice rather than duty and obligation. For example, in a chapter entitled "Reflections on the American Identity," Erikson (1963) wrote:

> The process of American identity formation seems to support an individual's ego identity as long as he can preserve a certain element of deliberate tentativeness of autonomous choice. The individual must be able to convince himself that the next step is up to him and that no matter where he is staying or going he always has the choice of leaving or turning in the opposite direction if he chooses to do so. (p. 286)

Turning to Erikson's general conception of ego identity, it is crucial to know that he originally conceived of the notion of the identity crisis when treating identity loss among war-trauma victims during the Second World War. The traumas they had experienced created severe symptoms of identity confusion and identity dissociation (cf. Steinberg & Schnall, 2000). After the war, he noticed the trend toward more problematic identities among the general population of Americans, and he subsequently wrote

extensively about the "identity crisis" that he saw as a rising epidemic in modern societies. He later drew a parallel between identity disturbances and the experiences of "severely conflicted young people whose sense of confusion is due to a war within themselves" (Erikson, 1968, p. 17). He also wrote about the identity problems of adulthood that he saw to be "normal" responses to the vicissitudes and alienation associated with modern, technological societies.

Our reading of how Erikson's psychosocial formulations apply to all cultures (not just choice-encouraging American culture), suggests that, for him, the crux of identity stability in any culture lies in the interplay between the social and the psychic. That is, a person requires a *viable social identity* of some sort, and when the person develops a workable social identity based on commitments integrating the person into a particular culture, the psychological sense of temporal–spatial continuity—ego identity—should be nurtured. Once a sense of ego identity is established, people are buffered and protected from the vicissitudes of social conflicts and tensions. We believe that this position describes identity formation in all cultures, not just those that are individualistic and choice-oriented, like the United States. According to Erikson, people of all cultures can develop a sense of ego identity based on role validation and community integration (i.e., sustained commitments), especially when there is a lack of ambiguity regarding cultural beliefs (cf. Côté & Levine, 1987).

Another way to express Erikson's views in this context is to speak of three forms of continuity: a sense of sameness of the self with itself; interrelationships between the self and the other; and functional integrations between other and other. The first type of continuity is what Erikson had in mind when he coined the term "ego identity" (i.e., a sense of self-sameness over time). The second type of continuity pertains to a person's relationships with others that maintain the stability of personal and social identities. A discontinuity in this realm threatens the stability of those identities, although a strong sense of ego identity can help people through periods of instability in their relations with others. The third type of continuity represents the stability of relations in a particular community or group. When these community relations are stable and continuous, people's personal and social identities within the community are safeguarded. However, when these relations are unstable, people's personal and social identities come under pressure and may undergo revision. What is particularly important to note, however, is that unstable community relations (problems in "other–other" continuity) can create difficulties for those attempting the transition to adulthood. This is especially an issue for those younger members of society who do not have a sense of "self–self" continuity (ego identity) and who experience unstable "self–other" relations. However, it appears that these three forms of identity continuity are now

experienced as problematic for a sizable portion of adults in Western societies, especially geographically mobile urban dwellers. We can see in this formulation just how important a stable and structured society is in helping with the formation and maintenance of identities. We can also see why unstable and poorly structured societies, increasingly common in the West, make identity formation and maintenance (in its various forms) problematic for the individual. In our view, herein lies one of the greatest challenges to late modern societies.

Of course, Erikson is not without his critics. For example, he has been accused of various forms of androcentrism and Eurocentrism in his formulation of life-stages (see Côté & Levine, 1987, for a review of these). Recently, Sorell and Montgomery (2001) offered a vigorous discussion of the contemporary relevance of Erikson's work, pointing out areas in which Erikson's work is clearly lacking, but identifying other areas for which there is still no substitute for his pioneering work. Still, it seems to be widely acknowledged now that most identity-formation research in psychology has moved beyond Erikson (Schwartz, 2001), and some say that we should not dwell on the issue of whether, or to what extent, our efforts should be rooted in his work (e.g., Archer, 1992; Berzonsky & Adams, 1999). Certainly, few people seem to be relying on Erikson's full range of works as primary sources, and many of his core concepts are ignored (e.g., ego strength, the ego–superego struggle, fidelity, etc.).

We agree that research in this area need not be explicitly based on Erikson's work; however, we also feel that elements of his work remain important theoretical resources (cf. van Hoof, 1999). We believe that if we ignore the useful elements of his thought, we disregard a rich theoretical base from which to build the type of interdisciplinary dialogue Erikson envisioned. Hence, although Erikson's work is by no means exhaustive or fully formalized, without it serving as a general theoretical foundation with which to coordinate efforts, we risk a continuing situation where each of us believes they have the best description of the elephant, as the Hindu folk tale goes. In short, although Erikson did not complete the construction of a comprehensive, multidimensional theory of identity, we believe he left a basic foundation for doing so (cf. Côté, 1993, 1997a; Côté & Levine, 1987). It is the primary purpose of this book to discuss and elaborate on Erikson's work, so we devote four chapters to this task (chapters 6 through 9).

An Elaboration: Marcia

Although several neo-Eriksonian frameworks for doing empirical research have emerged (Kroger, 1993a), the identity status paradigm developed by James Marcia (1964, 1966) has by far been the most popular in terms of

the number of investigations employing it. This paradigm is closely aligned with Erikson's writings on "the American identity" identified earlier, but is less rooted in Erikson's psychoanalytic ego psychology (e.g., Erikson's core concepts like the ego–superego struggle are rarely investigated) and has followed a quantitative-statistical, as opposed to a clinical-observation, methodology. Adopting the individualist logic encouraged by American culture, the basic narrative of the identity status paradigm is that the formation of social role and ideological commitments in youth and adolescence is best undertaken on the basis of individual choice-making. Accordingly, variations in the presence or absence of choice-making and commitments have been intensively studied. The paradigm's central concepts—identity statuses—are thus based on the cross-tabulation of the dimensions of exploration and commitment: respectively, (a) the conscious (reflexive) deliberation of alternative goals, roles, and values and (b) the formation of possible consolidations of these deliberations as courses of future action. This conceptual cross-tabulation identifies four identity statuses: Identity Diffusion, Identity Foreclosure, Identity Moratorium, and Identity Achievement. Operationalized in terms of degrees of conscious choice-making (exploration) about commitments to various domains of values and functioning, Diffusions exhibit low levels of past conscious choice-making and little commitment to present or future roles; Foreclosures demonstrate low levels of past choice but high levels of future commitment; Moratoriums express active choice-making but incompletely formed commitments; and Achievements express firm commitments for present or future roles after having been through a period of conscious choice-making.

The identity status paradigm has produced the most coherent body of empirical research on identity formation to emerge in the field of identity research, in either psychology or sociology. In terms of cross-cultural validity, this literature has examined "lower middle to upper middle class ethnic majorities in North America, Northern Europe, and parts of the British Commonwealth" (Marcia, 1989b, p. 402). The success of this conceptual model in providing verifiable predictions attests to its usefulness in studying (certain aspects of Western) identity formation.

The studies employing the identity status paradigm have examined family background variables as predictors of identity status, identified certain personality variables associated with each status, and found some developmental patterns among the identity statuses. Antecedent socialization experiences associated with educational contexts have also been shown to be associated with the identity statuses. The identity statuses have been measured using the original semi-structured interview (Marcia, 1964) and a paper-and-pencil measure (Adams, Bennion, & Huh, 1987). For recent reviews, see Adams, Gullotta, and Montemayor (1992), Archer

(1994), LaVoie (1994), Kroger (1993b), Marcia, Waterman, Matteson, Archer, and Orlofsky (1993), Schwartz (2001), and van Hoof (1999).

The identity statuses appear to be useful partly because they describe "a greater variety of styles in dealing with the identity issue than does Erikson's simple dichotomy of identity versus identity confusion" (Marcia, 1980, p. 161). The statuses were originally based on the developmental hypothesis that a "continuum of ego identity based upon proximity of an individual to identity achievement . . . [underlies] the statuses" (Marcia, 1967, p. 119). Thus, a developmental progression through the statuses was postulated to be a dominant pattern, with Identity Achievement and Identity Diffusion as "polar alternatives of status inherent in Erikson's theory," and Identity Foreclosure and Identity Moratorium as "roughly intermediate in this distribution" (Marcia, 1966, pp. 551–552). In this sense, the identity statuses were originally seen to be substages of the identity stage (Côté & Levine, 1988a). Revisions to these assumptions have been made (see Marcia et al., 1993; Waterman, 1988).

Developmentally, identity status is theorized to vary hierarchically regarding levels of maturity of self-regulation and complexity of social functioning. Each status has been empirically associated with personality characteristics and social behaviors, and these characteristics tend to reflect this hierarchy (see Marcia, 1993, for a review). Identity Diffusion is generally considered the least mature and least complex status. Identity Foreclosure is thought to be a somewhat more mature status than Identity Diffusion in that some form of commitment is embraced. Identity Moratorium is often considered a more functionally complex status than either Diffusion or Foreclosure, because the individual is supposedly taking proactive steps in autonomously considering identity alternatives. Identity Achievement is generally considered the most mature and functionally complex status.

Recently, there has been a branching out of research rooted in the identity status paradigm (see Schwartz, 2001, for a comprehensive discussion of extensions and expansions of identity status theory). The alternative approaches, while committed to using the original typology of identity statuses, differ according to an emphasis on: personal expressiveness and self-actualization (Waterman, 1992); moral identity and co-constructivism (Kurtines, 1999); processes underlying identity formation (Grotevant, 1992); social cognition represented in identity styles (Berzonsky, 1992), interpersonal feedback as part of identity control (Kerpelman & Lamke, 1997), identity differentiation and integration (Adams & Marshall, 1996), and social-contextual barriers to movement through the identity statuses (Yoder, 2000). In addition, the areas or "domains" of commitment formation have been expanded in order to increase the relevance and inclusivity of the typology. For example, to be more inclusive of women, premarital

intercourse (Marcia & Friedman, 1970) and sex roles (Matteson, 1977) have been added as domains of measurement; to include younger samples, domains of dating and friendships have been operationalized (Grotevant & Cooper, 1981); to be sensitive to some minority groups, ethnicity has been studied (Phinney, 1989); and to understand European samples (specifically Dutch), life-style concerns have been measured (Bosma, 1985). Recent research has investigated the identity statuses in terms of sexual orientation (Ellis, 2000), gender (Cramer, 2000), prayer (McKinney & McKinney, 1999), and Christian liberal arts education (Foster & LaForce, 1999).

Although it has been extremely popular, the identity status paradigm has also not been without its critics. The modifications discussed here have undoubtedly increased the usefulness and validity of the identity status paradigm, but the heavy conceptual investment in the four-category typology creates difficulties in establishing a model of identity formation that fully applies in all cultures or that represents all forms and manifestations of the identity stage described by Erikson (Côté, 1996b). In particular, an investment in the notion that "identity" is, or has to be, "achieved" for the identity stage to be resolved is problematic not only in Western contexts (only 20% to 30% of the population apparently resolve the stage in this way; see Pulkkinen & Kokko, 1998, 2000; van Hoof, 1999), but especially in other cultural contexts, where almost no one resolves it in this way. In most societies, adequate resolutions would be classified as "foreclosed" by the original criteria (Marcia et al., 1993), yet this is seen by those who subscribe to the paradigm to be inadequate in Western societies. It is possible that there is "identity achievement" within "identity foreclosure" if the culturally appropriate domains are investigated (Kroger, in press), but this remains to be demonstrated, particularly in terms of underlying structural (versus content) transformations.

Similarly, attempts to identify sub-categories of Identity Foreclosure and Identity Diffusion are also interesting, but studying them can become quite cumbersome when six to seven sub-categories are identified (e.g., Archer & Waterman, 1990). It is important to stress here that, for Erikson, an adequate resolution of the identity stage—adequate in the sense of successfully appropriating adult roles and being recognized as an adult by others—is a normative phenomenon. That is, it is a statistically normal, not exceptional, social fact describing a modal event in the socialization of a society's youth. There appears to be a problem, therefore, in using the logic of the identity status paradigm to precisely represent what Erikson meant by the resolution of the identity stage.

In addition, the notion of Identity Achievement does not necessarily help us understand how the subsequent psychosocial stages are resolved. In terms of understanding its developmental impact on endpoints like ego integrity, information about *how* the identity stage is resolved is likely as

important as information concerning *whether* or not it is resolved in the paradigm's sense of having been "achieved" (see also Côté & Levine, 1988a).

In this book, we are interested not only in identity formation during the *identity stage*, but also with understanding the impact of identity stage resolution on identity transformations through Erikson's subsequent three psychosocial stages of intimacy, generativity, and integrity. Given Erikson's developmental logic interrelating all eight psychosocial stages of his model, we hold that an understanding of an adequate resolution of the integrity stage is required before we can have an understanding of what an adequate resolution of the identity stage might be. And, in order to understand the relationship between the identity stage and the integrity stage, we need to delve deeper into Erikson's theory to understand what he meant by "value orientation" and "virtue." It is in this analysis that the agentic component of personality structure can be detected. We turn to this task in chapters 6 and 9.

THE SELF

The Foundation: Self-Psychology

The research tradition of self-psychology is driven by several conceptual concerns, most of which stem from the pioneering works of William James (1892/1948), G.H. Mead (1934), and Charles Horton Cooley (1902). More specifically, James' and Mead's distinctions between the "I" and the "Me" have been the source of much writing on the constructs of self, reflexivity, and self-concept. Research regarding the multiplicity of self-organization is also attributable to these early writings. Cooley's famous construct, the "looking glass self," has spawned a great deal of investigation about self-esteem and reflected appraisal (e.g., Brown, 1993) and their associations with various strategies of self-presentation (e.g., Baumeister, Tice, & Hutton, 1989).

The dominant concerns addressed in the psychological literature on the self can be expressed in the form of questions such as: What is the relationship between the self "as knower" and the self as "known"? Is the self a cognitive structure, and if so, in what sense can it be said to have properties of organization? In what sense can the self be understood as a cognitive/interactive process? Is there such a thing as a "unified" self, or is it more appropriate to think of the self as a multiple, organized set of cognitive schema, each likely to be sensed as more or less meaningful by a person and others, depending on the situation? If the self is multiple, is it employed consistently in interaction and/or is it reflexively understood as being internally consistent? Are selves always grounded in social experi-

ence, or can it be theoretically important to acknowledge the "existence" of "true" and "false" selves and "possible" and "ideal" selves (e.g., Cross & Markus, 1991)? Does how one "feels" about the self matter? Does self-esteem influence the content and functioning of the cognitive set we can call "the self-concept"? Is the self to be understood solely in cognitive and developmental terms or do we also need to understand its existence and qualitative variations in historical and cultural terms? What is the difference between "personal" and "social" selves and what are the cognitive processes involved in the construction of personal biographies?

All of these questions have generated significant amounts of research that is becoming increasingly successful at mapping out those domains we refer to as the personal self and social self, at the interactional and structural levels of analysis, respectively. In addition, gains in our understanding of the functional relationships among self phenomena have emerged. We touch on some of these ideas briefly by using Baumeister's (1998) strategy for dividing this field into the following three major categories of research concern: reflexive consciousness, the interpersonal self, and the executive functions of the self.

In the sub-area of reflexive consciousness, psychological research focuses primarily on the ideas of the "self as knower" and the "self as known" (Gergen, 1971). This distinction, stemming from the "I"/"Me" distinction in the work of James (e.g., 1892/1948) and Mead (1934), closely parallels other distinctions such as those between process and structure and form and content. Examples of the emphasis on the self-as-knower (i.e., as a cognitive processor) can be seen in those research traditions concerned with self-awareness (e.g., Duval & Wickland, 1972), self-concept (e.g., McQuire, McQuire, & Winton, 1979) and how self-knowledge can influence memory (e.g., Beggan, 1994; Rogers, Kuiper, & Kirker, 1977). Such research often addresses questions regarding the relationships among reflexive cognition, self-esteem (e.g., Baumeister, 1990; Steele, 1988) and external and internal standards for self-comparison (e.g., Higgins, 1987). One can also place within this broad sub-area on reflexive consciousness the work of a smaller group of researchers who are concerning themselves with questions about the acquisition of self-knowledge as a function of age and cognitive development (Hart, Maloney & Damon, 1987; Harter, 1993; Honess & Yardley, 1987).

Psychologists have also focused their research on the "self-as-known," that is, on the organization and content of the self-concept. Several different types of concerns permeate this literature. For example, much has been written about the internal consistency of self-knowledge, given the fact that it is differentiated or multiple (Broughton, 1981; Rosenberg, 1997) but can also evidence a quality of unity in the domain we call the personal self (McAdams, 1997). Other researchers have addressed the task

of how to conceptualize the self-knowledge system as an organization of coordinated schema-contents (Byrne, 1996; Byrne & Shavelson, 1996; Fiske & Taylor, 1991; Marsh & Hattie, 1996) and how such a system functions when processing self-relevant information, given variation in its complexity and its relationship with self-esteem. In this context, growing interest is emerging regarding questions of how personal self-conceptions are coordinated with more collectively grounded conceptions of identity. Thoits and Virshup (1997), for example, have theorized about the impact of social identities on persons' self-conceptions, and Roberts, Phinney, Romero, and Chen (1996) have focused more specifically on ethnic identity in this regard. Finally, some psychologists, from a social psychological perspective, have addressed broader questions about the historical and cultural origins of the self-knowledge system, pointing to its appearance and change as a function of dominant cultural value systems and variation in social structural complexity (Baumeister, 1997; Danziger, 1997; Holland, 1997; Mageo, 1997).

When the self is investigated as an interpersonal phenomenon, psychologists recognize the interactive origins, development, and maintenance of the social self. However, in this sub-area of research, they maintain a dominant focus on the intrapsychic dimension in order to convey the point that the self is not simply a passive product of social influences. As Baumeister (1998, p. 700) observed, a general way to understand the significance of this area of research is to think of it as being oriented to the study of the self as an "interpersonal tool."

Some of the topics investigated in the interpersonal self area concern the extent to which, and the intrapsychic reasons why, others' perceptions of self influence one's own self-concept. This concern with processes of "reflected appraisal" (Felson, 1989) has generated questions about the accuracy of one's perception of the impressions made on others (DePaulo, Kenny, Hoover, Webb, & Oliver, 1987) as well as about the functions of self-deception. Another major area of interest in this context focuses on the general topic of how and why the self presents to others the way it does. This study of self-presentation and the management of impressions has focused on the relevance of self-motives, such as supplication and ingratiation (Jones & Pittman, 1982) and self-monitoring abilities (Snyder, 1987), and threats to the self (Heatherton & Vohs, 2000). In a more theoretical vein, some writers have investigated the differences between the personal and social self (e.g., Harter, 1997), while others have turned their attention to the interactive and cultural processes involved in the derivation, maintenance, and change of personal identity (e.g., Shotter & Gergen, 1989; Worchel, Morales, Paez, & Deschamps, 1998).

Finally, we would certainly be remiss not to mention in this context the theoretical and empirical work stimulated by Tajfel's (1981) social identity

theory and Turner's (1987) self-categorization theory (see Thoits & Vir-
shup, 1997, for a review of these theoretical orientations and Worschel et.
al., 1998, for a review of theoretical and empirical extensions). Both Tajfel
and Turner attempted to understand the cognitive processes underlying
the distinction between personal and social selves on the one hand and
more collectively based group identities on the other. Their work extends
back to the "New Look" movement in perception (Bruner, 1968), a move-
ment that extended the principles of Gestalt psychology into the social
psychological realm of social perception. It theorized the relationship be-
tween the cognitive processes involved in the ongoing construction and
reconstruction of collective identities, the emergence of group structure
and cohesiveness, and the conflictual and competitive processes involved
in intergroup relations.

One other sub-area of psychological research that Baumeister identi-
fied concerns the study of the executive functions of the self, or, more spe-
cifically, research about how the self exercises control over its behavior
and choices. Sometimes referred to as the study of processes of self-regu-
lation and the attributes of an agentic personality, the fundamental as-
sumption grounding this area of inquiry is that persons are motivated by
the desire for control over both their environments and themselves in or-
der to pursue their self-interests. Although exceptions to this claim have
been documented (Burger, 1989, and the literature on self-defeating be-
havior; Higgins, Snyder, & Berglas, 1990), in general it seems to be a rea-
sonable one to make. More recently, Deci and Ryan (1995) have suggested
the view that this motive to control and pursue self-interest can be broken
down into the following three intrinsic motives: the need for competence,
the need for autonomy, and the need for relatedness.

Research into the executive functions of the self represents for us and
for Baumeister (1998, p. 724) an increasingly significant activity to pursue,
for it is the one research focus that promises to yield information about an
understanding of ourselves as willful, autonomous beings. However, we
believe that this agentic theme needs to be theorized in relation to notions
of identity and self more carefully than it has been, if the potential of this
research is to be fully realized. Accordingly, we undertake this task in the
chapters to follow.

Self research in psychology addresses a variety of concerns having to do
with the interactional and structural levels of analysis identified by the
personality and social structure perspective. In addition, some research
has investigated the executive and synthetic functions of the self, making it
compatible with Erikson's psychoanalytic approach to identity (although
the "self" has not been clearly differentiated from the "ego"). However,
self-psychology is of greater use in understanding identity maintenance

than it is in understanding identity formation, so we do not draw from it extensively in this book.

An Elaboration: The Postmodern Self

Kenneth Gergen (1971, 1972, 1991, 1992, 1994) has contributed extensively to self-psychology since the early 1970s. Over the last two decades, however, he has taken a divergent route that challenges many of the assumptions associated with the scientific ("modernist") study of the self. This divergent route views self and identity from a "postmodernist" perspective (this is a complex concept that can be defined in a variety of ways, as we see here with Gergen's theory; our glossary presents one). In taking this perspective, he moved this area closer to sociological approaches, as we see in the next chapter. Moreover, unlike some scholars who view postmodernity in negative terms, Gergen (1991) celebrated postmodernity as an opportunity for the human species to adopt higher forms of "consciousness" (p. 147). In fact, he spoke enthusiastically of "oceanic states" and "rapture" (p. 74 & p. 156), and "a cultural shift of Copernican magnitude" where we can achieve "a relational sublime" (Gergen, 1996, p. 135 & p. 138).

Gergen laid out stages through which he believed the adult personality moves toward this higher consciousness. In his (1991) book *The Saturated Self: Dilemmas of Identity in Contemporary Life*, he identified three periods reflecting different Western conceptions of the self: the romantic, modern, and postmodern periods.

In the romantic period (mainly the 1800s and earlier), according to Gergen, there was a widespread belief in a self with a fixed inner core that was passionate and volatile. The romantic had "deeply committed relations, dedicated friendships, and life purposes" (p. 6). This type of individual believed in moral fiber and integrity, and thought that one's actions reflected one's underlying character. This person believed that everyone, including oneself, was directly accountable for the consequences of one's actions. The "romantic" would have prevailed in the 19th century, but is dying out with each successive generation in the 20th century.

During the modernist period (the early 1900s to the present), according to Gergen, the view of the self changed to that of being machine-like and governed by reason. Passions were to be harnessed and volatility treated as a mental problem. Accordingly, the modernist is a person who leads a life based on an ability to reason through the demands and obstacles of life using his or her "beliefs, opinion, and conscious intentions." This type of person believes "normal persons are predictable, honest, and

sincere," and embeds his or her life course in "educational systems, a stable family life, moral training, and [a] rational choice of marriage partners" (p. 6). This would be the most common type of adult of the first half of the 20th century. However, for Gergen, the "modernist" came under siege in the late 20th century as a result of the "saturation of self" by new technologies that increasingly dominated the social and occupational landscape.

Gergen insisted that we are moving into a third period in which the self is once again undergoing transformations. As we move into the postmodern era, he submitted, beliefs in a stable inner core and a reason-governed personality are being abandoned in favor of a relational self. This shift in the self parallels a decline in faith in science, linear progress, logic, and the like. This relational self is shaped by "socializing technologies" that increasingly mediate our relationships with others. He submitted that face-to-face encounters are becoming rarer as we find more and more ways to interact with others through, or aided by, various technologies like the Internet.

The impact of all this, said Gergen, is that the postmodern self is free to slide from image to image and to eschew substance in favor of superficiality. The self is now presented according to the whim of the moment with constructed, situated identities, often conveyed through various forms of apparel. Thus, the postmodern self comes to exist only in relation to external images (conveyed to, reflected on, and received from others). Where there might once have been an inner core, the "interior" self is now "populated" by others and their images. Gergen qualified this claim with the acknowledgment that this form of self is not yet widespread, but is becoming more prevalent.

Against this sociological background, Gergen postulated that the effects of social saturation are made manifest through three developmental stages that people experience as they move "into" postmodernity, finally reaching a point where they no longer have any "self at all" (p. 7). This transition begins with the stage of the "strategic manipulator," moves on to the stage of the "pastiche personality," and finally develops into the "relational self." Gergen described the impact of social saturation on the person in the following manner:

> Emerging technologies saturate us with the voices of humankind—both harmonious and alien. As we absorb their varied rhymes and reasons, they become part of us and we of them. Social saturation furnished us with a multiplicity of incoherent and unrelated languages of the self. For everything we "know to be true" about ourselves, other voices within respond with doubt and even derision. This fragmentation of self-conception corresponds to a multiplicity of incoherent and disconnected relationships. These relationships pull us in myriad directions, inviting us to play such a variety of roles

that the very concept of an "authentic self" with knowable characteristics re-
cedes from view. (pp. 6–7)

For Gergen, the first reaction to the forces of social saturation is to ex-
perience oneself as a strategic manipulator. This type of postmodernist is
a weakened form of the modernist. The person experiences a sense of
alienation from his or her beliefs, opinions, and conscious intentions, and
loses faith in social institutions and in the predictability, honesty, and sin-
cerity of self and others. At the same time, there is a sense that life is sim-
ply a set of roles played for social gain. Moreover, instead of a face-to-face
daily validation from others, the strategic manipulator feels overwhelmed
by the sheer number of relationships with others intruding into day-to-day
life via various technologies. Contact with others expands exponentially,
but assumes a superficial nature:

> The result is that one cannot depend on a solid confirmation of identity, nor
> on comfortable patterns of authentic action. . . . As one shuffles and searches
> for appropriate forms of action, identity is more likely to be questioned than
> confirmed. . . . Thus, as the modernist confronts the challenge of social satu-
> ration, he or she is continuously ripped from the security of an essential or
> unified self. (pp. 147–148)

These conditions deprive the person of a comfortable niche in which to
function, creating a superficiality and meaninglessness in the actions of
self and other. As a result, day-to-day life becomes a matter of trying to get
the best out of encounters with others who are doing the same, and of hav-
ing to continually manage false impressions. Eventually, this type of per-
son is distressed and unhappy about these circumstances. According to
Gergen, this distress stems in part from the ill-founded belief that a real
self exists but cannot be experienced. For Gergen, attempts to find the
real self are fruitless in conditions of social saturation. Instead, individuals
are better off to let themselves move to the next stage of postmodern per-
sonality development.

The next stage involves the adoption of a pastiche personality where
the "individual experiences a form of liberation from essence, and learns
to derive joy from the many forms of self-expression now permitted" (p.
147). Now the search for a real self is not an issue; instead, the position
that there is no core identity is adopted. The person is no longer content
with issues of authenticity, sincerity, guilt, and superficiality. There just
"is," without conscious judgment:

> The pastiche personality is a social chameleon, constantly borrowing bits
> and pieces of identity from whatever sources are available and constructing
> them as useful or desirable in a given situation. If one's identity is properly

managed, the rewards can be substantial—the devotion of one's intimates, happy children, professional success, the achievement of community goals, personal popularity, and so on. All are possible if one avoids looking back to locate a true and enduring self, and simply acts to full potential in the moment at hand. Simultaneously, the somber hues of multiphrenia—the sense of superficiality, the guilt at not measuring up to multiple criteria—give way to an optimistic sense of enormous possibility. The world of friendship and social efficacy is constantly expanding, and the geographical world is simultaneously contracting. Life becomes a candy store for one's developing appetites. (p. 150)

Gergen's evidence for the pastiche personality comes from the way in which identities are now often constructed through fashion. Such a person literally believes that she or he is represented by clothing and contrived appearance, and social relationships are opportunities to act out whimsical identities. In his words: "The boundary between the real and the presented self—between substance and style—is erased" (p. 155). Gergen was evasive on the issue of what motivates this type of person, but he did acknowledge the possibility that the pastiche personality constitutes "a form of narcissism . . . [where] life becomes suffused with the search for self-gratification. Others merely become the implements by which impulses are served" (p. 154).

Gergen contended that as one continues "to experience the raptures of the pastiche personality," a "relational self" begins to grow on the basis of a "reality of relatedness—or the transformation of 'you' and 'I' to 'us' " (p. 156). People thus developed supposedly give up their self-centeredness and recognize that they are nothing without others, and that their beliefs, attitudes, and intentions are not their private domain, but rather the product of their encounters with others. When the belief in a real self is let go, the person turns to a belief in a "relational self"—all is played out in relation to others, even one's identity construction; indeed, everything about the world and existence:

> One's own role thus becomes that of a participant in a social process that eclipses one's personal being. One's potentials are realized because there are others to support and sustain them; one has an identity only because it is permitted by the social rituals of which one is part; one is allowed to be a certain kind of person because this sort of person is essential to the broader games of society. (pp. 156–157)

Gergen did not provide extensive details about the nature of the relational self, yet he was enthusiastic in his endorsement of it. However, he did admit that it is "foolish to propose that a consciousness of relational selves is widely shared in Western culture" (p. 157), and he provided no evidence that even a small proportion of the population actually lives a life

dictated by this communal consciousness. Moreover, the anecdotal evidence he cited for it can be more easily characterized as manifestations of other phenomena, like "other-directedness," a character type identified at mid-century by Riesman (1950).

What, then, did Gergen's analysis add to the stock of social science's knowledge on identity? We believe that he was correct in his identification of the pervasive effects of advanced technologies on social relationships and people's experiences. He also illustrated ways in which Western societies have gone through periods of destructuring and restructuring (i.e., the destructuring of the romantic period and a restructuring into the modern period; followed by the destructuring of the modern period, and the possible restructuring of the postmodern period). However, we are wary of utopian claims that some sort of Garden of Eden or Nirvana lies at the end of his view of the postmodern path. In fact, when the first two types of his postmodern personalities are gauged in terms of potential identity problems and pathologies, they appear to resemble elements of the Borderline Personality Disorder and the Narcissistic Personality Disorder (see chapter 8). In our view, if Gergen was correct that people are increasingly experiencing these things, this may not be reason to celebrate. Rather, it may be a signal that these disorders, or milder forms of them, are becoming widespread (Côté, 2000).

In essence, Gergen was arguing that Westerners have moved from having the potential for a rich interior life with little external stimulation, to having the potential for a frenetic exterior life with little internal integrity. Put in these common-sense terms, his vision of a new form of consciousness loses its appeal, yet he insisted that this an emancipatory path. However, it is not necessary to agree with Gergen's underlying prescriptive argument celebrating "postmodernity" in order to see the great merit in his descriptive case. He made a good case for the overwhelming psychological effects of media technologies. Indeed, the saturation processes to which he referred seem to be increasing as more and more people embed themselves in these technologies (see Côté & Allahar, 1996, for a similar argument). However, he made a weak case, in our view, that "inner resources" are no longer relevant (pp. 206-210). In fact, he mocked the notion that people can direct their behavior using reason and their intellectual faculties. Yet, he provided no evidence that people are so helpless (i.e., non-agentic) in the face of external influence, and he treated those traditions that provide evidence of agency in a strawman fashion (i.e., he stated them in a such a weak fashion that they are easily knocked down). And, while he mocked "reason" as an Enlightenment illusion, he provided a *carefully reasoned argument* in support of welcoming "postmodernity."

We take issue with Gergen and other postmodernists (who deny the reality and utility of an inner core to the personality) for numerous reasons

to be explored through this book. Still, there is much to value in Gergen's analysis. An empirical study of his stages may shed important knowledge about the impact of late modern social conditions on the manipulation of the self and the formation of social and personal identities. Whether, and to what extent, the processes of saturation influence the development of ego identity and a sense of agency are additional questions that also need to be addressed. We return to these issues in chapter 5, where we consider the postmodernist perspective in more detail.

SYNOPSIS

Our brief review of the dominant psychological approaches to the study of self and identity reveals the existence of a variety of research orientations that are not easily integrated into one coherent theoretical perspective. The field of self psychology remains largely focused on the ideas of how notions of self and self-concept can be understood as cognitive organization and process, enabling persons to maintain their identities in interactive contexts. Gergen's work can be seen as linking this concern with the interactive basis of self knowledge to the emergence of new postmodern identities. Research based on Marcia's neo-Eriksonian identity status paradigm reflects a focused developmental interest in the process of identity formation in adolescence and young adulthood. Finally, we have, in Erikson's original work on identity across the lifespan, a rich theoretical understanding of the relationship between identity formation, social structure, culture, and history.

As we noted, the conceptual foundation for Marcia's paradigm is Erikson's work; for self psychology, the conceptual roots are to be located in the pioneering psycho-philosophical writings of James, Cooley, Mead, and other early American pragmatists. In both cases, conceptual foundations are increasingly ignored in the growing specialization of research focus. Those working with the identity status paradigm have to a great extent ignored Eriksons's concerns with the importance of cultural and sociohistorical conditions, and self psychologists, with a narrow focus on the intrapsychic domain, fail to bring to their work an appreciation of interaction as an ongoing, powerful social force manipulating the self, its formation, and its maintenance.

We can also see from our review that there has been a failure on the part of some psychologists to grapple with the problem of differentiating the notions of self and identity. In addition, they appear not to appreciate the significance of Erikson's distinctions among ego, personal, and social identity, distinctions we believe are necessary for theorizing an agentic thematic for the personality. In other words, from our perspective, certain

important ideas remain underdeveloped in the psychological literature on identity and the self.

With the use of the personality and social structure perspective, we address throughout this book the shortcomings we have just noted in the psychological approach to self and identity. Before beginning this task, however, it is first appropriate to turn our attention to a review of sociological approaches to this area of research.

The Identity Concept
in Sociology

The definitive work on the early history of sociological approaches to identity can be found in Weigert et al's. (1986) *Society and Identity: Toward a Sociological Psychology*, so readers are referred to their work for details. We use their work here primarily as a springboard for discussion. Given our attention to both psychological and sociological approaches to identity, it is noteworthy that Weigert et al. (1986, p. 29) argued that Erikson's writings on identity in the 1940s and 1950s gave the social science community a "reasonably value-neutral and interdisciplinary term" that was inspirational for many of the sociologists discussed here. Giving tribute to the tremendous influence of Erikson's work in stimulating sociological interest in the concept of identity, Weigert et al. argued that his conception of identity was influential in shaping five different sociological traditions (although none of them explicitly relies on his psychoanalytic approach): (a) the symbolic interactionism of the Chicago school, which emphasizes the processual and emergent nature of social reality; (b) the symbolic interactionism of the Iowa school, which emphasizes the structural and fixed nature of social reality; (c) the sociology of knowledge and interpretive sociology; (d) structural-functionalism; and (e) critical theory (Weigert et al., 1986, pp. 1–2).

THE FOUNDATION: MODERNIST APPROACHES

The Chicago School of Symbolic Interactionism

Symbolic interactionism (SI) emerged out of the American pragmatist tradition rooted in the work of William James and Charles Pierce. The name

was given this tradition in the 1930s by Herbert Blumer, a student of George Herbert Mead at the University of Chicago. Known as the Chicago School, this type of SI is noted for its qualitative investigations, which assume that social reality is to be understood from a nominalist perspective (see glossary) and therefore requires continual negotiation to maintain adequate definitions of situations. That is, the fundamental ontological assumption (see glossary) is that social reality is continually created by humans through the names and meanings (i.e., symbols) they attach to things when communicating with each other (i.e., during interactions). Identities are created and modified through these ongoing processes. Moreover, because of the emergent nature of social reality, identities are considered to be precarious and in need of continual management (e.g., Hewitt, 2000).

These processes are described in detail in Mead's (1934) seminal *Mind, Self, and Society,* although the term "identity" is not used there (cf. Blumer, 1969). Note that the title of Mead's book identifies the three levels of analysis corresponding to the personality (mind), interaction (self), and social structure (society) that provide a viable organizational framework for the comprehensive taxonomy of identity that we are recommending researchers and theorists develop.

The perspective germinated by Mead has much in common with cultural anthropology, the difference being that the SI researcher "makes strange" with his or her own culture, treating taken-for-granted conventions as problematic. Accordingly, in-depth ethnographic studies are the preferred method of investigation. For the most part, quantitative approaches are eschewed, and some hard-core interactionists even treat them with suspicion, arguing that emergent social processes cannot be captured with quantitative measures.

Two of the best known scholars in the second half of this century from this school of symbolic interaction are Anselm Strauss and Erving Goffman. Strauss' (1959) *Mirror and Masks: The Search for Identity* is foundational for those interested in the self and identification. However, Goffman (1963) developed the concept of identity much further, paralleling Mead's "mind, self, and society" (and thus the three levels of identity analysis), especially in *Stigma: Notes on the Management of Spoiled Identities,* where he discussed ego identity, personal identity, and social identity, respectively, in terms of stigma management techniques (Weigert et al., 1986). However, Goffman is best known for his detailed studies of the management of personal identity in day-to-day social encounters (see *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life,* 1959), and is considered the "father" of the "Dramaturgical School," which focuses on impression management techniques. This approach is a rarely acknowledged intellectual precursor to the postmodern approaches described later.

The Iowa School of Symbolic Interactionism

Founded by Manfred Kuhn, the Iowa School is a small, breakaway tradition from the Chicago School. Although rooted in the same philosophical tradition as Meadian symbolic interactionism, its ontological and epistemological assumptions (see glossary) are polar opposites to those of the Chicago School, favoring quantitative methodologies and realist assumptions (see glossary) about the self (i.e., that it can be considered fixed, relatively stable, and therefore reliably measured as opposed to being precarious, in need of continual reconstruction, and open only to introspection). At the same time, however, Kuhn's "self theory" is consistent with the Meadian axiom "that the organization of self reflects the organization of society" (Weigert et al., 1986, p. 12).

The most popular quantitative instrument among sociologists for studying identity emerged from the (University of) Iowa School, namely, the Twenty Statements Test (TST; Kuhn & McPartland, 1954). Also called the "Who Am I?" test, subjects are simply asked to provide 20 statements in response to the question "Who am I?" This measure appears to tap salient features of social and personal identity. A conclusion drawn from this research is that among college students since the 1950s, personal identities (defined in terms of styles of self-presentation) seem to be increasing in importance, and social identities (understood as socially recognized roles) appear to be increasingly *less* important. Some 80% to 90% of college students now appear to favor reflective (personal) identities as their primary source of self-definition (compared to about 30% in the 1950s; see Babbitt & Burbach, 1990), suggesting that the TST is a useful instrument for monitoring late modern or so-called "postmodern" trends in identity formation.

Zurcher's work supported this connection of changes in "identity" in concert with postmodern trends (1977; Wood & Zurcher, 1988). He argued that the "mutable self" is emerging as a predominant identity strategy. Similar to the postmodern self discussed later, the mutable self is characterized by a highly flexible and autonomous capacity to modify and control self-concepts and to experience various components of self in varying social contexts. Zurcher believed this versatile identity strategy is adaptive in the face of rapid social change and uncertainty. He also speculated that there is a loose developmental pattern associated with it, from the adoption of single identity modes transforming to an ability to switch identity modes as the situation demands, at least in reference to the college student samples that have been studied.

In a separate but complementary line of research, Turner (1976) postulated a similar movement from the "institutional self" to the "impulsive self." He argued that for those who are "institutionally oriented," the "self

is something attained, created or achieved, not something discovered," whereas the "impulsively oriented" person "discovers" the self in part through a rejection of institutional constraints (p. 992). In reference to the taxonomy we are building in this book, institutionally oriented individuals would be placing greater emphasis on their *social* identity formation, whereas impulsively oriented people would be more concerned with their *personal* identity formation.

The structurally oriented Iowa School continues to stimulate a number of subsequent formulations of identity. McCall and Simmons developed the notion of role-identity in their *Identities and Interactions* (1978), providing a propositional basis for studying personal and social identity (see also Burke, 1980). Stryker (1968, 1987) built on McCall and Simmons' work with his "identity theory." Referred to as "structural interactionism," identity theory constitutes a systematic propositional basis by which social and personal identity formation can be studied through such concepts as identity salience (Weigert et al., 1986). Finally, an independent but epistemologically similar tradition emerged in Europe inspired by Tajfel's (1981) "social identity theory of intergroup relations."

Given our focus on literature originating in the United States, we will briefly elaborate the major themes of McCall and Simmons' (1978) role-identity theory and Stryker's identity theory (Stryker, 1987). Additional writings about this literature can be found in Honess and Yardley (1987).

McCall and Simmons placed the origins and functions of the social self and personal identity in the context of a person's enactment of social roles. Although they recognized the constraining influences of the Other and culturally shared meanings, they insisted that the person's self is not fully determined, so there is latitude for creativity and novelty in the reconstruction of roles and identities. Because of the multiple role repertoire that most persons have, the major issue McCall and Simmons addressed is how to understand (and predict) which roles a person will enact. (Of course, as Thoits and Virshup [1997] pointed out, the answer to this question factors nicely into the dominant sociological preoccupation with explaining social organizational regularity and change.) In answering this question, McCall and Simmons spoke about persons' organized identity "prominence hierarchies," developed through rewarding interactions; the accommodation of differences between these hierarchies and situational demands; and the important interactional basis for the maintenance of such hierarchies.

With his identity theory, Stryker (1968, 1987) also understood role enactment as the source of one's identities, and as the phenomenon to be explained and predicted. However, unlike McCall and Simmons' more "micro" focus on identity construction and negotiation in interactive relationship, Stryker was more concerned with emphasizing the problem of

deciphering the relationship between identity and social structure. This concern is reflected in what could be called a "neo-Durkheimian" approach to understanding the ideas of "identity commitment" and "identity salience." Notions of commitment and salience can be immediately understood by the reader in reference to subjectively based senses of responsibility and preference (commitment) and relative desire to enact a role (salience). But Stryker did not move in such a psychological direction to define these terms. Instead, he understood these "identity" attributes as a function of two sociological variables: interactive density and interactive opportunities. So, identity commitment as an attribute of a role was, for him, a function of the number of social ties (and their affective importance) that are associated with the role in question. Similarly, identity salience is understood as the probability that an identity will be enacted, given the interactive opportunity to do so. As was the case with the work of McCall and Simmons, Stryker's ideas are not far removed from constituting a theory of how social organization persists.

Despite their obvious interest in the interactive conditions that bond self and society, neither McCall and Simmons nor Stryker ruled out the importance of the "I" function (see chapter 6 for a discussion of Mead's notion of an impulsive, unpredictable "I"). This acknowledgment suggests the potential for a theory of agency. We noted earlier a similar potential in our review of the psychological research on the "executive functions" of the self. But because of their symbolic interactionist underpinnings, the work of these sociologists shows more promise in this regard because their focus on interaction has the potential to easily accommodate an investigation of the role of unequal power distribution and constraint, variables that obviously impact on the probability of novel role enactment occurring. As we note in later chapters, these themes are important components of a theory of identity and agency, but such ideas remain underdeveloped in these two sociological works.

The Iowa school shares much in common with self-psychology in terms of its micro, quantitative approach. Still, the perspective brought to the study of self and identity in the sociological literature contrasts sharply with that in the psychology literature. Although both disciplines sometimes share an interest in the domain of the interpersonal self, the sociological perspective on this domain emphasizes the claim that identities and selves emerge in social process, reflect social process, social values, and social structure, and function to contribute to the maintenance, and sometimes change, in social structure. In contrast, if ethnic or national identity, for example, is studied from a psychological perspective, interest in it is likely to be linked to questions of cognitive function, self-esteem, cognitive consistency or inconsistency with other self-schemas, stereotyping, and so forth. And although the sociological perspective might ac-

knowledge the role of self-esteem and stereotyping in the study of such identities, its major concern is to understand the relevance of national and ethnic identity in reference to issues concerning group solidarity and intergroup difference (e.g., Worchel et al., 1998). Although these differences between psychology and sociology can certainly be considered complementary from a multidimensional perspective on identity and self, our point is to emphasize in this context sociology's more macro perspective.

The Sociology of Knowledge and Interpretive Sociology

The other three sociological traditions have less developed theoretical and methodological orientations to identity, but deserve mention nonetheless. The sociology of knowledge synthesis with interpretive sociology is represented by the foundational work of Berger and Luckmann (1966) in their treatise *The Social Construction of Reality*. This often-cited work among contemporary social constructionists is actually a dense and little understood statement of "pragmatic social constructionism" and social epistemology (Weigert et al., 1986). In other words, Berger and Luckmann combined nominalist and realist assumptions to understand the dialectic between the physical reality of human existence and the nominalist social world in which humans live. For them, human constructions of reality are rooted in cultural and historical circumstances, but have very real consequences for human survival and well-being. As such, social constructions cannot simply be dismissed as "names," as if willing them away would easily create new social realities.

The key to understanding pragmatic constructionism is to note that social constructions create higher order realities that are nonreducible to individual constructions because they take on an "existence" of their own through the process of "objectivation." Consequently, identities are both subjective and objective: They are nominalist in the sense that they are derived from and negotiated within social constructions, but can have very *real* consequences for human welfare and survival. Although Berger and Luckmann's argument is too complex to draw out here, we recommend that those social constructionists and postmodernists who dismiss the relevance of the "self" or "identity" (see Hollinger, 1994, for a review) give Berger and Luckmann's book a careful reading. We return to Berger and Luckmann's treatise in chapter 7 when we elaborate on the multidimensionality of identity vis-à-vis three levels of analysis.

The Structural-Functionalist Tradition

Structural-functionalism (or more simply functionalism) was a mainstream sociological school of thought that dominated the American scene through mid-century and survives in various forms today. Rooted in Emile

Durkheim's classical formulations, its main proponent was Talcott Parsons (1968). Functionalists theorize that societies comprise interdependent subsystems whose functions contribute to the maintenance of social order and continuity. This perspective begins with macro-sociological propositions that accord places for *social* identity in the institutional structures of society. As societies become more differentiated and pluralized, so do social identities, along with attendant problems in social identity maintenance, described by earlier generations of sociologists like Durkheim as "anomie" or normlessness. As Weigert et al. (1986) noted, for functionalists like Parsons, increasing social

> complexity presents a wide range of possible choices and subsequent cross-pressures once the individual makes a commitment to one or another set of positions and acquires the attendant identities. . . . The modern person is much more aware of the problem of identity than persons living in simpler, stabler societies. (p. 19)

The value of the functionalist perspective lies in its identification of a level of analysis not reducible to the level of individuals or mental processes. That is, the system level of a culture is examined without reducing it to psychological or interactional processes, helping us to understand how societal differentiation can create widespread identity problems associated with "social pathologies."

Critical Theory

Finally, Weigert et al. (1986) pointed out that critical theory has added to the sociological stock of knowledge concerning identity, largely through the efforts of Jürgen Habermas (who carried on certain traditions of the Frankfurt School, known for its neo-Marxist critiques of modern capitalism). Like Berger and Luckmann, Habermas is an often-cited but poorly understood theorist. Weigert et al. described Habermas's position as follows:

> Habermas (1974) strove to formulate a theoretical version of social evolution and personal development based on underlying homologies between the two process. He sees social identity evolving from primitive mythic and kinship foundations to contemporary rational and communicative relationships. Within this overall scheme, he tries to integrate contemporary psychoanalytic, sociological, and developmental psychology perspectives on individual identity into a synthetic and normative argument for a sense of identity based on communicative competence, rationality and tolerance—a universal pragmatics [see glossary] (1979). Habermas offers a historically

grounded perspective with an emancipatory interest and normative thrust for analyzing identity. (p. 25)

In spite of its complexity, Habermas's argument is useful as a counterpoint to recent postmodernist positions that recommend the jettisoning of the entire humanistic project stemming from the Enlightenment (see glossary) and its concern with instrumental rationality (see Hollinger, 1994). For Habermas, the task of critical theory is twofold. First, critical theory must discern the developmental logic inherent in social evolution, with a view to understanding both of the degrees of independence and interpenetration of developing structures of personality, normative culture, and social organization. Second, critical theory is to have "practical intent;" that is, it is to provide the conceptual basis for a critique and reconstruction of contemporary society so that its structures of communication are compatible with the developing telos of individual autonomy.

In integrating several "modernist" sociological perspectives, Habermas viewed identity as grounded in the relationship between individual and societal development through three analytically distinct, although empirically interacting, levels of analysis: the interactive–communicative, the cognitive–affective, and the social–structural. Specifically, identity develops through speech acts at the level of communicative action, which foster the autonomous realization of self through dependency on interaction with others. In fact, identity can be seen as embedded in social experience, symbolic communication, and as a reflection of institutional processes. Yet, it can be potentially under agentic control by the individual—if communicative and broader social conditions allow. In fact, he saw human agency as a key goal of the emancipatory project of modernity (see chapter 9).

ELABORATIONS: POSTMODERNIST AND LATE MODERNIST PERSPECTIVES

Adding to, and updating, the historical background provided by Weigert et al. (1986), Gecas and Burke (1995) focused on the use of the concepts of self and identity in *sociological social psychology*. From this perspective, they provided the following characterization of identity:

> Identity refers to who or what one is, to the various meanings attached to oneself by self and other. In sociology, the concept of identity refers both to self-characterizations individuals make in terms of the structural features of group memberships, such as various social roles, memberships, and categories . . . and to the various character traits an individual displays and others attribute to an actor on the basis of his/her conduct. (p. 42)

Note that this depiction refers to two of the three levels of identity to which we wish to draw attention in this book: social identity (as in group memberships) and personal identity (as in character and conduct displays).

Gecas and Burke (1995) went on to classify four approaches to the study of self and identity:

> (1) situational, which emphasizes the emergence and maintenance of the self in situated (typically face-to-face) interaction; (2) social structural, which focuses on the consequences of role relationships and other structural features of social groups; (3) biographical–historical, which focuses on the self as a cultural and historical construction; and (4) intrapersonal, focusing on processes within self and personality affecting behavior. (p. 42)

The first two approaches correspond with the Chicago and Iowa schools of symbolic interactionism, respectively, whereas the fourth is associated with the psychological perspective. The third orientation, the biographical–historical approach, corresponds with the more recent postmodern approach that became popular after Weigert et al. (1986) analyzed the field. Because of its current popularity, we focus on it here and later in the book.

The postmodern approach stems from a confluence of interpretive and social constructionist approaches (with roots in symbolic interactionism, the sociology of knowledge, and critical theory). This approach is particularly popular "in cultural studies, feminist scholarship, and what has come to be called 'postmodernist' literature on the self" (Gecas & Burke, 1995, p. 44). Some explanation for the postmodern theory, or postmoderism, is in order here (see the glossary as well).

The type of theory preceding the postmodernist critique is now referred to as "modernist" analysis. A common theme running through modernist studies is the notion that modern institutions (especially of 20th-century "mass society") created a tension between self and society, resulting in identity confusion, alienation, the fragmentation of self, and loss of a sense of authenticity among those affected (Gecas & Burke, 1995; Smart, 1993). The postmodernist literature extends these problematic trends to explore new forms of self and identity. Gecas and Burke (1995) explained this change as follows:

> Postmodern society, with its emphasis on images and illusions and the increasing difficulty in distinguishing the 'real' from the 'imitation' is viewed as inimical to the maintenance of the bounded, private, centred self striving for agency and authenticity. The postmodern world is saturated with images and simulations to such an extent that the image . . . is viewed as replacing

reality. . . . the postmodern self is characterized as decentered, relational, contingent, illusory, and lacking any core or essence (p. 57)

Consequently, for the postmodernist, the more concrete problems of self in *modern* society (finding one's authentic self or core) lose their meaning in *postmodern* society because of a bombardment of external influences that erodes the very sense that there is an authentic core. Because of its sociological dimensions, Gecas and Burke used Gergen's (1991) work as an exemplar of the postmodernist approach. In particular, they cited his contention that in a postmodern society, the

> emphasis on images and illusions is reflected in greater attention to self-presentation and to style over substance. For that matter, the distinction between the real and presented self, between substance and style, disappears. . . . Fashion and personal appearance increase in importance as central means of creating the self and influencing the definition of the situation. . . . The accentuated emphasis on physical fitness and body shaping is understandable when self and appearance are viewed as the same. (Gecas & Burke, 1995, p. 57)

Hence, the distinction between false self and real self loses its meaning in the postmodernism paradigm, because postmodern society provides a "cafeteria" from which identities can be selected and combined with each meal, and then discarded.

