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Bridging Social Psychologies: An Introduction

ALICE EAGLY

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As the organizers of this special section of *Social Psychology Quarterly*, we are firm advocates of greater exchange between the psychological and sociological branches of social psychology. As this journal emphasized in celebrating the 2008 centennial of the publication of the first two social psychology textbooks (one by William McDougall in psychology and the other by Edward A. Ross in sociology), social psychology resides at the intersection of two disciplines. It is what Herbert Kelman spoke of as an “interdiscipline.” Therefore, it was founded and has matured in both disciplines but with insufficient communication between its psychological and sociological branches. This collection of essays and the conference that preceded it build on the desirability of finding common ground. Our faith that transactions between the two social psychologies would be productive follows from our intellectual histories as graduate students in broadly defined interdisciplinary social psychology programs of an earlier era at Harvard (Fine) and Michigan (Eagly). We took our social psychology PhDs in different disciplinary directions—to psychology (Eagly) and sociology (Fine). We therefore developed our careers in what turned out to be increasingly divergent intellectual contexts (Oishi, Kesebir, and Snyder 2009).

Influenced by psychology’s cognitive revolution, the psychological tradition became intensely individual, with an emphasis on cognitive processes, and the sociological tradition retained a focus on social interaction and collective phenomena. Psychologists embraced laboratory experiments as their primary method, and sociologists treasured their greater methodological diversity. Psychologists rarely

deviated from quantitative analyses, while sociologists continued to appreciate qualitative along with quantitative research.

The divergence of the two social psychologies is plain to see in citation patterns of relevant journals. As detailed in the Thomson Reuter’s Journal Citation Reports, the articles in *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* and other journals of psychological social psychology seldom cite articles in sociological journals, even *Social Psychology Quarterly*. Authors in *Social Psychology Quarterly* cite mainly articles in sociological journals, although psychological journals receive more citations than sociological journals do within psychological journals. Similarly, professional associations and conferences mainly serve only one of the two social psychologies.

Our concern that two perspectives that should complement one another but instead have grown apart provided the impetus for the “Bridging Social Psychologies” conference held in November 2009 at Northwestern University. We are grateful for the support of the American Sociological Association’s Fund for the Advancement of the Discipline, as well as for the support of the departments of sociology and psychology and the Weinberg College of Arts and Sciences at Northwestern University.

The essays that follow initiate explorations across social psychology’s disciplinary divide. We organized this special section and the conference that preceded it by deciding on six topics that are pursued in both of the two social psychologies: identity, cognition, emotion, gender, inequality, and culture. For each topic, we invited a leading scholar from each discipline to attend a conference in which he or she would be paired with a corresponding scholar from the other discipline. Each scholar was asked to

invite an interested graduate student to accompany him or her. We hoped thereby to inspire both this generation and the next generation of social psychologists. Talks by the scholars and the graduate students were engaging and thoughtful. The pairs of scholars and graduate students were invited to write joint essays for *Social Psychology Quarterly* in whatever format seemed appealing but focusing on research domains with possibilities for collaboration. The six essays by the established scholars thus discuss research and theory on which bridges can be built. Our instruction to the graduate students was to write a short paper that focuses on a domain in which they could imagine collaboration. All of these papers in this special section could be much longer, but the authors have succeeded admirably in writing brief, provocative essays.

These papers present discoveries of commonalities, as well as the recognition of divergence. The essays do not suggest that the sociology and psychology branches of social psychology could—or should—seamlessly meld. In some cases, psychologists and sociologists are studying closely related phenomena but labeling them differently. In other cases, the focus of research in the two disciplines is quite distinct. Despite differences, the authors of the essays point out numerous ways in which the two traditions can complement and enrich one other. For two of the topics in particular (identity and gender), the two social psychologies have already engaged in important cross-talk and cross-citation, but for the other topics, the research traditions appear more separate though open to productive exchanges.

Bridging the divide requires that theorists and researchers think across two levels of analysis, the individual and the group or collective. Sociological social psychologists retained such a focus over the years while it receded considerably in psychological social psychology with its greater attention to individual processes and lesser attention to social context. At present, the embeddedness of selves in larger collectives is an increasingly important theme in psychological social psychology (e.g., Ellemers, Spears, and Doosje 2002; Smith and Conrey 2007)

and a long-term theme in sociological social psychology (Burke 2004). This convergence of interest creates an opening toward greater exchange between the two fields, as illustrated especially clearly in the essays on cognition.

Increasing interdisciplinarity does not portend a merger of the two social psychologies or the formation of new interdisciplinary graduate programs. Instead, contemporary interdisciplinarity requires intellectual and methodological breadth and expertise that extends across the disciplinary boundary. Psychological social psychology will no doubt retain a greater focus on individual psychological processes and interface more with biology, especially neuroscience. Sociological social psychology will retain a more collective focus and interface more with economics, political science, and anthropology. With these two different but interacting branches, social psychology can begin to attain the status of the grand social science field envisioned by founders such as Kurt Lewin (1951) and George Homans (1961).

As scholars we are committed to interdisciplinarity. This commitment depends upon listening to—and learning from—those colleagues who are studying the “same” things in very different ways. In this essay-writing collaboration of sociologists and psychologists, the two fields become linked in ways that foster greater theoretical breadth and methodological flexibility. We hope that these essays will serve as inspirations for social psychologists to consider how the phenomena they study should be analyzed across the disciplinary divide. The result will be a stronger social psychology.