A number of postmodernists (within sociology and from other disciplines) take a variety of more extreme positions regarding the self and identity. Hollinger (1994) summarized those who avoid subscribing to a defined view of self and identity:

> For Derrida and Foucault, the idea of a unified self, even if self-constructed, misses the point that identity is a function of difference. Lacan offers, in opposition to Weber and Freud, a self without unity. Foucault, Lyotard, and Derrida agree with Lacan's movement away from a unified self. Echoing themes from Nietzsche, via Nehemas, and from Freud via Rorty, who ascribes the Nietzschean multiple view of self to Freud, they define the self as multiple, not fixed, and always under construction with no overall blueprint. The various multiplicities that constitute the self at a given time are involved in play and dance with each other. (p. 113)

Obviously, we would not be writing this book if we accepted the postmodern position. Our criticisms of it are elaborated in chapter 5. For now, we add our voice to a growing number of sociologists who are expressing their dissatisfaction with what they see as the exaggerated claims stemming from the postmodernism paradigm. Among these sociologists, there is general agreement that significant social and economic changes

took place in most Western societies in the latter part of the 20th century, but there is disagreement with postmodernists over how much change has taken place and the reasons for those changes. In their recent book, *Young People and Social Change: Individualization and Risk in Late Modernity*, Furlong and Cartmel (1997) characterized this dispute as follows:

> On a theoretical level, these changes have been expressed in a number of ways with sociologists holding different opinions about whether they signify the beginning of a new era, just as significant as the transition from medieval to modern society, or whether they represent developments within modernity. At one end of the spectrum, postmodernists . . . argue that we have entered a new . . . epoch in which structural analysis has lost its validity. . . . Patterns of behaviour and individual life chances have lost their predictability and postmodernism involves a new and much more diverse set of lifestyles. The validity of a science of the social is rejected, along with the usefulness of key explanatory variables such as class and gender. . . . Other theorists have been more cautious in their interpretation of changes and have used terms like "high modernity," "late modernity" . . . or "reflexive modernization" . . . to draw attention to the far reaching implications of recent socioeconomic change, at the same time expressing the view that, as yet, these changes do not represent an epochal shift. (pp. 1–2)

Furlong and Cartmel (1997, p. 2) concurred with the late modernism paradigm, arguing that while "radical social changes have occurred," they nevertheless "are extremely sceptical of the validity of postmodern theories." In particular, they do not believe that as much institutional destructuring has taken place in the later half of the 20th century as postmodernists contend. They acknowledge that "structures have fragmented, changed their form and become increasingly obscure," but those structures associated with social class and gender have remained more intact than postmodernists will admit (at least in Britain). Later, we return to the issue of institutional destructuring and its implications.

Anthony Giddens (1991), a chief theorist of the late modernist perspective, has laid out the social psychological implications of his social theory in the book *Modernity and Self-Identity: Self and Society in the Late Modern Age*. Giddens followed the sociological tradition (i.e., Marx, Durkheim, Weber, and Parsons) of formulating comprehensive macro social theories about the changing structure of society. He went even further, however, by developing an elaborate framework for understanding identity from a macro perspective, and in making important micro–macro links between agency and structure in his "structuration theory" (Giddens, 1990, 1991).

Giddens argued that sustaining identity has become problematic for most people throughout their life courses as they have encountered conditions associated with "late modernity" or "high-modernity," an era in

which the conditions of industrial capitalism have become heightened or exaggerated (Giddens, 1991). These conditions have "undercut traditional habits and customs," radically altering "the nature of day-to-day social life" and affecting "the most personal aspects of our experience" (1991, p. 1). Giddens carried on the earlier functionalist view that selfhood or identity becomes problematic because the destructuring of social contexts by industrial capitalism creates deficits in the "interior life" of individuals. However, in contrast to some postmodernists, he also ascribed intentional qualities to individuals to resist and adapt to this destructuring, and he described ways in which late modern societies have indeed restructured in various ways. Also in accord with functionalist views, this restructuring represents the process of differentiation, taking social action to greater levels of complexity than in previous societies. This places demands for adaptation on individuals' intentional qualities that cannot always be met. Consequently, those with less "wherewithal" do not cope as well in late modern contexts, especially in terms of being social actors in increasingly complex contexts (e.g., the professions).

For Giddens, under conditions of late modernity it becomes important for the individual to develop "agentic" capacities with which to construct reality and act in the world (cf. Côté, 1996a, 1997a). He described this individual as an "intelligent strategist" (Giddens, 1994, p. 7) in learning to deal with the abstract dimensions of "place" and "space" in the late modern world. At the same time, in accord with symbolic interactionist views, the self is held to require the "external" in order to obtain the reflexive grounding (reference points to mirror the self) that is key to the senses of personal and social identity. Thus, in Giddens' view (1991, p. 32) "the self becomes a reflexive project" for one's lifespan in late modern societies. This is due in part to the degree of institutional destructuring (in habits and customs), and in part to continual institutional restructuring and differentiation.

Another key difference between Giddens' work and the views of most postmodernists is that he argued that, like individuals, late modern institutions are "reflexive" in the face of the necessity of making continual adjustments to new risks and constant social change (i.e., major institutions have mechanisms with which to monitor their environments, thereby continually anticipating risks and adjusting to change). In premodern cultures, in contrast, Giddens (1991) argued that life was more highly structured and stable and because

> things stayed more or less the same from generation to generation on the level of the collectivity, the changed identity was clearly staked out—*as when the individual moved from adolescence into adulthood.* In the settings of modernity, by contrast, the altered self has to be explored and constructed as part

of a reflexive process of connecting personal and social change. (p. 33, emphasis added)

In Giddens' (1991) judgment, self-identity "is not a distinctive trait, or even a collection of traits, possessed by the individual. It is the self as reflexively understood by the person in terms of his or her biography" (p. 53). In other words, self-identity formation involves the person negotiating passages through life and reflecting on her or his actions during these passages. In this way, self-identity is now a product of meaning-making as a mode of adaptation to the vicissitudes of late modern society, including the alienating and disjunctive experiences associated with the decline of local authority structures and the rise of interconnected global influences.

The life course in late modernity now follows a large number of trajectories determined in part by individual preference (there is now a higher degree of "individualization" than in premodern societies), and in part by the uncertainty and risks of living in, and attempting to cope with, the global community (i.e., there is now a lower degree of predictable concrete, day-to-day structure than in premodern societies). We pick up the themes of individualization and destructuring in the next chapter as we continue to build a taxonomy of identity.

SYNOPSIS: THE BEGINNINGS OF A TAXONOMY

At the time they compiled their history in the early 1980s, Weigert et al. (1986) noticed two trends in the convergence of sociological thinking about identity, one at the micro level and the other at the macro. Here is how they characterized this convergence:

> At the micro, *interactional* level, identity is seen as multiple categorizations of the individual by both self and others that vary by situation, influence behavior, and constitute life's meanings. [At the macro, systemic level, identity] is conceptualized as a systemic problematic that must be reasonably resolved for a healthy social order. Identity is a positional definition of actors within *institutions* and societies. (p. 27, emphasis added)

This review of sociological work on identity reinforces these points and several others. As Weigert et al. (1986) argued, identity processes can be found at two irreducible but inter-related social levels: interaction and institution. The previous review shows that at the level of interaction, the study of *personal* identity is most relevant as people encounter each other in face-to-face situations. Impression management, identity displays, and the like become legitimate objects of investigation that are related to, but not analytically reducible to, either psychological or institutional proc-

esses. Similarly, at the level of the institution, the study of *social* identity is most relevant in understanding persistent patterns of social organization and convention, embodied in roles and statuses, whether they be ascribed, achieved, or managed. Thus, role allocations and expectations, social stratification and inequality, and the division of labor become legitimate objects of investigation that are related to, but not analytically reducible to, either psychological or interactional levels of analysis.

A second point to be taken from our review of the sociological literature is that the study of identity requires that we employ a range of epistemologies and methodologies (see chapter 5). The history of symbolic interactionism illustrates the merits of both realist and nominalist approaches as well as their concomitant quantitative and qualitative methodologies. For example, qualitative, nominalist approaches are most appropriate at the level of interaction, where nonroutine face-to-face encounters have emergent qualities, but less appropriate at the institutional/societal level where roles and statuses are more fixed and stable (except, of course, during periods of change when they become unstable). When the processes under consideration are more stable and enduring, realist, quantitative approaches can be more appropriate. A mature field of study is characterized by reasoned and measured approaches sensitive to the contexts of studying phenomena that are not bound by the limits of investigators' "personal epistemologies" (cf. Unger, Draper, & Pendergrass, 1986).

A third point suggested by our review of the sociological literature is that in spite of the unifying potential of the identity concept, the range of identity phenomena has been segmented, much in the same way the elephant was segmented by three blind men. That is, some sociologists have focused on the micro, interactional elements of identity and other sociologists on the macro, societal elements, and psychologists have tended to study the intrapsychic elements of identity. Understanding this artificial division of intellectual labor is essential for grasping the history of the concept of identity, as well as for re-unifying the field. Interestingly, this segmentation parallels the splitting of social psychology into the "three faces" we discussed earlier (House, 1977).

Beginning with Mead's (1934) "mind, self, and society" distinction, sociologists have recognized the value of using three levels of analysis to understand "identity." However, beyond Mead's designation of the "I" and "Me" processes of self-reflection (see chapter 6), little sociological theorizing has been undertaken concerning mental processes. Instead, psychologists have taken up that task, and sociologists have tended to be more concerned with general topics related to personal (self) and social (society) identity.

The tendency among sociologists to downplay the psychological level of analysis helps explain why the "structure–agency" debate is still a concern

among sociologists. Without a conceptual framework with which to represent the individual, but with an elaborate one to represent social structure, we can see how social-structural explanations of identity have been preferred over psychological ones. We take up these issues in the next chapter, showing how a balanced social-psychological perspective can do justice to both structural and individual explanations of behavior, or in this case identity.

We take with us from this two-chapter examination of the identity literature in sociology and psychology a conviction that the concept must be studied and understood at the levels of analysis associated with the three faces of social psychology, namely, social structure, interaction, and personality (House, 1977, see figure 1). Later, we develop explanations for the processes and structures of identity at these three levels, showing how each level has its own integrity and is therefore analytically different from the other levels of identity (i.e., the three levels are not reducible to each other). For example, personal identity, defined by situated day-to-day behavior displays and presentations in interaction with others, is not reducible to ego identity or social identity. Certainly, the three levels are interdependent, but in order to understand an individual's personal identity, one needs to know more about a person than his or her ego constructions and sociohistoric location and opportunities—one needs to know about the emergent interpersonal circumstances affecting his or her behavior, including others' perceptions of past personal-identity displays, labels that might have been affixed to him or her by others, prejudices faced, gossip relevant to the person, multiple and contradictory pressures to conform, and so forth.

This is the type of analysis Goffman undertook several decades ago, and it continues to be a relevant concern for identity researchers. Of course, this type of analysis needs to be made relevant to the contemporary era. We hope to contribute to this renewal in the current book. Moreover, if the field of identity research is to advance, we must agree on a common taxonomy. That is, we need to identify, describe, name, and classify the components of identity. In this chapter, we have noted recurring references to, and an intellectual division of labor concerning, three levels of analysis that appear to capture the multidimensionality of identity. With these three levels identified, we can classify the structures and processes of identity formation and maintenance within and between each level. If we can accomplish this in a convincing fashion, the next generation of scholars to study identity will be less likely to dismiss our efforts as those of blind people, each of whom thought they knew enough. In subsequent chapters, we continue to develop an identity taxonomy by theorizing cultural and historical variations in identity and postulating processes and structures of identity formation and maintenance.

Integrating Sociological and Psychological Perspectives on Identity: Toward a Social Psychology of Identity

In chapters 2 and 3, we identified a number of theoretical chasms dividing the dominant approaches taken in the study of identity. A primary aim in writing this book is to help fill these chasms by bridging the work of psychologists and sociologists as it pertains to the study of identity. In this chapter, we attempt to explain in clear, non-partisan terms how the psychological and sociological approaches fundamentally differ in terms of their underlying assumptions. In doing this we hope to begin a bridge-building project that others will take up in the effort to create a social psychology of identity. As we hope to show, when the divergent approaches of psychologists and sociologists are understood, the points of potential integration become clearer.

POINTS OF DIVERGENCE BETWEEN SOCIOLOGICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES ON IDENTITY

Virtually all contemporary formulations of identity in both psychology and sociology have been influenced by Erik Erikson.[1] An obituary de-

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[1]See Kroger (1989) for a discussion of five models of identity formation, including Erikson's. See also Chickering's (1969) non-Eriksonian model of vectors of identity development among college students. Chickering's model has been especially popular among those working in university student services and university administrative offices. In addition, consult Schwartz (2001) for a discussion of Erikson's influence on Marcia, and Marcia's influence on a number of neo-Eriksonian theorists and researchers.

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scribed Erikson as a "psychoanalyst who profoundly reshaped views of human development," and noted that his popular recognition peaked during the 1970s from his coining the term "identity crisis" ("Psychoanalyst coined identity crisis," 1994, E8). Not coincidentally, the social scientific community took increasing interest in the concept of identity during the 1970s; since then the literature has burgeoned, particularly in psychology and sociology. However, as noted in chapter 1, this literature has taken separate directions that need to be understood in different ways (Bosma, Graafsma, Grotevant, & de Levita, 1994).

Perhaps the best starting point in terms of understanding differences between psychological and sociological approaches to identity is to note differences in the "locus" of identity. Most fundamentally, psychologists tend to look for the locus of identity within the individual—as part of the psyche or "inner workings." Identity is in "unit relation" with the person, and is therefore that person's "property" (cf. Heider, 1958). By implication, the individual is largely held responsible for that identity, in terms of both its merits and failings. A striking example of how we "own" our identities can be taken from the unfortunate experiences of Patricia Hearst. It is a matter of public record that she was kidnaped, isolated, terrorized for several months, and subjected to indoctrination pressures. At a certain point, therefore, she began to identify with her kidnappers and took on an identity consistent with her terrorist kidnappers, helping them in several robberies. In spite of the extenuating circumstances, she was held responsible for her terrorist identity and served time in jail as a punishment.

For many psychologists, it is sufficient to obtain all of the necessary information about identity from the individual by asking how they think about certain matters. In this way, identity elements are accessed through the conscious mental processes that people can communicate to researchers, and researchers are interested in how many of these cognitive processes are focused on commitments and goals. Although expressed commitments and goals are ultimately "external" to the person in terms of how they are actualized, few efforts are made in the identity status literature, at least, to triangulate on them to assess their validity.[2] As such, the methodology is focused on mental processes for both independent and dependent variables, so the entire analysis is in effect "internal" to the individual.

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[2]Skeptics of this approach can ask, for example, to what extent expressed religious beliefs actually translate to religious behavior, or to what extent the expressed desire of a teenager to enter a certain occupation actually culminates in the person acquiring a position in that occupation. In the former case, people can over-report their actual religious activities, such as attending services (Putnam, 1996), and in the latter case, acquiring an occupational position such as lawyer or doctor may not take place for 10 or more years, if at all, from among the large pool of initial aspirants.

In contrast to psychological understandings, sociological understandings of identity tend to assume that it is not the exclusive "property" of the individual, but rather something that is "realized strategically and circumstantially" through one's interactions with others (cf. Weigert et al., 1986, p. 23). For sociologists, identity is both "internal" and "external" to the individual. It is internal to the extent that it is seen to be subjectively "constructed" by the individual, but it is external to the extent that this construction is in reference to "objective" social circumstances provided by day-to-day interactions, social roles, cultural institutions, and social structures. As we saw in chapter 3, the most recent approaches in sociology have been to view identity in contemporary society as involving a life-long "reflexive project of self" (e.g., Giddens, 1991, pp. 32–33) required by the degree of continual social change and loss of traditional social markers and anchor points. A popular current sociological view is that identity is a product of the person negotiating passages through life and reflecting on these actions. These reflections can then culminate in the creation of "stories" or "narratives" that explain past actions (cf. McAdams, 1993; Shotter & Gergen, 1989). As we saw in the last chapter, however, there are variations on this assumption (Gecas & Burke, 1995).

To provide an illustrative metaphor, for many sociologists there is no identity without society, and society "steers" identity formation while individuals attempt to "navigate" often hazardous and blocked passages. Many psychologists tend to view this the other way around, with the person doing the "steering" and the society providing predefined passages—passages that some people have trouble with, in varying degrees of difficulty, depending on the traits and abilities they possess. Weigert et al. (1986) characterized the sociological sense when they stated the sociological axiom that "[s]ocial organization is the principle of self-organization, and both together explain social [inter]action" (p. 5). We can see from this illustration how sociologists tend to be more concerned with general topics related to social and personal identity than with the specific topic of the formation of ego identity.

A second key disciplinary difference concerns assumptions about the nature of the life course. Over this century it has become axiomatic in psychology that the life cycle is divided into several distinct developmental stages. These stages are considered to be "structural" because it is believed that qualitatively distinct, and increasingly complex, levels of functioning characterize each stage in a number of psychological realms. Moreover, the "logic" for these stages is epigenetic, rather than cultural, so the causal source for them is primarily ontogenetic—every person needs to pass through them as part of "normal" development. In other words, for many psychologists there is a "reality" to these stages independent of how societies structure them. Accordingly, for example, childhood is believed to be

a distinct stage prior to adolescence, which is in turn distinct from adulthood. Thus, adolescence has been singled out in psychology as a developmental stage with its own structural properties (e.g., Davis, 1990; Muuss, 1996; Sprinthall & Collins, 1995). Moreover, in contrast to the term "adolescence," sociologists prefer the term "youth" to designate a socially constructed, age-defined period. The term youth is preferred over adolescence because it is less assumption-laden and less pejorative. (Indeed, only 19% of U.S. teenagers find the word adolescent "very acceptable" in reference to themselves; terms like young adult or teenager being greatly preferred; Arnett, 2001.) The titles given to their respective professional associations and journals reflect this terminology (psychologists dominate the Society for Research on Adolescence and publish in journals like the *Journal of Adolescent Research* and the *Journal for Research on Adolescence*, whereas sociologists dominate the Nordic Research Youth Information Symposium and publish in journals like *Youth and Society* and *Young: Nordic Journal of Youth Research*).

In any event, Erikson's influence can be seen here in the sense that he attributed the task of identity formation to the period of transition to adulthood. Since then, many psychologists have equated identity formation with adolescence, and until quite recently, identity formation (or maintenance) during adulthood has been ignored (for a recent treatment of identity in adulthood, see Côté, 2000; Kroger, 2000a). Consequently, the bulk of the psychological literature on identity focuses on "adolescence" (and/or youth).

In contrast to psychologists' focus on identity in adolescence, sociologists have been more concerned with identity as a life-course phenomenon. Sociologists prefer the descriptive term "life course" to the more assumption-laden term "life cycle," and they tend not to see "adolescence" as a period intrinsically different from other periods of life. Instead, identity *maintenance* issues are studied more so than identity *formation* ones, and identity maintenance issues are studied across the life course, right through old age. As a result, the use of "developmental" principles of identity formation has not been deemed necessary by most sociologists. Instead of focusing on developmental issues associated with the formation of identity, many sociologists look at identity maintenance and the boundary problems related to nationality, race, gender, and other dimensions of group membership.

When the sociological assumptions regarding the fundamental nature of adolescence are translated into psychological terms, the sociological position basically corresponds to the social learning theory approach in psychology (e.g., Bandura, 1989; cf. Muuss, 1996), namely, that adolescence is a culturally conditioned period of the life course and can therefore vary dramatically from one culture to the next (cf. Côté & Allahar, 1996;

Schlegel & Barry, 1991). For sociologists, these same assumptions regarding cultural conditioning apply to other portions of the life course as well. Moreover, for most sociologists, the psychological principles of learning theory would suffice in explaining not only "stages of development," but also the processes by which identity is formed (cf. Sprinthall & Collins, 1995).

This different view of identity *formation* points to a major divergency in assumptions regarding the relevance of certain domains of identity, like cultural or national identity. This difference can be described in terms of "incremental" versus "monumental" changes as the person constructs these domains of identity. Sociologists tend to assume that most people's sense of belonging to a particular culture or nation grows incrementally on the basis of slowly accumulated identifications as part of socialization processes beginning in childhood. Developmental psychologists, however, focus attention on periods of "monumental" change, especially during adolescence, looking for relatively rapid changes during these formative years. This distinction is useful in understanding ethnic differences in national and cultural identity, inasmuch as members of a majority group seem more likely to experience incremental change in their cultural identity, whereas those from minority groups seem more likely to experience monumental, or massive, change in self-definition because of the salience of these issues for them as they attempt to formulate a viable adult identity in the face of prejudice and discrimination.

Finally, sociologists and psychologists tend to diverge in terms of the role that theory plays in empirical research. Much of the empirical investigation of identity by psychologists has been based on a "building block" model that is common in some sciences, whereby theory is built on a collage of findings that are patiently assembled over a long period. Intuition and common sense play an often unacknowledged role in deciding what variables to examine and which hypotheses to test. Archer (1992, pp. 31–32) went so far as to suggest this as a *prescription* that researchers should follow.

Sociologists place much more value on "theory" than do psychologists.[3] Whereas many psychologists often seem content with cobbling together the results of small-scale studies to create "mini-theories," sociologists prefer to construct formal theories and to test these theories with large-sample data sets. This latter approach is similar to that long since adopted

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[3]When sociologists speak of social theory, they are not referring to mere "speculation," in the sense that many psychologists think about theory. Rather, most sociologists would subscribe to the following definition of theory: "Systematically organized knowledge applicable in a relatively wide variety of circumstances, especially a system of assumptions, accepted principles, and rules of procedure devised to analyze, predict, or otherwise explain the nature or behavior of a specified set of phenomena" (*Microsoft Bookshelf 98*).

by natural sciences like physics, whereby a set of abstract propositions is constructed as a formal theory in advance of careful empirical investigation. As Hempel (1966) argued, some of the greatest discoveries in the natural sciences have been made with the use of theories that postulate abstractions that eventually lead to discoveries of more concrete entities and processes (e.g., the electron).

Based on these philosophy-of-science assumptions, we believe that in the long run it is more productive for "theory" to not simply be a set of hypotheses about empirical measures and their intercorrelations (Côté & Levine, 1989). In sociology, philosophy of science assumptions more often require that logic and argumentation play a role in theory construction (see the consistency theory of truth, defined in the glossary), and that empirical investigations constitute large-scale tests of crucial elements of patiently constructed theoretical propositions (see the correspondence theory of truth, also defined in the glossary). We believe this is one reason why identity theories are much more elaborate and extensive in sociology, yet have a less expansive empirical base.

In our view, the intuition-based, building-block approach to studying identity employed by some psychologists has contributed to a fragmentation of research efforts that is slowing progress in making this body of knowledge relevant to the "whole person" in the "real world," both in terms of the challenges faced by those attempting to formulate their identities, and by those attempting to provide guidance for them (cf. van Hoof, 1999). We believe that the systematic theory-building approach needs to be taken more seriously by psychologists, if only to move the field along more quickly (cf. Vollmer, 2000, regarding this problem in personality psychology). At the very least, more research needs to undertake tests of competing models, rather than simply looking for correlations within one model or paradigm.

Critiquing the Purely Sociological Approach

In spite of certain common fundamental assumptions, the study of identity in sociology is splintered, in a way that reflects the previously mentioned fragmentation between sociology and psychology. Perhaps the splintering is simply due to different theoretical traditions, emphases, and subject matter. However, another way to understand it is in terms of how the field falls short in terms of three "theories of truth," namely, correspondence, consensus, and coherence, as we now explain (see the glossary for definitions of these terms, and consult sources like Craig, 1998, for more elaborations of the theories of truth).

Perhaps one of the greatest limitations of sociological work on identity is the dearth of empirical *correspondence* for a number of (carefully con-

structed) theoretical claims. Much evidence is based on anecdote or infor-
mal observation, and it is often posed in the form of social criticism. Few
studies can be found that are based on "hard evidence," where alternative
conclusions have been systematically evaluated and eliminated if appro-
priate, so issues often remain unresolved and left at the level of opinion.
Consequently, a reason why the field is fragmented in sociology is that
there have been few efforts to assess the empirical correspondence of the-
oretical claims, with any one claim not capable of being evaluated against
another in terms of relative evidential merit.

The lack of evidence in this area makes it difficult for the research com-
munity to arrive at a *consensus* about the nature of key issues and theoreti-
cal problems. In the absence of evidence, consensus tends to be based on
other factors like in-group loyalties, disciplinary assumptions, political
tendencies, personal epistemologies, and the like (cf. House, 1977; Wein-
stein & Platt, 1973). This helps explain why those working in the various
sociological specialties often talk past each other or simply ignore each
other's work.

Instead of the criteria of correspondence and consensus, those who
work in the various sociological traditions often rely on the *coherence* of
their arguments and attempt to ground these arguments in terms that
like-minded scholars can understand. However, the different technical
languages and epistemological assumptions that emerge from these ef-
forts create a babel in the field as a whole and a tribalization of perspec-
tives based on common political–epistemological preferences. Given that
sociologists have a difficult time communicating and cooperating with
each other, it is little wonder that psychologists have not utilized sociologi-
cal work to any great extent.

Critiquing the Purely Psychological Approach

Although the sociological approach may have an insufficient empirical
base, the psychological approach appears to have an insufficient theoretical
base. For the sociologist, for example, the psychological approach fails to
sufficiently theorize the "social" (van Hoof, 1999). Evidence of this comes
from the fact that psychological identity research has attracted virtually no
attention in the sociological community. We do not mean that the relevance
of the social or society is denied by psychologists. What we mean is that
there is a paucity of concepts on which to base testable propositions that
link the psychic with the social (but see Adams & Marshall, 1996; Yoder,
2000). Instead, psychological researchers often proceed on an ad hoc basis,
guided by intuition or the availability of pre-existing empirical measures.
When the relevance of sociological concepts is acknowledged, it is most of-
ten at only a very general level or is operationalized in simple and limited

terms. For example, psychological conceptions of the "environment" often reduce it to meso and endo, or proximal and distal, systems, rendering the conceptualization to little more than a structural-functionalist analysis considered outdated and naive in contemporary sociology.

This type of criticism was applied by Erikson himself to psychoanalytic theory. He wrote that "the greatest difficulty in the path of psychoanalysis as a general psychology probably consists in the remnants of its first conceptualization of the environment [simply] as an 'outer world' " (Erikson, 1975, p. 105). He went on to say that even the clinical validity of psychoanalysis is problematic "if the nature of the human environment is not included in the theory which guides the therapeutic encounter." One way to put this issue into perspective is to say that the "outer world" is as complex to the sociologist as the "inner world" is to the psychologist. The failure to appreciate this difference preempts further dialogue.

Modeling Divergencies to Understand Limitations

These critical comments suggest that there are patterns of underlying assumptions on which sociologists and psychologists diverge—and converge—in terms of identity formation and maintenance. Two key issues pertain to (a) the relevance of the concepts of structure and agency for understanding identity, and (b) the extent to which identity is conceptualized as having an "inner" versus "outer" origin. These debates help us understand how psychologists and sociologists approach other issues.

The first issue involves assumptions regarding individual causality, or personal responsibility; the sociological equivalent of which lies in the notions of reflexivity and agency (e.g, Giddens, 1991). It is quite true that this issue has long been ignored in sociology, but as noted, the issue is currently being discussed by late modernists in terms of the structure–agency debate (i.e., how much individuals exercise control independent of social structure versus how much social structure determines individual behavior). The notion of reflexivity posits that individuals continually monitor their actions and environment to make adjustments in terms of their definition of the appropriateness of their behavior (cf. the psychological concepts of self-monitoring and locus of control). The notion of agency grants that individuals exercise some control and make choices on the basis of their reflexivity (cf. the symbolic interactionist concepts of impression management and the presentation of self). Together, these capacities mean that individuals are governed by social structures to the extent that: (a) individuals do not engage in reflexivity concerning their relations in the social world, thereby allowing themselves to be conditioned or indoctrinated by social-structural influences; and (b) social structures are coercive, not allowing a (political) freedom of action made possible by the ca-

pacity for agency (under coercive circumstances agency may manifest itself as "resistance" and dissent).

In psychology, an equivalent of social structure as a directive force over human agency is the reinforcement schedule studied by behaviorists. Behaviorism has had a strong influence on psychological thought over this century, and has only recently given ground to the cognitive approaches that look for capacities for human agency, as in concepts like self-efficacy (Bandura, 1989). Radical behaviorism leaves no room for notions of agency (e.g., Skinner, 1971) or unconstrained choice. Although recent theories of social cognition do allow for choice-making behaviors among social options, the directive influences over this choice-making are situated internally in the psyche via cognitive mechanisms. Thus, for many psychologists, people are limited in their abilities to exercise unconstrained choice given the nature of their cognitive processes and structures (cf. attribution theory). From a purely metaphysical position, then, cognitive theories are deterministic, and it is only the origin of the causal influence that is in dispute among psychologists.

The second issue on which psychology and sociology differ concerns the nature and source of identity. As noted, the psychological tradition has tended to see the source of identity as "within" the individual. Identity formation is often seen to be a matter of "finding oneself" by matching one's talents and potentials with available social roles. Because this process involves looking within oneself, we call this the "well metaphor:" one draws on one's inner self for resources. Accordingly, one becomes agentic by being true to one's inner potentials. This view seems to underlie the identity status paradigm, at least for some researchers (e.g., Waterman, 1992, 1993).

At the same time, a competing metaphor can be found in both disciplines. We call this the "mirror metaphor." In this view, identity is to be found in social processes: the self emerges as a mirror to the social processes in which it participates. As we saw earlier, this metaphor has dominated sociological views of identity dating back to the work of early symbolic interactionists and has been renewed by some postmodernists. Although this metaphor is more dominant in sociology, in psychology it can be found in Erikson's original writings (e.g., Côté, 1993; Erikson, 1963, 1968, 1975).

These dimensions of structure–agency and outer–inner source can be tabulated to produce a classification of the similarities and differences with and between these disciplines regarding fundamental views of identity and what to do to enable its optimal formation. Figure 4.1 presents this taxonomy. The two dimensions defining the four categories are identity as an inner striving versus an outer social process, and agency versus structural determination (either social-structural or psychic-structural in origin).

		Identity found in:	
		An inner core: *well metaphor*	*Social processes:* *mirror metaphor*
Causal source of behavior	*"Agency"*	**1.** stimulate a crisis of purpose and a search of inner potentials to find it	**3.** initiate a crisis of meaning, and leave to find it in roles
	Structure (Psychic or Social)	**2.** push to search and strive; reward the best outcomes that enhance development	**4.** provide guidance to facilitate role and value integration

FIG. 4.1.   A taxonomy of positions regarding how best to facilitate optimal identity development.

The cell numbered 1 corresponds with the view that behavior is basically agentic and identity formation constitutes an individual striving to find an inner core. According to this view of identity, identity can found by drawing from the "well" of the self and biological potential. Thus, to encourage optimum identity formation in real-world interventions based on these assumptions, we would recommend the encouragement of identity crises associated with a sense of purpose, and we would hope that people search for inner potentials. Given this position's belief in agency, it follows that people should be left largely on their own to accomplish the tasks of identity formation. Cell number 2 differs on the assumption regarding the cause of behavior. In this case, the assumption is that individuals need guidance (i.e., structure in the form of positive and negative reinforcement contingencies) in order to help them draw from their inner "well," so it would be appropriate in interventions to push them to search for these potentials and strive to actualize them. In providing this guidance, the best outcomes would be measured in terms of human-developmental gains.

Cells 3 and 4 share the assumption that identity is a product of social activity, and that "who we think we are" is based on the mirror of feedback others provide for us in interaction. With an agentic assumption (cell 3), the appropriate intervention would be to encourage crises of meaning, such that the exploration is more "external" than its "individual striving" counterpart. Thus, it would be hoped that individuals establish a place in a community of others who share a common sense of meaning and provide them with corresponding roles. Cell 4 represents the assumption that the occurrence and outcome of the identity crisis is determined by causally identifiable social and psychological events, so it would be appropriate during the crisis to provide interventions involving structure and guid-

ance encouraging positive resolutions that integrate the person in a set of meaningful roles and values. Thus, whether a crisis takes place would depend on prior structural events, and how the crisis is resolved would depend on structural events during the crisis. Intervention here would be based on a sense of inevitability of the crisis, and of trying to direct it in ways thought to be most favorable for the individual and community.

It is difficult to say how much this taxonomy could be used in policy analysis and intervention, but it does raise possibilities for planning and evaluation. In fact, it would be most interesting to identify (or create) four environments corresponding to this taxonomy and assess outcomes for all three levels of identity formation (e.g., types of outcomes and for whom). On the other hand, the taxonomy may be used to describe different types of people or different facets of the whole person (e.g., the well metaphor may apply to the personality domain where abilities and special competencies are relevant, whereas the mirror metaphor may apply facets of personal and social identity like self-presentations and impression management). At the very least, though, we view this typology as a way of sorting out the sources of disagreements among social scientists so that we can discuss them in a productive manner. In a sense then, it gives us one rough map of the "elephant," and a better idea of what the other "feels" when touching it.

POINTS OF CONVERGENCE BETWEEN SOCIOLOGICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES ON IDENTITY

One of the most remarkable things we have noticed in observing the activities of psychologists and sociologists—especially those working in isolation from each other—is how they have identified similar processes at different levels of analysis. In the instances we now describe, sociologists have noted—at the macro-societal level—processes that psychologists have been studying at the micro, individual level. By integrating the psychological and sociological perspectives, we attempt to show how the errors of each approach can be corrected: Sociologists' overly structural view can be compensated for by notions of the individual, agentic actor, and psychologists' focus on conditions in contemporary Western culture can be given a sociohistorical, cross-cultural perspective. We begin by identifying the sociological and psychological concerns most relevant to the study of identity, and then go on to show how the two perspectives can be integrated to give us a more multidimensional understanding of identity.

A perennial concern in sociology, dating back to its founders and the Enlightenment (see the glossary), concerns the general problem of social

regulation and the *destructuring* of traditional forms of culture in the face of modernization. During the Enlightenment it was debated as to whether instrumental rationality (agency) or norm-based action (structure) best represents social activity (cf. Emirbayer & Mische, 1998). This long-standing concern has been given new life with recent work regarding the ascendance of the process of *individualization* in the formation of personal and social identities.

In his book *Risk Society: Towards a New Modernity*, Ulrich Beck (1992) viewed individualization as a function of destructuring processes, by which he meant that as a society undergoes a reorganization, people are left more to their own devices in making major decisions. He began by noting that in Europe the process of individualization dates back centuries, to the early phases of modernization, including the Renaissance, the decline of feudalism, and the rise of industrial capitalism. During this period, three phases in the rise of individualization took place. First, people were increasingly "disembedded" and removed from their "historically prescribed social forms and commitments in the sense of traditional contexts of dominance and support" (p. 128). In other words, people were "liberated" from traditional statuses, but also lost many collective supports. This change in societal structure was followed by a change in cultural structure. In the second phase, there was a "loss of traditional security with respect to practical knowledge, faith and guiding norms" (p. 128). But, in the third phase, new social commitments were formed that "re-embedded" people, reintegrating and controlling them. Now, as the reorganization of Western societies has stabilized in certain respects, individualization has been institutionalized in the place of the collectivization that characterized premodern societies.

Much of the writing on individualization comes from European scholars, perhaps because this process has been taken for granted by American scholars due to the long tradition of individualism in the United States. Recent global changes, however, have made it apparent that individualization is becoming a world-wide phenomenon.[4] Referring to the European situation, Wallace (1995) wrote that late modern trends associated

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[4]It is important to clearly differentiate psychological and sociological conceptions of processes in which the individual is central. For example, psychologists have used the term "individuation" for some time to refer to the "separation-individuation process" that begins in early infancy when the boundary is established "between the 'me' and the 'not-me'" (Levinson, 1996, p. 32). Psychologists' usage of this term refers to the processes by which offspring develop an emotional distance from their parents and become persons in their own right, but it does not require a rejection of those parents, nor does it require parents to withdraw support from their children. In contrast, "individualization" refers to the social processes by which people compensate for a lack of *collective* support from their community or culture. This term is intended to designate the extent to which people are left to their own devices in terms of meeting their own survival needs, determining the directions their lives will take, and making myriad choices along the way.

with individualization characterize "the tendency towards increasingly flexible self-awareness as the individual must make decisions and choose identities from among an increasingly complex array of options" (p. 13).

Study after study (e.g., Jonsson, 1994; Mørch, 1995) points to the process of individualization emerging as a key feature of late modern life around the globe. Indeed, it is increasingly accepted in sociology that late modern societies are associated with the process of individualization. Accordingly, a normal course of development now involves developing one's self as an "individual," rather than as simply learning to be a cog-in-the-wheel member of a collective community (Buchmann, 1989). There can be tremendous benefits associated with this opportunity, but as we have seen, there can also be tremendous pitfalls and liabilities. The problem is that this "freedom" requires a great deal from people because it places pressures on them to continually reflect on their relations with others, to be conscious of the necessity to think ahead, to make choices with which they have to live, to be solely responsible for their failings and limitations, but also to overcome by themselves structural obstacles like social class, race, gender, and age barriers. In other words, fully benefitting from this freedom requires, among other things, an astute self-discipline in dealing with one's self and one's society, often in the absence of collective supports (for an extensive discussion of these problems as they relate to contemporary adulthood, see Côté, 2000).

Returning to our attempt to integrate the psychological and sociological approaches, the just-mentioned difficulties faced by many people in a society that requires individualization (in effect, making it compulsory) can be empirically studied with the identity status paradigm. In fact, studies using this paradigm have mapped out several dimensions relevant to individualization and the role of reflexivity. Recall from chapter 2 that in its most basic form, this research uses four categories, or identity statuses, into which most people can be placed in terms of the dimensions of "exploration" and "commitment," namely, (a) the conscious (reflexive) deliberation of alternative goals, roles, and values and (b) the formation of possible consolidation of these deliberations as courses of future action. This cross-tabulation is normally represented as illustrated in Fig. 4.2 (cf. Marcia, 1980), with low versus high conscious exploration of options defining the columns and low versus high goal commitments defining the rows. Although the identity status paradigm theorizes identity formation at the intrapsychic level of analysis, this level of identity does have equivalents at other levels of analysis, particularly social-structural ones (cf. Côté, 1996a, 1996b). What we show next is that when we cross-tabulate the intrapsychic level of analysis with the social-structural level, the resulting typology helps us understand identity at several interrelated levels, especially its relation to both culture and agency.

		Conscious Exploration of Options	
		Low	High
Commitment to Occupational, Ideological, and Other Goals	*Low*	Diffusion	Moratorium
	High	Foreclosure	Achievement

FIG. 4.2. The choice–commitment dimensions underlying the identity statuses.

We accomplish this by overlaying the intrapsychic and social-structural concepts as follows: individualization as an analog of exploration, and social structure as the counterpart of commitment. Figure 4.3 illustrates as an orthogonal grid the comparability of the notions of community structure with commitment, and exploration with individualization. The structural dimension represents the normative organization of a community (defined to range from small-group to large-scale, depending on the individual's point of reference) that ranges from an unstructured "anomic" pole to a fully structured "nomic" pole; and the individualization component ranges from an "undifferentiated" pole to an "individualized" one.

Referring to the typology of identity strategies presented in the introduction to this book, the model represented by this figure posits that a high degree of psychological commitment is associated with involvement in more structured, or normed, communities, as represented by the strategies of a Guardian or Resolver. Conversely, a low degree of commitment translates to a lack of involvement in a normed community, represented by the strategies of the Drifter, Refuser, or Searcher. Thus, on the one hand, a committed person lives in a structured community and has a connectedness, integration, or rootedness with others (nomic); on the other hand, the uncommitted person tends to be alienated, loosely rooted, or disconnected from others (anomic). As noted earlier, this dimension of anomie–nomie lies at the heart of sociological theorizing, dating back to Durkheim (1897/1951), whose influence can be found in the

		Exploration / Individualization	
		Low/Undifferentiated	*High/Individualized*
Goal Commitment/ Community Structure	*Low/Anomic*	Drifter/Refuser	Searcher
	High/Nomic	Guardian	Resolver

FIG. 4.3. A social psychological model of identity formation based on the correlation of psychological and sociological concepts.

work of later scholars such as Parsons (1951), Berger and Luckmann (1966), and Coleman (1988).

In Fig. 4.3, we can also see how the exploration component is the psychological equivalent of the sociological dimension of individualization: a high degree of self-exploration is associated with a high degree of self-direction in determining one's life course, and a low degree of self-exploration translates to a low level of control over one's life course, so that personal and social identities remain undifferentiated and undeveloped beyond default options available to the person who exerts little or no effort in their identity formation.

Figure 4.4, which utilizes only the sociological concepts from Fig. 4.3, shows how the individualization component is relevant to the structure–agency debate because it adds concepts by which these increasingly common agentic (intentional, reflexive, and self-directed) behaviors can be understood. The model also suggests how structural determinants of behavior have been over-estimated in the past. That is, it is possible that early sociologists and anthropologists studied groups that tended to be collective and rigidly structured (especially in premodern societies), so choice-oriented behavior in any but minor proportions would have been proscribed. According to Beck (1992; and others), individualization of the life course is mainly a product of modern and especially late modern societies, so the attempt to develop sociological principles based primarily on rigidly structured, premodern societies (that limit choice) might have contributed to this structural emphasis among earlier observers of culture. Nevertheless, there are still many people and groups who have degrees of collectivist orientations in the present era, so identity formation among members of these groups requires special attention. This is especially the case given conflicts stimulated by the appeal of individualization in indigenous and developing cultures, which has spread as Western patterns of thought have gained global dominance (see Côté, 1997b, for a social history of a culture in which this has taken place; see Plange, 2000, for a treatment of this in South Pacific cultures).

		Individualization	
		Undifferentiated	*Individualized*
Community Structure	*Anomic*	Premodern (Transitional)	Late Modern
	Nomic	Premodern (Stable)	Early Modern

FIG. 4.4. The structure–agency template: Cultural parameters of life-course development.

   With the models represented by the various figures so far, we gain a better sense of the "universe" of potential social behavior patterns associated with identity formation. For example, we can follow the directions of individual and cultural change relevant to the life course in Fig. 4.4. An advantage of representing identity formation in this manner is that it facilitates a translation of the psychological patterns into terms describing the cultural parameters of life course development. With the structure–agency template in Fig. 4.4, we can plot how cultures define the parameters of acceptable behaviors in reference to how the life course of a typical member might unfold. For example, premodern Western cultures would be located in the bottom left (undifferentiated-nomic) quadrant during their stable periods and would move toward the top left (undifferentiated-anomic) quadrant during transitional periods precipitated by wars, famines, epidemics, and the like. In the stable periods, then, life-course development would have involved little self-exploration or self-development, along with an adherence to cultural commitments (e.g., Jordan, 1978; Merser, 1987; Mintz, 1993). This would have produced a orderly sequence and timing of life-course events based on rites of passage, rituals, ceremonies, and various cultural expectations enforced by the immediate community. Thus, identities would have been oriented to service of the group and been ascribed according to a regulated division of labor (e.g., with women and men performing different tasks). During unstable periods, the collective element would have held to varying degrees, but life-course patterns would have been more anomic, with the timing and sequencing of life patterns (like marriage, singlehood, and widowhood) thrown into relative disarray.

   During the early modern period, we can see how the cultural parameters of the life course changed, making the individualization axis relevant. Over this period, it became increasingly permissible for individuals to be self-directed in their life-course trajectories and to develop more differentiated selves and identities (e.g., Baumeister, 1986; Mintz, 1993). Accordingly, it became more important for individuals to build their own lives as adults, separate from their parents or wider community of origin. However, in many respects the social-structure dimension held (with exceptions, as in some frontier and immigrant communities), so a normative pattern of commitment could be followed. Thus, we can locate early modern societies in the bottom right quadrant, where cultural parameters push individuals to undertake individualized, but normatively structured life courses (cf. Riesman's, 1950, inner-directed character type). Here the timing of life-course events would have been orderly, but based more on individual preference than on the needs of the community (collective).

   With the template, we can continue charting developments over the last half of the 20th century, the late modern period. By many accounts, West-

ern societies have maintained the individualization parameter of life-course development, but have destructured to varying degrees, such that the timing of life-course events has become disorderly. Some refer to this as a de-coupling of the life course (e.g., Hareven, 1994; Wallace, 1995). Now, individuals are expected to be self-directed in their life courses, but have fewer normative directives to follow. In this anomic but individualized culture, people attempting to enter "adulthood," as well as "adults" themselves, find that they have few cultural restrictions placed on their choices, but they also have few cultural patterns to follow (cf. Bly's, 1996, "half-adult" in a "sibling society"). Consequently, people increasingly look to each other for meaning and direction (cf. Riesman's, 1950, other-directed character type). The normative patterns that have been destructured include gender relations, parent–child relations, ethnic/racial relations, and intergenerational obligations. In addition, consensus diminished regarding the structure of institutions developed during the early modern period, such as education (including child-rearing techniques) and the social safety net of the welfare state. Finally, in many Western countries the premodern foundational institutions of the family and religion have lost their legitimacy among a sizable proportion of the population. Wallace (1995) described this destructuring process in Europe as follows:

> age-status transitions have been de-structured. . . . Transitions are no longer associated with any particular age, or with each other. Youth has become more and more protracted with a long period of 'post adolescence' . . . at the upper end which is indeterminate. The outcomes of transitional phases are uncertain or risky—education is de-coupled from work, training is de-coupled from work, childbearing is de-coupled from marriage, marriage is de-coupled from work, leaving home is decoupled from marriage and so on. People's options and identities are no longer fixed or certain and their futures can take a number of directions, the end point of which is not always clear. . . . Age-transitions are open ended—they can go on for a long or a short time. (p. 10)

From Fig. 4.4 we can also chart cultural change from premodern through early modern to late modern times. It is evident that there has been a steady counter-clockwise course from the undifferentiated-nomic quadrant to the individualized-anomic quadrant. What the future holds can only be speculated on, but if we read Fig. 4.4 like a compass, this course suggests that we will enter a period of declining individualization and increasing anomie.

In addition to the charting of the cultural parameters of life-course development, the structure–agency template helps us to readily locate which identity status should be most common in each type of society (Fig. 4.5).

		Individualization	
		Undifferentiated	*Individualized*
Community Structure	*Anomic*	Premodern (Transitional)/ Diffusion	Late Modern/ Moratorium-Diffusion
	Nomic	Premodern (Stable)/ Foreclosure	Early Modern/ Achievement

FIG. 4.5.   The structure–agency template and the identity status paradigm.

Accordingly, stable premodern societies positively sanction Identity Fore-closure (lower levels of self-exploration but higher levels of cultural com-mitment); unstable premodern societies foster Diffusion (lower levels of self-exploration and cultural commitment); early modern societies nur-ture Identity Achievement (higher levels of self-exploration and cultural commitment); and late modern societies give rise to Moratorium (higher levels of self-exploration with lower levels of cultural commitment). We would add, however, that given the circumstances associated with late modern Western society, in which consumer–corporate capitalism domi-nates, Diffusion is likely to become an increasingly dominant response (e.g., Goossens & Phinney, 1996; Marcia, 1989a). This is the case because of the way the process of individualization has been appropriated by mar-keters to create illusions of individualization through commodified modes of expressing "individuality" (Côté, 2000). Perhaps these developments are the harbinger of the previously mentioned transition to an anomic/ undifferentiated period. We return to this important point later, but will note here that vacillations between Moratorium and Diffusion should be increasingly common as people find it increasingly difficult to anchor a stable identity in a stable community (MD–MD cycles, similar to the MAMA cycles already posited to occur; e.g., Stephen, Fraser, & Marcia, 1992).

    Representing the psychological level of identity formation in this man-ner has several advantages. First, it makes clear that each identity status has internal variation based on degrees of exploration and commitment. For example, individuals who would be located closer to the "center" of the template (where the lines separating the four categories cross) would exhibit fewer characteristics of any one identity status. In fact, we assume that a greater frequency of identity formation patterns appear closer to the center on this template (than to the perimeter) because of normal dis-tribution patterns and regression-to-the-mean tendencies. This phenome-non has been mistaken as a measurement problem by some, when in fact the problem of differentiating patterns close to the center is likely an accu-rate empirical depiction (cf. Bennion & Adams, 1986; van Hoof, 1999).

Second, the template depiction suggests that the identity statuses are not developmental in a strict psychological/structural sense where there has to be a linear, orderly, and invariant developmental progression through the statuses (see Snarey, Kohlberg, & Noam's, 1983, argument that Erikson's identity stage is a "functional phase" defined in terms of both [psychic] structure and cultural elements). According to the template, "development" can involve movement in any direction, or no movement at all. This explains why the identity status paradigm applies as well to the adult population as it does to the adolescent population, even though it was devised to characterize how late-adolescents were thought to develop adult identities (Marcia, 1989b, p. 403, wrote that the identity "statuses were intended as outcome styles applicable to late adolescence between the ages of 18 to 22"). Empirical research based on the identity status paradigm actually locates a low proportion of the adult population in the achievement quadrant, so the argument that "identity achievement" is the endpoint of the identity stage toward which the population "grows" has not found empirical support (van Hoof, 1999). Instead of developmental stages or substages, we prefer to think of the identity statuses as culturally influenced modal identity *patterns* (or character types) that can be thought of as representing the culmination of an individual's life-course experiences (to the point of the life course under scrutiny; cf. Schwartz, 2001). We return to this issue later in chapter 7.

Finally, the analyses associated with the structure–agency template shed considerable light on the issue of identity pathology (or sociogenic disorders, in general). If we take the charting of the structure–agency template seriously, it strongly suggests that we are in a period where it is increasingly difficult to sustain a "normal" sense of personal and social identity and a consistent life course. In premodern societies, people faced straight-forward issues in the formation of their adult identities: most simply had to fit into a collectively oriented community; metaphorically, as a brick fits in the construction of a house.

As argued earlier, in the present era, cultural parameters encourage widespread individualization in a generally anomic environment. To pilot a passage through the late modern life course in a way that produces long-term positive developmental outcomes requires considerable personal resources that many people do not possess (Côté, 1996a, 1996b). To continue the brick-house metaphor, many people in late modern society must now construct a whole "house" for themselves, rather than simply fit into an already constructed house. This is an enormous task that has placed considerable pressure on the "self," in terms of self-development, self-fulfillment, self-actualization, and the like (cf. Baumeister & Muraven, 1996). These difficulties apply to people in the "normal" and "healthy" population, but are exacerbated for those who have psychological difficul-

ties rooted in their childhood or adolescent experiences (cf. Steinberg & Schnall, 2000). Yet, outside the clinical literature, little attention has been given the identity problems of those with psychological difficulties stemming from pre-adult experiences.

Several important questions can now be raised. For example, how are the less psychologically resilient faring in a society that pushes them to self-style their life course with little guidance? And, how are they doing in a society that provides little collective support for them, yet requires them to be psychologically self-sufficient and self-directed?

We explore these, and related, questions in later chapters, showing how the structure–agency template can help explain the epidemic of identity-related pathologies that have apparently caught the psychiatric profession by surprise (Kreisman & Straus, 1989; Steinberg & Schnall, 2000).

LEVELS OF ANALYSIS REVISITED

Thus far, we have examined a history of the concept of identity in sociology and psychology and noted reasons for a variety of disagreements among those who have studied it, within and between each discipline. Our hope in writing this book is to provide a foundation on which those from various disciplines can contribute to an interdisciplinary understanding of identity and cooperate with others in this enterprise. In this chapter, we took a step in this direction by suggesting how the psychological and sociological approaches can be integrated in ways that are comprehensible to scholars from the various disciplines interested in identity. It has also become clear that social scientists need to come to agreement with respect to the relative importance of various factors in explaining behaviors associated with identity in its various manifestations. It appears from our analysis that social scientists are often in agreement on certain matters, but are thinking at different levels of analysis. Therefore, future studies and interobserver dialogues should be specific regarding which level of analysis is being studied and discussed.

To illustrate this last point, sociologists often are looking at identity from the angle afforded by notions of social structure and culture, and rarely get past considerations of institutionally defined interactions. In other words, they tend to focus on issues of social and personal identity, while issues of individual (or ego) identity are often a blur on the horizon. Conversely, psychologists often look at identity from the angle afforded by notions of personal and ego identity, with issues of social identity left as a comparable blur on the horizon. Thus, although looking at the same field,
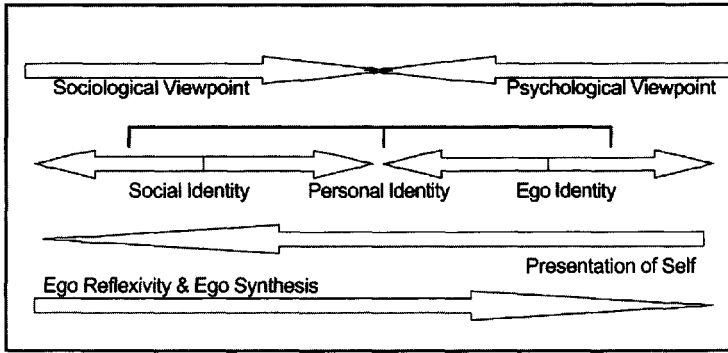
FIG. 4.6.   Levels of identity and their interrelations.

psychologists and sociologists generally do so from opposite positions. Like the blind men and the elephant, their particular perspectives lead them to draw different conclusions regarding what identity "is."

Figure 4.6 is provided to illustrate what we mean. It can be seen there how we propose the three levels of identity be understood in terms of an ordering and interrelationships. In addition, we propose how self-presentation and self-monitoring/perception processes are implicated in the process of identity formation and maintenance, in the sense that reflexivity/synthesis involves taking "external" information into the psyche to inform identity-related decisions, whereas the presentation of self involves taking "internal" information out of the psyche to actualize identity-related decisions and execute behavior.

SYNOPSIS

We have now suggested several ways of understanding how psychological and sociological perspectives on the three levels of identity can be coordinated and can complement one another. The use of a multidimensional perspective promises to give us a fuller conception of the development and functioning of identity. In later chapters, we give examples of how we have engaged this type of research orientation.

We must emphasize, however, that there are several conceptual issues that need to be adequately addressed before the multidimensional endeavor we envisage can be successful. After reading the first four chapters of this book, the careful reader may have already sensed one such issue. We are referring to the fact that we have not as yet distinguished clearly

between the ideas of self and identity. Much of the psychological and so-ciological literature appears to use these terms interchangeably. But there are important reasons to carefully distinguish between "self" and "identity" that will become apparent throughout the next two chapters. In addition, understanding the role of reflexive consciousness and how to conceptualize a notion of "agentic personality" are related tasks to be grappled with if a multidimensional perspective of identity is to be fully appreciated. We now turn our attention to these issues.

Issues in Definition and Critique

In reviewing the general dimensions of the perspectives taken in psychology and sociology to the study of self and identity, we noted that for the most part, these perspectives have evolved from similar origins into distinct analytical and methodological efforts. This need not be considered an unfortunate state of affairs for social science, given that the construct of identity is a multidimensional one, but it is a circumstance that creates the need for communication and cooperation among the relevant disciplines if attempts to synthesize perspectives and research findings are to be successful. Given the current state of the field, however, we must respond to several basic questions if the synthetic work required for the study of identity and agency is to begin. For example: What exactly is the self, precisely what is identity, and what is the difference between the two? What are the rudiments of a theory of the agentic personality? How are we to understand the relationships among ego, personal and social identity, self, and reflexive consciousness, in our attempts to answer these questions? In this chapter, we delve into the complexities of the various conceptualizations and definitions of self and identity.

SELF OR IDENTITY?

The terms "self" and "identity" are used extensively, and often interchangeably, in the psychological and sociological literatures. Ironically, however, one is hard pressed to find anything in these literatures but very general definitions of the self and identity concepts. Much writing makes

vague reference to them as if they were plainly understood (Weigert et al., 1986, make a similar observation), and the theorizing about them is sometimes highly abstract, including some extreme pronouncements that self and identity do not "exist." To make matters more complicated, in some works the term "self" seems to correspond, albeit imprecisely, to the psychoanalytic conception of the ego. For example, Gecas and Burke (1995) defined the self as the *process* of reflexivity or self-awareness, namely, the "ability to be both subject and object to [oneself]. Reflexivity is a special form of consciousness, a consciousness of oneself" (pp. 41–42). In the psychoanalytic tradition, the ego is assigned not only this reflexive function (called the ego synthetic function), but an agentic function in directing behavior as well (called the ego executive function; see Côté, 1993). As noted in chapter 6, we agree that self-awareness, and the "subject–object" distinction it enables, are properties reasonably attributed to a "self." However, to speak of the self this way without differentiating it from notions of reflexive consciousness, identity, and the ego, potentially inhibits the development of theory in this area of inquiry.

To begin our examination of the generic uses of self and identity, it is useful to concretize the discussion with dictionary definitions to see if academic usage adds anything beyond common-sense conceptions. *The Random House Webster Electronic Dictionary* (1991) defined these terms as follows:

> *self* 1. a person or thing referred to with respect to complete individuality: one's own self. 2. a person's nature, character, etc.: his better self. 3. personal interest. 4. Philos. the subject of experience as contrasted with the object of experience; ego.

> *identity* 1. the state or fact of remaining the same one, as under varying aspects or conditions. 2. the condition of being oneself or itself, and not another: He doubted his own identity 3. condition or character as to who a person or what a thing is: a case of mistaken identity . . . 5. the sense of self, providing sameness and continuity in personality over time.

When one reads the postmodernist literature on the self, it is often unclear in which sense the construct is intended. The first definition of self seems to refer to specific sociohistorical contexts where individuality is prized (e.g., Baumeister, 1997); definition 2 points to the sum of a person's attributes; definition 3 refers to a person's motivational structure; and definition 4 specifies that persons, construed as "subjects," can think, feel, perceive, and have intentions regarding who they are, were, and will be. So, to pronounce, as some postmodernists do, that there is no unified entity called the self does not tell us whether it is claimed that: (a) "individuality" is an illusion or is socially proscribed; (b) people have no stable

character or nature; or (c) people do not think, feel, or engage in intentional behavior.

In reference to the concept of identity, the dictionary definitions seem to describe qualities that a self might assume, such as an entity with particular characteristics, distinguishable from other entities, that can sense its own sameness and continuity over time, even under varying conditions. So, to emphasize, as some postmodernists do, the idea of the self as a poorly organized, constantly changing array of identifications, and to limit the idea of "identity" to a malleable "story" or "narrative," fails to acknowledge the following: that people can sense that something about them exists "beneath" or "outside" such narratives; that it is they who are the authors of such "stories"; and that they can sense themselves as "being" in time and social space. Undoubtedly, such a sense of existence is experienced by many people, and it is the absence of such awareness for some people that led Erikson to take an interest in identity pathologies. As noted earlier, he observed such pathology in some traumatized victims of the Second World War, in delinquents "at war with themselves," in severely confused youth, and in psychotics.

In the case of classical sociological writings, clear distinctions between the self and identity constructs were lacking; when used, both constructs were in reference to the second dictionary definition of the self. However, added to this idea was the additional assumption that a person's nature and character were primarily a function of social stimuli (Durkheim, 1893/1964). In other words, very few early sociologists investigated the "subject" aspect of the self, for to do so they would have had to attribute "intentionality" to individuals. This would have then required explanations implicating the role of cognition and emotion that would then draw the sociologist into psychological "territory," a conceptual move that for most was to be explicitly avoided (Comte, 1877/1976; Durkheim, 1895/1964). Thus, in classical sociology there was little regard for the "interior life" of individuals; instead, studying the surface manifestations of mental activities in speech and behavior, within the contexts of social encounters, was of sufficient depth for sociological analysis.

It is often in the study of such encounters that contemporary sociologists turn to notions of self and identity. We referred earlier to this domain of study as the micro level of interaction, where issues of personal identity are manifest. Although impression construction and management in social encounters involves both subjective and objective components (Weigert et al., 1986), and therefore involves psychological and sociological factors, contemporary sociologists tend to emphasize the latter. Accordingly, at this interactional level, although personal identity constructions may be initiated by focal individuals in their impression management efforts, sociologists tend to emphasize the idea that the "success" and "ve-

racy" of the identities produced are strongly determined by those others who view, construct, and share the definitions and meanings of the focal person's efforts.

In emphasizing the role of others in this process, and in seeing self and identity construction on the "cusp" of, or only through interaction processes, contemporary sociological theory has not really modified its classical position. With the exception of some sociological writing in the symbolic interactionist tradition of the Chicago School (see chapters 3 and 6), there is little investigation of the inner workings of individuals in sociological writing; accordingly, the distinction between a social self and an interior, reflexively understood identity has not played an important role in this literature. Thus, one is not offering an important observation if one declares, as for example Gergen (1991) did, that for sociology the subject of the self is dead, or that "core" identity is a thing of the past. Such an observation is much more misleading than original, for these ideas have never really played an important role in sociological theorizing at all. But, if sociologists have not seriously considered the distinctions between self and identity in order to theorize the relationship between these constructs and a notion of agency, what about the psychological tradition?

In chapter 2 we noted the effort on Erikson's part to make sense out of the difference between the self and identity constructs, and we build on his work in chapter 6. But it is important now to note that we see his neo-psychoanalytic, psychosocial perspective as qualitatively different from the perspective taken in mainstream psychology, where emphasis is placed primarily on the study of self and identity as "intrapsychic" phenomena. This emphasis on the "intrapsychic" does not mean that cultural, social structural, and interpersonal factors are totally ignored by psychology, especially contemporary psychology, but that these factors tend to be conceptualized as relevant from a perspective concerned with how a "cognizing" person assimilates such influences. Of course, recognizing the relevance of such variables as culture and interaction would allow for a social psychological reading of some of the psychological literature, but we believe that even in these instances, the research emphasis remains placed on "intrapsychic" issues.

Given that, what can we say in general terms about the psychological study of self and identity? Two observations come to mind immediately: First, the volume of research in this area over the last 25 years is enormous. More than 31,000 published papers on the self have appeared during this quarter century (Baumeister, 1998). Our second observation is that all of this research, although more or less classifiable by topic (e.g., self-reflexivity, self-complexity, self-discrepancy, self-concept, self-esteem, etc.), is fragmented in the sense that a coherent theoretical foundation for it has not yet emerged. In fact, among those who have attempted to con-

vey an overall sense of the field, there is explicit admission that a clear distinction between identity and self, as well as a clear conception of self per se, has not yet been sufficiently articulated (Ashmore & Jussim, 1997; Baumeister, 1998; Gergen, 1971; Osborne, 1996). Because of this ambiguity, as well as the sheer volume of work in this area, it is an easy task to find examples of research in this literature that refer to all of the dimensions of both dictionary definitions of self and identity referred to earlier.

CRITIQUES OF SELF AND IDENTITY: ACCUSATIONS OF SCIENTIFIC BIAS AND IDEOLOGICAL CRITIQUE

Metatheoretical Issues

In this section, we preface our review of the postmodern perspective on self and identity with a discussion of some issues that help us locate the various theories we discuss in terms of their underlying philosophical assumptions. This will enable us to indicate not only our position on what constitutes a valid approach to assessing knowledge claims, but it will also help us to understand certain conceptual underpinnings of the postmodern perspective. Readers are referred to the glossary for definitions of the philosophical terms used in this section.

Some of the most powerful methodological tools in social science are conceptual. Although this assertion may strike some empirically oriented readers as odd, we think it important to emphasize that the establishment of firm philosophy-of-science grounds for a theory enables researchers to make far more use of it than would otherwise be the case if such conceptual foundations and underlying assumptions remained implicit. For example, one way to both identify and evaluate underlying theoretical premises is to locate a model or theory in reference to its subjectivist and objectivist assumptions. From a subjectivist point of view, social reality is largely indeterminate, in the sense that it is held to be dependent on the ways in which individuals construct it. In contrast, the objectivist point of view sees social reality as consisting of phenomena sui generis, independent of human consciousness; in other words, reality is claimed to have a fixed and obdurate nature. These two polar positions are sometimes referred to as constructionism and positivism respectively (e.g., Unger et al., 1986). However, more elaborate philosophical terminology is available to describe these positions, as Fig. 5.1 illustrates (cf. Burrell & Morgan, 1979). Before discussing Fig. 5.1, it is crucial to emphasize that the term subjectivist does not equate with "bias" or "nonscientific." The confusion in using this term seems to stem from the fact that the more general term
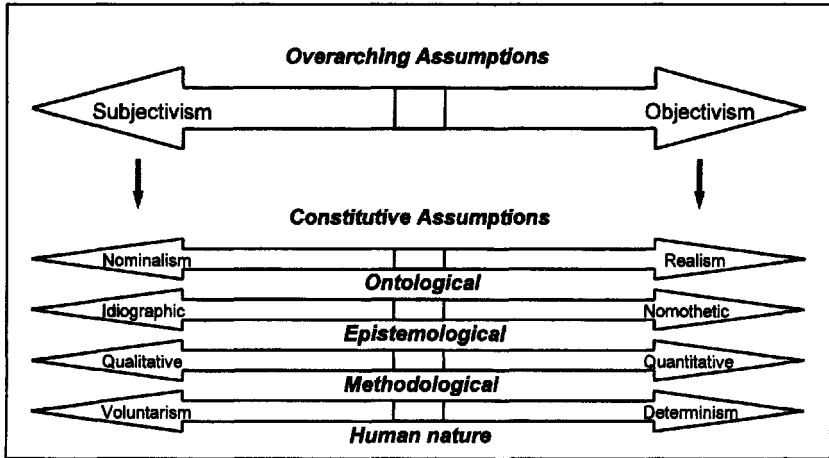
FIG. 5.1. Philosophy of science assumptions regarding the nature and study of social reality.

"subjective" is often used by the lay person to denote a lack of "objectivity," which in turn is equated with validity and science. Those unfamiliar with the philosophical usage of these terms may make this mistake. However, a thorough knowledge of the subjectivist position reveals that taking this philosophical approach can reduce bias and be more scientific under the right circumstances, as we show later.

The terminology depicted in Fig. 5.1 characterizes the four constituent assumptions of each position. For the subjectivist, nominalism is the favored ontological assumption (i.e., what is real) regarding the nature of social reality; namely, that social reality is a product of human consciousness and the names we have attached to our experience with it. From this assumption follows the use of experiential/idiographic epistemological strategies, in the sense that in-depth, case studies of experiences and emergent interactions are claimed to constitute the basis of valid knowledge. Thus, by necessity, researchers attempt to identify—using qualitative methodologies—the firsthand observations and impressions of persons, hopefully without the contamination of their own preconceptions, which are believed to be hidden in the form of hypotheses. Finally, the logically consistent assumption regarding human nature is voluntarism—it is claimed that human agents control their own behavior by exercising free will over their own thoughts and actions. Note here that the requirement of theoretical coherence dictates that subjectivist theories involve a logical consistency among these four philosophical assumptions. Accordingly, for example, a nominalist, idiographic, qualitative approach requires a position postulating some form of human agency consistent with voluntarism.

Adopting a deterministic position in an otherwise subjectivist theory would constitute a violation of the principle of theoretical coherence.

A parallel description can be made of objectivist theories. Ontologically, these theories approach social reality from a realist position, which postulates that reality has its own foundational and universalistic properties, independent of how humans construct it. An epistemological stance accepting the existence of nomothetic laws follows. In other words, it is claimed that knowledge can be deemed valid and generalizable when derived from the use of operationalizable concepts applied to the study of large samples. Objectivism, sometimes referred to as positivism, is thus a search for fixed behavior patterns explainable with general laws. These assumptions in turn require the use of quantitative methodologies, which involve detached observation by means of preset hypotheses that form the basis of statistical surveys and controlled experiments. Finally, it follows from these assumptions that human behavior is to be understood as being determined by a chain of prior causation. While notions of individual action are acknowledged by the objectivist position, the idea that such actions could be a function of "free will" is logically inconsistent with it.

Although this metatheoretical framework proposes subjectivism and objectivism as polar opposites, it is possible to adopt a defensible middle-ground position between them. One such position has a long philosophical history dating back centuries and is referred to as "metaphysical idealism/epistemological realism" (e.g., Angeles, 1992). This position holds that there is a social reality separate from our individual perceptions of it, and that therefore we can never be sure that we perceive reality with absolute accuracy. In addition, while we can uncover patterns and regularities in individual constructions of reality through empirical observation, our interpretations (i.e., theories) of such information must always remain open to question. Indeed, some research traditions in cognitive psychology (e.g., Kohlberg, Levine, & Hewer, 1983), and more recently in cognitive sociology (e.g., DiMaggio, 1997), appear to approach their fields of study with such a middle-ground perspective.

Another, closely related, and complementary middle-ground position is referred to as "pragmatic constructionism" (Weigert et al., 1986). This position identifies an on-going interaction between individual constructions of social reality and the fact that such realities then "act back" on individuals, influencing their subsequent constructions. It is the institutionalization of such socially constructed realities that constitutes the grounds for the emergence of codes of order (folkways, mores, laws) that appear to be necessary for social organization. In fact, pragmatic social constructionism is essentially what Berger and Luckmann (1966) had in mind in their treatise that is the basis of contemporary social constructionism (see chapters 3 and 7).

Before proceeding, it is important to contrast pragmatic construc-
tionism with "reductionist constructionism," a position of extreme subjec-
tivism (Weigert et al., 1986). This perspective reduces social reality to acts
of human construction in and of themselves. The problem with such re-
duction is that social reality becomes different for everyone; truth claims
about it become entirely relative. In reducing "everything" to individual
construction, such an extreme nominalist position yields judgments such
as "one social order is as good as another," and ultimately renders claims
to the validity and meaningfulness of human activity, at the individual and
collective level, arbitrary. This philosophical regress can indeed produce
social critique, but it is incapable of providing a priori standards or princi-
ples on which an agreed-upon analytical and ethical "fix" for social prob-
lems like sexism and racism, can emerge. For example, recent "standpoint
epistemologies" simply privilege the social constructions of the most pow-
erless, and in a world of competing relativisms there seems to be no way to
know which constructions of the powerless to believe, let alone why we
should promote those we choose to believe.

The position along the subjectivist–objectivist dimension that we en-
dorse for the study of identity and self involves the combined assumptions
of metaphysical idealism/epistemological realism and pragmatic construc-
tionism. It is this stance that enables us to respond constructively to the
postmodernist critiques of self and identity that we review later. We should
also state here that our orientation also provides us with the logic for pos-
tulating a notion of agency and for understanding its relationships with
identity, self, and culture from a social psychological/psychosocial per-
spective. Furthermore, although it should be apparent that various writ-
ings in both the psychological and sociological analysis of self and identity
occupy various positions on the subjectivist–objectivist continuum, we do
not detect in any of them a clear commitment to either of the middle-
ground positions we have just identified. For us, the writings of Erik
Erikson most closely approximate such a perspective.

The Postmodernist Critique

The postmodernist critique of self, identity, and agency was summarized
by Hollinger (1994) in *Postmodernism and the Social Sciences*. Hollinger pro-
vided brief, thematic discussions of the various positions that have contrib-
uted to the postmodern challenge to the contemporary social sciences and
their writings about self and identity. It should first be noted that he ar-
gued that the "literature on postmodernism is so vast, diverse, and un-
wieldy that even the initiated cannot keep up with it, let alone make coher-
ent sense of it all" (p. xi). This problem is exacerbated by the fact that
there is "an indeterminacy about postmodernist writers' shared assump-

tions and goals" (p. xi). Thus, it is not possible to identify one overarching postmodernist view. This identification problem stems in part from the fact that the postmodernist debate is engaged in by scholars from a variety of fields, including philosophy and the humanities.

Nevertheless, it is clear that some postmodernists have argued that the social sciences have become imperialistic enterprises, taking over much of the subject matter of philosophy and the humanities during the 20th century. Consequently, resentment has grown from those who feel their "territory" has been impinged on. It is not surprising, then, that much of the "postmodern" critique is actually part of an antimodernist sentiment (Kegan, 1994), with social science being identified as part of the modernist problem to be overcome. This helps explain why most postmodernist formulations seem not to offer alternatives to "modernist" theories, but merely take anti-objectivist positions. In Hollinger's (1994) words, many postmodernists refuse "to give justification or theories for what they are doing or the values they defend" (p. 175). Apparently, many of them believe that the "modernist" academic establishment is too detached from the problems of humanity, and this claim may explain why postmodernist "intellectual work is colored by a political posture that is clearly rooted in a deep feeling for the outsider and downtrodden" (p. 177; cf. Bauman, 1997).

It is not our intention to dwell on the modernist–postmodernist debate, but we believe that our work, which some postmodernists would dismiss as hopelessly modernist, can help rectify real problems of human suffering associated with "deficits" in identity in late modernity, deficits that have social structural, interactionist, and psychological sources (e.g., Kurtines, 1999).

One difficulty encountered in interpreting postmodern positions on the self and identity involves deciphering whether a postmodernist is referring to the "is" or the "ought" of these concepts. At times, there seems to be a denial of the *validity* of modernist theories when they insist that there is no unity and coherence of self and identity (the "is"). At other times, there seems to be a rejection of modernist theories because they ostensibly support the modernist project of prediction and control (the "ought"). For example, Hollinger (1994, pp. 47–48) identified a long-standing sentiment that "the self should not be unified or normalized in modernity on pain of imprisonment in the iron cage [of modern bureaucratic forms]" and "that one should avoid overcoming fragmentation and alienation within modernity at all costs." Hollinger (1994, p. 113) cited various postmodernists who avoid subscribing to a defined view of self and identity, such as Derrida and Foucault, who believe that identity is a function of difference, and Lacan, Nietzsche, and Rorty who deny that there is a unified self.

Hollinger (1994) went on to identify a dispute among postmodernists who, following Nietzsche, are either Dionysians (celebrating excesses of desire) or Apollonians (advocating order). The Dionysians want "a definition of the self based on desires . . . [that] would move us closer to a 'primitive,' allegedly better society" (p. 114). Moreover, they "hope we can discover or invent counterpractices that avoid disciplining the body and subjugating the self as modernity often requires" (p. 115). They charge that "the various technologies of the self, the various theories, practices, and institutions of modern society, sustain modern identity in two narcissistic forms: rational egoism and romantic expressivism" (p. 115). In contrast, he identified other postmodernists like Foucault and Gergen, who hold that "the modern self is not entirely trapped in an iron cage [of modernist bureaucracy], but has enabling possibilities, not just constraints" (p. 114).

Hollinger (1994) believed that postmodern writings on self and identity will have an impact on the social sciences. He claimed that although some will still try to work from a "human nature" approach and "advocate an Enlightenment humanist approach to psychology and self, it seems likely that the relevant disciplines, including social psychology, will work out some modified conceptions of the self rather than follow the advice of some postmodernists to leave the field altogether" (p. 115). In his own view, though, "[w]e may be at a stalemate: the concept of the self that dominates modernity seems problematic, but alternative ideas are either variants of this concept or are dubious or are dangerous" (p. 47).

Where does the project represented by our book stand in terms of these postmodern positions and challenges? We would classify it as a "human nature" approach to identity that advocates a neo-Enlightenment, humanist perspective underlying its methods and goals. It is important to note, however, that ours is not the extreme objectivist approach disparaged by an equally extreme postmodernist subjectivism. Instead, it corresponds with the "metaphysical idealism/epistemological realism" and "pragmatic constructionist" positions discussed earlier, or what some might recognize as a "postpositivist" approach (Côté, 1984; Côté & Levine, 1989). The goal of our investigation of identity is not simply one of prediction and understanding; it is also concerned with the alleviation of human discomfort and suffering, especially as these conditions have been exacerbated by the social conditions of late modernity (cf. Hewitt, 2000).

One final point helps to locate our "late modernist" approach in reference to the postmodernist perspective. This point pertains to the often-made claim among postmodernists to have discovered the "grand narrative" of modernity and to have successfully debunked it in various ways (i.e., they claim to have successfully uncovered the dangerous conditions

created by the connections constructed among Enlightenment logics, science, notions of progress, and rationality). Although this is an interesting and clever story to have weaved about the last 500 years, many other equally interesting stories can be told about this period, particularly the story of the history of modern capitalism, which is for us the more plausible explanation for the incredible amount of social and technological change, and ensuing human suffering, that has taken place over this time period.

Many postmodernists seem to have undervalued the significance of this alternative story; instead, and of course, they favor their own story and often celebrate it by asserting the "emancipatory" claims of "difference" and "diversity" that would be respected and appreciated if only we rejected our modernist logics. Clearly the emancipatory and transformative status of such claims is dubious unless grounded with sound ethical justification, which postmodernists fail to provide. We find that there is much that is deceptive and contradictory here. For instead of meeting the challenge of ethical justification by addressing questions about the type of society required if "difference" is to be fairly respected, as we do in chapters 8 and 9, the postmodernist defense of "difference" and "diveristy" remains bogged down in the quagmire of moral and logical relativism. And, of course, such relativism is contradicted by the very *universal* claim that many of them make or imply, namely, that all is relative. In attacking the classifications and objectivity of science and rationality as the "enemies" of "difference" and "diversity," these postmodernist analyses throw the baby (science) out with the bath water, but leave the dirty tub (capitalism) unexamined. In this way, what at first blush appears to be a radical move is, in fact, a conservative stance with respect to the most potent force—capitalism—affecting the lives of people living in late modern societies.

The Androcentrism and Eurocentrism Critiques

As in other areas of the social sciences, the self and identity literature is replete with a variety of claims that existing theories are male-biased. In this case, it is claimed that the processes governing women's identity formation are different from those governing men's, and that such processes have not been adequately researched. Hence, claims are made regarding differences *in kind*, not *in degree*, between men and women. However, we must be careful in postulating differences in kind in this area of research. For example, Lytle, Bakken, and Romig (1997) set out with a difference-in-kind assumption, but their empirical results told them otherwise, and they concluded that:

Amid the eagerness to understand and measure identity development, researchers may be culpable of underestimating the complexity of the identity process. On the surface there do appear to be gender specific patterns of identity development. However, in reality, these differences may be most accurately described in terms of nuances rather than exaggerated terms of dichotomous gender differences. (p. 184)

Jordan's Relational Self and Josselson's Connectedness.   Elsewhere, Côté (2000) has examined the "relational model" postulated by feminist scholars such as Judith Jordan, Ruthellen Josselson and Carol Gilligan (1982; Gilligan & Attanucci, 1988). Although this model has merits, it commits the error identified by a number of people including Lytle, Bakken, and Romig (1997), of dichotomizing "male and female patterns of identity development" and thereby serves "to rekindle and perpetuate former gender stereotypes" (p. 184). For example, Jordan (1997) characterized the work done in the psychology of self as follows:

In traditional Western psychological theories of development, the "self" has long been viewed as the primary reality and unit of study. Typically, the self has been seen as separated from its context, a bounded, contained entity that has both object and subject qualities. Clinical and developmental theories generally have emphasized the growth of an autonomous, individuated self. Increasing self-control, a sense of self as origin of action and intentions, an increasing capacity to use abstract logic, and a movement toward self-sufficiency characterize the maturation of the ideal Western self. (p. 9)

Jordan (1997) believed that this describes a "male" model of development that does not apply very well to women. She believed that the idea of a "relational self" better characterizes the psychology of women. Jordan argued that the relational model emphasizes the connections that women have with others, which she believes are uniquely different from the connections men make with others. Men, she believes, construct boundaries that protect and define themselves. In contrast, it is claimed that women are more contextual and intersubjective in their relations with others, creating more flexible and fluid interpersonal boundaries. Thus, women are seen to be more embedded in context, more concerned with those in their immediate presence, and more able to establish dynamically mutual relationships. Relational theorists believe, therefore, that women are more concerned with care-taking and the empowerment of others, whereas men are more concerned with power-based dominance patterns, abstract and universal principles, and self-empowerment.

This position sounds familiar and is promoted by many "pop" psychologists and academically involved ones as well; but when these ideas are

scrutinized from a social scientific point of view, it becomes apparent that the model tends to stereotype men and women (Hulbert, 1993; Tavris, 1992; Tronto, 1987). When reading this literature, we are asked to take seriously the proposition that, in general, women are more other-oriented, whereas, in general, men are more self-oriented and more likely to be interpersonal opportunists. And after reading and re-reading such claims, the caveat "in general" gets read as "all," and the stereotype emerges. Consequently, there is little conceptual room left for understanding women who have supposedly masculine tendencies and for men who have supposedly feminine tendencies. But, surely there are merits in both "connection" and "autonomy," and the same criticisms we directed at Gergen's third stage of the relational self can be directed toward the feminist relational model: Both focus on a highly idealized state of being that in the "real world" may not always be very functional or representative of the population. For example, overly flexible self-boundaries can leave a person disorganized and open to manipulation. To the extent that this happens and contributes to the formation of an unformulated sense of self, people may simply drift along through life, not attending very well to their own needs for security and survival, let alone the needs of others.

Josselson (1996) has applied relational theory to research on identity formation, with the use of a slightly modified understanding of Marcia's identity status paradigm (see chapter 2). She traced the identity development of a group of 30 women over a 22-year period from the end of their college years in the early 1970s, through to their mid-years in 1993. She used the identity status paradigm in the first panel of her study to categorize the "gateways" these women took into adulthood during their college years and the "pathways" they subsequently followed through to middle age. The identity statuses were thus seen as encapsulating the personality resources these women had already acquired before entering adulthood. These resources were then understood as the cognitive bases affecting how they processed experiences and acted on the world as adult agents.

As noted, Josselson modified the terminology of the identity status paradigm to better suit the experiences of these women. She renamed the statuses with the intent of making them more intuitively meaningful: Achievements were called Pathfinders; Moratoriums were termed Searchers; Foreclosures were referred to as Guardians; and Diffusions were viewed as Drifters (we borrowed some of this terminology to characterize the "identity strategies" discussed in chapters 1 and 4).

The struggles of women in Josselson's sample are characterized as "identity revisions," in which a process of self-discovery and growth is undertaken following a path marked by attempts to maintain "connections" while developing "competence." She described this process as follows:

> All women want a sense of competence and a sense of connection—that is one generalization I can make with some confidence. . . . How to go about achieving them is often the enigma. Choice is a slippery process, as is self-knowledge. To "know what one wants for oneself" is not an easy matter and is often a lifelong quest. Freedom is liberating, but it can also be terrifying. (p. 241)

Josselson went on to characterize the identity revision process as a "struggle to translate very inchoate longings—to 'be someone,' to 'do something'—into realizable goals" (p. 241).

Josselson's findings offer a valuable description of how the women in her sample struggled with a sense of competence in conjunction with their sense of connection. For example, she made the following observation about the relationship between these two attributes and having a sense of identity:

> Identity resides at the intersection of competence and connection: this is where people feel most fully themselves—and are most recognized by others as being who they are. Adult crises in identity among these women have most often involved the struggle to keep experiences of competence and connection in balance. (p. 178)

Unfortunately, these findings are of limited use because although she deliberately set out to demonstrate that women have a greater sense of "connection" than do men, she did not employ sufficient methodological safeguards in her study. For instance, she did not take steps to empirically test her claims by setting out null hypotheses or by making direct comparisons with the experiences of men. Consequently, in spite of the contributions her work makes, it has the same shortcomings as does much other work done using the "relational model."

When we examine the more scientifically oriented identity status literature, we still find a certain amount of confusion in terms of how to characterize "gender differences." A survey of this literature shows a general consensus that among contemporary (American, high school and college attending) youth there are no significant differences in *how* and *when* females and males move through Marcia's identity statuses. That is, there appears to be agreement that there are no meaningful gender differences in the *processes* by which psychological aspects of identity come together (i.e., the observed frequencies and subjective meanings of the identity statuses), and when they come together (Archer, 1993, p. 85; Marcia, 1993, p. 39; Waterman, 1993, p. 62). On the other hand, reliable gender differences seem to have been identified in terms of the "domains" or content areas around which identity issues are explored. Archer (1993) summarized these findings as follows:

> Gender differences were found in the domains of sexuality . . . family/career prioritizing . . . and friendship . . . but not on vocation, religious beliefs, sex roles, values, dating, and so forth. In each case of significant gender differences, females have been more likely to be identity achieved or in moratorium and males, foreclosed or diffused, reinforcing the female self-in-relation expectation. But females have been as likely as males to be self-defined in the intrapersonal domains as well. (p. 85)

In other words, relative to males, more females studied appear to be exploring issues in more domains related to real life concerns in a world of changing gender roles. It is in this sense that their identity formation processes may be considered more complex. As Waterman (1993) put it:

> The task of identity formation is more complex for females than for males in that they endeavor to work out for themselves their goals, values, and beliefs in more domains than do males. Not only do females experience the desire to establish their sense of identity in vocational choice, religious beliefs, political ideology, and sex-role attitudes in the same manner as males, but they engage in more active reflection and decision-making regarding identity in a relational context than do their male counterparts. (p. 62)

This current consensus regarding gender differences in the psychological dimensions of identity appears reasonable, but needs to be carefully examined on several grounds. For example, the samples cited by Archer and Waterman are restricted by age from early to mid-adolescence, even though important aspects of gender-identity formation often do not take place until early adulthood (and according to Marcia, 1989b, p. 403, the identity "statuses were intended as outcome styles applicable to late adolescence between the ages of 18 to 22"). That is, identity formation among contemporary American *adolescents* is mostly a psychological preparation or anticipation for early adulthood, but it is during early adulthood that this preparation meets social reality, often requiring further formation as an adult social identity is actually adopted (Sexton, 1979).

Although at the psychological level of ego identity there are likely no differences in terms of the *processes* by which females and males form their sense of identity—the ego mechanisms appear to be the same for both—at the level of social identity, gender differences still emerge along the private versus public dimension that has dominated *modern* Western societies. This is evidenced by the observation of persisting gender differences in the actual occupational roles assumed in adulthood, as well as in differential participation in formal governing institutions (Côté, 1996b, 2000). When the gender findings based on the identity status paradigm are reinterpreted in these sociological terms, the differences in domain are understandable in reference to a changing social context where (Western)

women have gained more access to the public (occupational) sphere previously dominated by men, and are no longer as restricted to the private (household) sphere (cf. Marcia, 1993, p. 39).

As a socialization task, therefore, identity formation today appears to differ mainly in terms of domain complexity, with more women than men tackling issues in both the public and private spheres as they form their identities. Women who move into the public sphere apparently find it necessary to balance issues associated with both the "private" and "public," often negotiating these issues with significant others as they go along (Côté, 1996a). Moreover, it has been suggested that the balancing pattern seems to involve dealing with the private sphere first and then moving on to the public sphere; but this observation needs to be investigated further (Thorbecke & Grotevant, 1982). The majority of men, in contrast, seem to have been less willing to interconnect the public and private domains, preferring the public; when they do sense links, they apparently deal with them as independent issues (Marcia, 1993; Waterman, 1993). For these reasons, identity formation currently appears to be more complex for those women who attempt to form an identity based on participation within both spheres. It also may the case that for these non-traditional, post-adolescent women, the timing and sequencing of identity formation differs from those men and women who pursue their respective traditional spheres (Archer, 1989; Côté, 1986a; Patterson, Sochting, & Marcia, 1992; Sexton, 1979).

Finally, although not researched widely, gender differences at the level of personal identity are obvious in terms of "gender displays" of masculinity and femininity in the presentation of self during day-to-day activities (e.g., Goffman, 1976; Wexler, 1992). These displays appear to be nurtured and exaggerated in adolescence by socially produced "gender intensification processes" (cf. Côté & Allahar, 1996).

Markus's and Kitayama's Interdependent Self.   The last perspective taken on the "relational self" that we would like to review can be found in the work of Markus and Kitayama (1991). In our view, it is here that the subject of the relational self receives the clearest and most analytically heuristic treatment (see also Mageo, 1997). Markus and Kitayama understood the relational self as a "matter of degree" along a bipolar continuum ranging from an independent to an interdependent construal of the self. It is important to emphasize that these authors conceptually disentangled the continuum of independence–interdependence from variables such as gender, religion, and ethnicity. Such variables may represent a "difference in degree" along the continuum, but Markus and Kitayama stressed that they do not constitute markers of a "difference in kind." Quite the contrary, for them the appropriation of a position along the independent–in-

terdependent continuum by any classification of "average" persons varied within and across cultures and as a function of interactive context.

The independent and interdependent self constructs are "ideal types" for Markus and Kitayama. They represent two possible ways in which persons can reflexively construe the meaning and interactive relevance of their social and personal selves. In other words, this is a theory of self-concept (and self-reference/reflected appraisal) in which self-conceptions constitute the schema contents of a structural theory of the self. In addition, however, it is also an operational theory for Markus and Kitayama, for they reasoned that these schema contents are influential in determining cognition, emotion, and motivation in those interactive circumstances that are self-salient.

The independent-self construal constitutes an emphasis on one's sense of autonomy and separateness from others, and the right to choose which duties and obligations are to be the basis of allegiances with others. The self is thought of as being "whole unto itself," comprised of its own thoughts, beliefs, and feelings. "Others" and interactive contexts are sensed as being outside the self and are utilized as sources of reflected appraisal. Relationships can and do change—contexts vary—but the self is sensed as maintaining a unitary core and as being, more or less, constant. Markus and Kitayama claimed that this construal of the self is more common for persons living in Western industrial societies.

The interdependent construal of self, in contrast, is more likely to be detected in the more duty-bound cultures of the Orient (e.g., Bond, 1988), or in premodern, pre-capitalist Western societies. Here the self is understood as always being in relation with context and other as part of a complex set of duties and obligations, as always connected and therefore sensed as constituted by others and shared perspectives. Although an "internal space" filled with beliefs, values, and desires can be sensed by the interdependent self, it is a "space" understood as always being in contexts of complex duties and obligations—as always contending with the dominant understanding of the self being "in relation" to others to whom one owes allegiance. Thus, this "space within" must be controlled and often inhibited if the self is to maintain connection; the notion of a "whole self unto itself" is therefore not operative in the interdependent construal.

Markus and Kitayama reviewed a substantial amount of literature documenting the cognitive, emotional, and motivational consequences of these two self-construals. As one would expect, those using an interdependent self-construal are more likely to process self-relevant information in a situationally specific manner and be attentive to the expectations and needs of others. For example, in a situation requiring decisions about the distribution of property, the interdependent self would likely consider its obligation not to exclude the other from distribution, whereas the inde-

pendent self would more likely and, more egocentrically, focus on the acquisition rights of the self. It follows that the interdependent self is more likely to experience and utilize "other-focused" emotions and cognitive operations such as empathy, sympathy, and shame, and identify these feelings as properties of context and relationship with the other. Finally, those with the interdependent self-construal understand their motives and goals (i.e., for Markus and Kitayama, their "sense of agency") in the context of accommodating to or at least cooperating with others, with the assumption that others understand their own motives and desires in a similar fashion. In contrast, it is the independent self that perceives others and contexts as phenomena to be avoided, manipulated, or controlled if the self is to be fulfilled—duties and obligations are seen as matters of individual choice.

In conceptualizing these two dimensions of self-construal as ideal types and in noting how they function in processing self-salient information, the work of Markus and Kitayama must be considered an important contribution to the relational-self literature. However, from our point of view, two critical observations about their work are appropriate. First, like the other literature reviewed in this chapter, their writing did not clearly distinguish among the phenomena of ego identity, personal identity, social identity, and the self. Second, their conception of agency was not differentiated from the two domains of self-construal they reviewed and was discussed primarily in reference to motivation. Although it is true that a desire to make choices and commitments is a property of human agency at the experiential level of both self-construal dimensions, this understanding of agency is not sufficient for several reasons.

In discussing the idea of agency only in the context of theorizing about motivation and the self, it remains a concept tautologically tied to behavior governed by either an actor's desires, social norms, and/or the expectations of specific others. As we argue in the chapters to follow, an agentic component of the personality cannot be reasonably understood in this manner. Instead, it must be an idea reflexively understood by persons as a strength, vitality, or willfulness they have to engage in behavior. It must be sensed as being their own strength; a strength that is *reflexively differentiated* in their minds from their desires and the obligations they feel impinging on them. In other words, it is an attribute that persons can associate with their ability (a) to *reason* strategically about how to pursue goals, and (b) to contemplate questions about whether or not it is appropriate to pursue such goals.

With this perspective on agency, the importance of the "relational self" idea takes on much more value for us, for it can now also represent the "pushes and pulls" any agentic actor must contend with in balancing the interests and needs of self and other, *whether or not* the relationship with

that other is construed by the self in an independent or interdependent way.

SYNOPSIS: THE NEED FOR A RETURN TO A FORMAL THEORY OF IDENTITY

The literature reviews and critical analyses in this chapter have addressed a number of issues that appear to present obstacles to the theoretical and empirical investigation of identity formation. One such obstacle concerns the fact that psychologists often conduct research at different levels of analysis than sociologists, without acknowledging or realizing it; another is the claim that the self and identity are merely modernist metaphors for a "core" sense of subjective existence that is quickly being eroded by forces in the postmodern world, or were never real in the first place. In concluding this chapter, we wish to re-emphasize in a more specified manner our views on these and related issues. Our hope is that our perspective can not only contribute to the construction of a conceptual bridge across the gap between sociological and psychological approaches to identity, but also point to a defensible understanding of identity and agency as a response to the postmodern critique.

It is the failure to adopt clear definitions for the constructs of identity and self that exacerbates the difficulty in coordinating the research orientations of psychology and sociology. On the one hand we have the psychological emphasis on the "intrapsychic" and the "interpersonal" contexts for the study of self and identity; on the other hand, we have the sociological interest in the "interpersonal" and the move from it to concerns about intergroup and social-structural processes of stability and change. The fact that both disciplines do focus on the interpersonal context should give us some hope for an eventual exchange of ideas. But another way to express this point is to reiterate our claim that a strong case can be made for understanding identity with a social psychological, multidimensional focus and that it is perfectly legitimate to study its different components and to investigate empirical associations among them. Recognizing the multidimensionality of identity and explicitly defining each component should help this area of research develop a broader, cross-disciplinary theoretical and empirical base.

In the opening chapters of this book, we made reference to the multidimensional, tripartite distinction among ego, personal, and social identity represented by the personality and social structure perspective. We analyze this distinction in some detail in the chapter to follow. For now, however, we can make several observations about it.

To begin, it is obvious that this distinction encompasses the focal research interests of psychology and sociology. Second, this distinction im-

plies that identity and self can be reasonably differentiated. For us, "self" refers to a person's internalized behavioral repertoires (for example, in role enactments during face-to-face interactions) and it can be an object of social experience. "Self-concept" refers to a person's subjective experience of this behavior, and it is when such experience is reflected on that it becomes schema content for the domains of either personal or social identity. In other words, the self and the self-concept are *not* "identities," when an identity is understood as the sum of second-order reflections on what can be called the first-order reflective experience of self-concept. This logic suggests that in the subjective, experiential realm, personal and social identities can be understood in part as cognitive operational structures of self-concepts. We address this distinction between identity and self in greater detail in the chapter to follow, but we can note here that it parallels the more generic distinction between cognitive process and cognitive content. In recognizing the relevance of such a distinction, the importance of distinguishing between "levels" of reflexive consciousness will become apparent, as will the logic for postulating the construct of an agentic personality.

Another observation is that the tripartite identity distinction points to the need to theorize the relationships *among* ego, personal, and social identity. Are these identity domains in some sense hierarchically ordered? Is one identity domain to be considered more "foundational" for personality function? Is there, in other words, a sine qua non of identity, a common thread that, with the use of reflexive consciousness, links all of the dimensions? And, if there is such a common thread, does it point to anything universal about the phenomenon of identity formation?

Our reading of Erikson suggests that for him the sine qua non of identity lies in the interplay between the social and the psychic. That is, at some point the individual requires a *viable social identity* regardless of its content; when the individual develops a workable social identity within a particular culture, the psychological sense of temporal–spatial continuity—the sine qua non of ego identity—should be nurtured (Côté & Levine, 1987). If this is the case, it then becomes appropriate to think of identity formation occurring for *all persons* (with the exception of the severely traumatized), *in all cultures*, and not just in those cultures where dominant values emphasize individualism and the need to make choices. Giddens (1991) defined a similar sine qua non for personal identity when he wrote that "[t]he capacity to use 'I' in shifting contexts, characteristic of every known culture, is the most elemental feature of reflexive conceptions of personhood" (p. 53).

If that is true, then, to define the sine qua non of identity as an individual achievement or construction, as some have done, seems to be Eurocentric, and may ultimately restrict the use of the theory as it is applied

around the globe. This would be unfortunate because researchers around the world are increasingly looking to our work in North America to help them gain an understanding of identity formation in their own cultures, cultures that are increasingly affected by the globalization of American cultural and economic practices.

The lack of definitional clarity regarding the concept of "identity" raises the question of whether or not we should turn our attention to Erikson's original writings about identity formation for assistance, especially given that his work is cited as a theoretical foundation for the research conducted with Marcia's identity status paradigm (Côté & Levine, 1988a, 1988b). It should be noted that Erikson voiced a displeasure with some attempts to empirically investigate his concepts (e.g., 1979, p. 24). However, it is also true that he was clinically oriented and did not favor quantitative methodologies, so those who chose to study identity in a quantitative fashion had little assistance from him on this matter. In addition, we should also note that Erikson shifted his terminology over the decades, so some confusion has resulted.

Although he did not provide researchers with clear direction regarding the specific ways to research his ideas, we believe that it is important, nevertheless, to attend to the more general thrust of his work, namely, his insistence that identity is to be understood in psychosocial terms. From such a position, it is our belief that we can more explicitly explore and understand its multidimensionality. In the next chapter we begin this inquiry.

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A RETURN TO A FORMAL THEORY OF EGO IDENTITY FORMATION

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Erikson Revisited: The Basis of a Formal Theory of Identity Formation

In this chapter, we turn our attention to a formal theoretical perspective on identity formation. This perspective is directly rooted in Erikson's psychoanalytic formulations of ego development over the life course. In elaborating this theory, we attempt to show how it is capable of distinguishing among structure, content, and process of mental functioning. In addition, we see how it makes distinctions among ego, personal, and social identity, as well as the self. When this is done, we have at our disposal a formal theory that describes mental (personality) structures, with potential for accommodating a wide range of cultural and life-experience contents, that function through time as processes, and which can be studied from the standpoints of psychology, sociology, and social psychology.

ERIKSON'S PSYCHOSOCIAL THEORY OF EGO IDENTITY FORMATION

As noted in chapter 2, Erik Erikson is arguably the most influential foundational theorist in the study of identity formation. Still, the depths of his writings on identity formation in relation to ego development have not been fully plumbed. In fact, much of his work has been ignored, as we show in this chapter, in favor of more superficial understandings of the relevance of ego identity formation. At the same time, many would agree that an important part of his work on the study of the life course focuses on issues relevant to our understanding of the transition to adulthood. This portion of his writing allows us to assess how events associated with youth and adolescence affect later life-cycle passages, as we show in chapter 9.

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Erikson's theory is particularly useful because it allows us to address, in one analysis, the psychological, social, cultural, and historical factors that shape adolescence and the formation of adult identity. Early in his career, Erikson (1963) undertook detailed analyses of childhood and adolescence in North American Native cultures when developing his "ego psychology." These studies in cultural anthropology, along with his experiences treating war casualties and disturbed children, led him to subsequently analyze problems among American young people (Erikson, 1963, 1968). Eriksonian scholars recognize that throughout his works, Erikson continually labored to establish linkages among the social, psychic, and biological factors that affect human functioning and development, creating a biopsychosocial theory. Scholars will also recognize that he did this to advance psychoanalytic theory beyond its *biological-determinist* position, and to establish the basis for an interdisciplinary theory.

Elsewhere we have described Erikson's work pertaining to the forces affecting adolescent development (Côté & Levine, 1987). We draw on that account here in discussing the following concepts: ego identity formation, the identity crisis, the institutionalized moratorium, and the value orientation stages. Later in this chapter, we discuss in more detail Erikson's model of personality structure, on which his identity theory is based. There we define and defend the importance of the "ego" concept in more detail. Readers will note here that in formulating a general theory of personality, Erikson allowed us to subsume more specific concepts like self-concept, self, and ego identity, thereby setting the stage for a systematic taxonomy of identity-related concepts and a multidimensional theory of human development over the life course.

Ego Identity Formation

As noted, Erikson advanced a theory that traces the development of the ego over the entire human life cycle, and he postulated eight (culturally universal) psychosocial stages of ego development.[1] A fundamental postulate of his theory is that humans are predisposed to attempt to gain competence when interacting with their social environments. This predisposition constitutes a "drive" for mastery (or competence, to use Josselson's term), and provides the stimulus for ego development, with the qualities of this predisposition varying by psychosocial task and stage of development. A second premise is that the mental processes constituting the ego are shaped early in life in relation to the challenges that result from the

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[1]The eight stages are: (a) trust versus mistrust, (b) autonomy versus shame and doubt, (c) initiative versus guilt, (d) industry versus inferiority, (e) identity versus identity or role confusion, (f) intimacy versus isolation, (g) generativity versus self-absorption, and (h) integrity versus despair.

universal need to master the discrepancy between physiological needs and the social obstacles associated with preventing the meeting of those needs.

Erikson argued that throughout the life cycle, the ego becomes structured on the basis of the types of challenges associated with stage-specific competence tasks (e.g., initiative, industry). Without challenges to resolve, the ego becomes structured in ways that produce passive and weak responses to subsequent demands. This has implications for both the "content" and "process" of the ego. Ego content includes cognitive schema, which influence how experience is conceptualized, and ego processes involve the vigor or strength with which ongoing experience is approached. Both of these dimensions of the ego are important for our understanding of the ego as a source of agency, a theme we discuss in this chapter.

It is crucial to note that the challenges confronting the person must be "meaningful" to the ego, and not just sensed as a series of random or arbitrary social obstacles, otherwise the person has difficulty understanding experience in terms of existing cognitive schema and cannot develop more elaborate cognitive schema as a result of experience. Furthermore, as the ego derives meaning (content) from the challenges it experiences— as it *synthesizes* experiences—it becomes stronger in its ability to master more complex challenges, namely, to *execute* (process) increasingly complex behaviors. In turn, the increased strength in these ego synthetic and executive functions allows the ego to more advanced levels of competence—to higher psychosocial stages. It is this movement through increasingly advanced levels of competence that constitutes psychosocial development through Erikson's eight stages. The important Eriksonian concepts to remember here are the ego functions of synthesis and execution, or, more simply, ego synthetic abilities and ego executive abilities.

If the ego is prevented from attempting to actively master its environment, or if it attempts to master levels of experience that are too advanced, the ensuing frustration can "damage" it and this can lead to the development of psychopathologies. This is especially the case if the frustration is long-term and lacks meaning for the ego. In some Western cultures, this is the position into which we put many young people when we subject them to long periods of childlike dependency and marginalization. For instance, many educational institutions can discourage ego mastery if one of their primary concerns is with the discipline and "custody" of their wards (Côté, 2000; Côté & Allahar, 1996; Côté & Levine, 1987).

With this understanding of the basic ego functions, we can discuss the ego capacity that develops as an individual passes from childhood to adulthood, namely what Erikson referred to as "ego identity." This is perhaps the most important concept that Erikson developed. He described ego identity from a variety of perspectives. From the point of view of the *subject* (the person experiencing himself or herself), Erikson referred to

the sense of one's self as a continuous entity or agent, in a variety of contexts, and over the passage of time. From the perspective of the other (i.e., viewing a person with a strong sense of ego identity as an *object*), ego identity refers to a strength that the ego has in terms of a capacity to master and maintain a stable identity across situations and through time. Thus, for Erikson, temporal–spatial continuity had subjective and objective manifestations: as a sense of stability experienced by the person, and as a stability in behavior exhibited by the person in the presence of others, respectively. This stability is observable in terms of personal identity and social identity, two analytically distinct but interrelated forms of identity. Readers will note that the principles underlying these basic ego properties should apply equally well in "independent" and "interdependent" cultures, the latter which Erikson studied while developing his ego psychology.

One way to keep clear a precise definition of ego identity is to remember that it refers to the "identity of the ego," and that the ego is the personality agency responsible for behavioral, cognitive, and emotional control. Thus, when this controlling agency loses its sense of itself from one point in time to the next, behavior, cognition, and affect can become disorganized and erratic. Accordingly, an adequate maintenance of ego identity is a basic psychosocial condition for effective functioning in adulthood. As with all ego attributes (like the synthetic and executive functions), this ego quality develops on the basis of effective and meaningful social functioning and is initially dependent on the quality of recognition and support the individual receives from his or her community at the level of *objective* forms of personal and social identity. A supportive community engages the individual in a complex of personal and social roles, which consequently validates the identity of the ego, giving it strength to further engage the environment. For Erikson, (relational) interaction with significant others and social institutions is the main source of strength for the ego, so positive and negative features of social interaction can reflect both ego weakness and ego strength.

Based on this, the following assertions can be made from an Eriksonian point of view: the greater the sense of ego identity experienced by a person, the more unified is his or her personality (i.e., self-concepts are more cohesive and integrated, and the psychic agencies act in greater unison); the more unified a person's personality, the further integrated the person's life is with the social world, net of social obstacles (i.e., integrated self-concepts are more embedded within and validated by the enactment of personal and social roles); and the more socially integrated a person's life, the more consistent is the person's behavior (i.e., the more stable is an individual's role repertoire). Of course, the relationship between the psychological and social worlds is dialectic, so the direction of causation works both ways (e.g., greater validation of social identity can nurture ego identity).

The Identity Crisis

As noted in chapter 2, Erikson coined the term "identity crisis" to describe the condition of the "shell-shocked" (severely traumatized) war victims he treated during the Second World War (cf. Steinberg & Schnall, 2000). The problem shared by these patients was that they had lost their sense of themselves as having a past and future—the ego had lost its sense of itself as a temporally continuous entity; hence, their sense of ego identity was severely impaired (Erikson, 1968). (This criterion of ego identity is the acid test that separates it from personal and social identity, because the ego is a psychic agency whose function is to control behavior, whereas at the subjective realm, the other two forms of identity are "content" in the sense that they constitute the internalized knowledge about self-concepts, social behavior, and roles that the ego controls with its processes.) After the war, in his role as a psychoanalyst, Erikson saw the same symptoms of identity confusion associated with ego identity impairment in "severely conflicted young people whose sense of confusion [was] due, rather, to a war within themselves, and in confused rebels and destructive delinquents who war on their society" (Erikson, 1968, p. 17). In drawing a connection between the two situations, Erikson designated the identity crisis as a period during which an individual's previous (childhood) identity is no longer experienced as suitable, but a new identity is not yet established. Generally, this crisis takes place during the identity stage, which normatively begins in contemporary Western societies sometime during or following puberty and ends any time from the late teens to the late 20s. As we discuss later, for some people it may never end; for these people, it becomes a "normal" part of their lives (cf. Côté, 2000).