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Bridging Identities

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Sociology and psychology are no strangers in the theoretical world of self and identity. Whereas some of the other topics represented in this volume are still in the courting stage and just beginning to find points of similarity and overlap, researchers in the field of self and identity are in many respects long-life companions. Early works by William James (1890), a psychologist, and George Herbert Mead (1934), a sociologist, are often taken as a starting point by investigators in both fields. In more recent years, with the development of a number of identity theories in both fields, several investigators have directly addressed both the areas of overlap and the distinctions between sociologically based and psychologically based theories.

LOOKING BACK

Psychologists Hogg, Terry, and White (1995) were among the first to directly confront the issue in “A Tale of Two Theories,” offering a critical comparison between sociology’s identity theory and psychology’s social identity theory and concluding that it may be “inadvisable to attempt to integrate very different theories” (Hogg et al. 1995:266). Their argument hinged on their view that the two theories fundamentally differed on a number of issues including their levels of analysis (social identity focusing more on sociocognitive processes of individuals and identity theory focusing more on a direct link between

the individual and society without much internal processing), their approaches to intergroup behavior (identity theory focusing on roles and social identity theory focusing on group and intergroup processes), their views on the relationship of groups and roles (social identity generally ignoring roles within groups and identity theory viewing roles as a central component of identities), and the salience of social context (social identity paying more attention to the impact of the social context on identities and identity theory viewing identities as more stable across contexts).

Sociologists Stets and Burke (2000) took issue with the analysis of Hogg et al. (1995), arguing that identity theory and social identity theory have far more in common than the latter authors acknowledged and suggesting that fundamental integration, if not yet fully realized, is nonetheless possible and indeed likely and necessary. Among their major arguments were the following: All identities function in a similar manner (the self-verification process), but that depending upon the basis of the identity (role, group/category, or person) the consequences are different. Social identity theory has tended to focus on the group/category basis of identity while identity theory has tended to focus on the role basis of identity (neither has focused very much on the person as a basis of identity). By viewing role, person, and group simply as bases for the development of identities, they argued that a unification of identity

theory and social identity theory is feasible. Second, they suggested that the cognitive and motivational processes underlying the theories are not dissimilar. Self-categorization and the often accompanying *depersonalization* (viewing the self as a group member rather than as a unique individual) are the primary cognitive processes in social identity theory, while *self-verification* (affirming self-meanings in the situation) is the primary cognitive process in identity theory. Categorization and self-verification show us that membership in any social group or role includes two important aspects: one's identification with and commitment to a category, and the behaviors that we associate with the category, both of which have been incorporated in varying degrees by theories in each discipline. More generally, both psychological and sociological theories of identity recognize that the self both exists within and is influenced by society, because socially defined shared meanings are incorporated into one's prototype or identity standard.

In another paper from the 1990s, Thoits and Virshup (1997) appraised the "me's and we's" of social identity. They suggested that the sociological approach tends to stress the structural and functional aspects of identity, and in so doing to focus on the ways in which identity performances are a means to maintain the social order. Psychological models, in contrast, are more likely to emphasize the ways in which people actively negotiate among competing categories and groups in order to achieve psychological satisfaction. Among other observations, Thoits and Virshup pointed to what sometimes appears as a counterintuitive reversal of emphases between sociology and psychology, with psychological theories more concerned with broader intergroup dynamics and sociology giving more attention to within-group and within-person processes.

Comparisons of sociological and psychological approaches to the study of social identities took center stage in the June 2003 issue of *Social Psychology Quarterly* edited by psychologist Michael Hogg and sociologist Cecilia Ridgeway, as the entire issue was devoted

to exploring the common ground between the two perspectives on social identity. In that issue, Deaux and Martin (2003) approached the topic as two complementary domains with different emphases. Their analysis rested on a distinction between social contexts defined by categories of group membership, including both ascribed and achieved categories that people can accept, challenge, or change, and social contexts that are defined by specific interpersonal networks in which people play a specified role with another person in that same network.

It is, of course, dangerous to frame this debate as a dichotomy between sociological versus psychological theory. Within each discipline, there are several distinct theories of identity and each has its unique emphases. This within-discipline variation tends to diminish the importance of between-discipline variation as a point of focus. Within sociology, for example, the identity theory of Burke and Stets (2009) is joined by, and in some ways influenced by, the earlier work of Sheldon Stryker (1980) in developing the self-society connection rooted in Mead and the earlier symbolic interaction foundations, and by McCall and Simmons (1978) in their development of the interactionist view of identities. An additional sociological approach is the theoretical research program on Affect Control Theory by Heise, Smith-Lovin, and others (e.g., Heise 1985; Robinson and Smith-Lovin 2006; Smith-Lovin 1990). This theory builds an understanding of identity processes as maintaining cultural definitions of the meanings of identities, behaviors, and situations.