During the identity crisis, people can experience a psychological "limbo" or "void," along with some degree of oscillation between the senses of ego identity and identity confusion. In Erikson's words: "As long as the establishment of identity is incomplete a crisis exists which, in its conscious and unconscious aspects, amounts to an identity-confusion" (1959, p. 68). Erikson referred to a variety of forms that identity crises can take, pointing out that they can vary in terms of their severity (e.g., 1958, p. 47), prolongation (e.g., 1968, p. 17), and aggravation (e.g., 1975, pp. 20–22). For Erikson, the severity of an identity crisis is proportionate to the degree to which the sense of identity confusion outbalances the sense of ego identity. When this happens, an individual's personal and social role repertoire can be disrupted. A prolonged identity crisis is manifested when the role repertoire remains disrupted over long periods of time. Finally, an aggravated identity crisis involves repeated but unsuccessful attempts to establish a stable and viable personal and social role repertoire. These characteristics of the identity crisis can be empirically assessed both idiographically and nomothetically (Côté, 1986b).

According to Erikson, identity confusion is manifested in terms of "contradictory self images or aspirations, roles or opportunities" (Erikson, 1975, p. 46) or as "a split of self images, a loss of center and a dispersion" (Erikson, 1968, p. 212). In its more obvious manifestations, identity confusion can be observed "[1] in excessively prolonged moratoria . . . [2] in repeated impulsive attempts to end the moratorium with sudden choices . . . [along with a denial] that some reversible commitment has already taken place, or [3] sometimes in severe regressive pathology" (Erikson, 1968, p. 246).

Erikson argued that an identity crisis of some form, even an extremely muted one, is a universal aspect of development as part of the transition from childhood to adulthood. On the one hand, well-structured cultures provide some sort of initiation, rite of passage, or apprenticeship for this transition. Common to these structures is a benign guidance offered by the adult community to help most people through this period of tension-resolution (between identity confusion and gaining a sense of ego identity). On the other hand, these structures create a tension around the issue of whether people will accomplish the passage into adulthood and therefore resolve the "identity stage." Mastering this challenge strengthens the ego and gives the person a sense of accomplishment, autonomy, and pride so that they feel worthwhile in a welcoming adult community. When the structures of transition are not adequate or benign, and the adult community is not welcoming, the severe identity crisis can reach epidemic proportions, more commonly referred to as adolescent storm and stress, or just adolescent turmoil (cf. Rohner, 2000; Schlegel & Barry, 1991).

For Erikson, the severity of the identity crisis is largely dependent on *cultural factors*, not biological ones. It is the case for him that biological factors—in the form of new drives, physical strengths, and cognitive abilities—can contribute to the severity of an acute identity crisis, but his claim is that they do not generally cause the crisis unless a culture fails to provide guidance for the ego concerning how to *master* these new drives and capacities. It is in the absence of such guidance that impulsivity and sudden choice can become the basis of adaptation for many youth. Thus, the structure of adolescence can be a source of widespread identity crises, especially if it involves a serious disjuncture between childhood and adulthood (Benedict, 1938).

Finally, Erikson did not believe that the identity crisis must be severe for subsequent ego development to take place. Indeed, contrary to common conceptions of his work, Erikson argued that a *severe* identity crisis is *not* a cultural norm, even in contemporary North American society. In his words, "the vast majority of young people . . . can go along with their parents in a kind of fraternal identification" (1968, p. 33). Additionally, he submitted that the identity crisis is least severe among those who invest their sense of fidelity in the technological ethos of their culture (whatever

the type of technology). Instead of severe, prolonged, or aggravated identity crises, Erikson believed that even in modern societies, most young people work through an identity crisis in a muted and barely discernible form, even if over a long period of time. In premodern and tribal societies, most young people were guided through the crisis by the adult community in order to ensure that it took place over a relatively short period of time and with maximum assurance of a successful resolution.

The Institutionalized Moratorium

As just discussed, Erikson argued that many cultures provide their new members with some sort of guidance to take them from childhood to adulthood. This usually involves a moratorium from adult responsibilities, during which novitiates can take time to develop their adult identity. In his words: "Societies offer, as individuals require, a more or less sanctioned intermediary period between childhood and adulthood, *institutionalized moratoria*, during which a lasting pattern of 'inner identity' is scheduled for relative completion" (1980, p. 110).

These identity moratoria usually grant young people the freedom to experiment with various roles, without them being expected to accept or to carry permanent responsibilities and commitments. This experimentation takes various forms, including travel (the *Wanderschaft*), service (military or voluntary, like the Peace Corps), schooling, or even just "dropping out" for a while (cf. Erikson, 1968, p. 157). Note, however, that the moratorium does not mean a total lack of structure, although this seems to be an increasingly common life-style choice, with some questionable consequences, made by some people in late modern societies (Côté, 2000). Instead, societies vary in terms of the degree to which they structure moratoria and in terms of how much conformity they demand to the norms and values of adult society during a moratorium. The high degree of freedom and choice now permitted in late modern societies can have both positive and negative consequences. The benefits of a loosely structured, choice-oriented moratorium can include accelerated cognitive, emotional, and ego development if an individual makes propitious choices in relation to the opportunities available. However, the liabilities of such moratoria include living with the consequences of poor choices made from among the available opportunities, as well as squandering opportunities in the moratorium on choices associated with immediate gratification and activities not associated with cognitive and emotional development (Côté, 2000).

Erikson's concept of the institutionalized moratorium provides a useful link between psychological and sociological formulations of identity, because it helps us understand how ego identity formation is closely linked to the institutional structures in which growing individuals function during their transitions to adulthood.

The Value Orientation Stages and the Development
of "Moral Autonomy"

Finally, in anticipation of the discussion of the normative-ethical implica-
tions of Erikson's work presented in chapter 9, it is useful to now consider
one other identity-related construct that Erikson postulated: the value ori-
entation stages. It is the value orientation stages imposed on the eight
stages of the life cycle that provide part of the justification for Erikson's
guarded optimism about the future of the species in a phylogenetic sense
because it postulates a moral–ethical component of optimal human devel-
opment, *without which we cannot evaluate differing outcomes of the identity stage*.
With the value orientation stages, Erikson proposed how the "human
identity" is capable of growing from an understanding of self based on
"difference" to one based on "similarity." This growth can be on both
ontogenetic and phylogenetic scales.

Derived from Kohlberg's (e.g., 1979) theory of moral development,
Erikson argued that humans pass through three stages of value orienta-
tion: the moral stage, the ideological stage, and the ethical stage. Further-
more, he proposed that an individual's progression through these stages
corresponds to an epigenetic principle: that when the time is "right" (pre-
cipitated by social circumstance meeting individual readiness), movement
will be toward a more advanced and differentiated stage that "takes for
granted," but goes beyond, the less advanced stage.

In reference to ontogenetic development, Erikson identified the moral
stage with childhood, the ideological stage with adolescence, and the ethi-
cal stage with adulthood. In terms of phylogenetic development, Western
civilization can be viewed to have passed out of its "childhood" (by impli-
cation, the first four "psychosocial" stages of civilization have been ade-
quately resolved) and to be currently in its "adolescence"—hence the un-
resolved concerns and widespread conflicts among nations over political
ideologies. These notions suggest that Western civilization has not yet
reached its "adulthood"—an observation supported by the widespread
ambiguities and confusion over what constitutes "adulthood" or "matu-
rity" for individuals (i.e., Western culture does not provide well-institu-
tionalized models for the individual resolution of adult psychosocial tasks;
Côté, 2000).

According to Erikson, these stages reflect varying levels of reasoning
ability about the source and nature of individual responsibility in comply-
ing with "authority." The moral stage, reflecting the reasoning capacity of
the child (for whom a superego is normally dominant—more on the su-
perego later), is characterized by a categorical belief in absolute authority.
The ideological stage involves an attempt on the part of the individual to
reason in relation to multiple authority sources in an expanding social en-

vironment. Thus, the individual at this stage must decide which "truth" will guide her or his sense of justice and way of life. This ideological awareness may be *implicit*, an intuitive faith that "society" is benign and "knows" what it is doing, or it may be *explicit*, mediated with an elaborate framework constructed by the individual to account for why things are the way they are, or to indicate what things ought to be like. Finally, Erikson contended that during adulthood, the individual who has experienced these first two stages may develop an ethical awareness or "enter" the ethical stage. An ethical awareness involves the recognition that everyone is ultimately responsible in some sense for his or her actions, and that everyone has a responsibility to some degree for the entire species and not just to one's "group," however narrowly or widely that group is defined (see Côté & Levine, 1987, for an elaboration of the ontogenetic relevance of these stages). It should be noted that such an awareness seems to be based on the "Golden Rule," but it requires that this principle be handled with more "integrity" than it has been by Christian civilization—that it be fully institutionalized and directed by the ego, and not simply given lip service in the form of superego atonement once a week during religious services.

At the level of potential phylogenetic development, these stages provide considerable insight and reason for optimism, particularly for those who believe that current economic and social arrangements are alienating and exploitive. Most of the history of Western civilization has been characterized by a moral orientation involving a blind obedience to one absolute authority. Deviations from moral proscriptions, whether in the form of deliberate action or merely as a result of out-group membership, were often met with swift and unrelenting censure. Over the past few centuries, movement has been into the ideological stage, and as previously noted, most people in Western societies seem to be attempting to confront the conditions of life with an ideological orientation. However, as was also mentioned earlier, there seems to be an emerging awareness of the limitations of the ideological orientation and of the promise of the ethical orientation. Currently, though, because of the hegemony of the ideological mode of awareness, most people find it difficult to develop and to sustain even an "intuitive" ethical awareness. Full movement into the ethical stage is likely still quite rare, except among those who later in life deal with issues of ego integrity at a universalistic, as opposed to a parochial, level.

Indeed, in a study in which Côté (1984) operationalized these concepts, only one person out of 149 (up to age 35) could be said to be firmly in the ethical stage, and this individual appeared to be experiencing considerable stress and a severe identity crisis due to a relative absence of social support for her highly developed reasoning capacity. Thus, although a case can be made that current circumstances may not bode well for Western civilization or for the species, there is reason for guarded optimism,

and if Erikson was right, knowledge of the value orientation stages and their relationship to the eight "stages and ages" of human development should facilitate movement away from parochial ideologies toward universalistic ethics. Erikson believed that both a universalistic set of ethics and universalistic identities will emerge out of the various forms of humanism that are now understood by many at only a parochial ideological level. Suffice it to say that, for Erikson, identity and morality are inextricably linked.

We return to the value orientation stages in chapter 9, where we consider the implications of the resolution of the identity stage in terms of later life course experiences and stage resolutions.

SELF AND IDENTITY REVISITED: ERIKSON'S MODEL OF PERSONALITY

Prompted in part by recent postmodernist claims about the arbitrary nature of identity, or even the "death" of it, and self-psychology's growing popularity (both discussed earlier), we now discuss Erikson's neo-psychoanalytic formulations of psychic structure and development (Côté, 1993). We present Erikson's formulations because they have not been widely recognized in the literature, yet we believe they are helpful in understanding the relationships among ego identity formation, culture, and agency. (In discussing this aspect of Erikson's work, we set aside issues of personal and social identity, but return to them in the remaining chapters of this book). Figure 6.1 is a representation of psychic structure as postulated by Erikson (1968) in *Identity: Youth and Crisis*. This figure compares with other psychoanalytic representations of personality structure in Freud (1923/1975), Parsons (1952), and Liebert and Spiegler (1974).

The personality concepts represented in Fig. 6.1 were used by Erikson as *metaphors* characterizing sets of mental processes. As such, they are heuristic in nature and valid at the level of analytical abstraction (cf. Hempel, 1966). It is important to note that accepting the analytic utility of these concepts does not require that one reject other formulations of psychological processes. Rather, these personality concepts are useful because they allow us to organize the numerous concrete facets of psychological functioning in a relatively parsimonious manner. Eventually, as we learn more about psychological and neurophysiological functioning, we may not have to rely so heavily on these metaphors. In the meantime, we should heed Erikson's (1975) cautions to avoid employing these concepts as "unchecked reifications" (p. 37).

Interestingly, the heuristic nature of these concepts is supported by research carried out some time ago by Pawlik and Cattell (1964), who computed the third-order factor structure of a large battery of personality tests. From their analysis they drew the following conclusion:
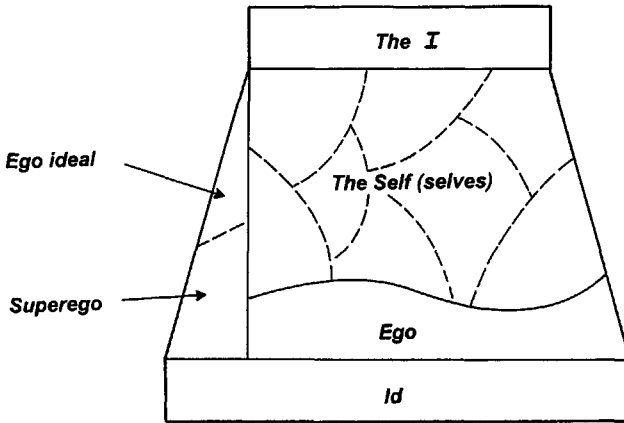
FIG. 6.1.   Erikson's postulations regarding psychic structures and personality organization.

It is possible that what the clinician sees, without the aid of measurement and computers, must be restricted to relatively few factors and that these perceptions will tend to be restricted to seeing the highest-order factors. Although we definitely did not start our studies with any predilections for psychoanalytic theory, it is a striking fact that the psychoanalytic descriptions of Ego, Id, and Superego would fit very well the three major patterns found in this research. (p. 16)

These three factors were described by Pawlik and Cattell as follows: (a) The strongest factor constituted what can be termed "id strength" and was "characterized by high exuberance of behavior, increased self-concern and self-directed attitudes, low shrewdness and alertness, and by a lack of adequate internal integration and control" (p. 14); (b) the second strongest factor could be termed "superego strength" and was "characterized by a readiness to accept cultural norms and demands, a lack of ego strength and alertness, and by caution and restraint" (p. 15); and (c) the third factor corresponds to "ego strength" in terms of "high efficiency of performance, determined self-assertion, and voluntary control over one's environment . . . together with low inhibition of behavior and increased but controlled and goal-oriented drive tension" (p. 15). As we see later, such factors can constitute a structural basis for a psychological theory of human agency.

In formulating his theory of personality, Erikson took what he believed to be the most workable elements of Freud's work and reformulated these ideas into what he saw to be a humanistic, ego psychology that corrects Freud's preoccupation with the darker side of the human psyche. In doing so, Erikson took Freud's basic assumptions regarding the structure of the

personality and elaborated on them to varying degrees, emphasizing socialization factors more than purely biological factors as part of a general theory of epigenetic development (Roazen, 1976; cf. Parsons', 1958, efforts in this regard). As Weinstein and Platt (1973) argued, Erikson's work "is based on Freud's later structural theory and [he] aims to integrate in a comprehensive way internal reality and social objects" (p. 12).

The Id

The psychic structure that is given the least emphasis in Erikson's theory is the id (Appelbaum, 1966). He de-emphasized the role of libido in ontogenetic development, especially beyond childhood (Erikson, 1963, p. 87; and Erikson in Evans, 1969, p. 24, pp. 86–87), and within childhood, he was reticent to posit universal complexes based on libido theory (e.g., the Oedipal Complex). Instead, he believed that they may emerge only under particular sociocultural circumstances (cf. Parsons', 1952, view that Oedipal problems are related to how the nuclear family has been shaped by industrial society). This does not mean that Erikson thought drives and instincts to be unimportant. Rather, he believed that for the "human animal," drives and instincts were simply less important than social conditioning and epigenetic potential (Erikson in Evans, 1969). Nevertheless, within Erikson's psychology, the id constitutes a source of psychic energy that can be harnessed by the ego in the service of agency.

The Superego and the Ego Ideal

The structure that Erikson elaborated on the most is the superego. Whereas Freud believed that the superego is not fully developed until the Oedipal Complex is resolved, Erikson (e.g., 1975, pp. 101–102) believed that meaningful development begins much earlier in response to disciplining practices and that it can never really be said to be "developed" once and for all (see Côté & Levine, 1987, for a discussion of the "Centaur model" debate applied to Erikson's work). In contrast to Freud (e.g., 1930/1961), and consistent with his own theoretical formulations postulating continuing development throughout the life course, Erikson emphasized the ways in which the superego undergoes transformations beyond childhood, often relinquishing part of its mandate to the ego, but only after considerable struggle with the ego.

The mandate relinquished by the superego normally becomes appropriated by the ego in the form of the "ego ideal." The ego ideal is best viewed as a "province" of the personality that contains the more "reality-oriented" *pre*scriptions based on a transformation of the primitive *pro*scriptions of the superego that were formed in the context of childhood

reasoning and primary socialization contexts. (Object relations theorists like Guntrip, 1971, distinguished between psychic "provinces" and "agencies": "A province is a spatial area, a material reality. An agency is the expression of a free and active purpose, a psychic reality" [p. 72]. In other words, a psychic province refers to the area of stored "content" or cognitive schemata, whereas a psychic agency refers to processes that control activity.)

A crucial factor determining the nature of the ego–superego struggle is the degree of superego strength developed during early childhood, a strength that, for Erikson, is related to the severity of disciplining practices during primary socialization. The greater the superego strength, the more problematic is "reality-oriented" adjustment for the ego as the individual progresses through the life-cycle. Although Erikson did not explore fully the ramifications of this struggle and the various forms it may take, investigations in this area should produce useful insights for psychoanalytic social psychology (see Côté & Levine, 1987, 1988a, 1989, 1992, for examples of such investigations).

The link between Erikson's personality theory and agentic thought and action emerges clearly in terms of his writings regarding the relationship between the ego–superego struggle and the perception of cultural contradictions. Whereas for Freud developmental crises and social discontent were often reduced to unresolved infantile conflicts, fantasies, and complexes, for Erikson, adjustment difficulties could also have their origins in social realities. For example, certain people of an era can become deeply troubled by the limitations of contemporary ideologies, particularly as they attempt to formulate their own adult identity. Unable to fully accept a limited or contradictory ideology conceptually, but having internalized it during childhood as part of their superego, these people can undergo intense struggles, in the form of an ego–superego struggle occurring as part of their identity crises (cf. the Searcher identified earlier in chapters 1 and 4). Erikson's clearest illustration of this can be found in his psychohistorical account of Martin Luther's prolonged identity crisis, a crisis stimulated by Luther's experiences with the contradictions of the Catholic Church doctrine of absolute obedience and hypocritical practices of selling absolution. Erikson (1958) traced Luther's internal struggles in dealing with these contradictions and described the way in which Luther resolved these contradictions by formulating an ostensibly less contradictory ideology to serve as a "*Protest*ant" model on which adult identities could be formed through a conscious deliberation about authority demands (cf. Côté & Levine, 1992). Hence, ego development, vis-à-vis individual choice-making, would be less extensive in premodern societies, whereas superego development binding the person to a community in terms of unquestioning duty, obligation, and self-sacrifice would have been more extensive.

The Ego

Erikson (1968, pp. 216–221) also developed a more differentiated view of the ego than did Freud. Erikson reserved the term "ego" for the most "active" but largely *unconscious* agency of the personality. As noted, for Erikson, the ego performs the *synthetic functions* of the personality (i.e., actively defines situations and develops constructions of reality) and the *executive functions* of the personality (i.e., produces deliberate presentations of self and management of impressions). Defined in this way, Erikson's ego concept appears to subsume many of the traits and capacities investigated in personality theory and social psychology.

We have noted that Erikson believed that humans are predisposed to attempt to master and control their environments and this "drive" for competence represents the essence of ego development. For Erikson, the ego is created by tension, initially between id impulses and environmental obstacles, and it thrives on tension and challenge, in amounts corresponding to the ego's strength. Without challenges to master, the ego becomes passive and weak, and the id or superego may impose themselves to dominate the personality. It is worth stressing that the challenges must constitute "meaningful" tensions, however, and not just random impulses or arbitrary obstacles. Moreover, as the ego determines the meaning of the tensions it experiences (*synthesizes* experience), it becomes stronger in its ability to master those tensions (*executes* behaviors). In turn, the increased strength in ego synthesis and executive functions derived from this competence facilitates the ego in moving to a more advanced level of mastery. As noted earlier, it is this movement through increasingly advanced levels of competence that Erikson referred to when he spoke of his eight stages of psychosocial development.

Readers will recall that Erikson believed that if the ego is prevented from attempting to actively master its environment, or if it attempts to master too advanced a level, the ensuing frustration can be damaging to it, especially if the frustration continues for a lengthy period and/or it lacks meaning for the ego. The weakening of the ego during such periods permits the id and/or superego to fill the void created and to begin to dominate the personality. There is, in other words, an ongoing "fluidity" or process in the structure of personality, partially tied to the ongoing construction and reconstruction of life's meaning; crises of identity can recur throughout the life course.

Fundamental to his theory is the argument that the human psyche undergoes a form of epigenetic development. Thus, like many forms of life, humans have certain potentials and limitations that emerge during their lifetime that can be actualized at specific points in development, but only if conditions in the environment facilitate them. If social conditions are

not nurturant, these potentials either do not emerge or they emerge in some distorted form. Moreover, for the actualization of potentials to take place, other less advanced potentials must already have been actualized and developed to some degree. Thus, if less advanced potentials have been seriously thwarted or stunted in their development, the more advanced potentials will be unrealized or will develop in some distorted form. Epigenetic development, therefore, requires a continuously facilitative environment as well as the prior growth of certain potentials. The crucial variable in the unfolding of ego potentials over the life cycle is how much an incapacitation has developed (Erikson called this an "ego dystonic" quality) and how much the original capacity has developed (Erikson called this an "ego syntonic" quality). The ratio of these two qualities contributes to the uniqueness of the individual personality and to the prognosis for further epigenetic development.

From the point of view of an Eriksonian developmental social psychology, the characteristics of the healthy ego and the requirements for its development are clear. Beginning at the most general level, a "healthy" adult is capable of *"actively mastering* his [or her] environment, shows a certain *unity of personality*, and is able to *perceive* the world and himself [or herself] correctly" (Erikson, 1968, p. 92, Erikson's emphasis). Thus, the ego—which is best placed at the "helm" of such a personality—actively engages or moves out into its environment, while at the same time holding the whole of the personality together as some unified entity. Finally, the healthy ego is *reasonably* accurate in assessing this environment, as well as its place in and impact on it.

The more the ego is capable of effectively managing information about itself and its environment (its synthesizing function), and in regulating behavior on the basis of this information (its executive function), the stronger it becomes or remains. The unhealthy ego, therefore, is one that withdraws and becomes passive, that is unable to manage behavior in a concerted, unified, and directed manner, and that employs excessive defense mechanisms that seriously distort incoming information about the social environment.

Ego Identity: The I and the "Self"

In developing the concept of ego identity, Erikson observed how people are able to maintain, or often lose, their *sense* of temporal–spatial continuity over time and across social situations—the sine qua non of ego identity. In other words, he studied how people maintain or lose a "sense" of the ego's continuity in reference to its synthetic and executive functions in relation to the person's own behavior, relations with others, and the sense of life's meaning. In order to fully understand the notion of temporal–spatial continuity experienced by the ego, it is necessary to appreciate the two

substructures postulated by Erikson that connect the ego with the social world: the I and the "Self." Knowledge of these substructures helps to clarify why Erikson considers the identity crisis and disturbances in ego identity to be "normal," if they are responses to "abnormalities" in social organization. This is the case because when the I and Self are exposed to problematic social interactions over a long period of time (as is the case where a culture is characterized by social disorganization), ego identity can become disrupted if the ego loses its "bearings" and thus becomes impaired in terms of its sense of itself and its relation to its object world.

The I. Erikson (1968) conceived of the I as a sort of "periscope" that allows unconscious (submerged) ego access to consciousness (the surface), thereby providing the ego with information about the social and physical environments. Thus, we can view the functioning of the I as that process that enables the possibility of reflexive consciousness. Acknowledging its periscopic nature is important, however, because this feature of the I accounts for a limitation of human functioning, namely, the human inability to manage large amounts of information, emotion, or experience within the conscious mind. As already discussed, the ego is the agency that normally has the greatest control over the personality, but it largely operates at the level of the unconscious and must therefore rely on the I for access to conscious experience. The inability of the I to handle large amounts of experience limits its (and therefore the ego's) sense of temporal–spatial continuity, and this is a reason why maintaining a sense of identity can be problematic, especially in unfamiliar or stressful circumstances, both of which are relatively common in complex or disorganized societies. It is for this reason that Erikson thought it necessary to place strong emphasis on his notion of ego identity, because "ego identity" is a concept that describes the ability of the ego to sustain a sense of temporal–spatial continuity, especially in the face of flux and change. Ego identity is in this sense a type of ego strength.

The Self. Integral to Erikson's personality theory is one final psychic structure: the Self. As depicted in Fig. 6.1, the "global" Self is viewed to comprise a number of "specific" selves, each of which more or less corresponds to social roles played by the individual. These role-specific selves develop on the basis of learning and repeated experience across similar circumstances. Upon entering a situation, the I is normally functioning, and on the basis of how the situation is defined by the unconscious ego, an appropriate role-specific self "emerges" to respond to the situation and to produce what are believed to be the appropriate impressions. Under ordinary circumstances interaction is relatively unproblematic for the individual. *It is when unusual or unfamiliar circumstances arise that ego identity becomes*

important in the management of behavior. In these circumstances, because the I is not capable of sustained independent functioning, and because no appropriate role-specific self has been developed to permit automatic or spontaneous functioning in the situation, considerable anxiety can result. An ego that is stronger and has a greater sense of identity (and therefore a more integrated global Self) is more capable of intervening, either temporarily (as in deploying an ersatz self) or by developing a new role-specific self that is capable of functioning in that situation, in the present and in the future.

Erikson (1968) provided the following passage to clarify the nature of the I and the Self:

> What the I reflects on when it sees or contemplates the body, the personality, and the roles to which it is attached for life—not knowing where it was before or will be after—are the various selves which make up our composite Self. There are constant and often shocklike transitions between these selves: consider the nude body self in the dark or suddenly exposed in the light; consider the clothed self among friends or in the company of higher-ups or lower-downs; consider the just awakened drowsy self or the one stepping refreshed out of the surf or the one overcome by retching and fainting; the body self in sexual excitement or in rage; . . . It takes, indeed, a healthy personality for the I to be able to speak out of all of these conditions in such a way that at any given moment it can testify to a reasonably coherent Self. (p. 217)

Finally, Erikson (1968) justified these modifications of Freudian structural theory in the following way:

> Only after we have separated the I and the selves from the ego can we consign to the ego that domain which it has had ever since . . . Freud's earliest days: the domain of an inner "agency" safeguarding our coherent existence by screening and synthesizing, in any series of moments, all the impressions, emotions, memories, and impulses which try to enter our thought and demand our action, and which would tear us apart if unsorted and unmanaged by a slowly grown and reliably watchful screening system. (p. 218)

With Erikson's personality theory, we believe that we are in a position to develop a formal theory linking identity, agency, and culture. Culture is internalized not only by the superego and ego ideal, but also within the multifaceted Self with its composite selves. This complexity of self helps us understand how the person moves through "space," and the superego/ego ideal helps us understand how the person is self-governing within cultural parameters. At the same time, the ego is the source of agency taking the Self and superego/ego ideal through time, while utilizing id drives as a source of energy in mastering cultural obstacles and challenges. Ego identity, then, can be understood as the ego's sense of agency in moving

through space and time; the stronger this sense, the more the ego feels *identical to itself* from one situation and point in time to the next.

ERIKSON'S THEORY COMPARED WITH SYMBOLIC INTERACTIONISM

Although rarely acknowledged in the literature, there are a number of un-recognized sociological themes in Erikson's work that can help us under-stand better the multidimensionality of identity formation and the links among identity, agency, and culture. Thus, we can build on Erikson's the-ory of personality structure and formation, with its focus on ego identity, by linking it with symbolic interactionist concerns of personal and social identity formation. For example, Erikson seems to have shared a number of phenomenological and methodological assumptions with symbolic interactionists with regard to the necessity of understanding the subjective experience of the actor. Erikson's "subjectivism" can be seen in his at-tempt to understand ego development in terms of how the individual at-tempts to confront and master each of the psychosocial stages by con-structing the social world on the basis of experiences with immediate others and with the cultural ethos in its various forms (in other words, with significant and generalized others).

The integrative potential of Erikson's formulations with symbolic inter-actionist theory becomes obvious when we consider the similarities and complementary differences between his work and the writings of George Herbert Mead (1934; see Blumer, 1969, for the first systematic statement of the assumptions underlying symbolic interactionism). Both theorists recognized the origins, maintenance, and re-construction of the "self" and its meaning as being a function of the processes and structures of ongoing interactive contexts. While it is the case that Mead placed his notions of the "I" and the "Me" within the notion of self and Erikson located the I outside the self, this difference is not a significant one in terms of a func-tional understanding of their respective theories. (We refer to Mead's "I" concept in quotes to differentiate it from the I discussed by Erikson.)

For Mead, the "Me" is to be understood as developing through three stages, based on the fundamental human ability to perceive the self as a social object. The first stage, the preparatory stage, refers to the time of in-fancy and early childhood when sensori-motor and then pre-operational thought succeed in enabling the child to understand self as a physical ob-ject, based on the experience of actions on other objects. In addition, this growing awareness of "self-as-physical object" enables the child to begin experimentation with rudimentary role-taking. It is during the second stage, the play stage, that children utilize basic role-taking and language skills to perceive and understand themselves from the perspectives of oth-

ers taken singularly. This stage yields the internalization of the social meanings of specific role-complementary "me's" or "selves." With the experience of participating in organized play, children advance to the "game stage." While particular-other role-taking continues at this time, children now develop the ability to take the role expectations of an organized social group. The perspective internalized at this stage is what Mead called "the generalized other."

The general notion of self, grounded in the experience of playing organized games, eventually expands to include the whole community as a standpoint from which to understand the self. The construction and internalization of such a "generalized me" is based on the cognitive ability to abstract, from experience with a variety of different but functionally interdependent roles, a self-concept based on self-referential meanings that are *common* to these different but interdependent roles. So, for example, while the role-repertoires and self-referential conceptions of pitchers, catchers, and fielders are all different, it is the experience with their functional interdependence that allows each to abstract a common self-conception of the complementary role requirements of "baseball player" or "member of a baseball team." This ability to abstract a generalized sense of self from experience with the role enactments of specific selves will be noted later as a logic for understanding the difference between the constructs of self and identity in Erikson's work.

It is clearly the case that both Erikson and Mead were preoccupied with the relationship between self and society and that both theorized this relationship with a common focus on the fundamental issue of meaning—the meaning of the self and self-concept. However, it is also true that they extended their interest in "meaning" in different but complementary directions. For Erikson, the dominant interest became intrapsychic, not at the exclusion of the role of social structure and culture, but in the sense of his interest in the formation and use of identity as a mechanism for engaging life tasks. In the case of Mead, the dominant interest in "meaning" extended to the domain of symbolic interaction so that he could understand the self as an on-going social process. His main unit of analysis now became "the act" or what we could call the "interact." Once again, it is important to state that these different theoretical emphases distinguishing Erikson and Mead are complementary and not at all antagonistic in a theoretical sense.

All social behavior relevant to one's self-understanding was conceived by Mead as occurring within social acts involving one or more actual or imagined others and their expectations, which bring the impact of general social norms and values into the act. In other words, it is in the context of "acts" that meanings about the self are initiated, validated, or challenged under the auspices of cultural norms and values. (Of course, the interactions we are discussing need not be about self-meaning but could focus on general

claims of truth, or the meaning of any variety of claims about social events and objects; however, our focus here is on acts that directly bear on issues of self-meaning.) It is when Mead focused his understanding of the self within the context of "the act" that his interest shifted from the developmental concerns noted earlier to a view of the self as an on-going social process. We are now in a position to appreciate Mead's understanding of the "I."

In addition to "me's," the self in Mead's theory also includes an "I." Mead's "I" is understood as that part of the self that initiates an act. It was described by Mead as being the impulsive, spontaneous, and unorganized component of human experience. To understand the role of the "I" in conjunction with the "me," meaning, and the act, it is useful to cite at some length Meltzer's (1967) review of Mead's thinking. Meltzer wrote:

> The "Me" represents the incorporated other within the individual. Thus, it comprises the organized set of attitudes and definitions . . .—or simply mean-ings—common to the group. In any given situation, the "Me" comprises the generalized other and, often, some particular other. Every act begins in the form of an "I" and usually ends in the form of the "Me." For the "I" represents the initiation of the act prior to its coming under control of the definitions or expectations of others (the "Me"). The "I" thus gives *propulsion* while the "Me" gives *direction* to the act. Human behavior, then, can be viewed as a perpetual series of initiations of acts by the "I" and of acting-back-upon the act (that is, guidance of the act) by the "Me." The act is a resultant of this interplay. The "I," being spontaneous and propulsive, offers the potentiality for new, cre-ative activity. The "Me," being regulatory, disposes the individual to both goal-directed activity and conformity. (pp. 11–12)

For our purposes, it is important to emphasize one more observation of Mead's having to do with the interactive basis of meaning. While the "I" initiates the act and therefore the offering of a particular self's projected meanings, the meaningfulness (i.e., acceptability, truth value, etc.) of the projected meaning depends, for Mead, on the response of the other(s) partaking in the act. Two important observations now follow. Mead's con-cern with the importance of the other's response in the creation of *shared* meaning is the idea that allows symbolic interactionists to use their "mi-cro" interactive analyses to comment on the possibility and maintenance of social organization (recall our observations regarding the theories of-fered by McCall & Simmons and Stryker in chapter 3). However, the sec-ond observation concerns the possibility that some projected meanings are not mutually acceptable, and that the on-going act then becomes one of cooperative or uncooperative interaction, oriented either to the pur-pose of generating new, mutually acceptable meanings or of imposing ex-isting meanings on the less powerful by the more powerful interactant. Both outcomes are logical possibilities for symbolic interactionism when "shared" meanings "break down."

It is when meaning does break down, however, and we are attempting to explain the results of a *cooperative* attempt to re-establish it (i.e., social power is distributed equally among interactants), that we confront a theoretical difficulty with a symbolic interactionist perspective that an Eriksonian perspective can help us rectify. Here, Erikson's distinction between ego identity and selves becomes useful. This distinction specifies the availability of an internalized intrapsychic meaning system, developed from past experience, that people can utilize to help them deal with the ambiguity that they now confront. Although it is certainly the case that Mead also acknowledges the same obvious truth about the relationships among human memory and problematic interaction, there is an important difference here that must be noted. We refer to the fact that from Erikson's point of view, the intrapsychic preparation for ongoing dialogue not only stems from a covert meaning system, but from one that can be associated with an agentic ego and thus, with an *intentional* attempt to alter meaning to make it acceptable to the interactants in question. In other words, an Eriksonian perspective allows us to understand the relationship between social history, biography, and the construction of new meanings as a function of human agency. Such an understanding is not as easily derived from a symbolic interactionist perspective. No such theory of personal agency and intentionality lies behind Mead's "I," leaving his conception of the "I's" impulsivity and spontaneity grounded in a nonsymbolic universe, and leaving us unable to explain why and when it functions the way it does.

However, it is in the case of *uncooperative* interactions oriented to the establishment of meaning that a symbolic interactionist perspective can contribute to an Eriksonian analysis. With the use of various models of "acts," a symbolic interactionist logic can help us understand how variations in the distribution of social power among interactants can influence the construction, internalization, and maintenance of meaning. In our opinion, the writing that best exemplifies this type of analysis can be found in the work of Habermas (1979). Although Erikson was certainly aware of the impact of social power on psychosocial development, he did not analyze its effects on persons at the micro-interactive level in any systematic and empirically testable way. In chapter 9, we reference some of Habermas' ideas in order to demonstrate the contribution a symbolic interactionist perspective can make to an Eriksonian analysis of the effects of both unequal and equal social power on the formation of identity.

From these analyses we can offer several general comments regarding the possibility and fruitfulness of coordinating Erikson's psychosocial perspective and the views of symbolic interactionism. With regard to the basic concepts in each perspective, we can note that Mead's notion of the "I" phase of the self-process resembles Erikson's concept of the I, in that both concepts characterize impulsive, relatively unorganized mental activity;

furthermore, Mead's notion of the "me" phase of the self-process resembles Erikson's concept of the Self, because both concepts characterize more reflective, patterned mental activity. Others have attempted to equate the concepts of the "I" and "Me" with psychoanalytic concepts but, as Hewitt (1984) argued, the simple equation of the "I" and "Me" with the id and superego is erroneous because the "I" and "Me" basically have a "cooperative relationship," with the "Me" "organizing and directing" the activities of the "I" (Hewitt, 1984, p. 73). Such a cooperative arrangement is more clearly analogous to the relationship between Erikson's I and the Self than it is between the id and superego. Thus, Erikson's formulations in this area appear consistent with Mead's and constitute an advance beyond Freud's work in terms of linking psychoanalytic and sociological thought. In this case, Erikson's work provides the basis for a synthesis of the psychoanalytic and symbolic interactionist conceptions of mental activity.

Erikson's conception of the Self can be seen as a site of "consciousness" that is easily manipulated by those vying for power in a society (e.g., Ewen, 1976). As we noted earlier, this theme permeates Erikson's work (e.g., 1958, 1969) and his writing about it can contribute to, and be embellished by, the logics of symbolic interactionism. Erikson has made reference to the impact of social organization on the "self," in terms of forms of "consciousness" or internalized "content" of cultural definitions of appropriate behavior, and he has focused his efforts more specifically on the impact of the technological ethos and humanistic ethos on the shaping of human "consciousness" during the industrial era (Côté & Levine, 1987).

Notwithstanding potential divergences in the definition of the concept of "identity," a difference between Erikson's perspective and that taken by many symbolic interactionists, at a general level, seems to be the approach to "identity maintenance." For Erikson, a primary concern was with *developmental* problems attendant to the formation and maintenance of a sense of "identity" over the entire life cycle; hence, his developmental perspective incorporating "depth" personality processes. For many symbolic interactionists, a primary concern seems to have been with difficulties in the maintenance of a sense of personal identity in the face of ongoing problematic social situations; hence, the concern among many interactionists with the vicissitudes of face-to-face interaction vis-à-vis impression management and the negotiation of identities. Unfortunately, Erikson did not cite the works of symbolic interactionists such as Cooley, Thomas, and Mead, whose basic assumptions regarding the internalization of "normative culture" appear analogous to assumptions basic to psychoanalytic thought (Parsons, 1964, p. 2). However, Erik Erikson and his son, Kai Erikson, crossed the boundaries of sociology and psychoanalysis in an article (Erikson & Erikson, 1957) that is firmly based in the symbolic interactionist tradition and constitutes an early statement of the labeling perspective.

Perhaps the most striking area of overlap between Erikson's work and that of symbolic interactionists is the concern with the problematic nature of "identity." For instance, Erikson would have agreed that the sense of "identity" is sustained, challenged, and transformed by daily face-to-face interactions. However, he considered such interactions more in terms of larger social patterns (e.g., racial and ethnic conflicts, religious and community structures, familial settings, social control mechanisms, and so forth), and he considered their implications for personality development in terms that include clinical and phenomenological problems associated with identity "pathologies," pathologies that he believed to be largely socially produced through systematic and recurring identity invalidation. In other words, Erikson focused on the developmental sources of problems of ego identity formation, whereas symbolic interactionists focus on the interpersonal sources of problems in personal identity maintenance. As noted earlier, in this context both perspectives can be sensitive to and benefit from an analysis of the impact of the unequal distribution of social power in the construction and imposition of meaning. Thus, an integration of these perspectives should greatly advance our understanding of problems in the formation of identity and its maintenance at the macro, micro, and psychic levels.

Finally, in reference to symbolic interactionists' assumptions concerning the source of problems in identity maintenance, Erikson would have insisted that the ability to role-take, manage impressions, and engage in identity negotiation is in part dependent on an inner (ego) strength that is developmentally acquired and that is trans-situational. This strength in question involves the sense of ego identity and it is something that an individual takes into situations; because of developmental problems and inadequacies in socialization, people were viewed by Erikson as *not* being equal in their abilities to engage in impression management. Therefore, some of the problems people experience in impression management can be associated with a breakdown in ego executive abilities that is either trans-situational or situation-specific, depending on the nature of the ego impairment. In moving psychoanalytic theory in the direction of studying "normal" behavior and away from a preoccupation with abnormal behavior, Erikson again may have provided a much needed basis for an integration of symbolic interactionist and psychoanalytic theory, a basis that has been elusive in more orthodox Freudian versions of psychoanalytic theory (cf. Swanson, 1964, particularly his assertion that Mead and Freud differ inasmuch as one took to be problematic what the other took to be unproblematic).

Among more recent interactionists, the work of Kai Erikson (1966), Becker (1963), and Goffman (1963) seems to be most compatible with Erikson's perspective. In particular, the reader is directed to Goffman's (1963) use of Erikson's concept of ego identity in analyzing group align-

ments in relation to stigma management, an analysis that is most illustrative of the potential integration of the two perspectives.

CULTURAL VARIATIONS IN PERSONALITY CONFIGURATIONS AND CONTENT

At this point in our discussion, it is clear that from an Eriksonian perspective, cultural differences in both the content of personality and the structure of personality can be identified. It is in this discussion that we can appreciate the relevance of personal and social identity in Erikson's theory. With regard to content, the Self is most directly affected in terms of specific social expectations defining roles. Thus, the individual comes to construct social reality in relation to roles played, and that individual's social and personal identities become pegged to such roles, whether ascribed or achieved (cf. Berger & Luckmann, 1966). To the extent that there are cultural variations in the definition of the "content" of roles, people will define different elements of social reality as being important (i.e., their "consciousness" will be affected).

It can be argued that the ego and superego are affected by culture in a similar fashion through the processes of internalization and learning. Thus, the defense mechanisms the ego adopts depend on the normative elements of a culture that discourage certain types of activities. For instance, as is well known, in Freud's early career during the late Victorian era, expressions of sexuality among women were intensely proscribed. This oppressive environment created an epidemic of hysterical neuroses that eventually led Freud to develop his theory of defense mechanisms based on observations regarding excessive sexual repression (Erikson, 1975).

The superego can be conceived of as constituting an internalized repository of normative cultural definitions. The difference between ego and superego internalization, however, is that superego internalizations have been taken quite literally by the child and remain in that form in the unconscious, held with the tenacity of a frightened or stubborn child. Superego internalizations, therefore, are more resistant to alteration or revision on the basis of experience alone. Superego *content*, though, varies from culture to culture as much as do normative definitions.

With regard to cross-cultural variation in the *structure* of the psychic agencies, the following propositions can be made: The Self should become "differentiated" as much as an individual's role repertoire becomes differentiated. Accordingly, the postmodern description of the "fragmented self" may simply be a misattribution regarding a complex personality structure. Still, people can internalize the social disorganization (e.g., fragmentation and atomization) of their society in the form of a disorganized Self. Thus, the capacity to tolerate various forms of role strain (role

conflict, ambiguity, overload) seems to have become the mark of a contemporary personality strength, the strength Erikson referred to as ego identity. This strength does not necessarily come without a price, however. Those who have adapted best to modern capitalist society—Erikson's technological person—seem to have done so by compartmentalizing aspects of the Self in order to deal with the cognitive dissonance that accompanies the *requirement* of a compartmentalized and often conflicted role repertoire. Such people therefore can be seen to be enduring a certain level of emotional impoverishment and maintaining a false consciousness as a sort of "defense mechanism."

Indeed, like Mead's, Erikson's schema of the Self requires accommodating the possibility of multiple role-selves because of the requirements of loosely integrated or disorganized societies. Moreover, his eight stage schema of the life cycle involves the notion that people must somehow develop a more coherent Self as they pass through the life-cycle if they are to develop a sense of *integrity* later in life. However, it may be that mastery of the integrity stage is apparently beyond the capacity of those who have lived their lives with a compartmentalized sense of self. Interestingly, despite the existential advantages associated with an integrated Self, the human species seems to be quite capable of, if not having the tendency for, developing a distorted and compartmentalized Self and being entirely unaware of what it has done to itself. To cite an extreme example, Lifton (1986), who has been deeply influenced by Erikson's work on ego identity, argued that the Nazi doctors who performed the inhumane experiments in concentration camps during the Second World War underwent a "doubling" of self as a form of adaptation. He defines doubling as "the division of the self into two functioning wholes, so that a part-self acts as an entire self" (p. 418). And, as is well known, many inmates in these camps survived by sacrificing their sense of identity and by "identifying with the aggressor" (A. Freud, 1948). Analyses of more contemporary adaptive techniques reveal that the "technological person" seems to be best able to handle the stresses of a competitive, fragmented society by developing "self-complexity": namely, a compartmentalized self that allows one to escape a role-specific self under siege by shifting to another role-specific self that is uncontaminated at the time (see Gergen, 1972, 1978; Linville, 1987).

Finally, both the superego and ego ideal appear to exhibit cross-cultural variability in terms of their structural relationships. The ego ideal may not develop at all if the superego is too overweening or if a culture is too intolerant of deviance of any form, because the formation of the ego ideal requires that the ego has developed some reflexive, autonomous capacities. In addition, the superego may be quite "weak" in a culture that has permissive childrearing practices, and may be strong and even oppressive in cultures that place more of an emphasis on authoritarian disci-

pline and developing children's "moral character" (cf. Riesman, 1950, p. 44). Indeed, Erikson's work is consistent with that of some object relations theorists (e.g., Guntrip, 1971) who argue that the superego appears to be an independent psychic *agency only* when it is the product of a culture that creates oppressive conditions for young children, requiring the ego to "split" pathologically and thereby repress its unbearable negative images of itself.

REVISITING THE TRIPARTITE IDENTITY DISTINCTION, REFLEXIVITY, AND AGENCY

We are now in a position to discuss the distinctions we make among types of identity, self-concept, and self. Our discussion is oriented toward a functional understanding of the relationship among these constructs; general definitions for these terms have already been offered throughout the previous chapters. Our focus here is functional because we wish to convey to the reader an idea of the personality structure in process with interactive contexts, by implicating the notion of agency and the role of reflexive consciousness in our explanation.

Ego identity constitutes the ego's sense of itself and it is to be differentiated from the constructs of personal and social identities. In the subjective realm, all three levels of identity involve what we call second-order reflexivity, but they have different functional roles in the operation of the personality system, as we explain.

In two senses, personal and social identity can be understood as second-order reflexive abstractions in relation to self-concept. First, the knowledge these two identity domains refer to is a second-order derivative, generalized and abstracted from that knowledge derived by persons in concrete, every day, situated experiences with their personal and social selves. (We are suggesting, in other words, that these identity domains develop in a manner similar to Mead's notion of the emergence of the generalized other.) The second sense in which we understand these identity domains as second-order abstractions concerns the reflexive consciousness of the ego that helps to produce and utilize their own knowledge. We differentiate this consciousness from "first-order" reflexivities such as self-concept (Mead, 1934), self-reference (Rogers, Kuiper, & Kirker, 1977) and self-awareness (Carver & Scheier, 1981) because it is not synonymous with direct experience but is rather a reflection on the first-order cognitions involved in experience with the personal and social self domains. Baumeister (1998) and others (cf. Higgins, 1996), have made somewhat similar observations about a second- order reflexivity phenomenon, and McAdams' (1997) notion of "selfing" can be entertained as a theoretical example of what we are referring to. In simple terms, in the subjective

realm, personal and social identities represent "thinking about" and deriving a generalized, trans-contextual sense of the meanings of one's personal and social self-concepts. Under normal conditions of life experience, they constitute a source of the ego's sense of continuity.

In contrast to personal and social identity, ego identity functions more directly in the service of the ego, but is also based on a second-order reflexive process. In general, it enables the ego to have a conscious sense of itself, and it is relied on to enable the ego to orient itself to, and act on, the domains of personal and social identity. Thus, if we conceptualize self-concepts as schema-contents for the domains of personal and social identity, we can also conceptualize the domains of personal and social identity as schema-contents for the domain of the ego's identity. It is this second-order metaphor about the reflexivity of ego identity that is necessary in order to theorize the relationship between the notions of self, self-concept, and identity in the context of a theory of an agentic ego. In other words, second-order reflexivity suggests the subjective psychological distance, or the subjective sense of differentiation (not detachment), from the self in interactional contexts, which is necessary if one is to speak about the ego's agentic capability.

When we combine what we have stated about orders of reflexive consciousness, agency, and identity with Mead's symbolic interactionist notions of the act and meaning, we can suggest the following regarding the ego's agentic role in the functioning of the identity and self system. If we focus first on the experience of unproblematic meaning in interaction, we can understand the ego as mastering its involvement with the social world with the use of the I in the form of either first- or second-order reflexive consciousness. Here the person is "involved" in social context and utilizes first-order reflexive self-concepts to project and manage presentations of self with others. If "problems" in interaction arise in this context of ego functioning, they are not sensed as "crises," but as adjustment tasks that could stimulate the use of second-order reflections by personal and/or social identities in order to re-orient to the on-going interactive context. On those occasions offering more temporal leeway, such reflections could also involve contemplative second-order reflections by the ego, mediated by its own identity, in order to adjust covert understandings of the other two identity domains.

In this context of "unproblematic" interactions, the agentic quality of the ego is certainly involved, but it is not "sensed" very strongly, if at all. This is the case because meaning has not broken down, but is simply being shared, adjusted to, and/or contemplated. In other words, the ego's sense of continuity has not been threatened because its personal and social identities have not been threatened. Thus, meaning has not been sensed as fundamentally problematic, and the social-structural and cultural parameters of social experience are sensed as normal.

However, when meaning is experienced as problematic because of a "crisis" of identity domains, the functioning of the identity system changes. Under such conditions, the ego cannot rely on the I (see earlier discussion) and must depend on its identity (i.e., ego identity) to deal with the crisis of meaning it is confronting. The past senses of continuity it achieved from experience in the social world and from second-order reflections on personal and social identity are no longer salient or sensed as adaptive. Now a *sense* of *its own* identity and agentic character must be operative for the ego if it is to maintain that sense of temporal and spatial continuity needed to engage the task of readjustment to interaction.

SYNOPSIS: A PSYCHOLOGY OF IDENTITY

In this chapter we have theorized part of the psychological side of our social psychological perspective on identity. Our primary focus has been on two tasks. First, we have attempted to clarify, in a manner consistent with Erikson's ideas, the distinctions among the three identity domain concepts (i.e., ego, personal, and social) and the concept of the self. Second, we have suggested a logic for understanding how the ego and its identity function in reference to personal identity, social identity, and the self. In order to develop this last idea, we have emphasized the compatibility of a symbolic interactionist perspective with Erikson's work, inasmuch as a functional analysis of identity requires attention to the role of the ego in interactive contexts.

In exploring the possible relationships among identity domains, we have also emphasized the important distinction between first- and second-order levels of reflexive consciousness and suggested that second-order reflexivity is a necessary, though not sufficient, factor in defining and understanding the functioning of an agentic personality. Although the ego's awareness of itself must be considered an essential condition for postulating an agentic, intrapsychic attribute, we must also theorize an ego's agentic relationship to interaction by identifying more clearly than we have thus far various "tools" available to it for expressing itself. We discuss this idea in chapter 8, with a detailed analysis of what we call "identity capital." Before doing this, however, it is important for us to maintain our commitment to the theme of identity's multidimensionality and elaborate our discussion of the psychic structure we have outlined in this chapter by linking it with a more social psychological, macro-structural perspective. We now turn to this task by exploring the relationships among culture, agency, and interaction.

Identity, Agency and Social Structure

A STORY ABOUT INTERACTION AND IDENTITY

The following situation, or a variation of it, is repeated daily in doctors' waiting rooms around the world:

Two strangers find themselves in a small room waiting for a doctor's appointment. Both are feeling friendly that day, and a conversation begins about the weather, then moves to a story featured on the cover of a magazine that has been left for patients to read while they wait. The two strangers feel they have something in common: interest in the weather and an interest in the events associated with the magazine story. Where does the conversation then go?

The odds are that the strangers begin asking each other very general questions like what they do for a living, whether they are married, have children, and so forth. But let us pause for a moment and reflect. In an attempt to gain a visual image of the story we are telling, many readers of this book are by now wondering to themselves whether the people we are describing are men or women, what race or ethnicity they are, and how old they are. What is being described in the story, and what readers are experiencing, is the desire to "place" people in terms of a location in society. This is the first step in impression formation—people want to know who other people "are" at this very general level. Similarly, modern societies keep track of their citizens at this social level of "who they are" (note the information on ID cards, driver's licenses, etc.). Knowing someone's occu-

pation, marital status, gender, race, and age is not very interesting beyond "placing" them; yet, these aspects of a person's social location—their social identities—are still very important determinants and predictors of their life styles and life chances.

Back to the two people in the waiting room: After they have located each other within the structure of society, and feel that they have enough in common to continue talking, the conversation moves to more personal matters. They will have already sized each other up in terms of appearance and demeanors, and these non-verbal cues will trigger further questions concerning each other's likes and dislikes, habits, activities, and general beliefs. The two will have been relatively honest about these things if they felt comfortable with each other, but a certain amount of impression management will have taken place to the extent that they want to create a favorable image with the other. If they had felt uncomfortable to some extent, or felt that there was something more to be gained from this conversation, they may have attempted to create an even more favorable impression. However, knowing about someone's personal life adds more to the goal of "placing" that person, so the situation quickly becomes more complex. Throughout the conversation, each person will have presented a set of images and definitions with which they want the other person to define them. These reflect the person's self-image and reflexive understanding of others' views of them.

This encounter may continue to be a pleasant one if these images and definitions coincide and find mutual affirmation. If not, the encounter may become unpleasant as one or both begin to realize that, although their social identities are compatible, their *personal identities* are not. This is the case because it is likely that each person will have been displaying a personal identity assuming the other's is compatible. For example, if both like sports or the theater, vote Democrat or Republican, and have the same taste in music, they will likely feel comfortable about the encounter and will continue. But, if it has come out that one hates sports, likes the theater, votes Democrat, and listens only to New Age music, whereas the other does the opposite, the chances are that this encounter will not go any further, and they will attempt to avoid further conversation by, for instance, reading a magazine or looking at their watches to signal that they hope to be called soon for their appointment with the doctor.

A similarly uncomfortable situation can arise when one person attempts to present one self-definition, while the other perceives a different definition. In this case, the personal identity as subjectively experienced by one person is not the same one received by the other. For example, suppose one person is dressed unfashionably, speaks without sophistication, and fidgets during the conversation, yet verbally presents himself or herself as cultured and knowledgeable about the arts. The chances are that the other

person will define that person in an entirely different manner—as uncouth, unmannered, and a phony.

Note that at this point in the story both people have information only about each other's social identity (their locations in society) and personal identity (their concrete presentations of behavior to others, which includes their personal beliefs and attitudes). The level of identity of most interest to developmental psychologists—ego identity—has not entered the picture, except to the extent that ego identity is, by definition, implicated by social and personal involvements (e.g., the level and stability of commitments in these areas of community involvement).

So, let us assume that the two people have social and personal identities that they feel are compatible enough to continue speaking with each other, and that the doctor is running very late. Once past the formalities of social-identity placement, and the camaraderie of personal-identity engagement, the conversation might become more in-depth (although most people are hesitant to take things further with strangers). However, if this happens, they would begin talking about what they think are their "true" feelings and who they "really" are—the subjectivity of their lives. For example, they might talk about how fulfilling they feel their careers or family lives are, that these experiences have brought great meaning to their lives and given them a sense of promise for the future. Or they would perhaps talk about how stressful the workplace now is and how they would really like to start a new career where they are self-employed. They would perhaps talk about how difficult it is to find meaning in many of the things they do, or how they no longer feel they are same person they were a few years ago. Or they may confide that their feelings for their mate have changed.

All of these examples have in common manifestations of the person's sense of ego identity—their subjective sense of continuity of being the same person over time and in different situations. If they have a strong sense of ego identity that is nurtured and reinforced in their lives, they should feel a sense of continuity with the past, meaning in the present, and direction for the future. If their sense of ego identity is weak, or has weakened for some reason, they may feel that what was important is no longer as important, or who they felt they once were no longer applies. If they are experiencing severe problems at this level of (ego) identity, they may even question whether they have or ever have had a sense of core identity—whether there was ever a stable entity in their consciousness in charge of anything.

We provide this story here in order to help us explain next an interrelated series of more abstract concepts derived from the formal theory of identity we are laying out in this book. Before discussing the identity concepts from this theory, we first provide a clarification of the concept of

"culture" (and its relationship to agency) and the hypothesized relationship we posit between culture and identity.

CULTURE AND AGENCY

The concept of culture is central to several social-scientific disciplines, yet its meaning is elusive. In this section, we search for a clear meaning that is workable for the identity literature. Swidler (1986) noted that in both sociology and anthropology, a "debate has raged for several academic generations" (p. 273) over how to define "culture." Generally speaking, its application has been too broad and its usage often carries connotations about human behavior that are difficult to defend, undermining any meaningful use of the term. In effect, broad definitions make "culture" a constant, rather than a variable, rendering it useless from a social-scientific point of view. Such definitions also have deterministic connotations, leaving little room for human agency and placing all causation on social structure, or more specifically, cultural values. (We noted a similar problem earlier in our discussions of the structure–agency debate).

Swidler (1986) noted that this older, all-encompassing, and deterministic view of culture has been supplanted by a more recent view. The watershed work is Geertz's (1973) *The Interpretation of Cultures*, in which he defined culture as a set of public symbolic forms that people *can* use to express meaning. Swidler (1986) modified this somewhat by arguing that "culture consists of such symbolic vehicles of meaning, including beliefs, ritual practices, art forms, and ceremonies, as well as informal cultural practices such as language, gossip, stories, and rituals of daily life" (p. 273). It is with these symbolic vehicles that thought and behavior are shared within a community. In allowing for an analysis of the agentic components of behavior, she argued that this definition of culture surmounts previous deterministic views of cultures in which "values" were all powerful. Her definition enables one to envisage the person in agentic terms, selectively using symbols as part of their cultural "tool kit" to solve various problems through "strategies of action." Thus, "culture's causal significance [is] not in defining ends of action, but in providing . . . components that are used to construct strategies of action" (p. 273).

Swidler's characterization of culture helps us better understand the different levels of identity, because it raises the question of what the link is between culture and identity, to which we turn next. For example, cultures do not absolutely determine a person's adult social identity so much as provide a "tool kit of resources from which people can construct diverse strategies of action . . . investing them with particular meanings in concrete life circumstances" (Swidler, 1986, p. 281). Accordingly, the adult so-

cial identity one forms depends on (a) available resources derived from the community, (b) how an individual packages these resources into a configuration that has meaning in that community, and (c) how that person then strategically invests these resources in the lives of people in that community. In this way, "culture" is involved in all three steps, but it may not be *the* determining factor in any of them. Note that this characterization is thought to apply equally to cultures whether they are based on collectivism or individualism.

This depiction of culture fits well with the notion of "identity capital" discussed in the next chapter. Identity capital comprises the investments people make in "who they are," but these investments can be strategically self-generated, especially in late modern societies. The more resources a person has, whether socially tangible or psychologically intangible, the better that person is likely to do in ensuring that their identity investments work. Hence, there is an important component of agency involved in this view that is manifested as a set of social skills and competencies. Swidler (1986) provided the following example that highlights the importance of this view of culture over the view that culture *determines* a person's values or preferences:

> If one asked a slum youth why he did not take steps to pursue a middle-class path to success . . . the answer might well be not "I don't want that life," but instead, "Who, me?" One can hardly pursue success in a world where the accepted skills, style, and informal know-how are unfamiliar. One does better to look for a line of action for which one already has the cultural equipment. (p. 275)

In sum, what one must analyze in order to understand the relationship between culture and identity is not so much the dominant values of a culture, or "everything" that has meaning in the culture; rather, one needs to understand the tool kit of resources available to different members of the culture and how skillful various members are in constructing and completing strategies of actions that achieve certain ends (or identities) for them. This notion of culture makes it possible not only to speak of agency, but to speak of it in the context of enabling and disabling social structures, a theme we continue in the next chapter.

THE CULTURE–IDENTITY FRAMEWORK

The story in the introductory section of this chapter provided a concrete illustration of three levels of identity. In this section, we provide a framework with which these three levels are cross-tabulated with three types of

societies that represent historical change over a broad period of time (centuries). We refer to this analysis as the culture–identity framework (Côté, 1996a, 1996b). This framework was developed out of a recognition of the importance of understanding the impact of cultural context on the three levels of identity. As shown in Fig. 7.1, the framework offers a typology representing some broad historical and cultural parameters in relation to sociological and psychological factors affecting identity formation.

This framework can help us organize a number of the identity concepts that have been generated by psychologists and sociologists over the past several decades, and it does so in a manner consistent with Erikson's theory of ego identity formation. In doing this, it more fully develops the sociological implications of Erikson's work. Figure 7.1 illustrates a three-by-three cross-tabulation of concepts, with social, personal, and ego identity represented at three social-structural eras (premodernity, early modernity, and late modernity). Note that this representation is meant to be heuristic and that concepts represented in the cross-tabulation are "ideal types," or abstractions that represent a "pure" form of a social reality. Accordingly, actual cases are unlikely to exactly correspond to the theoretical descriptions, much like psychiatric diagnoses where five of eight criteria are sufficient to identify a disorder with confidence. It should also be noted that more than one pattern can exist in a society, particularly in a pluralistic or multicultural one (although the one used by the dominant group will tend to set the standard). Consequently, there may be "fusions" among the patterns in a given society, and there may be "cultural lags," whereby previously predominant patterns persist in certain subcultures,

	Social Structural Era		
	Premodern •	*Early Modern •*	*Late Modern*
Modal Identity Patterns			
Social Identity	Ascribed •	Accomplished •	Managed
Personal Identity	Heteronomous •	Individuated •	Image-Oriented
Ego Identity *Structure*	Foreclosed •	Achieved •	Diffused/Moratorium
Process	Adopted •	Constructed •	Discovered

FIG. 7.1. The culture–identity framework.

gender domains,[1] social classes, rural areas, and religious and ethnic/racial subcultures.

Because it is tentative in many respects, the framework is meant to provide a basis for discussion. However, we believe that it promises to be especially useful in understanding cultural and social structural influences on individual development, including understanding how non-20th-century, non-Western cultures might nurture identity. At the same time, we admit that the framework is largely based on observations of Western cultures and likely applies most readily to the public sphere of the middle classes (especially in modern societies). Therefore, it may be "Eurocentric" and "androcentric" in some ways that remain to be determined. Although this may be a liability, we must begin somewhere if we hope to grasp the multidimensionality of identity processes. Besides, because of centuries of colonialism and imperialism, Western cultural patterns have set the standards that many other cultural groupings must follow or to which they now aspire. It is in this light that the relevance of this framework to other cultures can be evaluated.

With these qualifications in mind, we can now explain the framework represented in Fig. 7.1. The top portion of the figure identifies three periods of macro-structural social change that characterize what many sociologists believe has happened over the past several centuries among Western societies and societies influenced by the West. The distinction between premodern and early modern society constitutes a widely accepted distinction between folk and urban society, a distinction that has been referred to in other terms such as agrarian versus industrial, folk versus urban, or Gemeinschaft versus Gesellschaft (e.g., Tönnies, 1980; Wirth, 1938). In most Western societies, this transformation was largely completed during the 19th century. As noted at the beginning of this book, our intention is not to romanticize premodern societies, but rather to use them as a baseline from which to understand current cultural conditions.

The distinction between early modern and late modern is a less accepted one. We prefer to speak of the early modern period as an era of "modernism" in which production was a defining feature of social relations. We believe that "late modern" best refers to the type of industrial–capitalist society that evolved in the second half of the 20th century. It is distinguished from "early modern" in several senses: (a) a movement from production as a defining feature of social relations and identity to consumption (of goods and services) as a basis for these; (b) the rise of in-

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[1] On the issue of gender, it follows that because men and women have traditionally occupied different spheres (public versus private), and because women are aspiring to move into the public sphere more than men are aspiring to move into the private sphere, women are merging these categories more than are men.

formation and computer technologies that have supplanted labor and altered some of the bases for social relations; (c) the transformation, and in some cases disintegration, of certain institutions that once provided a stable basis for social relations; and (d) a society in which a large proportion of the population experiences day-to-day life in impersonal, urban environments, where there is a high degree of casual contact with "strangers"—others with whom there are few enduring emotional bonds. These trends combine to produce a society in which the motto for many people is increasingly "I am what I consume *today*." The nature of late modern society becomes clearer as we move to the micro level.

In this framework, social-identity formation differs in each type of society. In premodern societies it tends to be *ascribed*, in early modern societies the norm is increasingly that it be *accomplished*, and in late modern societies it seems to need to be *managed*. These terms can be defined as follows: "ascribed" means assigned on the basis of some inherited status; "accomplished" means based on one's own efforts and abilities; and "managed" means reflexively and strategically fitting oneself into a community of "strangers" by meeting their approval through the creation of the right impressions (cf. Gecas & Burke, 1995). In other words, in a premodern society, social identity is largely determined by one's characteristics or attributes like race, sex, and parent's social status. However, in an early modern society, as systems of ascription breakdown and status becomes more a matter of contest, social identity can be increasingly based on personal accomplishment and material attainment (both of which are *ostensibly* based on one's efforts, skills, and achievements, independent of one's inherited statuses). Finally, in a late modern society one's inherited characteristic and prior accomplishments often carry little weight in giving one legitimacy in a wide variety of social settings. Instead, people need to strategically guide and control their own actions in order to continually fit themselves into communities of "strangers" by meeting their approval through the creation of the right impressions—the wrong impression management can lead to an immediate loss of legitimacy in certain situations (cf. Baumeister & Muraven, 1996).

In late modern societies, therefore, social identities are much more precarious than ever before. As opposed to being a birthright, or a sinecured social achievement, one's legitimacy can be continually called into question. In order to find a social location to begin with, one often has to convince a community of strangers that one is worthy of their company, and this acceptance can be challenged virtually at any moment. Individuals now have to manage their lives by strategically finding their place or places, often repeatedly over their life course. Thus, in contrast to the past, it is common for people to move through a series of educational settings, jobs and careers, romantic relationships and marriages, and neigh-

borhoods and urban settings, possibly gaining and losing acceptance a number of times.

At the level of interaction (i.e., the interpersonal world where culture and individual meet), corresponding personal identities are largely *heteronomous*, then *individuated*, and then *image-oriented* as we move through the three types of societies. The heteronomous identity is based on an unreflexive acceptance of others' appraisals and expectations that produces a conformist and mechanical blending into a community; the individuated identity is one that is based on the production of a distinctive personal style and role repertoire by which the person's biography leads to an organic integration into a community; and the image-oriented identity of late modernity is based on a projection of images that meet the approval of a community, gaining one access so long as the images remain acceptable. Personal identity refers here to interpersonal styles that have been shaped by the actual life experiences of people. In a sense, it expresses the culmination of an individual's "biography of everyday life" at a given point in time.

In late modernity, then, personal identities can be even more precarious because the standards of acceptable behavior continually change. As a result, people experiment with various ways to present themselves, and change their appearances regularly (or even their names, much to the chagrin of genealogists or those concerned with intergenerational continuity). Much day-to-day interaction is with strangers or acquaintances who do not know each other's biography (and may not care), and who do not know or care if they ever see each other again. What is important is how the present is constructed, and this is most easily done through personal experiences and appropriate conversation. Consequently, what often counts is the *image* one projects, rather than the substance of what is behind the image. This, of course, is standard fare among the most recent cohorts of young people. A passage from Wheelis's (1958) *The Quest for Identity* contrasts current circumstances with those of the 19th century (which corresponds with early modernity):

> The goal was achievement, not adjustment; the young were taught to work, not to socialize. Popularity was not important, but strength of character was essential. Nobody worried about rigidity of character; it was supposed to be rigid. If it were flexible you couldn't count on it. Change of character was desirable only for the wicked. (p. 18)

Sennett (1998) followed a similar line of thought in his recent book *The Corrosion of Character: the Personal Consequences of Work in the New Capitalism*. He argued that contemporary economic conditions that require a high degree flexibility make it difficult for people to maintain a sense of personal

character. Noting that the traditional meaning of character dating back to antiquity involved "the ethical value we place on our desires and on our relations to others," Sennett defined it as follows:

> Character particularly focuses upon the long-term aspect of our emotional experience. Character is expressed by loyalty and mutual commitment, or through the pursuit of long-term goals, or by the practice of delayed gratification for the sake of a future end. Out of the confusion of sentiments in which we all dwell at any particular moment, we seek to save and sustain some; these sustainable sentiments will serve our characters. Character concerns the personal traits which we value in ourselves and for which we seek to be valued by others. (p. 10)

Bearing in mind these historical differences, then, at the level of "character," two components of ego identity can be classified: "structure" and "process." Ego identity *structure* has been defined as "how experience is handled as well as . . . [by] what experiences are considered important" by an individual (Marcia, 1993, p. 3); ego identity *process* refers to the manner by which the *ego* forms its identity as a distinct entity in relation to its object world. In terms of the types of identity structure studied by identity status researchers, identity *foreclosure* (qua commitments determined by others) predominates in premodern societies, identity *achievement* (qua self-chosen commitments) is the prototypical structure in modern societies, and both identity *diffusion* and identity *moratorium* (qua a lack of stable, long-term commitments) appear to be emerging as the predominant structures in late modern societies, if we follow the identity status paradigm outlined earlier. In terms of the processes by which identity is formed, premodern society requires its members to *adopt* their identities early in life; in early modern society people are expected to *construct* their identities as they come of age; and in late modern society people are encouraged to (continually) *discover* their identities through consumption and pleasing others (cf. Gergen, 1991).

Our framework clearly predicts that growing up in a late modern society, and attempting to come of age as an adult in it, creates psychological challenges (whereas doing so in premodern societies had more physical/survival challenges; cf. Maslow, 1971). The ego, in constructing and maintaining its sense of itself—its identity—faces a lifetime where stable, long-term commitments (qua identity achievement) are absent or problematic. So an "adaptive" ego identity structure can be one that filters out opportunities for such commitments and develops non-committal response patterns. Such a person may come to understand stability as "inflexibility" and therefore as something problematic for effective functioning and adaptation. The process by which the ego forms its identity in this setting then becomes one of "discovery"; in fact, this can involve a contin-

ual discovery of image-oriented identities that are deemed appropriate by others at the moment. Let us stress that this "discovery" is not of an inner "real self" but of outer "situational selves," and it is the thrill of discovery that can be the driving force (in a world increasingly oriented to impulse gratification). Being based on image rather than substance, however, the identities acquired are usually unstable and short-term. In fact, they are often based on consumption patterns with built-in expiry-dates (e.g., fashion, music, and other "flavors of the week").

It is important to note here that although we believe people are increasingly "discovering" themselves through "image consumption," rather than by making the types of commitment associated with the "identity achievement" of early modernity, we are *not* endorsing these changes associated with identity formation in late modernity. We are merely describing them. In fact, we are concerned about where these changes are taking Western societies and their citizens, as each successive cohort of young people is increasingly affected by the conditions of late modernity (cf. Côté, 2000).

According to this analysis, then, most Western societies have undergone changes over the last several centuries that have created circumstances in which people have been freed from the physical drudgeries and health hazards of premodern society and have been given a high degree of latitude in terms of self-determination, yet they are given little guidance in this enterprise as major institutions have destructured and decoupled from each other. The impact on individual lives has likely become increasingly accentuated with each successive cohort or generation over the course of the 20th century, so that many of those now attempting to formulate an adult identity have little idea regarding how their lives will unfold. Confronted with a long period of youth (or a potentially permanent "youthhood"; Côté, 2000) and expected to design their own life-projects, those in current cohorts are experiencing an unprecedented uncoupling of life-course events as traditional forms of adulthood have progressively destructured. This situation prevails in most Western countries and appears to be increasingly the case in many non-Western nations as well.

As noted earlier in chapters 2 and 5, some postmodernists look at these trends and argue that we are somehow past the "worst" of modernity, and that the postmodern fallout of these trends provides the key to forms of liberation and emancipation (e.g., Gergen, 1991). Maybe so, but other postmodernists believe that the inner self and identity are now but illusions, having been fragmented by modernity and dissolved by postmodernity. We think not. Contrary to these opinions, we prefer a more balanced position that recognizes that there *are* some foundational psychological processes, structures, and needs that are affected by basic social processes and structures (cf. Martin & Sugarman, 2000; Vollmer, 2000).

The social contexts of late modern society present difficulties not found in previous types of societies, but they also provide opportunities. Besides, previous types of societies presented their own difficulties that many of those accustomed to late modern society would likely have found unbearable (e.g., a lack of privacy, close informal social control, low levels of intellectual development, few opportunities for creativity and self-actualization, and so forth). Moreover, not everyone reacts the same way to the same social trends. Indeed, although many people seem to have been adversely affected psychologically by late modern social forces, others have been resilient in the face of them, while yet others have flourished (Giddens, 1991).

Our position on this matter corresponds most closely with Giddens, who, as noted in chapter 3, preferred terms like late modernity or high-modernity to postmodernity. His view is more balanced to the extent that he noted both positive and negative consequences of modernity. In fact, in his book on that very issue, Giddens (1990) contrasted his position with conceptions of postmodernity on a number of key factors, including social institutions and the self. For example, he noted that postmodernists claim an "end of epistemology/the individual/ethics," while he saw current trends "as possible transformations moving 'beyond' the institutions of modernity." And, whereas postmodernists see "the self as dissolved or dismembered by the fragmentation of experience," he saw "the self as more than just a site of intersecting forces; active processes of reflexive self-identity are made possible by modernity" (p. 150). In essence, Giddens saw challenges, where many postmodernists see either doom or utopia. We believe that neither of the latter extremes are inevitable, and prefer the challenge of understanding the complex psychological, interactional, and social-structural processes at work in the late modern world, with its global impact. Certainly, we are not about to give up on those in the lay public who are looking to us for guidance, nor are we about to try to lead them along an ill-considered millennial path.

Where are we, then? And where are we going? A case can be made that we are in a period of great potential and opportunity that is being squandered by many people, but also being capitalized on by a great number (Côté, 2000). Opportunities are being squandered by those who have been conditioned into, or have chosen, paths of passivity in a world that provides opportunities for self-determination. We understand very well that the problem for many people is the destructuring of institutions, the decoupling of the life course, and the anomie that follows. In fact, we are trying to understand the repercussions of this cultural destructuring at all levels of identity (cf. Wexler, 1992). In addition, we are endeavoring to grasp the active responses to these circumstances that have made people resilient to them, or even strengthened by them. Hence, we are trying to

understand the relationship between identity and human agency. Not only might this help people learn how to turn passive into active—a basic ego function according to Erikson (1963)—but we believe that the greater the number of agentic people with an ethically based identity in a society, the more likely a re-structuring of civil society is to occur that increases the social capital of its communities.

Next we explore the relevance of the framework for understanding changing developmental identity patterns and problems of identity maintenance, and in the next chapter we consider more closely the relationship between identity and agency.

A MULTIDIMENSIONAL MODEL OF IDENTITY FORMATION

The identity structures and processes discussed in the preceding chapter relevant to Erikson's work and symbolic interactionism, and the present chapter in terms of the culture–identity framework, can be formally illustrated through a series of figures that depict the three identity components and the interrelationships among the three levels of analysis (Fig. 7.2). This model follows the conventions of the personality and social structure perspective (PSSP) in identifying the levels of personality, interaction, and social structure, and is consistent with Berger and Luckmann's (1966) treatise on the social construction of reality in specifying active articulations among these levels representing how people attempt to make sense of their lives and give order to them.

The model represented in Fig. 7.2 is a process model that provides a way to explain how culture is reproduced, thereby maintaining structural
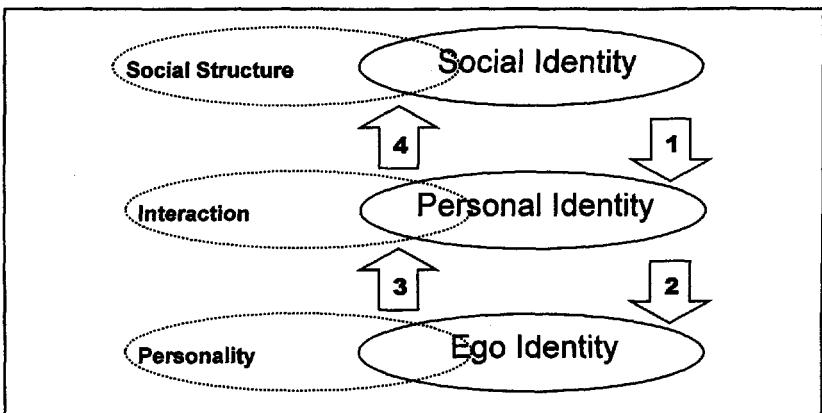
FIG. 7.2.   The social psychological levels of analysis applied to the study of identity.

stability, and how both culture and social structure can change. The model is unique in incorporating macro-structural factors, micro-interactional factors, and individual, psychological factors. What is illustrated here represents an iterative process that is in continuous motion as people associate in groups and undertake communication processes.

We can begin explaining this model with the relationship between social structure and interaction (arrow 1). (The starting point is arbitrary except in the case of a totally new member in a community who has no prior experience with the social structure.) This relationship represents a causal influence of social structure on interaction through the implementation of laws, norms, values, rituals, and so forth that have been previously codified or institutionalized. In other words, while engaged in concrete day-to-day behavior, people generally look to institutionalized norms and conventions to structure their behavior, thereby giving it meaning and justification. Beginning with this process, social structure is reproduced, however imperfectly, and it is at the intersection between social structure and interaction that we find socialization processes and social control mechanisms.

Moving to the next arrow (arrow 2), representing the articulation between interaction and personality, we find the processes by which each individual internalizes the outcomes of their ongoing, day-to-day interactions ("subjectivation," according to Berger & Luckmann, 1966). During this process, people actively define situations and develop *individual* constructions of reality. This internalization is subject to basic learning principles and is imperfect to the extent that people employ defense mechanisms and various cognitive and perceptual filtering techniques. The competencies associated with perceiving and filtering information are referred to by Erikson as ego synthetic abilities (see chapter 6). However, the general point here is that the content of people's internalizations comes from their concrete contacts with others, including their knowledge of, and sentiment toward, the social structure.

When a person re-engages in an interaction process, or is continuing an ongoing one (arrow 3), he or she relies on previous internalizations with which to first define the situation and then present the suitable impressions that others are intended to perceive. Erikson (1958) referred to these facilities as ego executive abilities (chapter 6). The general point here is that an individual's behavior is in part a product of past internalizations, in part a result of their attempt to act appropriately in a given situation, and in part a product of their abilities to produce the behaviors that their past ego syntheses suggest are suitable. We can see in the second and third processes (as represented by arrows 2 and 3) the potential for both agentic and passive responses as previously discussed, depending in part on the strength and appropriateness of the individual's ego synthetic and executive capacities.

Finally, when people are interacting with one another, a byproduct of their communication with each other—including the tendency to want to arrive at consensual definitions of the situation—is a social construction of reality. Berger and Luckmann (1966) referred to this process as "objectivation," the objectifying of people's mutually subjective perceptions of their worlds. As part of the general tendency to want to avoid interpersonal conflict and find consensus, people normally seek out compatible definitions of situations with each other. These processes can be seen continually in day-to-day behaviors, especially when situations are novel or unstructured. In the latter case, humans have exhibited a tendency to want to settle definitional disputes, at least with members of in-groups, so that problems do not continually arise. Accordingly, over important matters, formally codified agreements tend to be reached and enforced in subsequent interactions (back to arrow 1). For example, in a highly structured society, on-going discussions over the nature of reality tend to be about concrete, day-to-day, instrumental matters, because general definitions of situations have been previously objectivated, codified, institutionalized, and enforced through socialization and social control processes (arrow 1).

In literate societies, this social construction process culminates in the creation of codified laws. Social constructions in preliterate societies are objectivated differently, being passed on orally. Once constructions have been objectivated, there is a tendency for people to internalize them as "real" and "concrete"—to reify them. We can note here, however, how Western societies are now dismantling many of their old cultural norms and conventions on the basis of wider, more democratically institutionalized processes of social reality construction, aided by modern media technologies. The old norms served best those with power; now that more people can engage in the collective process of social construction, new norms are being constructed that serve wider interests. Readers are referred to Berger and Luckmann's (1966) *Social Construction of Reality* for further discussions of these processes. We now want to apply these general formulations to the specific issue at hand, identity formation.

Figure 7.3 shows the three identity components at each level of analysis, with arrows representing their iterative relationships. The three levels of PSSP analysis are designated to the left of the figure. The three comparable levels of identity are represented within oval figures, and their interrelationships are marked with four unidirectional arrows. The diagram is meant to signify four analytically distinct processes that are in continuous motion.

In addition, distinctions are made between (a) context and person, with the dividing line running horizontally through the interactional level of analysis, and (b) objective versus subjective elements of identity, with the dividing line running vertically through each of the three identity levels
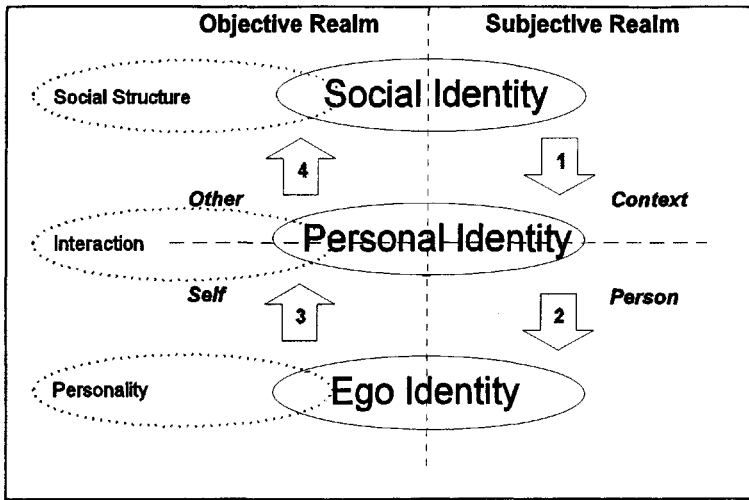
FIG. 7.3.   The objective and subjective dimensions of identity.

(cf. Weigert et al., 1986). The context represents the actual behavior that is carried out in day-to-day activities representing personal and social identity; "person" represents how behavior is carried out in terms of ego identity and operations of self-definition. The "objective" distinction refers to the behaviors that others are exposed to (representing personal and social identity) or make inferences about (a person's self-definition and ego processes). The "subjective" distinction refers to ego experiences of all three levels of identity. Accordingly, a thorough analysis of identity should include four components: the person's subjective experience of his or her mental processes; a person's subjective experience of his or her behaviors that culminate in personal and social identity; the objective personal and social identity as defined by others who are observers of a person's behavioral repertoire; and the "objective" component representing what can be said by others about a person's mental processes (e.g., private inferences people make, gossip, the results of psychological tests and attitude surveys, and so forth).

Figure 7.4 puts some flesh to the bones of Fig. 7.3 and helps to clarify the objective–subjective distinction. As the story at the beginning of this chapter illustrates, people execute "real" components of their identities, namely, those personal identity displays presented to others (e.g., clothing, demeanors, speech, etc.). Behavior is objective in this sense, and once displayed, cannot be taken back in a temporal sense. Similarly, social identity is "real," with objective impacts on a person's life, to the extent that societies provide different opportunities and limitations for different "types" of people, defined by their social identity designations (male–female, black–
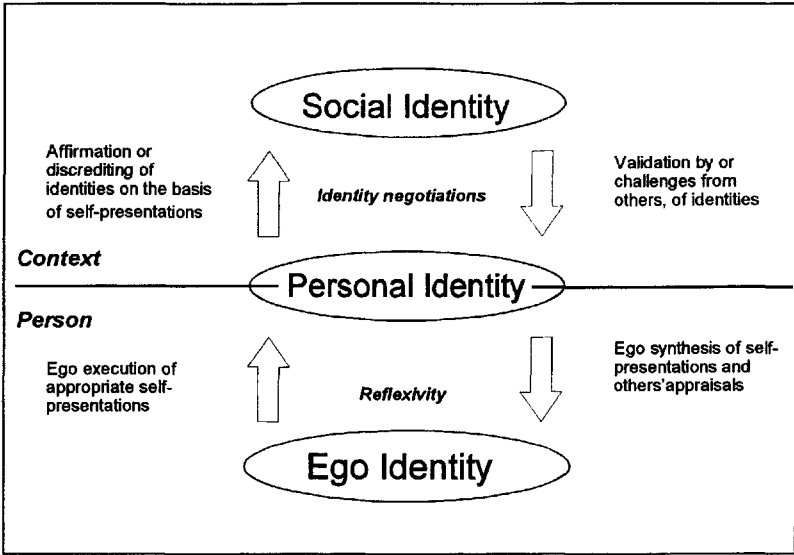
FIG. 7.4. Identity formation and identity maintenance processes.

white, old–young, etc.). In the social context where identities assume an objective quality, however, identity negotiations can occur by which people attempt to manage aspects of their identities, sometimes defending them and sometimes trying to modify them. The comparable process for the subjective realm of identity is reflexivity, as discussed by Giddens and other macro theorists, as well as by symbolic interactionists.

The beginning point for describing the process of identity maintenance is arbitrary, but if we begin with arrow 1 (the arrow between social identity and personal identity), we can note how a person's location in a social structure provides the possibilities and limits for his or her personal identity (i.e., only a certain range of possibilities will occur because of prior socialization specific to a role location, or social customs and conventions). Thus, a person with a given social identity will likely have only certain types of personal identities validated by others (e.g., to use an extreme example, a 70-year-old man is unlikely to find validation if he tries to dress and act like a 17-year-old woman). The arrow between personal identity and ego identity (arrow 2) represents the person's perception and ego syntheses of his or her own personal identity displays, along with what he or she thinks are others' appraisals of these self-presentations. Between ego identity and personal identity (arrow 3) is an arrow representing the role played by intrapsychic ego identity processes on personal identity displays. Finally, personal identity displays (arrow 4) are related to social identity in several ways: (a) they can validate a social identity when they

conform to expectations about what is appropriate for a particular "type" of person, thereby maintaining an individual's status in a group or society; (b) they can be fashioned to increase an individual's standing in a society, exceeding expectations for what is considered by others to be appropriate for upward mobility (e.g., as ambitious students do when interacting with professors); or (c) they can undermine and disavow a person's social identity, as when expectations for proper decorum are violated.

Through these three structures and four processes, identity is formed, maintained, and changed, depending on the circumstances just outlined. This is a continual process that affects everyone in a society. Differences emerge depending on the type of society in which a person lives (as argued earlier regarding the culture–identity framework), the resources that a person has at his or her disposal, and external events that affect this process over a person's lifetime (e.g., having one's sense of ego identity damaged, or one's personal identity stigmatized).

By returning to Fig. 7.3, the designation of two components of personal identity in Fig. 7.4 can be further illustrated. As specified in the bottom half of Fig. 7.3, the level of interaction is where the person or self meets context or other. A key feature of this model is the contention that personality and social structure *indirectly* affect each other—a society requires people to interact with each other for its norms, values, and the like to be actualized, and people only encounter that society when interacting with other people from it. More importantly, though, by designating two components of personal identity, we can identify a key "site" of identity problems. That is, when there is a misalignment between a person's self-definition and an other's definition of his or her personal or social identities, identity problems can emerge.

This aspect of the model is most easily illustrated in the case of the adolescent attempting to make the transition out of childhood. Others may still define the adolescent as a child, ascribing a child's social identity to the adolescent, and/or the adolescent's personal identity displays may be interpreted as childish. When this happens, the adolescent's sense of ego identity can be disrupted, as can his or her personal identity displays. Such events can precipitate an identity crisis in which the adolescent struggles to establish an acceptable social identity via personal identity displays. This situation can rapidly become very complex, particularly in a society that does not allow much latitude for the social identities of adolescents. For example, in late modern societies, younger adolescents are legally "non-persons" and have a limited number of social identities available, leaving only student, delinquent, athlete, and the like. This helps explain why adolescents often form their own subcultures or create peer groups in which validated social identities can be assumed, however parochial. This also helps explain why adolescents can become so consumed with their

personal identity displays: Because social identities with a significant positive value are out of their reach for years to come (until they achieve some recognition of adult status), they are using their primary resources at hand—their bodies and their behaviors.

A final figure illustrates identity formation patterns specific to late modern society as implied by the identity–culture framework (Fig. 7.5). Briefly, social identities often comprise multiple role locations in a society that need to be continually managed to varying degrees. This is so because the social contexts of late modern societies often involve interactions with strangers who have little or no knowledge of one's past (for good or bad). Consequently, it becomes necessary for people to manage the perceptions of others around those identities that they themselves value. Without a detailed knowledge of each other's biographies, it becomes necessary for people to try to ensure that strangers have the proper information to validate an identity they consider to be salient and positive.

As an example of this, in early modern societies, professors could expect that their status would speak for itself and they would be respected in most social interactions, after they had accomplished certain things in their lives. This was in part because of narrow norms concerning their deportment and in part because of a high level of respect for expertise and authority. In late modern societies, this is hardly the case for a variety of reasons, including loose norms for professorial deportment and a decline
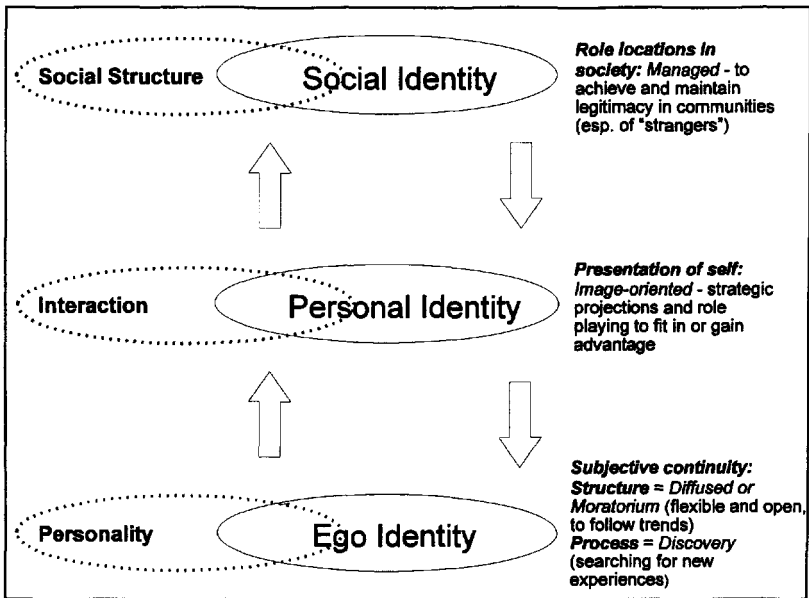
FIG. 7.5. Identity formation patterns in late modern society.

in respect for authority, especially among students. In these contexts, professors often find themselves defending the legitimacy of their social identity both individually (e.g., with students, colleagues, and administrators) and collectively (i.e., with governments and the corporate community).

At the level of personal identity, presentations of self are based increasingly on images, whose substance is often not at issue. Thus, as Goffman first demonstrated and as postmodernists like Gergen have continued to show, many people in late modern society engage in strategic projections of images aimed at fitting in or gaining advantage somewhere. Again, without knowledge of each other's biographies, people can create images of themselves, including fabricated biographies, that suit the requirements of a given situation, thereby gaining membership or validation with a group, along with certain rewards, for being simply who one is, or at least is thought to be.

At the level of ego identity, these late modern trends can affect people's sense of continuity in a variety of ways. As argued in the last chapter, these trends can turn people into passive acceptors of whatever they find in their day-to-day worlds. Consequently, they may remain open to each new trend, flexible in their views, and anxious to please others. In essence, people can become afraid not to conform, buckling under the pressure to continuously present pleasing and situationally appropriate impressions to others. In other words, they become identity diffused, with no real sense of inner continuity based on their ego synthetic and ego executive abilities. Instead, they look to others to synthesize information about the world and tell them how to behave—they become passive rather than active. Accordingly, identity formation processes often involve a process of "discovery," not of anything from "within" the person but of identity markers outside the person. This discovery is of new experiences, pleasures, and trends with and through others. The problem is, however, that ego capacities can become weakened by this trend. The ego needs to be "exercised" to grow and remain strong, but when people have this exercise done for them, their egos can become weak. Hence, the sense of ego identity can become weak as people become dependent on concrete day-to-day validation and direction from others, rather than maintaining an internal frame of reference for themselves.

The multidimensional model of identity formation has further implications for the sociological and psychological research that has focused on identity. For example, according to research using the Twenty Statements Test (TST; Kuhn & McPartland, 1954), college students (and perhaps young people in general) are forming their identities more elaborately at the level of personal identity than social identity. This finding suggests a number of trends in late modern society. One trend is that young adults are becoming less "establishment" oriented—feeling less connection with

mainstream institutions and authority structures. This transformation may not be too surprising, but it suggests that an increasing number of young adults are also less willing or likely to engage themselves in institutional processes, including those of political and community governance (see chapter 8 for further discussion of this growing problem). A consequence of this is that involvement in these institutions is left to those who do identify with mainstream social identities and who will therefore take power from the young (cf. Côté & Allahar's, 1996, discussion of the recent disenfranchisement of youth). Without viable social identities, young adults will be more likely to remain in an extended youth. Moreover, although elaborate personal identities may be personally "empowering" with one's peers and immediate associates, they likely do little for one's ultimate life chances and economic prospects. For some young adults, this "empowerment" may actually involve a retreat to, or self-absorption in, personal identity that makes them easier to control politically and to exploit economically. If young people are more concerned with how they look and feel than in larger issues of meaning in their lives and the direction their communities are going, it is easy for others to set their own political and economic agendas, while at the same time profiting from sales of items that feed the personal identities of those absorbed with nurturing such limited aspects of their identity.

Now that we have built the foundations for a formal, multidimensional theory of identity, we can move on to the important tasks of specifying relationships between identity and agency (chapter 8) and identity and integrity (chapter 9).

SYNOPSIS: MICRO–MACRO CONNECTIONS

We have explored a variety of themes in this chapter in order to develop a logic for understanding various micro–macro connections among identity domains, interaction, and social structure. With the use of a sociohistorical perspective, we have seen how changes in society, from premodern to late modern, have culminated in the formation of a contemporary social organization that has stimulated qualitative changes in the dominant modes of personal and social identity formation. These changes, in turn, help to reproduce society on a day-to-day basis. Many of them, we have suggested, do pose a threat to the development of the agentic personality, and they appear to have been debilitating for a sizable proportion of the populations of late modern industrial societies. There can be little doubt that the social conditions of modernity and late modernity have exerted a significant impact on us all, stimulating some of our "postmodernist" colleagues to theorize about the self and identity as though they were merely illusions or solely products of a narrative process.

But from our perspective, the social organizational developments we have been discussing are not sufficient reason to "throw the baby out with the bath water" and abandon the project of developing a society in which people are self-liberating with the use of forms of agency that a strong sense of ego identity can generate. In the last few chapters, we have suggested good reasons for exploring the structure of the human psyche to uncover the attributes of an agentic ego, understood in relationship with interactional and societal processes. In the next chapter, we present an analysis of "identity capital" to continue our discussion of this theme and to build on our general understanding of the agentic personality.

THEORETICAL AND EMPIRICAL ELABORATIONS FOR A SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY OF IDENTITY IN LATE MODERNITY

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Identity Capital

In these final three chapters, we offer several theoretical and empirical elaborations of Erikson's life-course perspective on identity formation, based on our attempts to synthesize psychological and sociological approaches to identity into a social psychology of identity relevant to late modernity. In this chapter, we discuss identity formation in the context of resources made available to people in their social settings and acquired by them in their day-to-day interactions, in terms of various ways of psychologically coping with the conditions of late modernity. The next chapter focuses on life-course conditions by examining the normative-ethical requirements necessary if life-long identity formation is to culminate in a sense of integrity at life's end. We conclude this book by making recommendations regarding how to fully develop and understand the untapped humanistic potential of identity formation.

IDENTITY CAPITAL DEFINED

As we saw in chapter 7, an emerging area of sociological interest lies in understanding how people are coping with late modern institutions. There is good reason to believe that late modern institutions present new challenges for the processes of identity formation and maintenance. For example, some sociologists have focused attention on problems in the relationships between educational institutions and the work place, finding that these institutions are now decoupled in ways that were not anticipated by educational planners and policymakers (e.g., Ashton & Lowe, 1991;

Bynner, 1998; Dryfoos, 1998; Lerner, 1995; Rush & Evers, 1986). Part of the problem lies in the non-directive nature of many mass educational programs, and in part with the collapse of the youth labor market in many Western countries (e.g., Davies, Mosher, & O'Grady, 1994; Furlong & Cartmel, 1997; Myles, Picot, & Wannell, 1988; Wallace, 1995). As a result, there are fewer "default options" for young people to follow in making this transition; instead, more planning and preparation is necessary for young people to successfully enter the world of stable and viable employment, especially in the middle and upper middle classes, but also even in the working class (Bynner, 1998; Wexler, 1992).

With the identification of certain disjunctures in the institutional linkages between education and work, some attempts to account for differing experiences in this transition have used the concept of "capital." With this concept, efforts are made to implicitly or explicitly explain how some individuals agentically compensate for "holes" in the social fabric, whereas others do not. For example, with the use of the concepts of human capital and cultural capital, some sociologists have attempted to explain how class mobility and class reproduction are accomplished on the basis of educational and economic resources transferred by parents to their children. (We discuss both human capital and cultural capital later, where we differentiate identity capital from other forms of capital.)

Although conceptualizations of capital in "human" and "cultural" forms are useful to some extent, we believe that neither comprehensively describes what seems to be necessary to negotiate the vagaries of late modern institutional transitions, like those from education to work. Thus, although our thinking has been greatly influenced by the concepts of cultural capital and human capital, we feel that these ideas do not constitute a sufficient theoretical foundation for understanding the multidimensional nature of life passages in late modern societies where (a) institutions can be poorly regulated and inadequately linked, in conjunction with the influence of (b) persisting status differentiations based on class, race, gender, and age, along with (c) the discrimination that these differentiations can produce. Thus, we have seen the need for a concept representing a different type of capital associated with identity formation, namely, the varied resources deployable on an individual basis that represent how people most effectively define themselves and have others define them, in various contexts. In our view, the concept of "identity capital" is appropriate to this task.

The idea for the concept of identity capital originated in our research projects that attempted to understand what now happens to identity formation among those attending higher mass-educational institutions, and how this identity formation influences their subsequent work- and life-experiences. The initial problem for us lay with the literature's tendency

for colleges and universities to be viewed as "black boxes" (Karabel & Halsey, 1977) into which something "goes in" and from which something else "comes out," but what happens in between is not well conceptualized. The same applies to sociological understandings of "the person." The "person" is currently little more than a subjective "black box" in the minds of many sociologists; consequently, disagreements and confusion over notions like "human agency" continue, as we have noted (cf. Emirbayer & Mische, 1998).

This initial education-specific problem comes into clearer focus when expressed in terms of the problems encountered during the transition to adulthood in an era of declining authority (identified by the culture–identity framework discussed in chapter 7). That is, with a growing segment of the population rejecting traditional forms of authority, and with existing authority structures often being indecisive in terms of guiding the young, the basis of identity formation has become increasingly problematic. Under such conditions, the *resources* at each individual's disposal become more important, including those psychological resources that can contribute to an internal point of reference (similar to the inner-directness of early modern society; Riesman, 1950) and an ability to reflexively evaluate and maneuver through a variety of social contexts.

A resource is an asset that people can "cash in," literally or metaphorically. In so doing, *identity exchanges* take place—pragmatically, symbolically, or emotionally—during contextually specific interactions, as part of a quid pro quo negotiated by the parties involved. If successful, these identity exchanges involve mutual acceptance with another individual, an informal group, a community, or an institution. And with this acceptance, the incumbent gains *identity capital*—there has been an increase in some aspect of "who they are." In this way, people acquire identity capital on the basis of the resources at their disposal. And, as in the financial world, capital can beget capital. Conceptualized in this fashion, we should be able to conduct audits or inventories of people's accumulated gains or net assets. Thus, we can refer to *identity capital acquisition* as representing an individual's net *assets* at a given point in time in terms of "who they are." Figure 8.1 illustrates the basic components of exchange attempts from the point of view of the individual initiating the exchange.

The term "capital" refers to sources of profit, advantage, and power, as well as net assets and resources. In the case of higher educational institutions, certain resources are brought to college and university settings by individual students, but these can be compounded in that setting. Other resources can be derived directly from involvements in educational settings, net of initial resources (Côté, 1997a). Assuming that a certain segment of the population already engages in the active accrual of identity capital resources, we can study their initiatives and strategies to see which are most
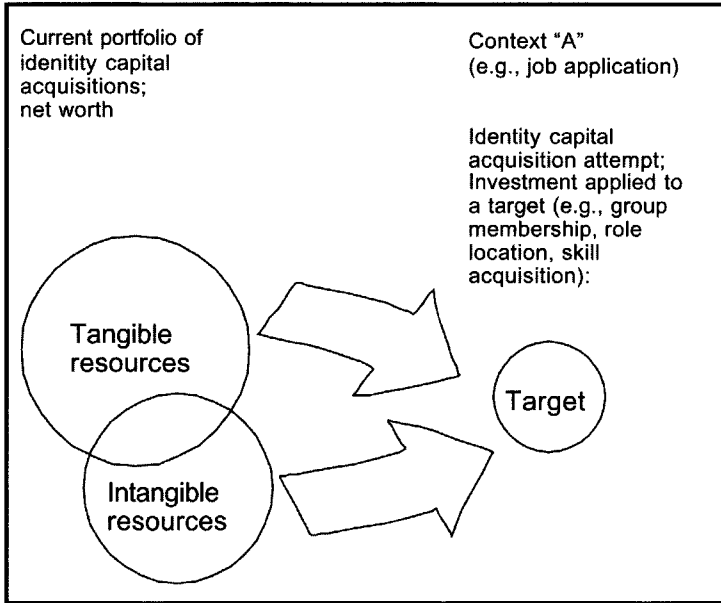
FIG. 8.1.   A representation of tangible and intangible identity capital re-
sources and their investment target.

"adaptive" in face of the disjunctive conditions of late modern society. A
prime testing ground for this is the college or university, where opportu-
nities potentially abound for personal and occupational development.

We employ the term identity capital to refer to two types of assets. On
the one hand, these identity capital assets can be *tangible* in the sense that
they are "socially visible." These include such things as degree credentials
and fraternity/sorority memberships, and they can function as "passports"
into other social and institutional spheres. As such, they are vital in pro-
viding the "dues" for memberships in various groups. Group member-
ships can vary in their concreteness (from club memberships to abstract
reference groups), making the tangible "membership" resources more im-
portant tools in the impression management and the micro-politics in-
volved in identity negotiations. Being thus involved in day-to-day interac-
tions over a period of time, such resources also indirectly contribute to
subsequent character formation and role socialization through the con-
struction of various situationally specific self-concepts and identities.

On the other hand, identity capital resources can also be *intangible*.
These resources involve ego strengths (synthetic and executive) that entail
reflexive-agentic capacities such as an internal locus of control, self-
esteem, a sense of purpose in life, the ability to self-actualize, and critical
thinking abilities (Côté, 1997a; Schwartz, 2001). We believe that these ego

strengths give people certain vitalities and capacities with which to *understand* (ego synthetic abilities) and *negotiate* (ego executive abilities) the various social, occupational, and personal obstacles and opportunities that they are likely to encounter throughout late modern life. Thus, there is a subjective/experiential component to these resources and a behavioral component in terms of micro-political and impression management skills.

In understanding how these intangible resources are developed, it is important to first note that they can be developmental in both cognitive-structural (Piaget/Kohlberg) and psychosocial (Freud/Erikson) senses. Thus, it should be emphasized that the *development and use* of such resources needs to be understood in terms of how social environments influence them. Social environments such as the university and college can contribute to, rather than inhibit, the growth and utilization of such intangible resources. Moreover, we believe that these resources have an inoculation quality in the sense that they can enable people to reflexively *resist and/or act back on* the social forces impinging on them. In this way, individuals should be more likely to develop a sense of authorship over their own biographies, of taking responsibility for their life choices, and of creating for themselves a meaningful and satisfying life. Note that these tasks are central to the individualization process, now widespread and compulsory, in Western societies. Thus, the notion of identity capital provides a way of theorizing "agency" for persons confronted by the task of individualization, and it does so with the explicit use of established theoretical concepts that have empirical referents. Moreover, the intangible resources are tied to well-developed ego synthetic and ego executive abilities that are fundamental to Erikson's formal theory of psychosocial health and development.

A couple of examples illustrate what we mean by identity capital and its situational relevance. First, take the instance of a young woman entering first-year college or university. Depending on the academic program, being female may be either a potential asset or deficit. For example, in programs where there is a "chilly climate" (e.g., Hall & Sandler, 1982), being a woman will likely be a situational deficit that can inhibit identity negotiation processes. Being an attractive woman, however, may neutralize this deficit and turn being female into an asset in some ways. Regardless of climate issues, there is much evidence that being an attractive woman is a potent asset in a number of contexts, including educational settings (e.g., Lerner, Lerner, & Tubman, 1990). The more articulate this female student is, net of the other characteristics just described, the more likely it is that her professors will take her seriously and engage her in conversations that will lead them to more favorably evaluate her, either in terms of the grades assigned for essays and presentations, or in terms of letters of reference that potentially open a variety of doors for the student.