Although the psychologist Erik Erikson (1950) was one of the first to bring the concept of identity into the social and behavioral sciences, his emphasis was primarily on the internal integrity of what we would call a global self-concept rather than on shared meanings and interpersonal connections between self and others. Psychological versions of identity most often point to Henri Tajfel's (1978) social identity theory (SIT) as a key reference. Subsequent developments by John Turner and his colleagues (Turner et

al. 1987) have produced self-categorization theory, which builds on some of the assumptions of SIT but focuses more on internal cognitive processes. Other developments in this general tradition include more detailed investigations of context, commitment, and content as variable features of social identities (Ellemers, Spears, and Doosje 1999) and the strategic aspects of social identity performance (Reicher, Spears, and Postmes 1995; Klein, Spears, and Reicher 2007). Outside the framework of social identity theory, there is also the work of William Swann (e.g., 1983, 1990) on the self-verification process. Although this work has not focused specifically on identity, it has been instrumental in the formulation of identity theory from the sociological perspective.

In all of this work by both sociologists and psychologists, we are dealing with characteristics of the self that are held at either a conscious or unconscious level. When an identity is activated, these characteristics are manifest to others and help define the self to the self and to others. In identity theory, these characteristics are meanings in the sense of what it means to be who one is, and they are based on a shared culture that defines possibilities based in groups, or roles, or the biosocial individual. These characteristics are often seen as actively protected or defended in a self-verification process, which gives rise to feelings of self-worth, efficacy, esteem, and authenticity.

LOOKING AHEAD

In the remainder of this paper, we point to three areas that seem to us to be of particular interest when one thinks about the ways in which sociological and psychological perspectives on identity converge. Although these topics vary in the degree to which they have attracted the interest of scholars in the two disciplines, and have been addressed with different emphases and interpretations, we believe that each topic holds promise for future research and development. The three topics that we have selected are (a) motivational bases for identity processes; (b)

integration of the different bases of identity; and (c) multiplicity of identities.

Motivational Bases of Identity

A central question for all identity theories concerns the motivation for having an identity in the first place, and for maintaining that identity across time and place. Identity theorists from both disciplines have addressed these issues, often borrowing from each other's work to buttress their arguments. Within the identity theory of Burke and Stets (2009), the self-verification motive plays a central role and is seen as the source of self-esteem in its various forms of worth, efficacy, and authenticity, each of which is seen as a motive in other theories.

Social identity theory, as originally formulated by Tajfel (1978), put the emphasis on a motive for positive social identity, which was presumed to drive the social comparison process and the search for positive ingroup distinctiveness. Later investigators, operating more or less within the social identity tradition, have posited a variety of other motives for social identification. Hogg and Abrams (1993), for example, suggested that the major motive for categorization of the self is to reduce uncertainty about one's place in the world. Other motives that have been invoked over the years of identity study include needs to increase self-esteem, create meaning, and maintain balance and consistency (Deaux 1996). Typically, within social identity theory and certainly with the subsequent development of self-categorization theory, these motivational processes are viewed as emerging from the cognitive processes of social categorization and social comparison.

More recently, Reicher and his colleagues (Reicher et al. 1995; Klein et al. 2007) have offered theoretical and empirical arguments for a strategically motivated presentation of one's identity. Rather than focusing on those factors that elicit depersonalization, they turn instead to the consequences for behavior once the identity is salient. Critical to the expression of an identity, they argue, are characteristics of the audience that may support or

negate an identity performance. Two key goals of identity performance, according to Klein et al. (2007), are *identity consolidation* (confirming the worth of an identity) and *identity mobilization* (motivating collective action on behalf of one's social group).

The variety of motivations invoked in the discussion of identity attest to the interest of investigators in the reasons why people would define themselves in a particular way and the functions that those identifications might serve. Yet while there is no shortage of motivational possibilities, less work has been done to compare the strength of various motives or to define the boundaries of their operation. Further exploration of these comparative issues might be a useful activity for future research.

Integrating the Different Bases of Identity

One large area of difference that has existed between psychological and sociological approaches to identity is that psychologists have tended to focus their theories on social or group-based identities while sociologists have put the theoretical emphasis on role identities as tied to a complex differentiated social structure. Identity theory (Burke and Stets 2009) has suggested that identity *processes* should be the same whether the identity is based on groups or roles. The outcomes and consequences of these common processes may differ, however, because role identities maintain a complementarity to counter-role identities, while group member identities maintain similarity to others in the group. The third basis of identity, the biosocial individual, has received only scant attention in either sociology or psychology and is in much need of development, though we suggest that the operation of person or personal identities would follow the same principles as social or role identities.

Multiplicity of Identities

The notion that people have multiple identities is one that has permeated the identity literature in both psychology and sociology, finding roots in both William James (1890) and George Herbert Mead (1934). Virtually all contemporary identity theories include an

assumption of multiplicity, noting both the seeming inevitability of multiplicity in the postmodern world (Stets and Burke 2009) and the possible psychological benefits of multiplicity for the individual (e.g., Linville 1987; Thoits 1992; although some recent research [Cerven 2010] suggests that these benefits may only accrue if the identities are verified). Theories differ, however, in the amount of attention they pay to the structure and relationship among identities. Tajfel's social identity theory, for example, simply acknowledges that people have more than one identity; J. Turner's self-categorization theory, with its emphasis on situational salience, points to the range of possibilities that the environment presents but gives little attention to dispositional properties of the individual.

Other theorists have focused more intently on the structure of identities within the person. Stryker, for example, used the concept of salience as an organizing principle, theorizing that identities are organized on the basis of their probability of being enacted in a person's social settings (Stryker and Serpe 1982). Burke and Stets (2009) also specifically theorize the relationship between multiple identities in terms of a hierarchical control system, in which the meanings output by higher-level identities form the standards for lower-level identities.