However, in this case, tangible resources such as attractiveness and articulateness may not be invested at all, or invested wisely. The student may take the wrong courses, may not engage in a sufficient amount of interaction with her professors, may not apply herself sufficiently in learning the basics in each course, may not seek to acquire a felicitous combination of skills, and so forth. Such poor planning and weak self-application may be a result of being aimless, having low self-regard, or being shy and anxious. Whatever the cause, the outcome will be basically the same: the student may not have wisely or sufficiently invested her efforts and time in this particular context in order to negotiate and exchange the resources she had on entering it, and is therefore unlikely to accrue further assets as a result of her involvement there. The student may not finish her schooling, and if she does, she may have poor grades and poorly developed human capital skills like self-management and self-motivation (cf. Côté & Levine, 1997). In relation to other graduates, her balance of identity capital assets may be far below average, which puts her at a competitive disadvantage in making the transition from the educational system to the work world. Moreover, it is likely that she would not have acquired additional non-academic identity capital resources with which to successfully negotiate this increasingly difficult transition. Figure 8.1 can be referred to in tracing these features of the identity capital investment process.

This example should resonate with student readers, whereas the next will have personal relevance for faculty readers. In this second example, we are using the prototypical situation of a fresh Ph.D. applying for a faculty position. In this case, Doctor Y has all of the credentials explicitly required in an advertisement for a faculty position at University Z, but of course so do dozens of other Ph.D.s. From the perspective of the identity capital model, the interest lies in what differentiates the person hired from the dozens who were not hired. Typically, recruitment committees look for candidates who will best "fit in" to the department and university. Therefore, being hired depends on "who one is" in some key respects in the eyes of the recruiters. Recruiters will initially see only the candidate's Curriculum Vitae, which explicitly lists the most obvious tangible assets (race, gender, degrees held from which schools, publications, conference papers delivered, and special skills with computers or statistics). Only if the candidate is called for an interview will there be an opportunity to display other tangible assets such as personal deportment, articulateness, contacts in the profession and department, and so forth. Moreover, it is only the short-listed candidate who has the opportunity to display his or her intangible assets including personality attributes (e.g., charisma, charm, confidence), short-term and long-term strategies in terms of goal setting and career objectives, and ability to cultivate rapport with depart-

ment gatekeepers. However, often existing networks get the person short-listed in the first place, and these networks will have been established through previous activities with key faculty members during the person's student career, while at conferences, and elsewhere (e.g., through journal submissions and e-mail communications).

To advance this illustration, let us assume that Dr. Y gets hired and becomes Professor Y. He or she then faces the sometimes grueling task of getting tenure and promotion, and movement through the academy. At this career stage, there will be more identity displays, but Professor Y will now have to demonstrate the ability to follow through on his or her career strategies concerning research and publishing, and maintain a current written portfolio (C.V.) to show that investment strategies have worked out. If they do not work out, the person may have to lower goals (say, by being a part-time instructor) or change goals (say, by going into a research position for a private business). During the early career phase, the self-presentation strategy regarding "who one is" likely involves identity displays as someone with promise, commitment, and an appropriate intellect for the discipline. Implicitly, the self-presentation strategy should also involve "who one is not," namely, someone who is not a trouble maker, flaky, or "all talk."

Because the academic career is one involving considerable investments in identity capital, it is particularly useful in illustrating the identity capital model. As anyone who has attempted this career knows, it is a career fraught with difficulties, ambiguities, and stresses best dealt with through a series of long-term strategies about how to invest one's time (e.g., on which committees) and effort (e.g., on which research projects) most wisely. In any event, the identity capital model should apply both specifically and generally (qualitatively and quantitatively) in the variety of contexts in which identities are negotiated rather than ascribed.

In sum, the term "identity capital" denotes "investments" individuals make, and have, in "who they are." These investments potentially reap future dividends in the "identity markets" of late modern communities. According to the model, to be a player in these markets, one must first establish a stable sense of ego identity (i.e., an internal point of reference) that is bolstered by effective behavioral repertoires and suitable psychosocial attributes. At the very least, given (a) that many people are not provided consistent and benign social support for life-course development in late modern societies and (b) the compulsory nature of the individualization process, key resources for bargaining and exchanging with others in the late modern adult communities are apt to involve skills for negotiating life-passages with others, such as securing validation and legitimation in communities of strangers and attaining membership in the circles and groups to which one aspires.

NEW REQUIREMENTS PLACED ON THE
INDIVIDUAL IN LATE MODERNITY

As we have argued, the social-organizational problems of late modern so-
cieties often translate into deficient guiding structures in educational insti-
tutions and in the wider society (cf. Baumeister & Muraven, 1996; Ianni,
1989). Regardless of how much guidance there might have been in the past,
this lack of guidance is becoming a more serious problem because there are
now fewer default options available in the workforce; there are fewer jobs
requiring only basic laboring skills and more jobs requiring advanced edu-
cational credentials and/or specialized skills. Consequently, a lack of action
or initiative on the part of a young person can have more dire, long-term
consequences than in the past. At the same time, default options *are* being
provided for young people by mass culture, which tends to encourage pas-
sive consumption of technologies and packaged experiences. The more a
young person becomes involved in a mass youth culture associated with
these activities, the more prolonged his or her adolescence can be; conse-
quently, the greater the delay of adult independence (Côté, 2000).

   In a series of ongoing investigations, we have been studying two re-
sponses to late modernity: passive compliance and active adaptation (Côté,
1997a; Côté & Levine, 1997). At the individual level, the passive response
appears to be widespread and involves unreflectively following institutional
reinforcement contingencies. More generally, it can involve acquiescing to
the identity manipulation that characterizes contemporary consumer–cor-
porate society and the "mainstream" youth cultures it has produced (this is
referred to as default individualization by Côté, 2000). In contrast, those
undertaking active responses are more involved in their own personal
growth, including following more difficult developmental paths and so-
cial/occupational attainment patterns (referred to as developmental indi-
vidualization by Côté, 2000). Thus, in view of the discontinuous socializa-
tion *under conditions of compulsory individualization*, more successful active
adaptations in these contexts likely involve *agentic* dispositions and behav-
iors that lead individuals to avoid and resist the paths of least resistance
and effort offered by late modern consumer culture, and instead to ac-
tively explore their potentials, build personal strengths, and sustain some
sense of direction and meaning (cf. Côté, 2000).

   The identity capital model also helps us make sense of the difficulties
citizens of late modern societies can encounter in making transitions
through their individualized life courses, especially in terms of setting and
achieving long-term goals without well-developed institutional supports.
Sustaining stable, internal points of reference can be problematic for all
individuals in late modern societies, but a significant proportion of young
people can be particularly prone to an other-directedness, whereby they

are often more intent on pleasing and impressing others than on creating and maintaining their own internal standards (Côté, 1996a). Under such conditions, the personal resources at individuals' disposal become important, particularly those psychological resources that can contribute eventually to an internal point of reference and an ability to reflexively understand these challenges.

To use once again the college and university context as an example of what we are discussing, one important way in which higher educational settings have changed in late modernity is in terms of a pervasive move toward a business model, both in terms of how universities are governed and in terms of how students are recruited and treated (e.g., the importation of the Total Quality Management [TQM] philosophy from business into universities). In many settings, especially locally funded ones, the student is increasingly treated as a "consumer," sending the message that knowledge is something to be consumed in the same fashion as other items common in late modernity, like fast food, action entertainment, and fashions that change every season. The "student-as-consumer" model of education paradoxically does not always encourage students to maximally benefit from their education. To the contrary, it can encourage various forms of passivity, where some students expect to be "served" and therefore are not meeting their educational environments half-way in bilateral relationships that would foster active engagement and involvement with courses and faculty members (cf. Côté & Levine, 1997). Approaching education as something to be served and consumed encourages a hedonic, extrinsic motivation for participating (e.g., Wexler, 1992), as opposed to an intrinsic motivation based on a love of learning, self-discipline, and mastery of experience (which are essential ingredients for ego strength).

Our own empirical investigations of this model confirm that agentic attributes are indeed important, even more so than the tangible assets we have studied (like family income differences among university students). For example, among a group of university students, agentic personality attributes (self-esteem, purpose-in-life, internal locus of control, ego strength, self-actualization, and ideological commitment) combine to predict identity capital acquisition in terms of formulating a stronger sense of adult identity while attending university. In addition, our research into student motivations for attending higher educational settings (Côté & Levine, 1997, 2000) has identified two relatively common passive approaches to learning among contemporary students: an "expectation driven" motivation, where students are attending in order to please their parents, and a "default" motivation, where students are attending because of a lack of perceived alternatives, yet are deriving little from their studies. These passive approaches generally show negative outcomes with respect to skills acquired and grades attained.

Three active approaches undertaken by university students have also been identified in our research: the "careerist materialist" approach, the "personal-intellectual development" drive, and the "humanitarian" motivation. Of these three approaches, the personal-intellectual development motivation constitutes the most beneficial one in terms of skills acquired and grades attained, whereas the careerist-materialist approach yields the fewest positive benefits, suggesting that those who are most willing to invest in their personal-intellectual development acquire more identity capital than those who are simply making career investments.

Empirical support for the identity capital model can also be found in large-scale longitudinal survey research being conducted in the United States on hundreds of thousands of college students each year. From these surveys, it appears that the passive-identity-investment, default-individualization approaches to the transition to adulthood are becoming more common. Freshmen surveys by UCLA's Higher Education Research Institute (Sax, Astin, Korn, & Mahoney, 1998) indicate that interest in politics is at an all-time low among this group of late adolescents, with only 26% of the 1998 cohort believing that "keeping up-to-date with political affairs" is a very important or essential life goal. In 1966, almost 60% of freshmen cited this as a very important or essential goal. Another record high has been reached in terms of academic disengagement, with 38% saying they frequently felt "bored in class" in their last year of high school (compared to 26% in 1985). At the same time, 60% said in 1998 that they were frequently late for class compared with 50% in 1966, and fewer students are doing 6 or more hours of homework each week in their last year of high school. These trends are consistent with our research reported earlier in the sense that more students are attending college for extrinsic (career and money) than for intrinsic (self-development) reasons (about 75% and 60%, respectively, as top reasons for attending college). Our research suggests that students get less from their educations if their motivation is merely extrinsic.

At the same time, the American educational system (and others that let this happen) seems to be enabling the more passive, extrinsic strategies. For example, grade inflation was to the point in 1996 where almost one third of freshmen reported receiving A averages in high school compared to 13% in 1969. Only 15% reported C averages, compared to about 33% in 1969. Levine and Curran (1998) reported that grade inflation has also occurred in American colleges, with the percentage of undergraduate As rising from 7% in 1969 to 26% in 1993. The percentage of Cs dropped from 25% in 1969 to 9% in 1993. This grade inflation seems to have increased the self-confidence and aspirations of college freshmen, but at the group level, this growing self-confidence is not likely based on enhanced abilities, in light of the increase in the default approaches to self-development

previously noted. Given that two thirds of the freshmen from 1998 planned to earn graduate or professional degrees, and that a very small percentage of people hold such degrees (7.9% of the American population over 25; Department of Commerce, 1999, p. 170), it also appears that more and more young people are being set up for disappointments in their development strategies. The most recent statistics suggest that no better than three quarters of those beginning undergraduate degrees finish them *within 7 years*; moreover, among Americans aged 25 to 34, only 21% have even a B.A., and only 6.2% have an advanced degree (an additional 9% have a 2-year Associate's degree; Department of Commerce, 1999, p. 170).

Even without the aid of the identity capital model, common sense tells us that those who resist the increasing pressures toward taking the paths of least effort and resistance should have a potentially more effective strategy in dealing with late modern life. They should do better in both the short run and the long run because they are more likely to attend to their own growth by actively investing in aspects of themselves, as opposed to assuming others will do it for them or that it "just happens." This situation is analogous to (passively) putting one's savings into a bank account and assuming this will be a good investment, as opposed to (actively) investing them in mutuals, stocks, real estate, and the like. The latter strategies may involve risk, but they also involve the need to take responsibility for planning and choice-making about one's future.

WAIT A MINUTE, MR. POST MAN[1]

As our discussion in chapter 5 indicates, although we find some merit in the claims subsumed under the disciplinary heading of postmodernism, this perspective is problematic in several respects, and we feel it is important to comment further about this now. We keep discussion here brief because we do not want to get side-tracked by the modernism–postmodernism debate, which in many ways is unproductive to the task at hand.

Late Modernity Versus Postmodernity

We include ourselves among a growing number of sociologists who voice a dissatisfaction with the "postmodernism paradigm" and various exaggerated claims made by some postmodernists. We agree with Furlong and Cartmel (1997) that, although significant changes have taken place in Western societies, it appears that there has been some exaggeration re-

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[1]This expression is borrowed from Chandler (1995).

garding the extent and nature of the social changes that have taken place in the latter part of the 20th century. Our main reservation for using the term postmodern to describe the present era stems from the fact that the transformation from premodern to modern was on a scale far greater than that thought to characterize the transition from the modern to the so-called postmodern era. That is, in the transition from premodernity to early modernity, there was a shift in the basis of social solidarity from primary-group relations to secondary-group relations. In secondary-group relations, social bonds are more voluntary and based more on rational self-interest, rather than on familial and intergenerational obligation. We do not think that a transition of such a magnitude took place in the 20th century, however. Rather, secondary relations seem to have evolved to one of greater self-interest, but the basis of social solidarity has remained essentially the same (i.e., contractual). Thus, we refer to the "late modern" rather than the "postmodern."

Realist Assumptions Associated With Identity and Culture

Our metatheoretical position of metaphysical idealism\epistemological realism, as laid out in chapter 5, helps us to clarify a number of issues that have created confusion in the identity literature. To begin, there are strong reasons to believe that identity formation and identity maintenance processes have certain structural limits with respect to how the human mind engages the social and physical worlds (e.g., Bosma et al., 1994; Martin & Sugarman, 2000; Vollmer, 2000). In particular, we believe that there *are* constraints associated with the need for a sense of temporal–spatial continuity—the sine qua non of ego identity. In other words, people need a certain minimal sense of order and continuity in their lives in order to effectively engage their environments, whether this be chasing game on an African savannah, tending crops in a feudal society, or surfing the Web in cyberspace. While the need for the ego to have some minimal sense of itself as a continuous entity through time and space likely has a wide latitude for most people, there is a point beyond which functioning becomes difficult if a person cannot maintain a sense of continuity of himself or herself from one situation to the next. Recall that it was on this point that Erikson conceived of the notion of ego identity as he treated shell shock victims from the Second World War (as discussed in chapter 2). This is an issue on which we particularly draw a line with postmodernists like Gergen (see chapter 5; cf. Côté, 2000; Glass, 1993).

Erikson (1974) seems to have anticipated the postmodern position, and formulated a rebuttal of it, when he wrote about the rise of "Protean man, that is, one who could wear . . . a number of seemingly contradictory char-

acters in one lifetime" (p. 106). He attributed this "new man" in part to the rise of relativism, noting that "the notion that everything is relative has undoubtedly contributed to the character of contemporary identity formation in many subtle as well as blatant ways." However, Erikson also observed that Proteus in the end was compelled to show his core identity when he was unable to "escape into different beings [and] was . . . forced to be himself and tell what he knew" (p. 106). Accordingly, Erikson was skeptical that people can be entirely superficial role-players without any stable, interior substance. He expressed this skepticism as follows:

> But what if role-playing became an aim in itself, is rewarded with success and status, and seduces the person to repress what core-identity is potential in him? Even an actor is convincing in many roles only if and when there is in him an actor's core-identity—and craftsmanship. Comparably, there may well be some character types who thrive on Protean possibilities, even as there is, by definition, a developmental period (namely, youth) when the experimentation with a range of roles and alternating states of mind can be a way of personal growth. What is described as a Protean personality today may, in fact, be an attempt on the part of adolescent personalities—and America has always cultivated them—to adjust to overwhelming change by a stance of deliberate changeability, of maintaining the initiative by playing at change so as to stay ahead of the game. . . . Those who are gifted in this game and, therefore, truly playful in it, may with luck make it an essential part of their identity formation and find a new sense of centrality and originality in the flux of our time. (pp. 106–107)

Although we believe there are *real* constraints on the elasticity of the *processes* of ego identity formation and maintenance, identity *constructions* are nevertheless entirely "world open" (Berger & Luckmann, 1966) in the sense that identities can be given virtually any sort of *content* without necessarily affecting the ability to engage one's environment in ways that do not interfere with one's basic temporal–spatial needs. As we noted in chapter 5, much of the literature on the self confuses identity formation and maintenance with identity construction (i.e., the concepts of content and process are conflated with each other). Accordingly, theories of cultural differences in self and identity are most appropriate for studying different identity contents and forms of identity construction that produce differences in, say, degrees of independence versus interdependence of functioning; but the basic ego processes of identity formation associated with the synthetic and executive functions are the same in both types of functioning.

We also believe that a line with postmodern logic must be drawn with respect to exactly what "social constructions" can accomplish. If everything could be reduced to social constructions, as some postmodernists would have it, then it would not matter what the reality of the situation dic-

tates in terms of the resources available to a given person. However, in our view it would be foolhardy to believe that the constraints and opportunities associated with the tangible and intangible resources discussed earlier with respect to identity capital are irrelevant to a person's ability to get along in the world. A person who lacks both tangible and intangible resources is not likely to be functioning at a very high level in a late modern society. In a premodern society, there were/are more default options for such persons by merit of the basic nature of many life- and work-tasks, along with the collective structuring of the life course, and the proscriptions regarding choice-making. However, in a late modern society, individuals face more complex tasks in their personal lives and in their work lives, in part because of the requirements for undertaking an individualized life course based on a high degree of choice-making (cf. Beck, 1992; Bynner, 1998).

One final "reality" of identity formation pertains to identity "pathologies." These are not necessarily the social constructions of moral entrepreneurs, but can represent serious difficulties-in-living experienced by an apparently growing number of citizens of late modern societies (Côté, 2000). On the one hand, many of the psychiatric illnesses, particularly the more severe ones, impair mental functions to the point where sustaining a minimal sense of temporal–spatial continuity is very difficult. In this case, the identity pathology is a result of impaired ego functioning caused by a functional or organic disorder. However, problems of ego identity can also produce pathologies of behavior, as in the original cases identified by Erikson caused by severe emotional trauma (Steinberg & Schnall, 2000). In these cases, the person's experiences are so stressful and/or disjointed over a sufficiently long period that the ego loses its capacity to effectively synthesize information and appropriately execute behaviors. As Glass (1993) argued, this is not a condition to glorify; rather, it is accompanied by severe subjective distress and disruption in one's personal life. Identity pathologies include the dissociative (multiple personality) disorder discussed by Glass, and the borderline personality disorder (DSM-IV). Kreisman and Straus (1989) explained the symptoms of the borderline personality disorder as follows:

> Central to the borderline syndrome is the lack of a core sense of identity. When describing themselves, borderlines typically paint a confused or contradictory self-portrait. . . . To overcome their indistinct and mostly negative self-image, borderlines, like actors, are constantly searching for "good roles," complete "characters" they can use to fill the identity void. So they often adapt like chameleons to the environment, situation, or companions of the moment, much like the title character in Woody Allen's film, *Zelig*, who

literally assumes the personality, identity, and appearance of anyone around him. (p. 9)

The diagnostic manual of the American Psychiatric Association regularly undergoes revisions. Currently, it is in its fourth major revision (the DSM-IV; American Psychiatric Association, 1994). An earlier version (the DSM-III) listed "Identity Disorder" as one of several psychopathologies found mainly among the adolescent population. In the most recent edition, Identity Disorder was "downgraded" to "Identity Problem," to be distinguished from the borderline personality disorder. According to the DSM-IV, Identity Problem "is reserved for identity concerns related to a developmental phase (e.g., adolescence) and does not qualify as a mental disorder" (p. 654). Whatever its official psychiatric status, identity "difficulties" appear to be widespread enough not only to gain the attention of the psychiatric community, but to now be considered within the realm of "normalcy." According to Feinstein (1985):

> The DSM-III defined identity disorders as subjective distress over an inability to reconcile aspects of the self into a relatively coherent and acceptable sense of self. The disturbance is manifested by uncertainty about a variety of issues related to identity, including long-term goals, career choice, friendship patterns, values, and loyalties. (p. 1763)

Although it appears that most people can cope with the pathogenic social conditions of late modern society without becoming seriously afflicted themselves (cf. Giddens, 1991), a proportion of the adolescent and adult population does apparently experience severe abreactions to some of these social conditions. In its listing of symptoms of Identity Problem, the DSM-III (American Psychiatric Association, 1977) indicated that a diagnosis should be given if there is "severe subjective distress regarding uncertainty about a variety of issues related to identity" (such as those just cited). However, if we backtrack to research conducted by identity status researchers (chapters 2 and 4), we find that most young people have difficulties with these issues. There may not be severe distress concerning issues of long-term goals and career choice in the "normal" samples studied, but the bulk of the research suggests that most young people do not resolve these issues in a self-directed or committed fashion (Kroger, 2000a, 2000b). In fact, it appears that most adolescents tend to be passive and other-directed in their identity formation strategies, even the substantial population that goes on to college and university. In our view, the reason for this lies not so much in the failings of the "individual," but in the nature of late modern society. However, the result is much the same and the

identity problem becomes "habituated" in some people's mental states and behavior patterns (cf. the Self as discussed in chapter 6).

IDENTITY CAPITAL ELABORATED

A Differential Definition: Capital Ideas

The concept of human capital has a relatively long history, dating back to the 1950s (Becker, 1964, 1975). This economic theory has had a strong impact on educational policies around the world, convincing governments to invest heavily in mass educational systems (Côté, 1994). A second notion, cultural capital, has a shorter history, growing out of recent sociological theories of social class and cultural reproduction (Bourdieu, 1986; Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977). Despite their differing assumptions and origins, both of these concepts were developed to account for how educational experiences, or "investments," ultimately pay off during subsequent occupational and social involvements.

In view of the issues raised by the culture–identity framework (chapter 7), it is our position that economists' concerns with human capital, on the one hand, and sociologists' concerns with cultural capital, on the other hand, miss the point regarding how higher education can function in a late modern society. The inculcation of human capital in the form of instrumental skills can gain a person membership in the technocracy (if those skills are cutting-edge enough), but it may do very little for short- or long-term personal development or fulfilment (Lockhart, 1978), or social mobility (Bourdieu, 1986). Similarly, cultural capital can be useful in gaining or sustaining membership in the upper classes (at least as a nominal member who has some of the appropriate cultural knowledge, but not the lineage), and may be a source of personal development and fulfilment, but cultural/aesthetic skills are not well rewarded in the corporate technocracy of the late modern economy, so may not be the basis for an occupation if one does not have a network established by wealthy parents (Bourdieu, 1986). Thus, in late modern societies, both forms of capital are likely to be of limited value in the long term for the bulk of the population because skills and cultural tastes are constantly shifting. What is needed, therefore, is a concept that helps us understand how the person can strategically acquire and deploy skills and knowledge to meet the difficult conditions presented by late modern societies. Such skills and knowledge should help the person meet his or her needs, and those to whom obligations are owed in the immediate family and wider community.

It appears, then, that although both human capital and cultural capital are useful resources to develop and exchange, without other attributes,

they may not be exchanged over the long run and they may not be wise investments for seeing one through one's total life span in a fulfilled and meaningful manner. Therefore, a set of psychosocial skills, largely cognitive (or ego-based) in nature, seems to be necessary for people to intelligently strategize about how to plan and construct their life courses. In this context, the notion of identity capital becomes useful. The benefit of this concept is that it helps us to understand how a person can deliberately sustain an identity pragmatically situated in a social/occupational matrix. The concept of identity capital describes how the individual invests in a certain identity (or identities) and engages in a series of exchanges with other actors aimed at the validation of personal and social identities. To do this in a complex, shifting social milieu requires certain cognitive skills and personality attributes that are not necessarily imparted by human or cultural capital, and are certainly not imparted by mass/public educational systems.

In addition, our research suggests that neither economists' concerns with human capital nor sociologists' concerns with cultural capital are sufficiently sensitive to the complexity of the individualization process that has become commonplace in late modern societies. Although each type of capital has its uses, singularly pursuing the acquisition of just one may not be the most astute investment strategy in terms of seeing one through one's total life span in a fulfilled and meaningful manner. Accordingly, a more "diversified portfolio" that includes the psychosocial skills mentioned earlier may be necessary if an "intelligent strategist" is to be at the helm of behavior (Giddens, 1994, p. 7).

Still, some readers may not appreciate the utility of differentiating among different forms of capital. The differences between human capital and identity capital are relatively clear-cut, with human capital constituting skills that can be used as identity resources. The differences between cultural capital and identity capital, however, may not be so clear in some readers' minds. Part of the problem may be that the concept of cultural capital has been stretched by some sociologists to be a "rubber sheet" concept to characterize all non-economic resources that might influence others. It is important, therefore, to make clear that the concept of cultural capital was intended to explain how high status culture is transmitted interactionally and reproduced intergenerationally. Accordingly, the "culture" referred to is not just any culture, but the culture of the wealthy and aristocratic (cf. Bourdieu, 1986). Cultural capital is about social class-membership, -boundaries, and -consciousness. The "capital" involves things like esthetic and arcane tastes, advanced educational degrees, and cultivated linguistic and grammatical forms, all of which are necessary to sustain membership in the traditional upper classes of Western societies. To say, for example, that a street gang has certain cultural capital is to misuse the concept.

Identity capital as a concept is not context- or class-specific. Identity capital can include cultural capital (as part of a diversified portfolio) to the extent that a person believes that exchanges in high status culture are useful, but identity capital can include many other things that are specific to membership in any type of culture—including street gangs. In this sense, identity capital operates to gain and/or preserve group membership validation and personal definition. Moreover, identity capital can involve personality mechanisms (e.g., charisma, cleverness, impression management skills) that facilitate free movement among diverse groups and contexts, including social class groupings and ethnic subcultures. The accumulation of identity capital can also facilitate the person's movement through the life course, with or without any social class mobility. Identity capital exchanges can be equal and mutually beneficial, or they can be unequal, as when a person with greater resources uses her or his resources to acquire further resources at the expense of others (analogous to capital accumulation in the economic system). Thus, identity capital exchanges can lead to: mutual validation among equals; unilateral validation, as by a subordinate to a superior; and financial or material gain, as by a superordinate from a subordinate.

We believe that much can be gained in the identity field with the use of the concept of identity capital. For example, identity capital helps us understand how individuals can negotiate exchanges with members of outgroups, where the outcome is not necessarily dependent on mutual cooperation or a recognition of common symbols. In addition, the concept of identity capital can help us understand social cohesion in late modern societies where involvements are not necessarily at the first order of "bonding social capital"[2] (which requires personal involvements in a "place"), but rather at higher orders of involvement similar to "bridging social capital" (through "space," as in a professional reputation, occupational prestige, the power to influence career-building decisions, cyber identity, and

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[2]Robert Putnam (1995) defined social capital as those "features of social life—networks, norms, and trust—that enable participants to act together more effectively to pursue their shared objectives" (pp. 664–665). The more social capital a community has, the greater its economic prosperity and civic vibrancy, in part because more people subscribe to a "norm of reciprocity" that helps create a "dense civic fabric" in which people connect with their neighbors and community institutions. Putnam (2000) argued that one of the most important dimensions of social capital involves a distinction between bridging, inclusive social capital, and bonding, exclusive social capital: "Some forms of social capital are, by choice or necessity, inward looking and tend to reinforce exclusive identities and homogenous groups. Examples of bonding social capital include ethnic fraternal organizations, church-based women's reading groups, and fashionable country clubs. Other networks are outward looking and encompass people across diverse social cleavages. Examples of bridging social capital include the civil rights movement, many youth service groups, and ecumenical religious organizations" (p. 22).

so forth). In these cases, people located around the globe can create and sustain communities that involve very little face-to-face interaction, but which provide many of the benefits of concrete communities (e.g., career advancement, the generation of new knowledge, mutual senses of accomplishment, and so forth). Scholarly societies, now aided by instantaneous Internet communications, are an obvious example of this. Thus, in addition to human capital skills and cultural capital repertoires, the concept of identity capital helps us understand: the mental wherewithal people can possess as part of an agentic personality; the ability to move, both concretely and abstractly, among groups and networks with diverse interests (a multiplexity); and the adaptive ability to combine diverse resources as the situation dictates. We return to these issues later.

The Anatomy of Identity Capital

With identity capital sufficiently differentiated from other forms of capital, we can now delve into its ontological nature. In doing so, it is helpful to differentiate (a) its essence from its basis and (b) its structure from its processes.

The *essence* of identity capital pertains to what it does for a person in terms of benefits like access through "place," "space," and "time" (cf. Giddens, 1991) to certain identity contexts. Identity contexts are where identities are communicated to, and perceived by, others as part of the exchanges involved in acceptance and entry into groups, as well as sustained membership in those groups. In describing the essence of identity capital, we can use words like passports, passwords, and tickets as metaphors for means of access. In contrast, the *basis* of identity capital refers to what constitutes it, namely resources garnered through previous investments. As noted, these resources can be both tangible and intangible. Tangible resources are the more visible attributes that signify personal or social identities, or which "buy" an identity. In order to be exchangeable, these resources must have some socially recognized attributes (ascribed, achieved, or contrived). Intangible resources involve the psychological wherewithal to know what to do to gain access, or what attributes to have, as judged by others (i.e., the "right stuff," in reference to both personality factors and behavior).

The *structure* of identity capital comprises these dimensions of "essence" and "basis" as possessed by an individual at a given point in time. The *process* of identity capital refers to the means of accrual and exchange of resources. The accrual of resources involves the outcomes of prior investments in one's identity(ies) by self or others (like parents), whereas the exchange of resources occurs during (proximate or distal) interactions with others. These exchanges can result in profit or loss (zero-sum), or in

mutual benefit. Some people may be Machiavellian in their exchanges, but this is only one possibility. (To reject the idea of the identity capital model because some people can use it in a Machiavellian fashion is like wanting to ban clerical training because some priests and ministers become child molesters.)

With the anatomy of identity capital elaborated, we can now speak of its dimensionality. Following Giddens (1991), people move through "place" and "space." Place is the concrete site of face-to-face interaction, whereas space involves the transcendence of place. Thus, throughout much of human history most people functioned, and possessed identities rooted, in one place—their village, town, or neighborhood. Now, because of technological advances in transportation and communication (which affect the essence of identity capital now available to people), it is possible to sustain identities through space. A person can be known in places around the globe by reputation alone, which gives him or her physical and symbolic access when desired. Traveling from place to place is now common in business and the professions, and is facilitated by a person's identity capital. In the case of the professions, this physical movement through space may be at no personal financial cost, but can be of great professional benefit in terms of networks expanded, reputation bolstered, and future opportunities opened. Symbolic influences through space are evident when a person's ideas or actions affect policies and practices elsewhere, even though the person has not physically been to that place.

Theoretically, it is possible to plot an individual's access to various places through "space." To the extent that this access is identity-based, identity capital increases movement through space, so that the greater the identity capital, the greater access the person has to places around the world. Time adds a fourth dimension to this analysis and becomes important as people move through the life course. A person's identity capital can be tied to age, as in the obvious example of being young as opposed to being elderly. Both age periods can afford people various resources (especially appearance-based resources), but some resources are different and difficult to carry from one's youth to one's old age. Indeed, a fruitful line of inquiry should be to examine the strategies and habits people use to acquire and maintain identity capital resources at different stages of the life course, and how early forms of identity capital expire (e.g., attractiveness) or lose value over time (e.g. impulsive, youthful risk taking).

By analytically separating the dimensions of identity (i.e., time, place, and space), we can gain greater appreciation of exactly what human identity is in its most basic forms. The time dimension pertains to the person's temporal continuity (objectively as in behavioral stability and subjectively as in the sense of temporal continuity); the place dimension pertains to the person's sense of "home" or "tribe" (where one's core is anchored in a primordial sense), and the space dimension helps us understand move-

ment into unfamiliar territory (movement through time to other places in which one is a stranger in varying degrees). The ability to manage each of these dimensions constitutes ego strengths, the cumulative product of which can represent an individual's identity capital portfolio. Most people do not have serious problems with temporal continuity, or a sense of place. However, one of the challenges that many people now face, or would if they try to do so, is psychological movement through space, where familiar landmarks are missing. The ability to move through space, and to leave the security of home and tribe behind—along with the temporal pattern that these anchors produce—is second nature to many late modern citizens but is a serious emotional and intellectual challenge for many more citizens of the late modern world, in part because they have no experience of leaving the place in which they formed their basic sense of identity, and hence have not developed the synthetic and executive ego strengths for such movement. (This should be an empirically verifiable distinction between Identity Foreclosure and Identity Achievement, as defined in the identity status paradigm.)

Finally, it is useful to note important diagnostic utilities of identity capital that might escape the attention of those who do not attend to the realist aspects of identity. As discussed in chapter 7 (Fig. 7.3), identities have objective and subjective components. Objective components involve the actual positioning of the person in terms of personal and social identities as perceived and validated by others. In contrast, subjective components pertain to people's experience of their identities, including who they think they are, what impression they are making, and what impact they are having. However, the degree of *correspondence* between the subjective and objective components of personal identity is essential for effective functioning. For some people, there can be an exact correspondence—they accurately perceive their position in the world, how other people see them, and what impact they are having. For others, though, the correspondence may be moderate, and for yet others there may be little correspondence. Expressed in this way, we can offer several postulates about identity capital based on the interrelationships between objective and subjective components of identity:

1. The larger the "area" of each component (i.e., the more identity elements there are) and the greater the overlap between the subjective and objective components, the greater the identity capital.

2. The more the two components become uncoupled, the more likely it is that psychological/emotional problems will emerge (or vice versa).

3. A high degree of correspondence between the two components is necessary for effective identity formation from adolescence through adulthood.

4. Contemporary adolescence can create a tenuous linkage between the two components, with more activity occurring in the subjective dimension that will have to be worked out later in the objective dimension during the later transition to adulthood.

5. Certain "breakpoints" may occur between the two components that create identity crises (e.g., job loss can create an objective identity loss, a relationship breakdown can create a subjective identity loss).

6. A strong ego with well-developed synthetic and executive functions can more accurately perceive the correlation between the objective and the subjective components (a synthesis function), and more appropriately match the subjective component with the objective one in terms of day-to-day behaviors (an executive function); accordingly, a stronger ego should be better able to manage objective and subjective aspects of identity capital than a weaker one.

With the anatomy of identity capital thus elaborated, we can now revisit the relationship between identity and individualization.

LOCATING IDENTITY CAPITAL IN COLLECTIVISM AND INDIVIDUALISM

Thus far, we have introduced a large number of concepts related to variations in self- versus other-orientations and different forms of capital. In this section, we show how these concepts can be viewed in relation to each other. Figure 8.2 lists three sets of master concepts in the left column related, respectively, to "self" concepts, "societal" concepts, and life-course structuring according to variation in the active/developmental and passive/default nature of the individualization process. In the main body of the figure, we have laid out the dimensions that various social scientists have used to characterize these "self and society" concerns, along with a mapping of the various forms of capital we have been discussing.

It can be readily seen in Fig. 8.2 that many self theorists have been conceptualizing a similar dimension that ranges from the isolated, stand-alone person to the embedded, socially integrated one. With the exception of Bakan (1966), who was the first to suggest such a distinction in modern empirical social science, we have already discussed most of these theorists, so further elaboration is not necessary here. The two societal concepts offered here represent Durkheim's (1893/1964) classical sociological distinction and Coleman's (1988) and Putnam's (1995) recent neoDurkheimian distinction in the area of social integration. (The distinction between individualistic and collectivist societies could also be placed
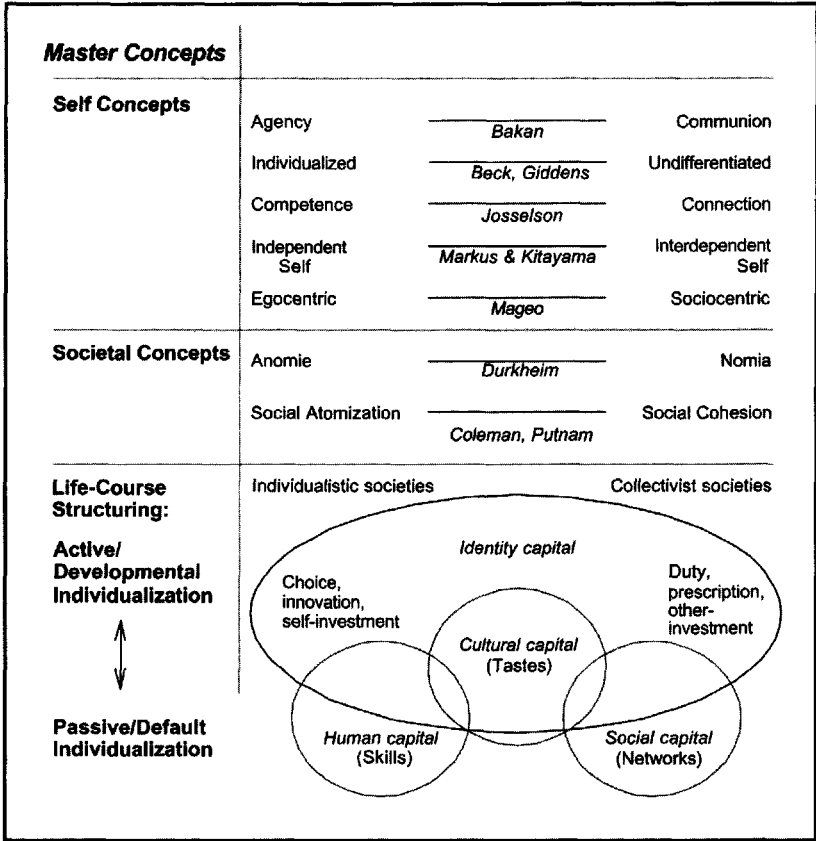
FIG. 8.2.   The interrelationships among various forms of resources.

among the societal concepts, but we reserve this for our over-arching conceptualization.)

Although all of the societal concepts do not correlate perfectly with the self concepts, a degree of correspondence is logically apparent. Our reason for presenting these concepts here is to show how identity capital is theoretically associated with the dimensions generally affiliated with individualism and collectivism. On the one hand, identity capital resources can involve choice, innovation, and investments in one's personal development. This is what one would expect in societies that place a premium on individualism. On the other hand, identity capital resources can comprise duty, following norms, and investing in symbiotic relationships with others. This is what one would expect of people in more collectivist societies.

The final segment of Fig. 8.2 represents how variations observable in individualistic and collectivist societies (horizontally) can be cross-tab-

ulated with variation in individualization along the active–passive dimension (vertically) discussed earlier. When these two distinctions are placed orthogonally to one another, we can map out identity capital to show that it can be applied equally to both types of societies, but is found only with the more active forms of individualization. We can also postulate the relationship of identity capital to other forms of capital: human capital tends to the individualistic side at moderate to low levels of active individualization, whereas social capital tends toward the collectivist side, also with moderate to low levels of individualization. Finally, cultural capital can be placed mid-way in terms of individualism–collectivism, but toward higher levels of active individualization. Portrayed in this way, we can readily see how identity capital is meant to constitute a broader array of more general resources that are more situationally applicable than the other forms of capital, and that the other forms of capital can constitute forms of identity capital, but are not synonymous with it.

Figure 8.2 also helps clarify a problem facing late modern societies where individualism is combining with passive forms of individualization to the point where a significant proportion of the population is adversely affected in significant ways (Côté, 2000). The challenge for these societies is how to regain social capital in anomic, atomized societies, that are by definition low in levels of mutual cooperation. It is possible that the concept of identity capital can help in this regard by showing how people can involve themselves in communities at second- and third-order levels represented by the notion of "space" discussed in the last section. To the extent that people pursue active forms of individualization, their self-investments should produce social dividends from which larger communities benefit. In other words, their identity capital can produce a larger, more global community that is affluent, with identity capital operating in a manner analogous to the way in which economic affluence can benefit a society. Much of the work on social capital and its benefits is at the first order of "place," which is of limited benefit to the human species as a whole because groups look primarily to their own interests to the exclusion of the interests of others (see Portes, 1998). However, bridging social capital (Putnam, 2000, Note 2 this chapter) involves identity capital invested and utilized across "space" through networks with other groups.

With these clarifications, we hope we have made it clear that we are not presenting identity capital as some sort of means by which people use false impressions and trickery in dealing with others (as would be the case in Gergen's, 1991, "strategic manipulator"). To the contrary, the personality takes on a complexity and flexibility in adapting to the multidimensional contexts of late modern society. Identity capital is thus a set of strengths, not a bag of Machiavellian tricks. (See MacDonald, 1999, for an anti-objectivist critique of agency as conceptualized here, a position to which we take exception, as already explained.)

We would also like to emphasize that by speaking in terms of "active" responses and "agency," we are not endorsing what some might call a "male" model of behavior. The problem is that the concept "agentic" is often counterposed with the notion "communal" (see the representation of Bakan in Fig. 8.2) and then the leap is made that females are more communal, so agency must be a "masculinist" concept. We believe that we have provided enough elaboration of the concept in this book enabling careful readers to know that this is not our intention and that it is not an implication of the identity capital model. It also needs to be emphasized that the dimension "active–passive" is not parallel to either "male–female" or "agency–communion." Instead, active–passive is orthogonal to both, as represented in Fig. 8.2. Clearly, females can be both active and passive, as can males. However, active–passive *is* parallel to the developmental–default individualization dimension. Accordingly, agentic (choice oriented) patterns can be active (developmental) or passive (default), as can communal (collectively oriented) patterns.

With these points established, it is now possible to comment on the fundamental nature of identity as conceptualized by Erikson and other modernist social scientists. Many postmodernists mistakenly believe that modernist social scientists have a simplistic, binary view of identity as the rudimentary us–them basis of "difference" (see Hollinger, 1994; Sökefeld, 1999). While this may be the case in describing the views of some social scientists (although we cannot think of any identity researchers or theorists who believe this), conceptions of identity are far more complex, and Erikson led the way in discussing this complexity.

The following discussion is essentially derived from Erikson's (1975) theory of the value orientation stages, but can be found in various places throughout his writings. We are using Fig. 8.3 to illustrate three levels of increasing complexity in the moral–ethical grounding of identity forma-

Identity mode / value orientation stage	Fundamental identity experience	Implicit validating metaphor
Binary self-definition / Moral stage	Me vs. you & & Us vs. them	I am what I am not. We are what we are not.
Typological self-definition / Ideological stage	Me vs. you & them & the rest & Us vs. their kind & the rest	I am an individual who needs to feel different in some ways; We are different and need to show it and be recognized for it.
Dimensional self-definition/ Ethical stage	Me and Us, including you, them, and the rest, in certain ways and in certain contexts.	Me and you are simply members of the same species, who have responsibilities to all others of our species.

FIG. 8.3.   Concepts of identity as "self-in-relation-to-other."

tion by which people experience themselves in relation to others, ranging from the parochial binary self-definition to the universalistic dimensional conception.

At the binary level, or what would correspond to the most primitive level of human identity (existing at the "moral stage" for Erikson), people possess a dichotomous "me versus you" and "us versus them" view of themselves in relation to others. At this primitive level, there is a clear in-group and a clear out-group. An essential part of a person's self-definition is "what they are not," namely, a member of one or more out-groups, which are defined as threatening or antagonistic in some way. People whose self-definition is at this basic binary level are very much tied to place and have difficulty moving through space, given the rigid in-group/out-group distinctions they endorse.

As human civilization became more advanced, and as people mature during their life courses, the basis of self-definition can become more complex, moving to a typological level. Here there still exists a strong sense of identity based on in-group membership, but the conception of out-groups becomes more differentiated into a typology of others. A person is more able to see "the other" in larger, more neutral contexts, as one of many other groups of possibly threatening and non-threatening "others." This form of self-definition corresponds to the ideological stage that Erikson believed corresponds to the "adolescence" of civilization, as well as to the adolescence of the individual life course.

Erikson believed that many people can, and do, continually push back the boundaries of their sense of in-group to include more and more out-groups as part of their self-definition. As this happens, people begin to experience themselves and base their personal and social identities on a sense of being a member of the human species, rather than simply a member of a specific, privileged group. This is the ethical stage that Erikson attributed to advanced forms of civilization and maturity. A person who reaches this advanced stage of value orientation has a more dimensional sense of identity that is inclusive and universalistic. Out-groups are not viewed as threats so much as constituting persons who define themselves differently. All humans have particular identity needs, along with material needs, and all are minor actors in larger systems. Morever, it is realized that all humans have ultimate responsibility for their actions, and neither identity needs nor material needs justify the exclusion or persecution of others, regardless of their group membership.

When we combine this formulation of levels of self-definition with the identity capital model, it becomes apparent that the acquisition of identity capital can be associated with the movement through these three levels of self-definition in the sense that the more identity capital acquired by an individual, the more likely that individual is to progress through these lev-

els. This is especially the case to the extent that one uses one's identity capital, or finds it necessary because of one's identity capital, to move through "space" and therefore to interact with the variety of hitherto outgroup persons. Stated in this way, we can assert a claim regarding the moral–ethical potential of identity capital.

THE STRUCTURE–AGENCY DEBATE REVISITED

Finally, with the concept of identity capital more fully elaborated, we can return to the structure–agency debate referred to at various points in this book. As noted, this debate has been a contested area through much of the disciplinary history of sociology. Emirbayer and Mische (1998), writing in the prestigious *American Journal of Sociology*, provided a thorough, up-to-date review and analysis of this debate, along with substantive recommendations toward resolving it. We concur with much of their analysis, finding it highly compatible with Erikson's formal theory and our own formulations of identity capital. Moreover, we believe the contributions toward understanding identity and agency that we make in this book advance the model presented by Emirbayer and Mische. Accordingly, we will briefly review their model and point out how the Eriksonian model both supports and extends it.

Emirbayer and Mische (1998) began by noting the persisting problem of the structure–agency distinction in sociology, and the difficulties sociologists have had in dealing with it:

> The concept of agency has become a source of increasing strain and confusion in social thought. Variants of action theory, normative theory, and political-institutional analysis have defended, attacked, buried, and resuscitated the concept in often contradictory and overlapping ways. At the center of the debate, the term agency itself has maintained an elusive, albeit resonant, vagueness; it has all too seldom inspired systematic analysis, despite the long list of terms with which it has been associated: selfhood, motivation, will, purposiveness, intentionality, choice, initiative, freedom, and creativity. Moreover, in the struggle to demonstrate the interpenetration of agency and structure, many theorists have failed to distinguish agency as an analytical category in its own right—with distinctive theoretical dimensions and temporally variable social manifestations. The result has been a flat and impoverished conception that, when it escapes the abstract voluntarism of rational choice theory, tends to remain so tightly bound to structure that one loses sight of the different ways in which agency actually shapes social action. (pp. 962–963)

In other words, the structure–agency debate has been mishandled in sociology because of a conceptual sloppiness that seems to date back to its

earliest history. The sociological community has not been able to consistently define the concept of agency, and many definitions offered are conflated with elements of structure. We go back to our original position as previously stated that the primary problem has been the reluctance among sociologists to propose concepts that represent psychological processes and structures. Without these concepts, the "person" is under-conceptualized, and consequently so is the relationship between person and structure. Emirbayer and Mische showed how sociologists have tended to leave this aspect of the problem as a "black box" (p. 966). As we have argued, Eriksonian theory can take us beyond this impasse by specifically postulating the contents of this black box, as well as specific elements of the nature of the relationship between its contents and its social context.

Emirbayer and Mische argued that problems in resolving the structure–agency debate "can be traced back to the Enlightenment debate over whether instrumental rationality or moral and norm-based action is the truest expression of human freedom" (p. 964). Readers will note that these two dimensions correspond to the superordinate dimensions we have been using to organize the identity literature. For example, in chapter 4, we noted how the identity statuses are classified in terms of exploration (cf. instrumental rationality) and commitment (cf. moral and norm-based action). Similarly, the concepts of individualization and community structure were used in chapter 4 to further classify identity strategies and social-structural eras (Fig. 4.2 to Fig. 4.5). In these classifications, we treated the superordinate dimensions as orthogonal rather than as correlated, illustrating that when structure and agency are treated as cross-tabulations, rather than as bipolar alternatives, much of the apparent opposition between structure and agency disappears, for it becomes apparent that agency varies to the extent that choice and structure interact. In our illustrations we produce four potential combinations of agency and structure as related to identity issues.

Emirbayer and Mische relied heavily on American pragmatism generally and Mead's work specifically in formulating their model of agency. They defined agency as:

> the temporally constructed engagement by actors of different structural environments—the temporal-relational contexts of action—which, through the interplay of habit, imagination, and judgment, both reproduces and transforms those structures in interactive response to the problem posed by changing historical situations. (p. 970)

They argued that there are three analytically distinguishable constitutive elements to human agency: iteration, projectivity, and practical valuation (these are synonymous with habit, imagination, and judgment, as per

their definition of agency). We are struck by how close these three elements are to key features of Erikson's theory of personality, as discussed in chapter 6. As we see, the first element, iteration or habit, is homologous with what Erikson referred to as the Self, with its various minor, situationally specific selves. The second component, projectivity or imagination, is analogous to key features of Erikson's notion of ego executive functions. And the third element, judgment or practical evaluation, is compatible with some of Erikson's ego synthetic functions (such as those represented by the value orientation stages).

Emirbayer and Mische defined the iterational element as "the selective reactivation by actors of past patterns of thought and action, as routinely incorporated in practical activity, thereby giving stability and order to social universes and helping to sustain identities, interactions, and institutions over time" (p. 971). This is exactly the role ascribed by Erikson to the Self, as maintained and executed by the ego. Noting that the second element, projectivity, has been dealt with by several fields, including psychoanalysis, Emirbayer and Mische defined it as "the imaginative generation by actors of possible future trajectories of action, in which received structures of thought and action may be creatively reconfigured in relation to actors' hopes, fears, and desires for the future" (p. 971). What they described is a key feature of what Erikson called ego executive functions, in which the person plans future courses of action based on what is available in the knowledge gained from previous ego syntheses and the behavioral repertoires of his or her Self. Finally, Emirbayer and Mische defined their practical-evaluative element as "the capacity of actors to make practical and normative judgments among alternative possible trajectories of action, in response to the emerging demands of dilemmas, and ambiguities of presently involving situations" (p. 971). The ability to perform this cognitive function is essential to the synthetic function that Erikson ascribed to the ego, namely, to selectively attend to incoming information about the social context in order to provide a basis for subsequent ego executive operations and the deployment of situationally appropriate selves.

We believe that this sociological model of agency would benefit from an incorporation of Erikson's theory of personality structure and functioning. In fact, Erikson's theory would round it out by providing a workable conceptual apparatus with which to study the "black box" of the human mind. Certainly, Emirbayer and Mische provided convincing elaborations of various components of three elements of agency, which we cannot go into here, but their model is still one where the psychological mechanisms of an active person are not specified. As such, agency consists of a series of cognitions dialogically embedded in contexts, but there is no discernible, structured person directing these cognitions from within the "black box." Interestingly, Emirbayer and Mische came close to postulating a theory of

personality structure when they "ground this capacity for human agency in the structures and processes of the human self, conceived of as an internal conversation possessing analytic autonomy vis-à-vis transpersonal interactions" (p. 974).

Although they deliberately cut their analysis short of exploring "the ontology of the self" or conducting "a systematic analysis of the components or structures of the self," they "maintain that while transpersonal contexts do both constrain and enable the dialogical process, such contexts cannot themselves serve as a point of origin of agentic possibilities, *which must reside one level down (so to speak), at the level of self dynamics*" (p. 974, emphasis added). In other words, Emirbayer and Mische admitted that the point of origin of agency lies within the person. In our view, therefore, it is attendant upon them (and us) to specify this point of origin as clearly and thoroughly as possible. Although they recommended Wiley's *The Semiotic Self* (1994), we obviously recommend Erikson's work. We leave it to interested parties to look into Emirbayer and Mische's formulations to see for themselves its compatibility with Erikson, and to decide for themselves whether or not Erikson's formal theory of personality is up to the task of identifying the point of origin of agency within the person. We believe it is, however, and support this claim in the next chapter where we discuss the "virtue" of wisdom and the ego's reflexive attempt to preserve meaning in interactive contexts.

It is also worth arguing that the agentic model proposed by Emirbayer and Mische is compatible with, and would benefit from an integration with, the identity capital model. Briefly, they believed that "there are no concrete agents, but only actors who engage agentically with their structuring environments" (p. 1004). They proposed the notion of the "double constitution of agency and structure," meaning that

> temporal-relational contexts support particular agentic work orientations, which in turn constitute different structuring relationships of actors toward their environments. It is the constitution of such orientations within particular structural contexts which gives form to effort and allows actors to assume greater or lesser degrees of transformative leverage in relation to the structuring contexts of action. (p. 1004)

In other words, the potential for agency in a given individual depends on both the specific qualities of that individual and the specific qualities of the context in which the individual is acting. Actors, by definition, function in contexts; as such, they are never free from structure, but vary in terms of their ability to utilize and transform that structure. In this respect, Emirbayer and Mische endorsed the position that agency "consists primarily in the capacity of *resource-equipped actors* to act creatively through

the transposition of existing schemas into new contexts" (p. 1005, emphasis added). This is precisely the fundamental postulate of the identity capital model. In this regard, it is noteworthy that they argued that "the empirical challenge becomes that of locating, comparing, and predicting the relationship between different kinds of agentic processes and particular structuring contexts of action" (p. 1005). This is exactly what we have been endeavoring to do in empirically testing and theoretically elaborating the identity capital model (Côté, 1997a, 2000; Côté & Levine, 1997, 2000; cf. Lerner's developmental contextualism, e.g., Lerner & Kaufman, 1985; Lerner, Lerner, & Tubman, 1990).