Sociologists frequently use the concept of master identity to refer to overarching demographic categories such as gender and race; this concept is less often found in the psychological literature. One approach to the issue of multiplicity within psychology makes use of statistical procedures called hierarchical class analysis developed by de Boeck and Rosenberg (1988) to empirically derive an ideographic identity structure for each individual. By this analysis, one can empirically determine, for example, whether a person has a single overarching identity and what other identities are subsumed by that identity, or whether a variety of identities coexist at equivalent levels of importance (Deaux 1993).

Multiplicity of identity is a good arena for sociologists and psychologists to meet, particularly when the analysis of these identities

includes consideration of both the social categories and the meanings that are associated with those categories. Some good theoretical and empirical work has been done here (e.g., Crisp and Hewstone 2007), but we believe that opportunities for further development exist.

We have highlighted three areas in which bridges between sociology and psychology might be extended and strengthened. Certainly, in an area as broad as identity, many other candidates for connection could be considered as well. Much is to be gained, we believe, by exploring these possibilities in ways that will strengthen our overall understanding of identity from both sociological and psychological vantage points.

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Bridging Identities through Identity Change

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As indicated by Deaux and Burke (this volume), sociology and psychology have shared a tradition of discourse allowing us to build upon each other's ideas. A conversation between social identity theory and identity theory was initiated fifteen years ago and addressed the similarities and differences between these theories (Hogg, Terry, and White 1995; Stets and Burke 2000). This type of communication between the fields can further define our theories through gaining a new perspective. We may also advance identity research by working together on areas that need development in current theories. Deaux and Burke (this volume) have described three possible areas of focus; we focus on a fourth, identity change.

One way to explore the conditions of identity change is to examine discrepancies or what occurs when one's identity, whether social, role, or biosocial individual, is challenged in a situation. We might think of identity not as a point on a dimension of meaning, such as caring, but as a distribution along the dimension of meaning. A distribution will show how tightly maintained a given identity is; those with lower variance distributions will have less flexibility and will be more vulnerable to identity discrepancies than those with higher variance distributions. This conceptualization demonstrates why a discrepancy

of the same magnitude may have no effect on one person's self-view yet have a devastating effect on another's. This understanding can aid in the exploration of long-term processes including identity change. Perhaps those with more flexibility will experience less change over time, or alternatively, tighten their distribution as their identity becomes more defined.

Within social identity theory, we may use a distributional understanding to account for the way an individual's social identity changes as the ingroup defines itself relative to an outgroup. The distribution of meaning for the social identity may become less dispersed, less flexible, more important, and better defined as the ingroup further distinguishes itself. Research on social identity theory shows different motives can play a crucial role when defining one's identity in intergroup situations. The need for positive social identity and optimal distinctiveness help structure and define a person's social identity within a given context and might help us to understand the amount of change in meaning distributions over time. Some of these ideas are being developed by the first author from a sociological perspective, but it is evident these ideas can expand the understanding of psychological processes as well.

Keeping the lines of communication open between disciplines and reading within our

sister discipline can be the basis for collaboration and joint theory building. Though collaborative theory and research may aid in bridging identity theories by gaining new perspectives, we can also achieve advancement through focusing on common areas in need of development in current theories of identity.

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Transcending Cognitive Individualism

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The inclusion of "cognition" in this issue's discussion of the two social psychologies may seem puzzling: isn't cognition the uncontested territory of psychology? Doesn't this topic demand a narrow individualistic focus that is alien to sociological thinking? Current views both in the field of psychology and in the culture at large answer these questions affirmatively. Advancing knowledge in many areas of psychology and neuroscience, underlined by dazzling images of brain scans, appear to many professionals and to the public to show that we are on the way to explaining cognition purely in terms of processes within the individual's head.

Yet while such cognitive individualism (Downes 1993) still dominates the popular Western vision of cognition, modern scholarship rejects such a personalized view of the mind. Few students of cognition today still envision a solitary thinker (as so evocatively embodied in Rodin's statue "The Thinker") whose thoughts arise solely from his or her own personal experience and idiosyncratic outlook on the world. The rise of the modern study of the mind coincides with the decline of the Romantic vision of the individual thinker and a growing interest in the nonpersonal foundations of our cognition.

To be sure, mental acts such as perceiving, attending, remembering, framing, generalizing, classifying, interpreting, and time reckoning are always performed by specific individuals with certain personal cognitive idiosyncrasies. Yet they are also performed by social beings who are members of specific thought communities (Mannheim [1929]1936; Fleck [1935]1979). In other words, what goes on inside our heads is also affected by the particular thought communities (nations, churches, professions, political movements, generations) to which we belong. We thus think not only as individuals but also as social beings (as a German, a Muslim, a lawyer, a feminist, a baby boomer), products of particular social environments that both affect and constrain the way we mentally interact with the world.

Even psychologists increasingly recognize the limits of cognitive individualism. One driving force is the realization that many phenomena in the social world that we wish to understand, such as intergroup conflict and aggression, market bubbles, fads and fashions, and overuse of public goods, are not the outcome of any one individual's decisions and intentional actions. In fact, these phenomena are often not intended or desired by any of the individuals whose actions cause

them to occur. Another driving force is the effort to understand the many occasions when people act collectively rather than as independent individuals, whether in face-to-face groups (mobs or riots, or rescuers rushing to save victims of an earthquake) or as members of social categories (antidiscrimination movements among oppressed minorities, for example).

None of these types of collective phenomena can be explained by an analysis that focuses solely on individual cognition. Instead they must be accounted for as emergent products of the interactions of many individuals, each pursuing their own goals based on fallible and limited information that they obtain from their own particular thought communities. Multi-agent modeling is a prime conceptual tool to understand these emergent effects and how they arise from the actions of many individuals, without central control or direction (Macy and Willer 2002; Smith and Conrey 2007). This approach simulates many autonomous agents that behave based on their own goals and their own knowledge. Agents interact with each other and with a simulated environment according to specified rules, allowing theorists to see what outcome patterns ultimately emerge from different assumed rules. One example is the demonstration by Schelling (1969) that individuals' preferences to live in areas where their group is not a minority can create situations of near-complete group segregation, an outcome that is not desired or intended by any individual. Equally compelling is Kalick and Hamilton's (1986) model of assortative mating (individuals' tendency to end up with romantic partners who are similar to themselves in their level of physical attractiveness). The model showed that this results not from any centralized authority assigning people to mates, nor from individuals' desire to find partners who are similar in this way, but can emerge even when each individual is seeking a partner who is as attractive as possible.

The rest of this article describes in depth two broad approaches that help us transcend individualism and to arrive at a more satisfactory understanding of cognition.

A SOCIOLOGY OF THINKING

Cognitive sociology (Zerubavel 1997) rejects the extreme individualistic vision of a "mental Robinson Crusoe," reminding us that we experience the world not only personally, through our own senses, but also impersonally, through our membership in various thought communities. It also reminds us that even our cognitive development is constrained by specific social circumstances. Rather than a solitary individual developing in a vacuum, the child is a cognitive apprentice (Rogoff 1990) socially instructed by others.

Furthermore, cognitive sociology reminds us that we inhabit an unmistakably intersubjective social world that is quite distinct from the subjective world of the individual (Schutz and Luckmann 1973), where time is reckoned not according to our inner sense of duration but in accordance with standard time-reckoning systems such as clock time and the calendar. The transcendence of subjectivity and the social construction of intersubjectivity (Berger and Luckmann 1966) are central to the sociology of the mind. Rejecting cognitive individualism, cognitive sociology ignores the inner, personal world of individuals and confines itself to the impersonal social mindscapes we share in common. Resisting the Romantic appeal of cognitive individualism, it calls attention to the strikingly similar manner in which different individuals focus their attention, frame their experience, assign meaning to objects, and reckon the time, as well as to their common memories and remarkably similar cognitive maps of the world.

Aside from highlighting the thought communities within which we think, cognitive sociology also calls attention to the normative dimension of cognition, that is, to the various cognitive norms that affect as well as constrain the way we think. After all, not only overt behavior but also mental acts such as perceiving, attending, classifying, interpreting, and remembering are also bound by specific normative constraints such as rules that specify what ways of thinking are appropriate in a particular social community or situation. For

example, social rules of focusing lead us to disregard certain aspects of our surroundings as mere “background” and essentially exclude them from our attention. By the same token, it is unmistakably social rules of remembrance that tell us what we should remember and what we may, or even must, forget.

It is likewise society that determines what we come to regard as “reasonable” or as “making no sense,” and it does so by exerting upon us tacit social pressure which we rarely even notice unless we try to resist it. As a result of such pressure, we come to perceive sounds we hear as “classical” or “folk” as well as to reckon the time in standard terms such as “four o’clock,” “Friday,” and “2010” even when we are all by ourselves.

Like any other social norm, cognitive norms are something we learn. We learn how to focus our attention, frame our experience, generalize, remember, and reason in a socially appropriate manner. We likewise learn to “see” the fine lines separating “liberals” from “conservatives” and the edible from the inedible, as well as to distinguish “fiction” from “nonfiction” (Zerubavel [1991]1993).

Indeed, we also learn to see things as similar to or different from one another. After all, when classifying things, we always regard only some of the differences among items as significant, ignoring others as irrelevant, yet which differences are considered significant is something we learn, and ignoring those that “make no difference” involves tacit social pressure to disattend them. Separating the relevant from the irrelevant is not just a logical but also a normative matter.

Through such process of cognitive socialization we actually enter the social, intersubjective world. Becoming social, in short, implies learning not only how to act but also how to think in a social manner. As we learn to see the world through the mental lenses of particular thought communities, we come to assign to objects the same meaning they have for others around us and to remember the same things that they do. Needless to say, the fact that we undergo cognitive socialization underscores the

considerable amount of control society has over what we attend to, how we reason, what we remember, and how we interpret our experiences.

Many of these insights are also shared by the social identity tradition in psychological social psychology (Tajfel and Turner 1986). This line of theory links individual cognition to the significant group memberships that help constitute the psychological self, and holds that these social groups establish norms. These in turn become internalized standards governing individual thought, feeling, and behavior even when the individual is not physically in the presence of other group members. In the social identity tradition, then, groups can be conceptualized as communities of knowledge that establish norms, pervasively shaping individual thought.