SYNOPSIS

In this chapter we have differentiated the constructs of human and cultural capital from identity capital and claimed that the latter's tangible and intangible assets can provide persons with the ability to adapt to the social conditions of late modern society. We have also suggested that the notion of identity capital intangible assets (e.g., critical thinking abilities) enables us to theorize the idea of agency and associate this idea with psychic structure and the functioning of persons in interactive contexts, where the assets of identity capital can be depleted or increased.

Our understanding of identity capital as a product of the agentic personality led us once again to take issue with certain postmodern claims regarding the illusory nature of the self and identity. In addition, we have taken care to point out that identity capital assets do not simply describe a bag of Machiavellian tricks to be employed in order to strategically manipulate others. Although such assets can indeed be used in such a manner, we have also indicated that their use can enable movement through Erikson's value orientation stages and through levels of understanding the self in relationship with others.

When understood in reference to increasing one's sociocentricity and moral development, identity capital becomes, for us, a more important construct. It, as well as the general notion of the agentic personality, should be discussed in relation to more general themes regarding lifespan psychosocial development. We turn to this task in the next chapter.

Assessing the Adequacy of Identity Stage Resolution in Late Modernity

In previous chapters we have developed a social psychological perspective on identity formation and functioning in the late modern world. We have taken care to point out some of the benefits of such a perspective by exploring how the broad orientation of a macro-sociological perspective, concerned with culture and social structure, can be coordinated with more micro-psychological concerns describing the development and adaptive capabilities of young people making the transition to adulthood. We have also emphasized our belief that there is still much to be gained with a reliance on the social psychological perspective provided in Erikson's writings.

In this chapter, those themes remain of interest to us as we turn our attention to an analysis of several related issues that remain implicit in much of the identity literature. In general terms, we are referring to the fact that if the study of identity includes an awareness on the part of the research scientist that it is a developmental phenomenon, then such a study can, and sometimes must, include reference to certain normative-ethical concerns. In other words, although the study of identity can simply be oriented to the "is" or the "facts" of the matter, some theorists discuss it in terms of "ought" claims, making judgments about how it should develop.

Erikson approached the study of identity in that way, with the use of descriptive as well as prescriptive, normative-ethical perspectives. The major theoretical/descriptive parts of his work have already been referred to throughout this book. In this chapter we emphasize the normative-ethical perspective in his writing that is expressed by him in at least two ways. First, Erikson recognized in a variety of his works the idea that, from an optimal point of view, the development of ego identity goes hand in hand

with moral development. This idea is apparent, for example, in his discussion of the value orientation stages (see chapter 6) and when he attempted to define "integrity" as the endpoint for human development. Here, Erikson's normative-ethical concerns were projected onto persons and were expressed in reference to certain cognitive and evaluative skills and understandings that he thought persons should ideally acquire as they develop.

It is important to note, however, the second way in which the normative-ethical perspective pervades Erikson's work. We are referring to the fact that he made "ought" claims regarding what "integrity" should be and implicitly used these "ought claims" as standards to be used in evaluating the progress of development toward integrity. In other words, it is probably the case that Erikson (1968) had an optimal standard of "healthy development" in mind when he judged certain ways of resolving the identity stage (e.g., humanistic youth) as being, in an ontogenetic sense, more adaptive than other ways (e.g., technological youth). And it is just this evaluative theme that we wish to make explicit in this chapter. After offering a lengthy but necessary set of introductory comments, we analyze Erikson's notion of integrity with an emphasis on its cognitive and normative-ethical properties. Then we argue that some of the ontogenetic precursors of these properties *can and must* be detectable in a resolution of the identity stage if we are to evaluate such a resolution as "healthy." Our analysis is quite detailed, because extreme care must be taken with any attempt to introduce normative-ethical concerns into the domain of scientific study.

CLAIMS AND ASSUMPTIONS

We have noted that the conception of identity capital, as well as various cognitive and personality correlates of the "achievement status" (cf. Marcia, 1993), have contributed to our understanding of those resources that are likely to contribute to the young person's ability to adapt to the adult world of late modern society. Based on such evidence, however, it is important to note that several researchers sometimes speak in terms of having observed indicators of "healthy" resolutions of the identity stage (Archer, 1989; Marcia, 1980). In this vein, Waterman (1992) has provided a carefully formulated paper, based on his research on self-expressiveness, designating criteria that can be used to assess "optimal" psychological functioning in reference to "adaptive" identity stage resolution.

For us, however, the young adult's ability to simply adapt is not a sufficient criterion for judging an identity crisis resolution as "healthy" in the context of the late modern world. Rather, from an Eriksonian perspective,

we argue that justification for designating an identity crisis resolution as healthy must also include empirical support for a theory of youth as "agentic" and, as well, tell us something about developmental preparation for dealing with the psychosocial tasks of intimacy, generativity, and integrity. It is probably the case that grounding most of the previously noted research on the adaptive skills of youth is an implicitly held assumption that young adults can be "agentic" and that an "agentic trait" has been sufficiently documented with the kinds of correlations referred to earlier. In our view, although such evidence is suggestive of an agency construct, we find it insufficient evidence of adequate or "healthy" identity stage resolution for the following two reasons: (a) the notion of agency implicated is insufficiently documented in both an empirical and theoretical sense, and (b) unambiguous inferences about developmental potential cannot be drawn from it.

In chapter 6 we suggested that a notion of agency could be understood in reference to levels of "reflexive consciousness" enabling the identity of the ego to scrutinize and adjust personal and social identities. In this chapter, we wish to consider the notion of agency once again, but this time within the context of the developmental logic of Erikson's psychosocial theory of identity formation. Specifically, we want to suggest that to understand a trait of "agency" as a *minimal requirement* for designating resolutions of the identity crisis as "healthy" requires us to differentiate between the following two meanings of the term "adequate" (Côté & Levine, 1987): the idea that adequacy can refer to a socialization concern of functional adaptation, of fitting in to society, and the idea that it can also refer to ontogenetic adequacy or to the acquisition of certain understandings and cognitive skills that can be logically understood as necessary precursors for optimal functioning at the stage of integrity, the last stage in Erikson's ontogenetic model.

Although we believe that both of these notions of adequacy must be grounded in reference to a theory of agency in order to identify a minimal requirement for designating an identity stage resolution as "healthy," our concern in this chapter is primarily with the relationship between agency and "ontogenetic adequacy." To understand this relationship, we focus on Erikson's (1980) stage model in its "optimal developmental" sense (i.e., as a hierarchy of psychosocial stages that are successively resolved in favor of their syntonic rather than dystonic alternatives). When his theory is understood in this way, it becomes logically possible to argue that three related "outcomes" of identity crisis resolution can occur: (a) a reflexive conception of ego identity and "agency" can be constructed by adolescents; (b) a *limited* understanding of the interactive basis of "meaning" and life's meaningfulness (in descriptive as well as prescriptive terms) can be acquired by them; and (c) the preceding conceptions can be used by youth to

understand why they choose the commitments they do. We argue that it is these three "outcomes" that enable us to have some degree of confidence that an identity crisis resolution is healthy in the sense of "developmental adequacy" because they can be logically implicated as ontogenetic foundations for an optimal conception of integrity.

UNDERSTANDING ADEQUACY

As just implied, the idea of "functional adequacy" dovetails into the realm of socialization concerns and, in the most general sense, defines adequacy in reference to a variety of cognitive and behavioral skills that enable an individual to adapt to his or her immediate social environment.

In the life history of any particular individual, it is clear that exercising those skills that insure functional adequacy can have a positive impact on that individual's developmental potential, assuming that there is a reasonable amount of environmental consistency in nurturing the individual throughout the remainder of his or her life. However, although functional adequacy can thus contribute to developmental potential, it seems that simply assuming this becomes increasingly naïve in a social world that is becoming progressively anomic. Thus, we believe that it is important to maintain an analytical and methodological distinction between functionally adaptive adequacy and ontogenetic adequacy and ask, for example, whether a particular identity stage resolution is developmentally adequate, regardless of whether or not it appears to be functionally adequate.

A claim to having adequately resolved the identity stage and crisis is often made for a respondent when he or she is scored as "identity achieved" according to the criteria of the identity status paradigm. As noted, the identity status paradigm focuses on the idea that youth can occupy various "identity statuses" in an attempt to resolve the tension between attaining a sense of "identity" and experiencing "identity diffusion" or confusion. So, according to Marcia's (1964) paradigm, one can say that after a period of exploration, youth have "found themselves" when they express commitments to their choice of occupation, religion, politics, and/or a variety of other "identity domains" and, if such commitments materialize, that the adult world has nurtured this "desire to belong and participate" through the provision of appropriate occupational opportunity and membership status in social groups.

However, if we grant on the basis of such evidence that we have an adequate resolution of the identity stage, we still must acknowledge in the context of our present social milieu that such adaptation may be adequate only in the functional sense. Although it is possible that commitment to available adult roles might engage the talents of youth in ways that further

developmental potential, it is also plausible to argue the converse and reason that some commitments (e.g., military service, membership in certain youth cultures) may inhibit the development and use of competencies that could, if exercised, further ontogenesis. This possibility may be one of the reasons why Stephen, Fraser, and Marcia (1992) reported the phenomenon of MAMA cycles (i.e., movements back and forth between the moratorium and achievement statuses of the identity status paradigm).

In other words, when a subject is scored "identity achieved," then we need to have confidence that such an observation represents at least the following two outcomes before we can call it a "healthy" resolution of the identity stage: (a) that the person in question has resolved the identity crisis in the sense of having successfully adapted to the social world, and also (b) that such adaptation is developmentally significant as a preparation for resolving later adult crises of identity in the contexts of intimacy, generativity, and especially, integrity.

The major task of this chapter, then, is to begin the construction of a developmentally adequate or "optimal" conception of identity stage resolution that can be called "healthy," a conception necessarily to be understood in reference to a reflexive sense of agency. This notion of agency implicates the important role of both social/descriptive and moral/prescriptive cognitive schemas and operations that young adults can use to understand "who they are and should be" and "who they are and should be in relation to others." Our claim that the use of such cognitive properties at the identity stage suggests "developmental adequacy" is based on two assumptions: (a) that when such properties are utilized and nurtured, their subsequent developmental transformations can be identified as components of "optimal" integrity stage structure; and (b) that Erikson's conception of integrity contains psychological, dialogical, and ethical dimensions that are intended to describe an ideal endpoint for human development in a universal sense.

Because Erikson's (e.g., Erikson, Erikson, & Kivnick, 1986) conception of "optimal integrity" makes claims regarding certain universal (i.e., transhistorical and transcultural) psychological and ethical standards of human functioning, it necessarily implies a distinction between form (structure) and content, that is, that certain psychological and interactive competencies of persons can be understood in formal or structural terms and can be distinguished from the historical contexts and cultural contents of experience. This distinction between form and content has been a useful one for research on moral development (e.g., Kohlberg, Levine, & Hewer, 1983; Levine, 1979) and has more recently been introduced to the literature on Erikson's work, for a variety of different purposes (e.g., Logan, 1986; Marcia, 1993; Power, Power, & Snarey, 1988; Snarey et al., 1983; van Geert, 1987). It is a distinction to be kept in mind and relied on when one enters

the difficult conceptual territory of making universal claims about human development and ethics.

We are fully aware that the theoretical project we are engaging is prescriptive in the sense that it is oriented toward defining ideal developmental criteria that seem to ignore the nature of the "real" world and the "real" identity struggles of youth within it. But our claim in this context is that in order to assess the *developmental significance* of such identity struggles, we must first construct optimal notions of integrity and identity stage resolution to use as standards for comparison.

One final comment for this chapter's rather lengthy introduction seems to be in order. It is important to remember that optimal developmental notions in Erikson's hands are social psychological in nature and are tied to a theoretical logic that comprehends a person's life-cycle in the context of an intergenerational reality. Thus, any inquiry into the realization of youths' developmental potential must also be a critical inquiry into the generative performance of the adult population. We say more of this in our next chapter.

SOME GENERAL OBSERVATIONS CONCERNING ERIKSON'S THEORY OF EGO DEVELOPMENT

As we noted in chapter 6, Erikson's theory of ego identity development can be understood as a theory most fundamentally concerned with the development of a sense of life's meaningfulness (cf. Adams & Marshall, 1996). This theme was clearly acknowledged by Erikson (1968) when he differentiated personal from ego identity:

> The conscious feeling of having a personal identity is based on two simultaneous observations: the perception of the self-sameness and continuity of one's existence in time and space and the perception of the fact that others recognize one's sameness and continuity. What I have called ego identity, however, concerns more than the mere *fact* of existence; it is, as it were, the ego *quality* of this existence. Ego identity . . . is the awareness of the fact that there is a self-sameness and continuity to the ego's synthesizing methods, *the style of one's individuality*, and that this style coincides with the sameness and continuity of one's *meaning for significant others* in the immediate community. (p. 50; emphasis in original)

This theme of meaningfulness was also expressed by Erikson (1987) when he noted that integrity

> represents man's obligation to the most mature meaning available to him, even if this should presage discomfort to himself, deprivation to his mate

and offspring, and the loss of friends, all of which must be envisaged and endured in order not to be exposed to a final sense of disgust and of despair. (p. 274)

There are two important aspects of Erikson's concern with meaning that we wish to emphasize: first is his awareness, reminiscent of Mead's symbolic interactionist perspective (see chapter 6), that fundamentally, *all* meaning is derived from and verified in interaction. In Erikson's (1974) words:

> No ego is an island to itself; and, indeed, . . . the language we learn as we stand up and grow up, transmits to each the common experience of all: I, you, we . . . in the same world of facts, of experience and of interaction. (p. 93)

Second, we need to remember that life's meaningfulness for Erikson had both a descriptive and prescriptive dimension; that the formation of identity is not only a concern with "who" one is, but also a concern with "who one ought to be." Erikson (1968) expressed this claim quite emphatically in reference to our generative responsibilities to cultivate in older youth "an age-specific ethical capacity . . . which is the true criterion of identity" (p. 39). This awareness of the important role of a developing ethical capacity was also acknowledged by Erikson (1975) in his discussion of "value orientation stages" and in his postulation that Kohlberg's theory of stages of moral reasoning was relevant to his understanding of the ego's development.

This descriptive/prescriptive thematic for understanding identity formation is a major theme in the discussion to follow, so it is worthwhile to note the following comments offered by the noted philosopher, Charles Taylor. In his work on the "dialogical self," Taylor (1991) tacitly acknowledged the relevance of the work of Erikson and Mead when he observed:

> A human being exists inescapably in a space of ethical questions: she or he cannot avoid assessing himself or herself in relation to some standards. To escape all standards would not be a liberation, but a terrifying lapse into total disorientation. It would be to suffer the ultimate crisis of identity.
>
> But the kind of identity that is crucial to having a coherent sense of self is one that relates us to ethical space. To have an identity is to know "where you're coming from" when it comes to questions of value, or issues of importance. Your identity defines the background against which you know where you stand on such matters. To have that called into question, or fall into uncertainty, is not to know how to react, and this is to cease to know who you are in this ultimately relevant sense. (pp. 305–306)

From a developmental perspective, then, each stage in Erikson's eight-stage model can be seen as an epigenetic moment when the person synthesizes social and prescriptive experience in a way that allows them to "make sense" out of their life as they interact with others in their social environment.

The developmental focus of Erikson's theory concerns itself with the integration and transformation of meaning throughout the life cycle and, assuming optimal development, the correlative and cumulative "strength" gained by the ego during this process. Thus, one can say that the ego gains strength as it synthesizes (i.e., integrates and transforms) its understanding of its relationship to the social environment in order to act within it. These ideas of integration, transformation, and accumulating ego strength are often depicted by Erikson in the form of epigenetic charts, found in many of his published works. In *Insight and Responsibility* (1964), for example, he commented on one such chart by providing us with a clear statement regarding epigenesis and the previously mentioned developmental processes: "The point to be made is merely that what thus grows in steps is part of an ensemble in which no part must have missed its original crisis, its further metamorphoses (i.e., transformation), and its re-integration into each later stage" (p. 140).

The most general notion of accumulating ego strength throughout the life cycle is reflected in Erikson's conception of virtues, discussed by him in various works (e.g., Erikson, 1968; see Markstrom, Sabino, Turner, & Burman, 1997, for an empirical measure). It is important for us to emphasize that it is because of the three developmental processes of integration, transformation, and cumulativity that a formal or structural relationship between identity stage resolution and the ego synthetic and executive functions of integrity was implied by Erikson (1964) when he claimed: "Where identity formation is relatively successful in youth, psychosocial development leads through the fulfillment of adult phases to a final integrity, the possession of a few principles which, though gleaned from changing experience, prove unchangeable in essence" (p. 94).

We have chosen this very abstract emphasis on "meaningfulness" and its development as a way of describing Erikson's theory because it enables us to emphasize the important themes of interaction, mutuality, and ethics in his writing. It is our view that "optimal" development for Erikson (i.e., development that resolves crises in favor of the positive pole) is increasingly sociocentric and that therefore these themes must be emphasized if we are to appreciate his point of view.

We now turn to Erikson's writings on integrity to detect the general themes of mutuality, relationship, and sociocentricity as foundations for the quest for a meaningful life. We then consider what is involved in an

optimal, agentic resolution of the identity stage and suggest its health or "developmental adequacy" by noting its relationship with characteristics of integrity.

ERIKSON ON INTEGRITY

It is clear from a careful reading of various works by him that Erikson (1963, pp. 268–269; 1968, pp. 139–140; Erikson, Erikson, & Kivnik, 1986, pp. 52–53) defined integrity in various ways. In very general terms, he understood integrity as "the ripened fruit" of his preceding seven stages that is based on the ego strengths acquired from a developmentally syntonic history in dealing with past psychosocial crises. However, what strikes us as important is that Erikson's thoughts about integrity seem to describe the following two different phenomena: (a) reflexive, autobiographical tasks and (b) reflexive, ego executive and synthetic processes involved in the adaptation to on-going life tasks in general, and to significant other persons in particular. The common denominator of both conceptions seems to be an orientation toward meaning: either toward coming to terms with the meaning of a life mostly lived, or toward an understanding of how living life with others is the source of life's meaning. We may call the first of these two orientations to life's meaning "life review," and the second "life with others." It is through understanding Erikson's conception of integrity with these two "meaning orientations" that we can detect several important and interpenetrating themes that he emphasized in this context: ego identity as "existential identity;" a sense of agency as responsible, "vital involvement;" and a concern with ethics as a principled orientation to interaction.

Integrity as Life Review

When the significance of integrity is conceptualized as a psychosocial task of "life review," we encounter the most common interpretation of Erikson's (1963, 1975) concerns about it. From an optimal developmental perspective, integrity is the final life stage during which the accumulated strength of the ego enables one to entertain questions such as: "What does my life mean, and what do I feel about that? What have I to grieve, to be proud of, to make up for, and what remains to be done about these things?" (Hearn et al., 2001, p. 3). Thus, a recall of various positive and negative life experiences (tied to one's experience and review of personal and social identities) can occur, hopefully allowing for the conclusion that one's life has been worth living. Such life review is a significant activity contributing to the maintenance of self-esteem and necessarily involves an evaluative, prescriptive orientation in the assessment of one's biography (Power et al., 1988, pp. 143–144).

But life review must also come to terms with the limits imposed on life and life's meaning by the realization of death's increasing proximity. From our "optimal interpretation" of Erikson's theory, it is clear that the optimism produced by life review must outweigh the significance of senses of "loss, sadness and grief over the inability to do as much as one would like" (Hearn et al., 2001, p. 5). However, "outweighing" is not the same thing as "forgetting" or "repressing," and this awareness of life's finitude remains in the realm of the conscious.

It is the resilience of the ego in the face of one's mortality that allows the aging person to win out over despair. And it is important to note that the victory appears to go hand in hand with increasingly salient attitudes of humility and open-mindedness regarding the limitations of one's abilities and knowledge (Hearn et al., 2001; Power et al., 1988). As Erikson et al. (1986) observed: "The oldest and wisest elders understand that situations are complex and that many factors have to be weighed and distinguished. Prejudice is maladaptive and presumptuous, for with age one is forced to concede how little one knows" (p. 288). Such attitudes imply both an increasing sociocentricity and a generative orientation to others, and it is probably because of this that Erikson et al. (1986) suggested that in the elderly, a transcending, existential sense of ego identity can emerge. For these attitudes do connote an "opening up" and a "letting go," a "detached concern with life itself, in the face of death itself" (Erikson et al., 1986, p. 37) and an "involved disinvolvement" (p. 51).

It appears then, that "life review" goes hand in hand with the development of an "integrated" ego identity: a vital sense of one's continuity and sameness, and a vital sense of one's commitment to orient oneself responsibly and generatively to others. But this identity is also, at the same time, an identity that can be sensed as being increasingly differentiated from context, transcending, or existential. Power et al. (1988) expressed some of these ideas:

> On a more profound level, loss and impending death call for an identity that includes as well as transcends all temporal identities, an identity that is accepted as well as achieved. The integrated identity emerges from a dual process of "reckoning" and "relinquishing." In reckoning, one evaluates the self-made identity—an identity constructed out of decision and action throughout the life span. Relinquishing completes the process through a surrender of the self-made identity and a recognition of a deeper sense of the self as part of a larger whole. (p. 137)

Integrity conceptualized as "life review" is predominantly a notion of ego identity derived from the reflexive evaluation of cognitive schemas of content. Such content schemas can range in "sociocentric scope" from being biographically unique ideas pertaining to events, feelings, and so-

cial/personal identities recalled, to being full-fledged, universally transcending beliefs and understandings of one's relationship to God, community, and all humanity.

For our purposes, the importance of integrity as life review is that it points to a transcending and existential sense of ego identity coupled with a sense of vital involvement in "actuality and mutuality" (Erikson et al., 1986). We see that it is on the basis of this sense of ego identity as differentiated from personal and social identity, yet mutually involved with others that we can appreciate the more formal, agentic qualities of integrity that link the person with others in an ethical manner. And it is with such an appreciation that we are able to suggest qualities of an optimal resolution of the identity stage.

Integrity as Life With Others[1]

Integrity can also be understood as an orientation toward "life with others," an orientation that is motivated by the need for "vital involvement in actuality and mutuality." "Vital" can be understood in this context to mean "essential" or "necessary" and, as implied earlier, it is only when an integrated ego subjectively identifies its existential nature as differentiated from personal and social identity that it can then sense that it "freely" wills or chooses to take responsibility for such vital involvement with others. Herein lies its agentic quality.

To explore this second conception of integrity, we focus our attention on its virtue, wisdom. We do not mean to suggest that this virtue is not relevant to our "life review" notion of integrity. Erikson (1964) did point to this ego strength's contribution to "life review" when he defined wisdom and one of its purposes in the following manner: "Wisdom, then, is detached concern with life itself, in the face of death itself. It maintains and conveys the integrity of experience, in spite of the decline of bodily and mental functions" (p. 133). Clearly, there is a courageous aspect to wisdom's contribution to "life review" activity.

However, it is also true that Erikson placed special emphasis on this virtue in conjunction with what we are calling "life with others." It is the role played by wisdom in orienting the ego to the world of meaning and mutuality that we now consider. Wisdom can be understood as grounding the ego's reflexive and ethical orientation to the creation and confirmation of

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[1]The awareness of having a "life with others" is an idea germane to Erikson's overall conception of integrity, and the reader should not confuse this idea with the distinction between the independent and interdependent self, discussed in chapter 5. At the psychosocial stage of integrity, an awareness of the self as being both independent and interdependent is relevant, if having "a life with others" is to be understood in a developmentally adequate manner.

descriptive and prescriptive meaning, meaning about its own identity, justice/care, and the world of things. Furthermore, with wisdom and its identity, the ego understands that mutuality or solidarity with others is the interactive/dialogical foundation necessary for the derivation and verification of meaning.

The dialogical orientation to "life with others" *must* also be an ethical matter for Erikson. In order to appreciate his thoughts in this regard, we begin with a review of some relevant claims he made regarding "mutuality," "meaning," and the relationships among "wisdom, insight, and knowledge." We then continue with a review of his understanding of ethics, conceptualized by him as a principled orientation toward interaction based on the intent to confirm/derive descriptive and prescriptive meaning.

Mutuality and Meaning

As previously suggested, one can approach Erikson's work with the basic claim that it is about the role of interactive relationship as the foundation for meaning creation in human development (Adams & Marshall, 1996, p. 438). We can detect this theme when he asserted that any life cycle lived "without vigorous meaning . . . endangers the sense of life and the meaning of death" (Erikson, 1964, p. 133) and when he claimed that the reflexive process of identity formation, while sustaining some core sense of continuity and sameness, is nonetheless based on an on-going, always changing, interactive process with others (1964, p. 96).

Erikson's views on the interactive basis of meaning formation, and its impact on identity formation, more or less echo the views of Mead (1934), Cooley (1902), and other American pragmatists in their writings on the origin and maintenance of the self concept. But for Erikson, it is important to note that the interactive basis of meaning must be differentiated from and grounded on a prior sense of "mutuality" and an intent to nurture it. For him, mutuality is "a relationship in which partners depend on each other for the development of their respective strengths" (Erikson, 1964, p. 231). This sense of mutuality and the intent to nurture it was considered by him to be the epigenetic consequence of trust and an important foundation for our sense of shared understandings and prescriptive motives.

Wisdom, Insight, and Knowledge

At the integrity stage, the themes of mutuality, interaction, and meaning become operative in the interdependent relationships forged among wisdom, insight, and knowledge. Wisdom is the virtue of the integrity stage, and Erikson (1964) defined virtue as an "inherent strength or active quality" (p. 113). It is acquired through cumulative and integrative psychosocial development, and manifests those required strengths ". . . neces-

sary for mutual involvement in an ever increasing social radius . . ." (Erikson et al., 1986, p. 33).

We discussed the "inherent strength" quality of wisdom in our "life review" section when we defined it "as a detached concern with life itself in the face of death itself." Here, we want to emphasize its "interactive quality;" that is, how it functions in dialogue with others.

For Erikson, the essential purpose of wisdom in the context of "life with others" was to be seen in its orientation toward interaction with the intent of deriving and confirming knowledge. Wisdom can muster the courage to engage in insight, which for Erikson (1975) meant ". . . an overall inquisitive approach by which we learn something essential about ourselves even as we master the facts around us" (p. 172). But we cannot forget that for Erikson, the use of insight must be grounded in an orientation to mutuality, along with the assumption that the "other" approaches the interaction with integrity also, "for a wise Indian, a true gentleman, and a mature peasant share and recognize in one another the final stage of integrity" (Erikson, 1963, p. 269). This assumption about the integrity of the other was necessary for Erikson. Without it, one cannot place hope in mutual respect, an orientation to interaction necessary to encourage the reciprocated trust and commitment needed to engage in open-minded, unconstrained, "insightful" inquiry. In other words, wisdom enables the ego to differentiate "an instance of dialogue about knowledge" from that preinteractive knowledge, communicative skill, and hope needed to foster and maintain the "mutuality" of the dialogical process. It can only commit to an interest in pursuing meaning in interaction because of its commitment to maintaining mutuality with the other. These two "moments" of commitment appear to capture what Erikson meant by "vital involvement" at the integrity stage in the context of "life with others."

This analysis presupposes the obvious idea that when we interact with one another, we need to assume their sincerity in order to have confidence that the knowledge we acquire is in some sense "true;" not necessarily universally true for all places and all times, but "true enough" for our "actual" mutual purposes and interests.

We believe that this analysis of wisdom in the context of "life with others" is a reasonably accurate representation of what Erikson has attempted to convey in his writings. In *Life History and The Historical Moment*, his focus on Socrates and Gandhi appears to corroborate our claim. With the example of Socrates, an instance of the relationship between wisdom, insight, truth, and interaction was conveyed by Erikson (1975): to be wise means to understand ". . . the prototypical method by which the truth in a given matter is revealed: confrontation leads through dialogue to joint recognition" (pp. 173–174). And the relevant themes pertaining to a wise person's interest in truth and the need to foster dialogical mutuality through re-

ERIKSON ON INTEGRITY

spect of the other were exemplified when Erikson wrote about Gandhi. He stated that Gandhi insisted that that "line of action is alone justice which does not harm either party to a dispute" and "only that which transforms both partners in action, is truth" (1975, p. 181). Erikson continued in this vein to acknowledge that dialogue must be protected through mutual respect and the protection of each other's ability to maintain participation in dialogue. He stated:

> "Truth," Gandhi said, "excludes the use of violence because man is not capable of knowing the absolute truth and therefore is not competent to punish." Nor would Gandhi be guided by a wish to do away with his opponent, or even to weaken or to shame him: for this would only result in maintaining the pernicious cycle of violent "solutions." (1975, p. 182)

Before moving to our discussion of Erikson's view of ethics, we may note that two groups of investigators (Power et al., 1988; Hearn et al., 2001) have, in their empirical studies of integrity, observed positive correlations between it and several cognitive and interactive orientations, findings that appear consistent with our thoughts about the nature and function of wisdom. Hearn et al. (2001) reported: As "Integrated persons are open to experience, socially mature, positive about themselves, high in ego identity, tolerant of ambiguity, high in moral reasoning, and employ dialectical thinking" (p. 5).

Integrity and Ethics

Universal Claims

Our review of integrity as "life with others," based on a sense of vital "actuality and mutuality" (Erikson et al., 1986) constitutes the framework for our understanding of Erikson's conception of ethics. While we briefly point out some of the similarities among their perspectives, it is interesting to note that Erikson's views about ethics appear to be consistent with those on mature moral reasoning advanced by Kohlberg, Boyd, and Levine (1990), Kohlberg et al. (1983), and Habermas (1979, 1990, 1991). In the most general sense, all three writers understood ethics not in terms of substantive, culturally specific norms and values, but in formalistic, universal terms. They regarded ethics as referring to normative or prescriptive orientations employed by persons to "structure" interactive engagements with others. In this sense, ethics refers to a "principled orientation to interaction," or a strategy for the norming of mutually acceptable norms among persons.

Consistent with this notion of ethics understood as "a principled orientation to interaction," Erikson (1968) asserted the following "compound" universal claim:

> Jefferson's assumption and that of his friends, that there is in man in principle a moral core that, if given leeway to manifest itself in mutual activation with others, will tend to make ethical and rational choices, represents a basic developmental truth. (pp. 95–96)

We see that claim as a "compound" one because it contains two complementary yet analytically distinct assertions. The first idea being expressed by Erikson was that there *is* a mature ethical point of view that is transhistorically and transculturally adequate and constant. The second notion was that "if given leeway," all persons "in mutual activation" could acquire and use it.

The first claim does indeed seem to be an audacious one to make in the context of our "postmodern" age of moral relativism, and when Erikson in another of his writings asserted it again, he did appear to contradict himself. In *Identity: Youth and Crisis* (1968, p. 259), he emphasized (a) the need for a *"new ethics* that must eventually transcend the alliance of ideology and technology" (our emphasis) held in the minds of many of our youth; yet, on the same page of text he went on to assert that (b) "moralities sooner or later outlive themselves, *ethics never"* (our emphasis).

This "contradiction," between calling for a "new ethics" and asserting that "ethics never outlive themselves" is, however, more apparent than real. The former concern was an historically and culturally specific one in Erikson's mind. The new ethics he called for referred to humanistic value content that he hoped could provide a balance to the developmental and social threat posed by the modal technological orientation of youth. In contrast, when he also asserted that ethics never outlive themselves, he was referring to a principled orientation to interaction, grounded in a shared sense of mutuality, that can be defined in a sufficiently formal way so as to be identified in transhistorical and transcultural terms.

This latter claim can be treated as an hypothesis to be investigated cross-culturally: that is, is there in fact an ethical point of view that appears universally? Although this hypothesis has not been tested in a fashion based on Erikson's theorizing, it has been indirectly and partially investigated by various researchers in reference to Kohlberg's stages of moral reasoning (e.g., Snarey, 1985). The evidence from such studies does not report a cross-cultural usage of Kohlberg's "highest" stages, but it does indicate that moral development through his first four stages does occur cross-culturally.

It is also true that this universal claim regarding a principled orientation to interaction with others is often accompanied with a moral philosophical assertion, a full discussion of which is beyond the scope of this book. It is an assertion that would state that not only *does* there exist such a universal ethical point of view, but that it *ought* to be used. It seems clear that Erikson subscribed to this "ought" or "should" claim throughout his writings (Roazen, 1976), although nowhere did he delve into the difficult arguments that must be resolved in order to "validate" it. Although the literature about the nuances of this claim is indeed contentious (cf. Boyd, 1986; Kohlberg, 1971), let us just say that it does seem difficult to defend its opposite; that is, that one ought not to engage others with mutual respect. In reference to various needs, values, and goals, such a contrary assertion might be a more "realistic" or "strategic" directive for human interaction, and sometimes a "necessary" one, but could one claim it to be "ethical?"

The second part of Erikson's "universality" claim is, in essence, empirical. He asserted that those who experience "optimal" psychosocial development and who experience integrity will have at their disposal those "vital strengths" and psychological competencies to understand and maintain an ethical point of view while engaging others in "actuality and mutuality." This idea, then, refers to the second part of Erikson's reference to Jefferson; that is, the idea that "optimal integrity" can be a "developmental truth" and that those who attain it are adequate to the task of engaging in ethical discourse, with "insight and informed assent" (Roazen, 1976, p. 153).

Substantive Claims

At a more psychological and social psychological level of analysis, Erikson defined ethics as a "moral discipline based on insight and informed assent" (Roazen, 1976, p. 153). When we recall what was discussed before in terms of the relationship of insight to wisdom and mutuality, we may conclude that Erikson's conception of ethical interaction assumed those agentic and reflexive qualities of "integrated" persons that enable them to be "vitally involved."

In the context of a concern with ethics, the idea of "mutuality" takes on an additional, prescriptive dimension that we only hinted at in our earlier discussion. When one with "integrity" identifies an interactive context as ethically relevant, he or she must not only express his or her own interests, but must also take sufficient responsibility and care for the other so that she or he can participate likewise. This idea we suggested earlier by noting Erikson's (1964, p. 239) reference to Gandhi's principled orientation to interaction; that is, "That line of action is alone justice which does not

harm either party to a dispute." But here we may add that "by harm" Gandhi meant ". . . an inseparable combination of economic disadvantage, social indignity, loss of self-esteem, and latent vengeance." Taking responsibility to alleviate such "harm" is a tall order indeed (and appears to be an almost insurmountable task given the social structural characteristics of our late modern world). People like Gandhi, who have tried, we have revered. However, we must acknowledge that to the extent this is not accomplished and such differences among participants in interaction remain, trust in mutuality per se may be undermined. While the intent to be ethical can exist under such "harmful" circumstances, the extent to which actual ethical discourse can proceed within them must remain an open question. But, the point is that Erikson was aware that mutuality and an ethical orientation to interaction cannot be dissociated from one another given the reflexive quality of integrity.

With that in mind, there appear to be at least four distinct observations that Erikson made about ethics that we can now focus on. For him, ethical interaction was based on the following: (a) a principled orientation to persons and dialogue; (b) an altered version of what we conventionally call "the Golden Rule;" (c) a prioritizing of the principle of equity over equality; and (d) from the perspective of integrity, an awareness that such an ethical orientation constitutes the only appropriate strategy for deriving and maintaining a sense of meaningfulness in human development.

Principles.   There are two dimensions to Erikson's conception of an ethically principled orientation to interaction with others. First, a principled intent to treat persons fairly is a maxim that is to apply to *all* persons. For Erikson, our conception of "others" must be universally extended to the class of "all human beings." This is one of the consistent claims made throughout many of his writings, very often expressed in the form of a criticism of our tendency to construct sub-classes of others, or what he called "pseudo-species," as a justification for their differential treatment. Clearly, to engage in the closed-minded activity of "pseudospeciation" is to undermine our ethical potential. As Erikson (1974) observed:

> The *pseudo* means that, far from perceiving or accepting human identity based on a common specieshood, different tribes and nations, creeds and classes . . . consider themselves to be the one chosen and will . . . sacrifice to this claim much of the knowledge, logic, and the ethics that are theirs. (p. 28)

Claims that "all persons" are to be treated ethically suggests the second dimension of Erikson's view, that a principled orientation to interaction must be, in essence, constant or "unchangeable" (Erikson, 1964, p. 95). Its

constancy stems from the concern to *always* treat all persons fairly, and it accomplishes this by differentiating the form of interaction from the substantive issues a specific interaction addresses. Although both dimensions of interaction are objects of ethical concern, the former is an issue of "correct procedure" for always maintaining fairness and mutuality, whereas the latter can be expected to be variable. In other words, the interests and claims of participants regarding "the good and human perfection . . . (are) . . . subordinated (by each of them) to a concern for adjudicating *differences* among individuals on how the good and human perfection are to be defined, furthered, and distributed" (Boyd, 1980, p. 187). Although Erikson did not explicitly address this notion of principled "procedure," we hold that it is logically necessary to acknowledge this idea if we are to make sense of his universal claims about the importance of maintaining "mutuality" and about treating all persons fairly.

The Golden Rule.   Erikson's conception of principles included the idea that they function as the cognitive vehicle for anticipating and hoping for the continuance of "mutuality" among persons. Whereas Kohlberg (1981) and others have called this orientation to mutuality the "principle of respect for persons," Erikson chose to maintain his emphasis more clearly on the issue of mutuality. For him, this issue was the key for understanding the necessity of *revising* our conception of the Golden Rule. He wrote (1964) that "all moral, ideological, and ethical propensities depend on (the) early experience of mutuality" (p. 231). However, after noting the predominantly emotive and physically nurturant mutuality of the parent–baby bond, he went on to suggest that mutual *understanding* should take its place in the world of the adult. In his words: "Should we, then, endow the Golden Rule with a principle of mutuality, replacing the reciprocity of both prudence and sympathy?" (1964, p. 231).

As expressed, this "principle of mutuality" may seem to be somewhat insensitive, given the suggestion that it is to "replace the reciprocity of both prudence and sympathy." But such an interpretation of Erikson's intent would be incompatible with all that he has written about ethics (recall, for example, his reverence of Gandhi and the latter's concern about not doing harm to others). Rather, in a manner consistent with his overall emphasis on mutuality *in the context of the integrity stage,* he seemed to be suggesting that in the instance of ethical concerns, a "mutuality of understanding" must come first. This does not mean that care and sympathetically motivated actions do not matter; it means, instead, that their use cannot be based on a presumption that they are needed, for presumptuousness can threaten mutuality. Rather, their relevance should depend on a prior mutual *understanding* that they are desired by one, and then may be reasoned to be obligatory for the other. At any rate, Erikson seemed to be

suggesting this interpretation by raising mutual understanding to the principled status of a new version of the Golden Rule.

Equity.   The reader should not assume that Erikson suggested the appropriateness of a carte blanche "principle of equality" with his emphasis on an ethical orientation to "all persons." It is true that such an equality principle was logically necessary for him, but only in the sense that it suggests the broad notion of respecting the equal rights and obligations that persons have in their roles as ethical interactants. Thus, in his view, an "equality principle" could be conceived as a subset of the overall notion of a principled orientation to mutuality.

In contrast with equality, Erikson (1964, p. 242) implied the greater relevance of an "equity" principle, whereby the equal status of persons "as interactants" is valued *because* it provides the communicative means that enable them to comprehend and respect each other's uniqueness. The ethical requirement to respect (i.e., attend to, appreciate) "difference" or "uniqueness" in the context of mutuality is the only means we have to properly maintain those nurturant interactive conditions necessary for there to be "meaningfulness" in a human's development.

Ethical Communicative Context.   We come to our final observation about Erikson's perspective on ethics. For him, an "integrated identity" was reflexive or self-conscious and, in an optimal sense, engaged its psychosocial tasks from an ethical standpoint. One implication of this claim speaks to issues surrounding "generational responsibility and generativity," some implications of which we discuss in the chapter to follow. The point we wish to focus on here speaks to the general theme of life's meaningfulness.

From their reflexive standpoint, optimally integrated persons understand that the on-going process of interaction is the source of meaning and "truth" about things, ideas, and their own personal and social identities. In other words, they can have "some sense" that identity formation is a life-long interactive process (Erikson, 1968, p. 23). Furthermore, they understand in "some sense" that the "mutuality" that can ground interaction is "a relationship in which partners depend on each other for the development of their respective strengths" (Erikson, 1964, p. 231). In other words, optimally integrated persons have "some sense" of the social psychological foundation of their life's meaning, the life meaning of others, and how their "vital interactive involvements" can therefore change their understandings of themselves and others. These understandings give meaning to their willingness to be responsible but *must* also ground their motivation to adopt an ethical stance on interactive mutuality. Any other

orientation taken to themselves or others would, for them, only make "bad sense."

One last observation now seems appropriate. It is the awareness that they can interact under conditions of ethical mutuality, that it can envelop them, can affirm them, and yet sometimes change their understandings of who they are, that enables integrated persons to "let go" and "hold on." They can remain vitally involved with and at the same time "let go" of their social and personal identities. They can realize that these identities have always been part of an interactive social world, have always been mutual "symbolic" property, and thus in some sense only falsely presumed to have been theirs to begin with. But it is also this reflexive awareness of the interactive foundation of these identities that enables the integrated person to "hold on" to ego identity, for *it* is the source of that sense of a core of sameness and continuity from which "letting go" makes sense.

What can be understood as being left for the person, then, is the "I" that Erikson et al. (1986) spoke of, that "verbal assurance that each of us is a center of awareness in the center of the universe, and this with a sense of coherent and continuous identity; in other words, we are alive and aware of it" (p. 32). It is this "existential identity" that is ego identity at the integrity stage, and when it is understood in conjunction with its "ethical capacity, which is its true criterion" (Erikson, 1968, p. 39), we can begin to appreciate Erikson's observation that

> . . . only an adult ethics can guarantee to the next generation an equal chance to experience the full cycle of humanness. And this alone permits the individual to transcend his identity . . . to become as truly individual as he will ever be and as truly beyond all individuality. (p. 42)

HABERMAS AND KOHLBERG

We are now at the point where we can note certain similarities between Erikson's view of ethics and the views of Jurgen Habermas on the relationship between ego and moral development and those of Lawrence Kohlberg on the development of moral reasoning competencies. We have three reasons for including this discussion here. First, in suggesting how the theoretical views of these writers dovetail, we are providing some "face valid" evidence for Erikson's conception of integrity and ethics. Second, the discussion of Kohlberg's ideas is relevant for our understanding of "optimal" identity stage resolution. Finally, Habermas' understanding of the relationship between ego and moral development as a function of communication structures provides us with a perspective on how the ef-

fects of culture, social power, and social structure can be manifested at the levels of ego, personal, and social identity.

Habermas on Ego and Moral Development

In his essay, "Moral Development and Ego Identity," Habermas (1979) validated the developmental logic of Kohlberg's six-stage theory of moral development and Erikson's theory of ego identity formation. He did this by reconceptualizing both theories with a social psychological understanding of the communicative skills required for human participation within structures of social action. With reference only to Piagetian stages of cognitive development, on the one hand, and a hierarchical model of communicative structures provided by late modern social systems, on the other, Habermas described those interactive competencies that must be acquired by persons for them to interact with others in developmentally appropriate ways. In so doing, he deduced an optimal endpoint for human development that complements Kohlberg's notion of Stage 6 moral reasoning and Erikson's idea of ego identity as integrity.

The essential themes of Habermas' perspective are as follows. For him, the "core" of optimal ego identity formation was the development of "interactive competence;" that is, the ability of the developing individual to engage in interactions within three hierarchically related and increasingly complex structures of communication. Movement into these three structures of communicative action is a function of development through Piaget's pre-operational, concrete operational, and formal operational stages of cognition. This development enables the self to differentiate its own identity and the identity of others first from body and appearance (pre-operational logic); then from social role (concrete operational logic); and, finally, with formal operational abilities, to construct a conception of self and other as "ego identities" that can reflexively differentiate themselves from concrete roles, role relationships, and norms.

Developing in parallel with these successive differentiations of identity are correlative differentiations of needs and motives, and the communicative competence to articulate them in interaction. Thus, in differentiating their identities from conventional roles, persons using formal operational thought (interacting at the most advanced communicative structure) acquire the ability to represent "themselves" as interested persons, as persons with needs and motives, and to conceptualize their own identity and the identity of others essentially as "speakers." It is this conception of self and other as "speakers," reminiscent of Erikson's ethical concern about regarding all as members of one species, that enables one to "give one's own needs their due" (Habermas, 1979, p. 78), through the interpretation and defense of one's own interests in dialogue.

For Habermas, an "autonomous" (i.e., agentic) ego must be able to maintain access to the third level of communicative action with others in order to continue the meaningful interpretation and articulation of its needs. (Recall Erikson's [1963] claim that "a wise Indian, a true gentleman, and a mature peasant share and recognize in one another the final stage of integrity" [p. 269].) This is the case because it is only at this third level of interaction that communication is nurtured by an equal distribution of social power and is therefore governed by a "universal ethics of speech." Without such an ethic in communicative force, the ego is unable to trust in mutuality with the other and can thus be robbed of its ability to "discursively form its will;" that is, it can be denied "communicative access to its own inner nature" (Habermas, 1979, p. 94) and thus be unable to express its needs in "principled" communicative contexts. Like Erikson, then, Habermas was fundamentally concerned with "ethical mutuality;" the development of life's meaningfulness, both descriptive and prescriptive, and, finally, with the equal ability of persons to "freely" participate in meaning's creation. For him, moral reasoning is a special case of making claims in mutually interactive contexts and "represents a part of the development of personality that is decisive for ego identity" (Habermas, 1979, p. 78).

Although the similarities between Habermas' and Erikson's views are detectable from this brief review, we should emphasize the important implications of Habermas' understanding of "discursive will formation." It is the case that this idea was expressed by Erikson (1964, p. 231), for example, with his definition of mutuality as "a relationship in which partners depend on each other for the development of their respective strengths" and implied throughout his writings when he reminded us that ego identity formation is a life-long, communicative project. However, in Habermas' hands this idea was more clearly placed within the context of communicative social structures, and because he did this, we are reminded of how the distribution and interactive use of social power can significantly enhance or inhibit opportunities for ego identity formation and function. In other words, the equal status (and power) of interactants, although acknowledged by Erikson (1974, p. 123) as significant,[2] received more emphasis in Habermas' writing.

For example, interactants within Habermas' second level of communicative structure do not perceive themselves as "formative" persons. Rather, their conceptions of self and other are identified with social and cul-

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[2]Erikson's (1974) comment on American democracy conveyed his understanding of the role of social power in dialogue quite nicely: "American democracy, if it is to survive within the superorganizations of government and commerce, of industry and labor, . . . [must be] . . . predicated on personal contacts within groups of optimal size—optimally meaning the power to persuade each other in matters that influence the lives of each" (p. 123).

tural indicators provided by role and status. In such a communicative structure, then, power enters into communicative exchange, no matter how subtle, and interactants of differing status thus vary, not necessarily in terms of communicative competence, but in the likelihood of using it to express their interests as "formative persons." As such, "access" to their own "inner natures" can be ignored or directly interfered with. And, to the extent that "reified" or "concretized" notions of identity "as role and status" remain unquestioned (in a sense, echoing Erikson's ethical concerns about not transcending "pseudo" conceptions of self and other), to that extent access to one's inner nature is denied not only to the less powerful interactant, but also to the more powerful. In other words, from an optimal developmental point of view, we have a context in which social identities and not ego identities mediate interaction. Accordingly, such interactions can be neutral to or inhibit ego identity formation, for they are not likely to encourage a "discursive formation of will" or a mutuality in which each depends on the other for "the development of their respective strengths."

Whether or not a generative orientation on the part of the more powerful can help to transform such interactions into "optimal" ones for the less powerful (and hence, for themselves) is a question that needs to be addressed. This question is, essentially, the one Erikson (1968) asked concerning the relationship between the generations. This time, however, it is expressed in a way that sensitizes us to the important issues of how social power and communicative structure impact on the development of youth. For example, if the generative orientation of adults is not sensed as "mutual" by youth, can it help to nurture an "optimal" sense of fidelity on their part? If generativity is confined to interactions mediated by "role" identities, is it not possible that the cultural nuances of power difference can function to inhibit the making of commitments that are "freely" assented to? Regardless of the good, generative intentions of adults, given Habermas' perspective we must nevertheless ask those questions and inquire into the issue of whether our places of work and institutions of education are sufficiently sensitive to and capable of overcoming what may be barriers for the development of youth, barriers constructed by our "need" to wield social power in the service of our own interests, conceptualized and articulated as the interests of role incumbent persons.

Kohlberg on Moral Development

We have stated Erikson's awareness of the relevance of Kohlberg's theory for his own model of psychosocial development. However, his reference to Kohlberg was expressed only briefly during his own discussion of his value orientation stages (see our chapter 6). From our perspective, the perti-

nence of Kohlberg's work for an understanding of ego identity formation needs to be noted more carefully.

Kohlberg's (1984) six-stage model of moral reasoning can be divided into the three levels of pre-conventional (Stages 1 and 2), conventional (Stages 3 and 4), and post-conventional (Stages 5 and 6) stages of reasoning, and Habermas, as discussed, deduced the developmental order and operational logic of these stages from his own general model of communicative structures. Our purpose in briefly reviewing Kohlberg's perspective is twofold. First, we wish to point out that his ideas about Stage 6 dovetail with Erikson's conception of integrity as an ethical orientation to mutuality. Second, we wish to discuss a specific conception of moral reasoning that Kohlberg developed that is not only pertinent to understanding the relationship between integrity and Stage 6 reasoning, but also helps us to understand an optimal conception of identity stage resolution. We are referring to his distinction between "A-type" and "B-type" moral reasoning (Kohlberg et al., 1983).

Stage 6 and Integrity as Ethics

In the late 1970s Kohlberg dropped his empirical claims to having observed Stage 6 reasoning. This development in his work was partially a function of revisions in his content analytical scoring procedures, and because the incidence of Stage 6 reasoning appears to be rare indeed (Colby, Kohlberg, & Gibbs, 1983). However, for a variety of psychological, logical, and moral philosophical reasons, Stage 6 as a theoretically defined optimal endpoint for his stage hierarchy could not be dropped (Kohlberg et al., 1983).

In 1990, Kohlberg, Boyd, and Levine published "The Return of Stage 6: Its Principle and Moral Point of View." In this paper, they described a conception of Stage 6 that is consistent with Erikson's conception of ethics, although it is much more focused on the cognitive operational bases of a prescriptive orientation to dialogue about moral matters. For them, the principle of respect for persons was not only an attitude about attending to the claims of self and other, it was also an active operational strategy for doing so. This operationally active nature of Stage 6 is emphasized because they understood it as the necessary cognitive preparation for respecting persons in and through dialogue.

Kohlberg et al.'s (1990) perspective focused on justice, and the purpose of Stage 6 was to adequately resolve disagreements about justice. It is important to note, however, that for them such resolutions of justice must, ideally, be derived from interaction entered into with an attitude of benevolence. Their claim in this regard was compatible with Erikson's concerns about a sense of mutuality grounding ethical discourse and echoes the lat-

ter's references to Gandhi's and Socrates' orientations to dialogue. Kohl-
berg et al. (1990) conceived of the issue this way:

> The way of regarding the other that we are calling benevolence views the
> other and human interaction through the lens of intending to promote good
> and prevent harm to the other. . . . Thus, as a mode of interaction between
> self and others that manifests a Stage 6 conception of respect for persons,
> benevolence is logically and psychologically prior to what we are calling jus-
> tice. (p. 157)

The principle of respect for persons, then, seeks justice from a prior,
benevolent regard for maintaining interactive solidarity. For Kohlberg et
al. (1990), this attitude became cognitively "activated" with the opera-
tional thought processes of sympathy and ideal reciprocal role taking.

Sympathy functions in the service of the attitude of benevolence. As a
thought operation, ". . . it is the cognitive organization of the attitude of
identification and empathic connection with others" (1990, p. 165). It un-
derstands persons as ". . . self determining agents who pursue objects of
interest to themselves" (p. 165). Furthermore, such objects of interest ". . .
are understood as derived from and supportive of a life plan actively con-
structed and reconstructed by persons over time" (1990, p. 166). We may
note that this latter observation is consistent with the developmental claim
emphasized by both Erikson and Habermas regarding the formative na-
ture of ego identity, as a function of on-going participation in interactive
contexts with a sense mutuality.

The operation of ideal reciprocal role taking addresses the "adjudi-
catory dimension" of respect for persons in the context of dialogue about
what is to count as justice. It attempts to identify mutually acceptable reso-
lutions through the balancing of claims raised by involved persons. In at-
tempting to accomplish such a balanced or fair treatment of competing
claims, persons assume that others are attempting to do the same. Thus,
this activity not only requires the sense of trust implied by mutuality, but
also ". . . involves temporarily separating the actual identities of persons
from their claims and interests in order to assess what would be the rela-
tive merits of those claims and interests from the point of view of any per-
son implicated . . ." (1990, p. 167). This ability to be "temporarily impar-
tial" is reminiscent not only of Gandhi's orientation to dialogue, as
reported by Erikson, but also of Erikson et al.'s (1986) understanding that
a reflexively sensed, freely willed "vital involvement" must stem from the
"distanced" perspective of an "existential ego." In Kohlberg et al.'s (1990)
words, the operations of sympathy and ideal reciprocal role taking can be
seen as cognitive "devices through which persons momentarily shed their

own ego's particularities in order to consider the needs and claims of others" (p. 175).