DISTRIBUTED COGNITION IN SOCIAL NETWORKS

Cognitive sociology emphasizes mostly our long-term memberships in thought communities that socialize us and establish norms for our ways of thinking as well as acting. A complementary trend is to focus on shorter time scales, examining the contexts in which individuals exist and function, conceptualized as social networks. The goal is to understand how information and social influence flowing through the network enable and shape individual cognition. The interdisciplinary science of networks that arose in the 1990s has already discovered powerful concepts that apply to networks of all sorts, from social networks of relationships among people (our concern here) to artifacts such as the highway grid to abstract networks such as the link structure of the Web. The structural properties of a network shape both the speed and the patterns of information and influence as they flow between individuals (Mason, Conrey, and Smith 2007). Recent studies, for example, show how physical and affective states such as obesity and loneliness are influenced by others in our social networks (e.g., Cacioppo, Christakis, and Fowler 2009).

Our cognition also depends on the social network. The “situated cognition” movement of the 1990s, drawing on many earlier roots (Clark 1997), rejected abstract information-processing models of cognition in favor of a picture of the individual in detailed, moment-by-moment interaction with the environment, with cognition supported by sensory-motor systems (the principle of embodiment) and “scaffolded” by environmental supports. Smith and Semin (2004) applied the term “socially situated cognition,” further developing this line of thinking by emphasizing not the physical but the social environment. A key principle is that cognition is often distributed, implemented by more than one individual, as dyads, groups, or other types of thought communities acquire, store, process, integrate, and retrieve information. Not only small, local dyads or groups can be seen as scaffolding cognition: entire cultural systems can be seen as capacious, increasingly easy-to-access, offline memory. Thanks, Google!

As one example of the type of analysis provided by this perspective, consider the concept of the *script*, a set of rules for how to behave in familiar situations such as eating at a fast-food restaurant. Earlier psychological models (Schank and Abelson 1977) regarded scripts as private knowledge used to regulate behavior. However, in a real restaurant there are plentiful environmental supports that allow customers to do the right thing: signs saying “order here” or “pay here,” or lines of customers waiting their turn. Relying on these scaffolds allows successful negotiation of the situation without detailed mental scripts, only some basic cultural knowledge (such as, go to the end of the line and wait your turn).

As another example, in forming impressions of those they know, individuals have frequently been assumed to rely solely on their own observations or interactions with the target, and their own mental processes of interpretation, stereotype use, evaluation, and the like. In contrast, in real life we commonly draw on information provided by others through gossip as well as using our own

observations and interactions with the target person (Smith and Collins 2009). Impression formation is socially distributed cognition — and its product is not just an impression within one individual’s head, but a reputation, the more or less consensually shared impression of the target that spreads through the social network constituting the relevant thought community (Craik 2008). This perspective opens up many fascinating questions that simply do not arise if person perception is narrowly seen as individual cognition. For example, how do people interpret gossip from others that disagrees with their own impression of a target? This situation is surely common, for research establishes that different perceivers often hold different views of another even when they are based on the same information (e.g., Mohr and Kenny 2006). Are people aware of the potential biases that can influence the content of gossip, and do they try to correct for them? To what extent do people take a target’s reputation as well as their own private impression into account in deciding how and whether to interact with the target?

Questions such as these can be answered, and cognition can be fully understood, only with the aid of methods that allow us to cross conceptual levels. We need to study individuals in the context of their dyadic interactions, social networks, thought communities, and groups. Methodological individualism, with theory and research focusing on isolated individuals, has produced great advances in the study of cognition, but it must be supplemented with methods that allow the development of theory spanning levels—multi-agent modeling as an example—as well as empirical methods that provide rich, time-dense observations of individuals embedded in their communities and networks of interaction and influence. Only such an approach, as taken by Christakis and Fowler (2007), for example, will allow us to understand how members of a town’s population interact with each other, mutually influencing each other’s exercise habits, eating habits, and ultimately levels of obesity.

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Subcultural Influences on Person Perception

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Cognition offers a natural setting for the intersection of the research interests of both sociologists and psychologists.

The study of cultural influences on automatic processing highlights the shared interests of social psychologists from both disciplines

(e.g., DiMaggio 1997; Cerulo 2010). In particular, the examination of subcultural differences in person perception is a promising topic for future collaboration.

Psychological social psychologists have spent decades examining how individuals come to form coherent mental representations of other people. The general psychological model of impression formation involves stages in which individuals first categorize an actor in a relatively automatic fashion based on available cues (appearance, behavior) and give more elaborate thought to their impression only under certain circumstances (see Fiske and Neuberg 1990; Gilbert, Pelham, and Krull 1988). This model includes a number of assumptions, perhaps most notably that information processing is the same across individuals. Although some cultural differences have been noted (particularly in terms of causal attributions; e.g., Miller 1984; Morris and Peng 1994), most differences are assumed to occur during later stages of processing, and social psychologists' examination of cultural influences has been largely limited to contrasting Eastern (or collectivist) and Western (or individualistic) cultures.

Although this broad East-West divide is an important one, we know that culture can also be defined in much more local terms. Sociologists have studied numerous subcultures, including professional subcultures, regional subcultures, youth subcultures, class subcultures, and subcultures associated with hobbies, such as hiking, knitting, and mushroom hunting, frequently noting their diverse norms of thought and perception. Perhaps even more so than deliberate thought, automatic forms of cognition rely heavily and uncritically on culturally available schemas (see DiMaggio 1997:269), so it is important to further contextualize the impression formation process; this process often occurs not only within particular social networks (Smith and Collins 2009), but also embedded within particular subcultures.

One important way that subcultural membership influences person perception is

through the creation of salience. Even something as seemingly self-evident as what cues are relevant when determining another person's sex can vary subculturally. For example, transgender people often view the human body in light of the possibility of transitioning between the sexes, a unique perspective that heightens their awareness of both the similarities between male and female bodies and their key differences—the body parts that are the most common barriers to “passing.”

Subcultures can also differ in what types of information are available about people in the first place. Whether normatively withheld, disregarded, or simply unavailable, our perceptions of others are in part a reflection of the particular details of appearance and behavior that we *cannot* access. For instance, without information about a person's skin color, blind people's perceptions of race are significantly different from the typical sighted experience. And the type of personal information one provides to others in a knitting circle no doubt differs substantially from the type of information one provides to other members in a swingers club. Norms regarding the acceptance of gossip, and whether it is appropriate to talk about absent individuals, may also vary substantially between subcultures, with significant influence on the impressions we form of others.

The examination of these and other subcultural influences on person perception by both sociologists and psychologists will allow for more comprehensive accounts of the mechanisms of cultural cognition—the specific sociocognitive processes through which the social world shapes our perceptions (whether mental representations or literal sensory perceptions).

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The Social Psychologies of Emotion: A Bridge That Is Not Too Far

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Traditionally, emotion is a topic more central to psychology than to sociology. The *Annual Review of Psychology* has almost 400 articles that mention emotion since 1975, while the *Annual Review of Sociology* has roughly one-third as many in that period. Rather than bridging the two disciplinary canons, the early literature in sociology was focused on establishing that it had something distinctive to say about this apparently individual phenomenon (see early reviews by Gordon 1981 and Smith-Lovin 1995). During that time, the study of emotion in psychology, on the other hand, was focused on the relationship between emotion and cognition (Mandler 1975; Zajonc 2000), and the nature-nurture type of questions like physiological specificity of emotions and the universality of facial expression (Ekman 2003; Russel 1994). Most of the cross-citation was from classic sources like Schachter and Singer (1962) in psychology and Goffman (1959) in sociology. As the modern literature in both fields matures, we hope there may be more potential for mutual interest. Here, we briefly review some

developments in both fields, and offer a research agenda that may be beneficial to both disciplines.

SOCIOLOGICAL SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY: EMOTION AS CULTURE AND CUE

The sociology of emotion began in the mid-1970s with debates about how many basic emotions there were (Kemper 1987) and about the normative nature of emotional response (Hochschild 1983).¹ Sociologists of emotion emphasize the fact that the meanings of emotions—their antecedents, their prevalence, and their modes of expression—differ over historical time, institutional arrangements, and material resources. The macro-level work on the relationship between emotional norms (or feeling rules) and these material historical determinants is not really a social psychological enterprise at all. Rather, it is focused in the social constructionist tradition of the discipline, and is more closely akin to cultural sociology and the relationship between structure and culture that dominates

Order of authorship is alphabetical; our contributions are equal.

¹ For reviews of this literature, see Smith-Lovin (1995), Stets and Turner (2006), Thoits (2004), and Turner and Stets (2006).

that subfield. An example of this macro-level approach to the sociology of emotions is Stearns and Stearns's (1986) argument that the Industrial Revolution and its changing arrangements of work and family life led to a view of the family as an emotional haven from an impersonal, brutal work environment. They suggest that this shift led middle-class Americans to view anger as a disruptive force that required control. Another macro-level example is Lofland's (1985) argument that grief is experienced more intensely and for longer durations in modern times, because of shifts in demography (smaller families, lower infant mortality) and living arrangements (more private space to withdraw from others).

The other major thread of sociological work on emotions explores how emotions arise from social interaction and motivate subsequent social action. This micro-level work is at the center of sociological social psychology. It offers more potential for bridging to psychological research on emotion. Most of this work falls into three themes. The biggest body of work looks at emotional socialization and regulation, especially among adults in occupational settings. This research builds on the concept of emotional labor introduced by Hochschild (1983). Many different occupational settings have been studied—flight attendants, supermarket clerks, fast food servers, bill collectors, sales workers, doctors, nurses, paralegals, attorneys, wedding consultants, among others (see Thoits 2004: 365–6 for a review). A smaller literature looks at emotion socialization among children and adolescents, mainly concentrating on how this socialization is accomplished and the emotion norms that are communicated (e.g., Simon, Eder, and Evans 1992). Finally, there is a substantial literature on techniques of emotion management that people use to conform to emotion norms (Thoits 2004).

The second major theme relates emotional experience to health outcomes. This work links social structural positions, the life course, and major life events to mental distress or happiness (e.g., Mirowsky and Ross 2003). More directly related to the sociological theme of emotion

norms, Thoits (1985) discusses how emotional deviance can lead to labeling of self or others as mentally ill. Finally, there is a small but interesting literature on how emotional dynamics are used within clinical settings for therapeutic purposes (Francis 2006).

The third theme in the micro-level sociology of emotions focuses explicitly on social interaction, and how the form of that interaction can produce systematic emotional outputs. This work was labeled “positivist” in the early era of the sociology of emotion (e.g., Kemper 1977) because it assumes that emotions are produced spontaneously by certain social arrangements and that those emotional responses have been selected by evolutionary processes and have functional value. In work within the group processes tradition, microsociology has focused on how status-ordered interactions generate emotional responses which foster group cohesion or generate tensions that must be dealt with for task work to proceed (see review in Ridgeway 2006). Researchers have described the emotional responses that arise systematically from social exchange, and their implications for the development of relationship commitment and group identity (Lawler, Thye, and Yoon 2009). Emotional responses to injustice in exchange have also seen some work (e.g., Robinson, Clay-Warner, and Smith-Lovin 2010).