A- and B-Type Reasoning

It is important to realize that the "operationally active" nature of Stage 6 we have described in the last section has its developmental roots not in earlier moral stages per se, but in the "operationally active" use of those stages. It is necessary to understand the distinction between A-type and B-type reasoning in order to explain what we mean by this observation.

In addition to his primary concern with conceptualizing and measuring only the structural properties of moral reasoning, there were reasons for Kohlberg (1976) and his colleagues (Colby & Kohlberg, 1984) to also conceive of moral reasoning in a hybrid fashion, in terms of its structural *and* content properties simultaneously. This concern led to the making of a distinction between two moral reasoning "types" that could be identified in Stages 2 through 5 of Kohlberg's developmental model. Heteronomous A-type moral reasoning could now be distinguished from autonomous B-type reasoning.

A-type reasoning can be considered "pre-packaged" or pre-constructed in the sense that the moral judgments it produces simply assert the legitimacy of various rules and regulations perceived as relevant to the moral dilemma in question. On the other hand, B-type reasoning actively re-constructs the relevance of pertinent rules and regulations *in relation to* an awareness and evaluation of the needs, rights and obligations of persons implicated in dilemmas. In a general sense, then, B-type reasoning is "humanistically" oriented and articulates this orientation with the use of such cognitive operations as classification, rank-ordering, and balancing perspectives (i.e., reciprocal role taking). In contrast to the heteronomously constructed concerns with rightness generated by A-type reasoning, B-type moral judgments appear much less rigid and place more emphasis on notions of fairness.

For our purposes, the important point to note is that for psychological as well as moral philosophical reasons, Kohlberg claimed that it is only the maturation of a B-type competency that can eventually yield a Stage 6 reasoning ability.

It is interesting to note that when Erikson's neo-psychoanalytic and social psychological perspective on integrity is conceptualized as "life with others," it is complemented by Kohlberg's cognitive operational emphasis on mature moral reasoning as well as by Habermas' overall concern with the role played by communicative competence and communication structures in human development. Clearly, there is likely much to be gained

from a carefully formulated research project that combines these perspectives.

So far in this chapter we have presented a review of Erikson's conception of integrity. This final psychosocial stage in his developmental model can be described in the following manner: Integrity, understood as an orientation to "life review" and "life with others," stems from an "existential ego identity," an identity that is differentiated from an understanding of one's personal and social identities. It is this sense of "being in time and space" that enables both a reconstruction of biography and an awareness of one's ongoing dependency on vital involvement with interactive relationship as the foundation for the pursuit of a "meaningful" life. Furthermore, it is understood that if interactive relationship is to fulfill this task, it must be sensed as "mutual" and "ethically" normed so that it can be trusted as the foundation for making "meaningful sense" of one's continuing development as a social being. We now turn our attention to the identity stage in order to identify developmentally nascent forms of these characteristics of "optimal" integrity functioning. This exercise should enable us to identify "optimal" characteristics of identity stage resolution, and thus give us some criteria for assessing the health of actual identity stage development as it occurs in the "real" world.

DEVELOPMENTAL PRECURSORS OF INTEGRITY
AT THE IDENTITY STAGE

We can begin our analysis of the identity stage by recalling that at the integrity stage, "ego identity" appears to be an "epistemological gestalt." By this we mean that it constitutes a logical structure that *coordinates* the following: a sense of "existential identity;" an understanding that mutuality with others in interactive relationship is the necessary foundation for meaning; a sense of the need to be "vitally involved" with others; and, finally, an ethical competency.

It seems clear that such a structured awareness is not available to youth as a means for resolving the identity crisis. For example, while it would be rare indeed to find an adolescent who could articulate a moral Stage 6 understanding of the principle of respect for persons, it seems even less likely that such a person could understand the relationship between this principle and his or her sense of ego identity. However, it can be suggested that it is at the resolution of the identity stage that earlier developmental forms of these integrity components can be understood by adolescents and to some extent organized by them as an epistemological structure. (We must point out that the discussion to follow is not intended as a description of the average member of the adolescent population liv-

ing in industrial, late modern societies. Instead, we are attempting to describe the optimal reflexive knowledge systems of "humanistic" or "intellectual" youth, the groups that Erikson [1968, 1975] thought have the greatest potential for development.)

Periodic "Reflexive Distancing" as Existential Identity

It is at the identity stage that a reflexive awareness can emerge of one's ability to psychologically differentiate a sense of one's existence from one's personal and social identities. We call this awareness "reflexive distancing." Although this sense can be to some extent appreciated for the first time during the second psychosocial stage of "autonomy versus shame and doubt" (a time during which the child can realize that one "is never fully himself and never fully them"; Erikson, 1964, p. 103), it is in reference to the identity stage that Erikson (1975) emphasized the importance of this awareness when he observed that it is ". . . in adolescent experience that the 'I' can first really perceive itself as an existential phenomenon" (p. 107). As we suggested in chapter 6, "reflexive distancing" would likely come to awareness only periodically, when the "meaningfulness" of things, one's past, present, and/or future personal and social identities was sensed as problematic.

During the psychosocial moratorium provided by late modern societies, adolescents can realize that they are no longer simply who they were and that they are involved in a life process of "becoming," of "moving" toward a variety of possible futures. Because they can differentiate themselves from their pasts and futures, they can experience "reflexive distancing" from their personal and social identities and ask themselves "who" they are in a fundamental, existential sense. This reflective process was acknowledged by Erikson (1965, pp. 14–15) when he discussed the "historical perspective" (i.e., autobiographical awareness) that can be developed during adolescence. This perspective enables adolescents to psychologically differentiate themselves from family and from any suggestion that their futures are "hopelessly determined by what went before in life history."

Raising questions about the meaningfulness of one's personal and social identities and experiencing the juxtapositions of "present with past" and "present with future" are psychological events that can stimulate and reinforce the sense of "distancing" about which we are speaking. We believe it is this sense that is a necessary psychological condition for a developing sense of ego identity and that it is, therefore, also a "sense" that can be considered a necessary developmental precursor of an "existential ego identity" at the stage of integrity.

**The Epistemological Shift: Anticipating Interactive
Mutuality as the Foundation for Meaning**

It is important to recognize that reflexive distancing reinforces the sense
of "sameness and continuity in time and space" and enables the activity of
biographical reconstruction; however, it is also of utmost importance to
understand its eventual contribution to integrity conceptualized as "life
with others." As noted, reflexive distancing grounds the ability of the ado-
lescent to construct a sense of ego identity and differentiate it from concrete
roles (i.e., social identities) and, therefore, from particular or contextu-
alized systems of norms. Habermas (1979) recognized the significance of
these observations and added to them the differentiation of personal
identity. With an observation that anticipated our concerns with identity
capital competencies, he noted that the adolescent can now

> . . . retract his ego behind the line of all particular roles and norms and stabi-
> lize it only through the abstract ability to present himself credibly in any situ-
> ation as someone who can satisfy the requirements of consistency even in the
> face of incompatible role expectations and in the passage through a se-
> quence of contradictory periods of life. Role identity is replaced by ego iden-
> tity; actors meet as individuals across, so to speak, the objective contexts of
> their lives. (p. 86)

Habermas' observation suggests that the differentiation of ego identity
from role (social) identity contributes to the further differentiation of ego
identity from what we have called personal identity. This is apparent in his
emphasis on the psychosocial task that youth must perform; that is, the
task of reflexively constructing and managing their presentations of self
(i.e., their personal identities) "credibly in any situation" as persons who
can satisfy the requirements of consistency in interaction with others. It is
these differentiations that we have in mind when we speak of "reflexive
distancing" coordinating ego, personal, and social identity.

The differentiations just noted among types of identity and the correla-
tive awareness of the task of managing personal and social identities en-
able adolescents to experience what we call the "epistemological shift."
With this expression, we refer to the adolescent's growing awareness that
both descriptive and prescriptive meaning is contextualized by interaction
and is thus understood as a function of communicative relationship with
others. To justify the claim that adolescents can become aware of this idea,
we focus on reflexive distancing and the deductions one can draw from it
regarding life with others.

Once ego identity is sensed, the adolescent can understand that life ex-
perience (as mediated in interaction by their personal and social identi-

ties) can no longer fully define the "who" that they are. Rather, there is now available to them this "sense of being" that remains abstracted from context-bound interactions. We claim that it is this sense of a "distanced" standpoint juxtaposed with the realization of their involvement within varying interactive contexts that allows adolescents to deduce the following understandings: (a) that their personal and social identities can be/are multiple; (b) that the "rightness" of their behavior as well as "norms governing behavior in general" can be relative to context; (c) that life is comprised of a variety of possible relationships and, finally, (d) that they can "change" and "grow" as a function of "being with" others.

What now logically follows from those understandings is the more general deduction we call the epistemological shift: the awareness that descriptive and prescriptive meaning per se is contingent on interaction with others. This abstract conclusion does not mean for adolescents that "meaning" is controlled or known only by others, and is, therefore, to be unilaterally internalized by the self; rather, we are simply claiming that they can become aware that the experience of learning about self, things, and rightness is a function of interactive relationship.

This "epistemological shift," we hold, is the ontogenetic precursor for the later life understanding of the relationship between meaning and interaction that we have attributed to the integrity stage, when understood as "life with others." What is clearly lacking at the identity stage, however (and what Erikson, 1968, saw as one of the major developmental tasks that must be accomplished during the next three psychosocial stages), is the coordination of the epistemological shift with an ethical comprehension of a sense of mutuality with interactive others.

Fidelity as Wisdom and Vital Involvement

Given Erikson's developmental logic, an adolescent "sense of fidelity" can be identified as the virtue that must eventually be transformed into wisdom and its association with "vital involvement." We can understand fidelity as the attitudinal/motivational "bridge" required to coordinate an adolescent ego identity with a "life with others." The exercise of this virtue, in other words, enables the on-going development of an autonomous ego identity by initiating and maintaining its inclination to be socially involved. Erikson (1964) defined fidelity in the following manner:

> Fidelity is the ability to sustain loyalties freely pledged in spite of the inevitable contradictions of value systems. It is the cornerstone of identity and receives inspiration from confirming ideologies and affirming companions. (p. 125)

It is important for our purposes to focus specifically on the agentic theme in Erikson's definition of fidelity, a theme expressed with the phrase "freely pledged." Before considering the significance of this agentic theme, however, we wish to present one additional observation Erikson (1968) shared with us regarding fidelity, its relationship with ego identity, and the formal operational thought abilities of the adolescent:

> Such cognitive orientation forms not a contrast but a complement to the need of the young person to develop a sense of identity, for, from all possible and imaginable relations, he must make a series of ever-narrowing selections of personal, occupational, sexual, and ideological commitments. . . . Here again diversity and fidelity are polarized; they make each other significant and keep each other alive. Fidelity without a sense of diversity can become an obsession and a bore; diversity without a sense of fidelity, an empty relativism. . . . *The dominant issue . . . therefore, is the assurance that the active, the selective, ego is in charge and enabled to be in charge* by a social structure which grants a given age group the place it needs . . . and in which it is needed. (pp. 245–246; emphasis added)

It is clear from these two quotations that fidelity does/must involve commitment to an "object" (i.e., occupation, ideological point of view, social affiliations, etc.); fidelity becomes manifest by providing the ego with its "bridge" to others and the social roles and values of their culture. This interpretation of fidelity would seem to allow us to consider it a developmental precursor for agentic, "vital involvement" at the integrity stage. But for us (and we believe that the quotations indicate that Erikson would concur), this logic is insufficient, for it does not address the essential theme of agency that must be grasped if fidelity is to be properly appreciated as wisdom's developmental precursor. Let us explain.

We noted earlier that the agentic quality at the integrity stage could only be appreciated by understanding wisdom's role in reflexively coordinating an "existential ego identity" with vital involvement. In order to implicate fidelity as wisdom's developmental precursor, then, it appears that we need to understand it in a similar fashion, that is, as a reflexively informed intention, linking an adolescent's sense of ego identity with commitments made, for only in this way can fidelity's agentic quality be grasped.

Adolescent commitments, however, cannot be designated as "free" or agentic simply because they have been made. Instead, to understand fidelity as manifested in a "freely pledged" commitment, we need to know that adolescents (a) perceive alternatives, including the option of not choosing (or delaying choosing), and (b) understand themselves "as being in charge" when selecting among these possible options. Furthermore, as Erikson suggested, trusting or "believing in" one's sense of "being in charge" requires a sensed "psychological distance" between self and possible commitments, and this psychological distance can only be utilized with

a sense of ego identity. In his words: "A sense of [ego] identity . . . becomes more necessary . . . whenever a wide range of possible [social] identities is envisaged" (Erikson, 1968, p. 246).

Thus, it would seem that "evidence" of the agentic quality of fidelity can be seen in its *coordination with a sense of reflexive distancing and an intent to make commitments*; it is evidence of this coordination that we would require to count fidelity as a developmental precursor for the virtue of wisdom and the intent to be vitally involved.

If we understand fidelity as we have suggested, as an informed disposition to make commitments from a reflexively distanced standpoint, then we can see why Erikson referred to it in the earlier quotation as a "sense" and differentiates this "sense" from fidelity's "objects" of commitment. For Erikson, a proper appreciation of the virtue of fidelity cannot be based solely on evidence of acts of commitment. Instead, it is to be understood in a more general manner, as a reflexively sensed desire or willingness to commit. A sense of fidelity can remain a critically important component of development, in other words, without the making of any specific commitment and throughout a life experience of changing commitments.

Explicit Ideology and B-Type Moral Reasoning as the Precursor of Principled Ethics

In chapter 6 we discussed Erikson's emphasis on the adolescent need for an ideological value orientation, and in this chapter we have cited his, Taylor's, and Habermas' claims regarding the fundamental role played by prescriptive reasoning in the formation of ego identity. We have also noted that the functions of reflexive distancing, ego identity, fidelity, and the epistemological shift can only be partially coordinated at the resolution of the identity stage, partly because the adolescent's prescriptive sense of mutuality is not yet sufficiently developed. However, there are certain competencies in the domain of prescriptive reasoning that can be expected of adolescents and that can be implicated as ontogenetic precursors of a principled ethical orientation to interactive mutuality seen at the integrity stage.

Our earlier description of principled ethics emphasized Erikson's claim regarding a "second order" Golden Rule; that is, a normative orientation to "life with others" that privileges "mutual understanding" as the first principle for deriving prescriptive meaning from interactive relationship. In other words, at the integrity stage, an ethical orientation is understood as functioning in two ways: first, it is comprehended as the need to foster mutual respect with others in interaction, and second, such mutuality is seen as a necessary condition for having confidence in any prescriptive "truths" derived from interaction. In our discussion of the epistemological

shift, we noted that the adolescent mind can recognize the general idea that norms for behavior can vary by interactive context. What remains for us to attribute to the adolescent, then, is a more specific understanding of the prior two prescriptive logics: that (a) others and the self need to be respected if (b) "prescriptive truth" is to be derived from interaction.

Many years ago Piaget (1932/1977) observed that young adolescents were capable of moving beyond interactions normed by "unilateral respect" once they had acquired the cognitive and interactive skills needed to participate in relationships of "mutual respect;" that is, they had become aware of the practical necessity of orienting themselves cooperatively with one another as the dialogical means for constructing "proper" rules for playing games. This orientation toward "mutual respect" represents, then, a basic grasp of the two prescriptive understandings we referred to earlier. Although not based on a mature "principle" of mutual respect, such an orientation to interaction is likely available to most adolescents and can be seen as the ontogenetic precursor for an ethical understanding at the integrity stage. We can identify in Erikson's (1968) conception of an "explicit ideological" value orientation and in Kohlberg's (1984) notion of B-type moral reasoning the cognitive abilities in adolescence that appear to represent the two conceptions of prescriptivity that we are discussing.

For Erikson, an ideological value orientation can be held in an implicit or an explicit manner (Erikson, 1968, p. 187). When it is explicit, it is manifested in the adolescent's ability to articulate and defend prescriptive claims (Côté & Levine, 1987, p. 298). It is this inclination to "interactively assert/test" one's value orientation that was understood by Erikson (1964, p. 225) as the adolescent's ability to *approximate* an ethical awareness, and it appears to reflect the basic understanding that prescriptive meaning can be validated in interaction.

Although interaction can be understood as the means for deriving and validating prescriptive meaning, we noted earlier that this is not the same thing as being aware of the need to take a prescriptive orientation toward the other (mutuality) when interacting. It is this latter awareness that needs to be coordinated with the former if we are to have confidence that an adolescent has an operative and preliminary sense of mutual respect. An explicit ideological orientation can be taken as a proxy for the first awareness; however, it is the use of B-type moral reasoning that appears to reflect the second, especially in its intent to "balance perspectives" among relevant parties to a dilemma.

We have reported elsewhere (Côté & Levine, 1989; Levine, Jakubowski, & Côté, 1992; Levine, Pavkis, & Higgins-D'Alessandro, 2000) that both an explicit ideological awareness and B-type reasoning are positively correlated with the endorsement of humanistic values. These findings, as well

as the theoretical claims presented in this chapter, lead us to recommend that identity researchers view these two prescriptive competencies in adolescence as the ontogenetic precursors of an ethical orientation at the integrity stage.

In conclusion, our claim is that a periodic sense of distancing coupled with reflexive cognition should be sufficient psychological conditions to enable adolescents and young adults to understand and coordinate these ideas regarding fidelity, the epistemological shift, and the prescriptive understandings of explicit ideology and B-type reasoning. In addition, we are claiming that such understandings constitute the ontogenetic precursors for the psychological and interactive functioning of persons at the psychosocial stage of integrity.

SYNOPSIS

In this chapter we have presented our view of the psychosocial stage of integrity in a manner consistent with Erikson's writings about it. In addition we have presented a theoretical logic for outlining the relationship between the integrity and identity stages by identifying certain reflexive understandings that are logically accessible to the young adult mind (under optimal psychosocial conditions) and that can be reasoned to be the ontogenetic precursors for functioning at the integrity stage. Our argument is that evidence for these ontogenetic precursors is required if we are to have confidence in designating the resolution of the identity crisis and stage as functionally and ontogenetically adequate. Although our analysis in this chapter has been largely based on an inquiry about the "optimal" intrapsychic competencies that can be acquired by adolescents (e.g., explicit ideological awareness, a periodic sense of distancing, etc.), it has not ignored the social psychological and interactive themes discussed throughout this book. We have endeavored to convey this point with our discussion of the perspectives of Kohlberg and, especially, Habermas.

From the perspective of ontogenetic adequacy developed here, it is our view that the achievement status of the identity status paradigm cannot be accepted as a sufficient operational indicator of "healthy" identity stage resolution. Inasmuch as the achievement status is likely a reliable and valid indicator of functionally adequate adaptation to the adult world, we would like to see future researchers investigate the possible empirical associations between it, measures of identity capital, and measures of the various intrapsychic competencies we have discussed in this chapter. In this way, we can develop multidimensional measures tapping the relationship between indicators of both functional and ontogenetic adaptation and be in a better position to comment on the "health" of psychosocial development in our adolescent and young adult populations.

Identity and Late Modern Society: Ongoing Concerns and Future Research

This book has undertaken several tasks thus far. In chapters 1 through 5 we reviewed and analyzed the existing psychological and sociological literature on identity, pointing out its strengths, limitations, and points of potential synthesis. In chapter 6, we presented a formulation of Erikson's work on ego identity, showing how it is part of a formal theory of identity formation compatible with symbolic interactionism. Then in chapters 7, 8, and 9, on this Eriksonian base we placed elements of a synthesis of psychological and sociological approaches to elaborate aspects of a social psychology of identity formation that is relevant to the conditions of late modern society. In this final chapter of the book, we look to the future of theory and research on identity, hopeful that we can apply lessons from the past without being constrained by it. Accordingly, we provide a set of recommendations regarding what we believe should be pursued to help the identity concept reach its full potential. This seems particularly appropriate at the beginning of a new millennium.

We noted in chapter 4 that a major difference between the approaches taken in psychology and sociology is that psychologists tend to see theory as mere speculation, whereas sociologists rely on theory as a methodological tool. A result of these tendencies is that the psychology of identity tends to be based on a literature rich with empirical studies, but relatively impoverished when it comes to providing formal theoretical justifications for carrying out those studies (Côté & Levine, 1988a; van Hoof, 1999). Similarly, but conversely, the sociological literature tends to be rich in theoretical formulations, but impoverished empirically. It is our hope that the synthesis we have begun in this book will constitute a starting point

from which the deficits of each discipline can be offset by the strengths of each. In this respect, we call on psychologists to devote more efforts to developing formal theoretical foundations for their empirical efforts (ideally beginning with a more formalized theory before empirical research is carried out), and we call on sociologists to devote more effort to empirically testing their theoretical formulations.

Having said this, we also want to call on the "identity community" to seriously consider ways in which their theory and research can find practical applications in people's day-to-day lives. In particular, the range of identity-related problems needs to be better understood if we hope to ameliorate problems endemic to late modern life. The range of these identity-related problems spans from day-to-day difficulties in impression management in a world largely composed of "strangers" (these include challenges to identity resulting from ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, and other salient features of personal and social identity), through identity crises of adolescence and youth, to identity disorders resulting from prolonged and unresolved identity crises (including some of the identity strategies identified in chapters 1 and 4), to personality disorders.

When viewed historically, we believe the conclusion is inescapable that identity problems constitute a main source of psychological discomfort and social discord in the current era (see Steinberg & Schnall, 2000). If we do not recognize this and find ways to deal with identity problems, the optimism we take into a new millennium may go unrealized. Instead, individual pathologies might well become more commonplace and the corrosion of civil society will continue (cf. Côté, 2000; Putnam, 1995, 2000). As Erikson (e.g., 1975) feared, we could be left with a technologically sophisticated economy that drives a humanistically impoverished society comprising a large population of people with little sense of meaning and purpose (other than that derived from their techno-economic pursuits).

MOVING FROM THEORY TO RESEARCH AND APPLICATION

Lerner, Fisher, and Weinberg (2000) argued that university-based, academic research, as is found in Western countries, has tended to be disengaged from the realities and problems of local communities and civil society, preferring instead to validate itself in terms of pure research defining interdisciplinary boundaries. Consequently, much academic knowledge is a product of independently working career scholars endeavouring to produce decontextualized knowledge. As a result, there is a deficit of knowledge that can be used as a basis for policy and program endeavours. Clearly, this is unfortunate, given the breadth and magnitude of problems facing the citizens of developed and developing countries.

Lerner et al. (2000) are advocates of "applied developmental science," an approach that explicitly seeks to rectify the hiatus between pure and applied knowledge. They characterized their approach as

> scholarship that seeks to advance significantly the integration of developmental science and actions that address the pressing human problems of our world. As such, a key goal (intended impact) of applied developmental research is the enhancement of the life chances of the diverse individuals, families, and communities served by such scholarship. (p. 24)

More specifically, they define applied developmental science (ADS) as

> the synthesis of research and applications to promote positive development across the lifespan. Applied developmental scientists use descriptive and explanatory knowledge about human development in order to provide preventive and/or enhancing interventions. The conceptual basis of ADS reflects the view that individual and family functioning is a combined and interactive product of biology and the physical and social environments that continuously evolve and change over time. ADS emphasizes the nature of reciprocal person–environment interactions among people and across settings. Within a multidisciplinary approach, ADS stresses the variation of individual development across the lifespan—including both individual differences and within-person change—and the wide range of familial, society, cultural, physical ecological, and historical settings of human development. (p. 25)

Given what we have already written regarding the multidimensionality of identity and the transcontextual, transhistorical variation in identity, along with our identification of emergent problems associated with changes in identity formation, we not only see the applied developmental science approach as compatible with our approach, but we wholeheartedly recommend it as a masthead with which to direct future research efforts in the field(s) of identity.

In addressing the hiatus between pure and applied research, Lerner et al. (2000) recommended that scholars and community members become partners in the process of knowledge generation, and that they use this partnership to learn from one another. To the extent that there is wide variation in the manifestation of both normal and abnormal forms of identity, such an approach will help us to ferret out the "diverse developmental patterns [of identity formation] by examining individuals within the multiple embedded contexts in which they live" (p. 25). Lerner et al. also recommended "the innovative and triangulated use of quantitative and qualitative methodologies that afford sensitivity to time, place, and person" (p. 26), as part of collaborative interdisciplinary efforts that set out to identify contextual differences in human ontogenesis. Indeed, they view the world as a "natural ontogenetic laboratory" in which multivariate,

multilevel, and longitudinal research focuses on person–context relations to produce programs of applied research that "involve the design, delivery, and evaluation of interventions aimed at enhancing—through scientist-introduced variation—the course of human development" (p. 26).

This humanistically oriented research agenda is compatible with our position and, we believe, would receive endorsement from Erikson. For example, our neo-Eriksonian approach matches the inherent humanism of the ADS approach, as is evident with its call for applied developmental scientists to

> develop ethical sensibilities that enhance both scientific and social responsibility, and that frame in collaborations with community members useful understanding of the forces that shape their development. . . . Put simply, a scholar's knowledge must be integrated with the knowledge that exists in communities in order to understand fully the nature of human development and, based on this co-constructed knowledge, to develop and sustain ethical actions that advance civil society. (Lerner et al., 2000, p. 27; cf. Kurtines, 1999)

In addition, ADS is an implicit endorsement of the personality and social structure perspective that has guided our work in this book. For example, Lerner et al. (2000), wrote that

> person–context relations provide both opportunities for, and constraints on, change across life, and thus constitute a basis for relative plasticity in development across the lifespan. . . . This stress on the dynamic relationship between the individual and his/her context results in the recognition that a synthesis of perspectives from multiple disciplines is needed to understand the *multilevel (e.g., person, family, community)* integrations involved in human development. (p. 26, emphasis added)

In sum, we agree with Lerner et al. (2000) when they called for scholars to enhance the ecological validity of their work, while at the same time seeking ways to empower the people they study and to promote their life chances. The main challenge, they argued, "is to collaborate with community partners to include scientifically rigorous evaluations—that include formative, and outcome/impact, and empowerment components—as part of the day-to-day operation of programs" (p. 27).

BUILDING A MEANINGFUL RESEARCH AGENDA

In making our recommendations with respect to what the identity field needs to do in terms of its future research agenda, we take up the challenge made by Lerner et al. (2000). Accordingly, the identity field needs to move in a scientifically grounded, humanistically based direction in the

sense that it *systematically* address issues and problems associated with the quality of people's social, psychological, and material existences. It is not that the research community has not been aware of this challenge, or pursued it to some extent, but there seems to have been little coordinated, concerted effort toward taking it up. For example, at the beginning of the 21st century, our knowledge of the basic processes of identity formation and maintenance is in a state of disarray, as is evident from our review of the literature in the opening chapters of this book. As we argue, although Erikson laid the foundation toward which a consensus concerning some of the basic processes of identity formation can be attempted, his work has been largely ignored and is even seen by some academics as irrelevant (cf. Sorell & Montgomery, 2001; Wallerstein, 1998). In short, the consensus of the research community is at a very low level, especially when compared to other fields, such as those in the natural sciences.

Part of the problem may be that research in the identity area has not addressed some of the big questions that divide various researchers about the intrinsic nature of identity and the extent of identity problems. For example, no empirical research has systematically addressed on a large scale the question of how widespread the deficit of identity is in late modern societies.[1] Part of the problem lies in the fact that the very notion of a deficit of identity has not been agreed on in the literature.[2] Without a basic definition of what constitutes a deficit identity, it is little wonder that there are no attempts to answer this question. Accordingly, efforts need to be de-

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[1]One exception to this is a minor study undertaken in the early 1970s by Turner (1975). He found among an adult sample that there was not a widespread self-conscious "search for identity," and only about one third of his youth samples (aged 18 to 29) reported such feelings. Unfortunately, this study was based on limited evidence (Turner, 1975, p. 160), and its deficits have never been corrected, with the minor exception of Turner and Schutte (1981), who reported initial work on a revised survey version on Kuhn and McPartland's (1954) Twenty Statements Test.

[2]A controversial line of research is helpful here. In their investigations of Dissociative Identity Disorder, Steinberg and Schnall (2000) estimated that about 14% (30 million) of Americans experience "substantial" symptoms (pp. xvi–xvii). They argued that another 25% experience dissociative "episodes that are brief, are rare, and have minimal effect on their ability to function socially or on the job" (pp. 12 and 20). They estimate that 1% (2.5 million) of Americans have the actual disorder with "persistent, recurrent, and disruptive" (p. 12) symptoms involving amnesia, depersonalization, derealization, identity confusion, and identity alteration. Steinberg and Schnall argued that the disorder, and its milder forms, originates in childhood trauma, especially resulting from abuse and exploitation (experienced by 70 million Americans, they claim). Although they do not discuss Erikson's work on ego identity and identity confusion, their work is clearly compatible with his. Recall that Erikson first noticed identity confusion when treating traumatized shell-shock victims. He later wrote (Erikson, 1968) that acute identity confusion in late adolescence could be traced to trauma during childhood and youth, including "severe physical trauma," as in an operation, accident, "or a severe sexual traumatization" (p. 179).

voted to: (a) operationally defining, and differentiating among, the notions of healthy identities, identity deficits, identity problems, identity disorders, and identity pathologies, (b) establishing reliable and valid (multiple) measures of each of these as they are manifested at each of the three levels of identity, that can (c) be administered to large-scale, representative samples of the population, with multimethod formats (i.e., combining quantitative and qualitative approaches).

In contrast with that, the current literature is dominated by approaches that: (a) cannot distinguish among different forms of identity along the normal–pathological range; (b) have potential validity problems associated with narrow, singular measurement methods; and (c) have utilized small, non-random samples largely made up of college students (the studies are typically constrained by finances, partly because they are usually carried out by graduate students as thesis projects). Only when normative data of the order we are suggesting are collected—and the magnitude of problems are then empirically verified—will we be able to bring the research community together to discuss what to do next.[3] Moreover, we would then be in a position to conduct studies on a regular basis that help us to monitor changes in identity over time, eventually allowing us to draw conclusions about cohort effects. A model for this idea is the annual freshman survey conducted by Astin and his associates (e.g., Astin, Korn, Sax, & Mahoney, 1994; Sax et al., 1998). The limited short-term benefits and the expense of adopting this research strategy will eventually be offset by the immense long-term benefits derived by future investigators, and future generations, who will have a historical barometer to guide them. Had this research project been undertaken in the past, we would not have to deal with so much conjecture now, and we would be in a much better position to undertake the type of applied initiatives called for by Lerner et al. (2000).

When the massive empirical undertaking being suggested is completed, the research community would be able to provide solid and useful information for policymakers and community leaders. The research community will be able to tell them how widespread different types of identity

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[3]Another big question to be addressed involves empirical support for the culture-identity framework discussed in chapter 7. This typology is based on cultural knowledge and logic, but it would be very difficult to empirically test the proposition that members of late modern societies have a more difficult time with identity than members of, say, premodern societies. Most would likely agree with the typology to the extent that it identifies difference, but there is likely less consensus that things are more problematic now than they were in the past. Obviously, this is impossible to answer scientifically within a society (archival evidence is suggestive at best), but it is possible to answer this scientifically by comparing late modern societies with subcultures that have preserved elements of premodernity, as in the Gemeinschaft-type societies preserved in groups like the Mennonites.

problems are, what ages are critical for which problems, and how these problems vary by race and ethnicity, gender, class, sexual orientation, education, and various features of social organization. When the larger questions are addressed and a certain consensus has been reached, researchers can then conduct a series of middle-range studies similar to those recommended by Lerner et al. (2000) in which other aspects of identity can be investigated in diverse contexts. This research would help to further develop the much-needed taxonomy of identity concepts that we have been calling for, and to map out various facets of identity formation and maintenance, both normal and pathological, in much the same way as medical research has sought to advance knowledge concerning epidemiology, prevention, treatment, and care for the myriad of health and disease manifestations. The goal of this would not be to develop a grand theory of identity that would dominate the field, obscure variation, and suppress innovation; to the contrary, it would be to provide a catalog of descriptive knowledge concerning identity *within the prescriptive parameters of the humanistic ethos*, which promotes enhancement of the human condition in terms of increasing life chances, personal empowerment, and social emancipation (cf. Erikson, 1975).

As an agreed-upon taxonomy is developed, and as researchers feel that they have a common superordinate goal, the field of identity should enjoy an increase in its own social capital. We should witness more cooperation among researchers, as opposed to the current situation where researchers have tended to favor their own approach to the exclusion of other approaches. This is not to say that diversity of opinion is undesirable, but that the research community can spread its efforts too thin to the neglect of the previously described cooperative project. We believe that the individualism and competitiveness associated with the academic career tends to drive the research community apart, to the detriment of a wider society, as noted by Lerner et al. (2000).

Readers are referred to Kroger (2000b) for a thoughtful analysis of what she believes needs to be accomplished by identity status researchers. Her recommendations regarding the development and use of this paradigm are compatible with the broader recommendations of Lerner et al. (2000), as well as our own. She noted that over the past several decades, much work has been done on the contents and course of identity status formation, but that little research has been done on the relationship between social context and identity status formation. Looking into the future, Kroger noted that social conditions are promoting greater compulsory choice-making (cf. the individualization process), "giving rise to the need for identity-defining decisions among adolescents and young adults, [and giving] rise to identity concerns among those in their middle and later adulthood years" (p. 146). Moreover, she believed that the results of

research involving identity formation "hold important social implications for future human service providers and social policy-makers" (p. 146). She drew attention, for example, to the need "to examine the *quality* of identity decisions made within the different identity domains" (2000b, p. 146, emphasis in original; cf. our chapter 9). In addition, she felt that attention needs to be devoted to "identity trajectories," not only in adolescence and youth, but also in adulthood, including an examination of "developmental arrest" in these trajectories (she noted that longitudinal research shows that over half of the adult population remain in the Foreclosure or Diffusion statuses). Finally, echoing Lerner et al. (2000), Kroger (2000b) argued that

> research on social context and identity formation must consider the individual's interpretation or experience of context as an important mediating variable. The same context will not be associated with a uniform pattern of identity development for all individuals therein. Much valuable information about identity formation will be gained by examining the meaning an adolescent makes of elements in his/her social context. (p. 147)

DEVELOPING APPROPRIATE INTERVENTION APPLICATIONS

We noted earlier an emerging consensus in the literature of the need to better understand the relationship between social context and various forms of human development. Although this idea has a long history in social science (e.g., Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Mead, 1934), it is only recently that the more problematic aspects of social context have been systematically identified (e.g., Yoder, 2000, regarding the identity status paradigm). Previously, literatures have tended to focus on individuals' inadequacies in dealing with social environments (as per the traditional psychoanalytic and clinical psychology approaches), or have only dealt with normative transitions, which usually involve studies of middle-class, college samples. We believe it is time for researchers to break out of this mold to examine non-normative transitions in environments that are clearly problematic. This should help us move beyond the "victim blaming" tendency of the first approach, and the conservative, Pollyannic tendency of the second approach.

Again Lerner (1995) has led the way in this respect, particularly with *America's Youth in Crisis*, in which he noted the magnitude of risk factors confronting young people in America (see also Lerner & Galambos, 1998). For example, citing Dryfoos (1990, 1998), he noted that estimates indicate that

> fifty percent of American youth engage in two or more of the major four categories of risk behaviors (crime and violence; substance use and abuse; un-

safe sex and teenage pregnancy and parenting; and school failure) and that
10 percent engage in all four sets. (Lerner, 2000)

These risk behaviors are accompanied by degrees of marginalization from
mainstream society in general and adult society in particular. The more
they are engaged in, the more difficult transition to adulthood will be, if it
is reached at all. In addition, the implications of social marginalization for
identity formation are clear: The more marginalized the person, the more
difficulty they have in formulating a positive identity rooted in a stable
community of others, the more likely it is that they will follow a default in-
dividualization trajectory, and the more likely it is they are not accruing
the type of identity capital that will see them into a productive adulthood.

The United States is not alone in this predicament. Everatt (2000) re-
ported research from South Africa in which degrees of marginalization
were measured (based on "a 12-part index covering employment, educa-
tion, attitudinal, value and other axes"; p. 9). According to this research,
the most severely marginalized constitute 5% of those age 16 to 30 who
were deemed "lost," namely, "so damaged by their past that the only way
youth programs might reach them would be via the criminal justice sys-
tem" (p. 9). Another 25% of South African youth were found to be
"marginalized," that is, functioning outside mainstream institutions. A
third group, categorized as "at risk," constituted 43% of South African
youth, while only 25% of South African youth were found to be "fine."
Among the three marginalized groups, almost 30% are unemployed, and
about 20% are neither in school nor in the workforce (but do not show up
in the unemployment statistics because they are not looking for work).
More shocking is the fact that one third of females age 19 or less have
been pregnant, while one in five under the age of 20 are HIV-positive
(Everatt, 2000).

Clearly, such marginalized populations need to become the focus of
concerted and integrated research and policy efforts, such as those pro-
moted by Lerner et al. (2000) in their advocacy of applied developmental
science. In our view, this research should incorporate identity as a primary
focus of investigation, in an attempt to understand the social and psycho-
logical processes of becoming marginalized as well as the processes of "de-
marginalization"—of moving into adulthood by forming a stable identity
as a productive member of a civil society.

Social and Psychological Interventions

Our knowledge concerning how to effectively intervene when identity
problems are evident is sparse. Indeed, as a field, identity intervention is
in its infancy. Part of the problem lies in the "normality" of many identity

problems, especially those experienced by young people during the transition to adulthood. In most cases, aberrations associated with identity crises are simply tolerated, or they are ignored, on the assumption that they will pass, which they may do in time. But not only do we know little about how to help young people through a stage-specific identity crisis (see the discussion in chapter 4, and the typology of intervention possibilities), we know even less about how to deal with more serious identity problems, disorders, and pathologies. In individualistic societies, where the right to freely choose regardless of possible negative consequences is highly revered, it is difficult to convince many people of the need to be prudent about how to govern their lives. At the personal level, intervening can be seen as interfering, and adult concern can be mistaken for intergenerational prejudice. And, at the social level, communities can be seen as oppressive and reactionary, while programs and policies can be mistaken for authoritarian paternalism.

This problem regarding developing a consensus among identity researchers finds a parallel when it comes to identity intervention; namely, just what constitutes an identity problem, and how severe should it be before an intervention is undertaken? Erikson, himself, was quite cautious in this regard, in spite of his extensive clinical experience in dealing with identity pathologies. In his view, most people could work through their youthful identity crises, often in a growth-producing, therapeutic manner. Not only did he think that the adult community should step back and ignore some forms of deviance associated with most identity crises, for fear of permanently labelling the young person and thereby setting up a self-fulfilling prophecy of a negative outcome, but he did not think that we know enough about identity crises to intervene in most cases. When directly asked about this, Erikson (1959) replied, "we would play engineers, without the necessary mathematics for engineering" (p. 104). For Erikson, intervention was appropriate in severe cases of obvious harm to the person or others, or when a person asked for it.

Nevertheless, some identity status researchers have studied and experimented with interventions seeking to increase the extent to which a person explores commitment-related alternatives associated with choice-making (e.g., Archer, 1994; Dreyer, 1994; Kerpelman & Smith, 1999; Marcia, 1989b; Markstrom-Adams & Beale Spencer, 1994; see Schwartz, 2001, for a review). The targets of these interventions are identity diffused and identity foreclosed young persons, who by definition have not actively sought out alternatives to their current life-course trajectory. Schwartz (2001) concluded that the results of empirical evaluations of these interventions show moderate levels of success in stimulating the exploration of various commitments. He also made a cautionary note regarding the implications of pushing people into courses of action for which they are not prepared.

One particularly promising intervention model has been developed by Kurtines (1999) based on his co-constructivist variant of the identity status model (see Schwartz, 2001, for review). Kurtines's intervention model seeks to increase the agentic capacity of the young person by teaching critical skills associated with the exploration of alternatives (e.g., problem-solving skills such as creativity, critical valuation, and a suspension of judgment). Using small groups of peers in which mutual criticism is encouraged, critical discussions are generated regarding real-life problems that can help young people learn from each other about how to conceptualize their current situation and imagine alternatives to it. This model has been effective among marginalized youth in helping them deal with real-life problems associated with numerous risk factors. Clearly, those interested in advancing the intervention field should make special note of the techniques developed by Kurtines and his associates (e.g., Ferrer-Wreder et al., in press).

Multidimensional "Identity Therapies"

Based on the formulations developed earlier regarding the three levels of identity and their interrelationships (see especially chapter 7, and Fig. 7.2 through Fig. 7.5), in conjunction with the material on identity capital (chapter 8), we believe that there is sufficient justification for recommending that those undertaking identity interventions consider basing their efforts in part on the distinctions between social identity, personal identity, and ego identity. In doing this, attention should be drawn to the fact that identity formation and maintenance processes are different at each level. Forming and maintaining social identities is a difficult and long-term task in late modern societies. Finding an appropriate niche and securing validated roles in an adult community has become an increasingly prolonged task (Côté, 2000). An implication of this is that most young people are now institutionally denied sources of meaningful adult social identities; hence, they often turn to the level of personal identity for sources of meaning and validation. However, the level of personal identity has been targeted and penetrated by mass culture influences that seek to push and pull the young person in various directions.

The fluid and unstable nature of these influences can be a source of concern and anxiety for the young person. Those who enter the period of youth with a relatively strong sense of ego identity, bolstered by well-developed ego synthetic and executive functions, can likely endure the assaults on, and insecurities about, their personal and social identities. However, those who have weaker egos will probably encounter greater difficulties in dealing with the deficits in their social identities and assaults on

their personal identities. Therapeutic interventions need to recognize this, and therapists need to let young people experiencing difficulties in their identity formation know that it may be the nature of contemporary society and not them personally that is at the heart of their distress. This does not remove responsibility from the young person for learning how to cope with this society, but the sense of contrast with other societies might help relieve some of their self-blame and anxiety. Therapist and patient alike should recognize that the identity problems associated with the compulsory individualization process were not found in earlier types of societies, where social identities were ascribed and personal identities were not manipulated for profit.

With this factual base established (cf. veridical attribution therapy; Fiske & Taylor, 1991), attention can be focused on the young person's subjective and objective identity components to determine whether this is a source of difficulty. As postulated in chapter 8, the greater the discrepancy between the two, the more difficulty one will have in relating to others, and the more one's identity formation progress will be affected, including identity capital acquisition. This sort of "reality therapy" can help the young person adjust to both his or her peer group and its pressures, and the adult community and its expectations. Maintaining accurate bearings on these social markers should facilitate the transition to membership in an adult community. Indeed, sustaining a realistic view of one's position in society has been the mark of adjustment in all societies, especially premodern ones that demanded a high level of conformity. We are not recommending blind conformity here; instead, people need the ability to realistically assess a situation and judge their chances for, and means of, achieving certain goals.

With a more aligned sense of reality, and of his or her objective location in the larger community, a person is in a much better position to engage in the identity capital acquisition process. Instead of squandering opportunities for growth and development by engaging in high-risk behaviors (as up to one half of American youth apparently do) or following a default individualization trajectory, efforts can be made to build a solid future based on the deliberate building of personal strengths and social networks that will ultimately pay off for the person and the community. The waste in potential among the young that is currently the norm in many communities is shameful, and to the extent that the adult community sits by and ignores it—or worse yet, endorses it—is even more shameful. At the beginning of the current millennium, with the technological wonders that afford so much wealth and opportunity, we should be far more socially advanced than we are. Learning more about identity formation and our generative responsibility for it may help us close the gap between our technical sophistication and social parochialism.

SOCIAL SCIENCE, GENERATIVITY,
AND INTEGRITY

As a final word, we wish to summarize and reiterate the metamessage of our book. The scientific community, as well as the community at large, is in need of a *normative* science applied to the study of identity (e.g., Greer, 1969). This is a science with an explicit set of humanistic values whose objective is the improvement of the human condition and the life chances of every human. The misconception that science is a neutral enterprise needs to be abandoned if we hope to move beyond the current state of affairs, which often favors a few at the expense of the many. Importantly, this false sense of scientific neutrality dovetails with a false sense of economic and political neutrality. The educated elites, many of whom are trained in the rudiments of the scientific method, and who have taken the helm of contemporary Western societies, have not fully met their obligations of assuming the type of leadership needed; instead, they have tended to take their wealth and shield themselves from the world in large houses and gated communities (see Lasch's, 1995, *The Revolt of the Elites*).

The possibility that the identity formation of our educated elites has predominantly followed a trajectory dictated by a technological ethos over a humanistic ethos is supported by the difficulties many of them are having while they move through their adulthoods, as evidenced by how many have mishandled their adult stages of intimacy, generativity, and integrity (Côté, 2000). Clearly, we need to find ways to reinstitutionalize these adult stages if we are to steer our course back to concerns with stable civil societies and intergenerational justice. The right to "freely choose" has been the result of hard-fought battles, but with rights must come responsibilities (cf. Fromm, 1955). We need, therefore, to teach people, beginning with our youngest, how to engage in activities that promote a developmental individualization trajectory (chapter 4). Adults need to take up this generative challenge in order to guide and protect their offspring, who face the difficult task of forging viable adult identities in late modern societies, with its attendant diversions, risks, and rewards.

Glossary

Agency: The capacity for intentional, willful behavior, sometimes in spite of social structural obstacles (see Structure–agency debate).

Anomie (Anomic): A condition of a society characterized by a breakdown or absence of norms and values. Derives its root from the Greek *anomia* meaning "lawlessness" and it came into English usage between 1930 and 1935. Often used interchangeably with the psychological concept of alienation, but sociologists prefer to use it to describe a condition of society, not the individual (see Nomie).

Consensus theory of truth: A test of the validity of a knowledge claim that requires a theory or idea to be agreed on by a community of informed observers. Usually used in conjunction with other theories of truth.

Consistency theory of truth: A test of the validity of a knowledge claim that requires a theory or idea to make sense in terms of its internal logic, and to not contain contradictions. Usually used in conjunction with other theories of truth.

Correspondence theory of truth: A test of the validity of a knowledge claim that requires a theory or idea to show some support in a concrete reality. Usually used in conjunction with other theories of truth.

Early modern society: see Modern society.

Enlightenment, The: A European philosophical movement of the 17th and 18th centuries characterized by a belief in the powers of reason and observation, especially in the context of challenging authority.

Epistemological assumptions: Fundamental views held regarding what constitutes valid knowledge.

Epistemological shift, The: A reflexive awareness that one's identities and moral/ethical understandings are derived from, and remain embedded in, interactive relationships. The shift to this awareness is a logically possible product of the identity stage.

Fidelity: The virtue or ego strength acquired with the syntonic resolution of psychosocial tasks confronted at the identity stage. When Erikson conceived fidelity as manifested in acts of "freely choosing" to make commitments, he clearly intended us to understand this virtue as an agentic strength of the person. Accordingly, we define fidelity as an intention to make commitments when that intention is differentiated from external pressures to conform and is, instead, reflexively coordinated with a sense of ego identity.

Independent self: A conceptualization of self as autonomous or separate from others. While the self is understood as participating within interaction and relationship, it is sensed as being "whole unto itself," as continuous and relatively constant in a temporal and social sense.

Individualization: The life-course process of developing one's self as an "individual," rather than as a member of a collective community. This involves a reflexive self-awareness in making life-altering decisions and choosing courses of action from a range of options. This process becomes necessary as collective supports for life-course trajectories are destructured, leaving people more to their own devices in making their way in the world as adults. (To be distinguished from "individuation," which involves developing an emotional distance from one's parents.)

Individualization, Default: An individualized life course that follows paths of least resistance and effort, essentially allowing decisions to be made for one, rather than actively engaging oneself in the decision-making process.

Individualization, Developmental: An individualized life course that follows active, growth-enhancing paths, while resisting various pressures to follow default options.

Integrity: The last stage in Erikson's epigenetic model of the life-cycle. Conceptualized as a structure of psychological competencies, an "integrated" ego confronts two main psycho-social tasks: autobiographical re-

construction, in order to derive a sense of life's meaningfulness, and how to understand the interactive role others have played and continue to play in the construction of life's meaning.

Interdependent self: A conceptualization of self as "being in relationship with context and others." The self is sensed as always "connected," as always constituted by others and shared perspectives. While an "internal" space within the self, filled with ideas and values, can be sensed, it is a space always understood as being within cultural and interactive contexts.

Late modern society: see Modern society.

Metaphysical idealism/epistemological realism: A middle-ground position between the epistemologies of objectivism and subjectivism. This position assumes that there is a social reality independent of our perception of it; that we can study it, observe regularities in it, but that we can never be entirely certain about the validity of our interpretations about it.

Modern society: In the sociological literature, there is not a total consensus regarding the naming of various historical periods. Some scholars prefer to distinguish the "modern" period from the "postmodern" one, while others prefer to distinguish the early modern and late modern eras. The transformation from premodern to modern involved a shift in the basis of social solidarity from one of primary-group relations to one of secondary-group relations. In secondary-group relations, social bonds are more voluntary and based more on rational self-interest, rather than largely on familial and intergenerational obligation. Late modernists do not think there has been a massive shift in social solidarity (as postmodernists do), but see secondary relations as having evolved to greater self-interest.

Modernity (modernism): There are differing characterizations of the beginning of modernity, ranging from the 17th century, the Enlightenment, to the early 20th century. Giddens uses the term in a very general sense, seeing its roots in post-feudal Europe, but in the 20th century became world-historical in its impact; it is roughly equivalent to the industrialized world, and refers to capitalism, the nation state, and organization social control.

Nomie (Nomic): A condition of society or an interpersonal relationship characterized by well-established norms and values. Normed, normful, structured, lawful. Often the term anomie is used, with the implication that nomie is its opposite (see Anomie).

Nominalism (see Realism): The philosophical position that social reality is the product of human consciousness, particularly the symbols (names) humans ascribe to mental experiences and social events.

Objectivation: The product of human social constructions that result in formation of social norms (shared prescriptions) and codified rules (written laws).

Objectivism: The philosophical position that social reality is fixed, obdurate, and independent of human consciousness (see Subjectivism).

Ontogenesis: The life course development of the individual.

Ontological assumptions: Fundamental assumptions regarding what is considered to be real (and by implication, not real).

Phylogenesis: The history of the development of a species, which is often thought to influence ontogenetic development.

Pragmatic constructionism: A middle-ground position between the epistemologies of objectivism and subjectivism that can be understood as complementing the position of metaphysical idealism/epistemological realism. Pragmatic constructionism claims that knowledge about the social world is always formative; that individual interpretations of the social world contribute to the institutionalization of that world that in turn "acts back" on individuals, reinforcing or stimulating changes in their subjective understandings.

Premodern society: The distinction between premodern and modern society corresponds with a widely accepted distinction between folk and urban society, a distinction that has been referred to in other terms such as agrarian versus industrial, folk versus urban, or Gemeinschaft versus Gesellschaft. In most Western societies, this transformation was largely completed during the 19th Century, but considerable variation can still be found.

Postmodernism, postmodernity: Succinct definitions of postmodernity and postmodernism are difficult to provide, but there is now a voluminous literature on these topics. However, the term "postmodernity" basically refers to the social conditions that are arising as "modernity" breaks down and/or is being rejected. Thus, large-scale modernist institutions based on science, logic, and reason that posit objective realities are seen to be declining in relation to more non-rational, subjective, and relativistic social forms based on individualistic or smaller collective interests. The term "postmodernism" generally refers to those streams of thought that analyze and/or celebrate these changes. In spite of their currency, many social analysts express a dissatisfaction with these terms.

Psychologism: The reduction of explanations for human behavior to mental processes and the behavior of individuals.

Realism: The philosophical position that social reality has its own proper-ties, regardless of human consciousness and social construction (see Nom-inalism).

Reductionist constructionism: A position of extreme subjectivism that as-sumes that social reality is simply a projection of individual constructions of it. This position, in taking an extreme nominalist stance, invites critical questions about the relativity of descriptive and prescriptive knowledge.

Reflexive project of self: The self-conscious planning of one's self-devel-opment and life course trajectory. It can also apply to retrospective inter-pretations of one's past life course and self-development (cf. individualiza-tion).

Reflexivity: The ability to view oneself as an object, or from an external point of view, as others would view one.

Sociologism: The reduction of explanations for human behavior to social processes and group behavior.

Structure–agency debate: The disagreement as to whether human behavior is determined and constrained by normed social structures or is the result of intentional, willful capacities.

Subjectivism: The philosophical position that social reality is indeterminate and dependent on the ways in which individuals construct it (see Ob-jectivism).

Universal pragmatics: A theory of communication and speech acts that out-lines communicative competencies (e.g., perspective-taking skills) and in-teractive requirements that must be met if meaning is to be shared. Habermas uses this theory as a foundation for understanding the relation-ship between ego and moral development.

Wisdom: The virtue or ego strength acquired with the syntonic resolution of psychosocial tasks confronted at the integrity stage. It can be defined as an ethically principled attitude toward others and interaction with them, based on the realization that interaction is the source of meaning.

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