Closely related is research growing out of the symbolic interactionist tradition focusing on how identities (created by role occupancy, group membership, or salient differentiating personal characteristics) generate emotions. The fact that identity occupancy creates interactions that foster typical emotions (called “structural emotions” by Kemper [1977]) links this work to the survey research tradition on mental distress and happiness. Most research, however, has concentrated on situations where identities are not maintained. There is a lively debate (and somewhat mixed empirical literature) on how social interactions that disturb identity meanings influence emotional responses (Smith-Lovin and Robinson 2006).

Linkages to Psychology

Connections between the microsociology of emotion and psychological work on the topic are clearest in the third tradition of work on social interaction and emotion. The close link between sociological and psychological work on exchange processes is discussed elsewhere in this collection (Fiske and Molm this volume); psychological work on emotional responses to injustice is also foundational (see review in Robinson et al. 2010). Much of the research on identity and emotional response parallels closely several psychological theories of self-regulation and self-consistency (e.g., Higgins 1987; Swann 1987; Carver and Scheier 2001). One recent psychological framework that explicitly discusses the role of identity in elicitation and expression of emotion is the Intergroup Relation Theory (Smith and Mackie 2008).

Even in work on emotion norms, emotional socialization, and emotional deviance, it is implicit that there is some type of spontaneous emotional response that needs to be regulated. Occupational settings often give rise to emotional responses that would be problematic if expressed directly (for example, when medical work requires dealing with disgusting bodily functions or when service work requires attention to situations which are not inherently interesting). Emotional deviance, and the labeling that it creates, explicitly acknowledges the fact that emotional responses are not always well-regulated by normative structures (e.g., Gross 2008).

The research on how social structures influence emotional distress, loneliness, happiness, and health outcomes rests upon a psychological literature that links stress to its physiological effects on other health-related processes (Cacioppo, Fowler, Christakis 2009; Miller, Chen, and Cole 2009). Interdisciplinary work here is the norm rather than the exception.

PSYCHOLOGICAL SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY: EMOTION AS EMBODIMENT

Psychological debates about the nature of emotion have in many ways paralleled

sociological ones. Psychology, like sociology, has a long literature discussing the classification and number of basic emotions, vigorously debating the degree of universality in their expression, physiology, and their evolutionary history (Ekman 2003; Russel 1994). It also has a very active debate over the degree to which emotions are tied to rational cognition and are consciously processed (see discussion in Zajonc 2000). Recent work has focused on embodiment theories of emotion (for review, see Niedenthal et al. 2005). These theories developed in response to symbolic theories of information processing (Fodor 1975). According to those symbolic theories, in order to be “thought about” (processed by higher-level cognitive functions), all experiences (including social experiences, like emotional responses) have to be first transduced from their modality-based form (including perceptual, somatosensory and motor systems) into symbolic, language-like representations (propositions). Embodiment theories, on the other hand, assume that modalities are always involved in processing of the experience. That is, embodiment happens both in the original active interaction with a stimulus as well as in later thought about the now-absent stimulus (Niedenthal et al. 2005). Such embodiment often involves imitation, so that the processes by which we understand the experiences of others mimic the processes by which we experience emotions directly ourselves. For example, thinking about a partner’s pain might generate some of the same physical reactions that a painful stimulus directly experienced would generate. Thinking about a past experience with a lying politician might regenerate some of the same responses that the initial encounter elicited (a roiling stomach) as well as new motor responses (a clenched fist). Even thinking about abstract emotion concepts (e.g., delighted, or irritable) generates mild but congruent facial expressions, which seem necessary for a fast and accurate identification of such concepts (Niedenthal et al. 2009).

The modality-based view of emotion processing is informed by fast-growing knowledge about the neuroscience of emotion. A

detailed review of those findings is outside the scope of this piece (see a summary in Heberlein and Atkinson 2009). A few general points about the neural basis of these phenomena are useful, however. First, the new embodiment theories assume that neither central nor peripheral systems have priority; they tend to run simultaneously during both initial processing and later (re)creation of emotional experience. A related point is that it does not make much sense to talk about “primitive” and “advanced” systems of the brain. The neural representations of emotion have not been static in evolutionary history, and have changed along with the addition of higher-order cognitive processing, such that the whole emotional brain works together to generate the appropriate emotional response (Damasio 1999).

Further, as mentioned, the essence of the embodiment approach is that perception, reaction, understanding, and action are intrinsically intertwined and support each other. Thus, the neural systems supporting these processes are simultaneously active. For example, processing of facial expressions will draw on “core” brain areas, which perform basic feature extraction and encode invariant (structural) and variant (person- and movement-related) features (e.g., fusiform gyrus, inferior occipital gyrus, the superior temporal sulcus). But, in addition to these core areas, recognizing facial expressions also recruits areas involved in (a) detecting emotional significance (amygdala), (b) sensing and moving the perceivers’ own faces, such as the somatosensory and motor cortex, (c) interoception, such as the insula, and (d) linking bodily feedback to abstract cortical representation, such as the ventromedial prefrontal cortex (vmPFC). This multi-modality explains why people are slower to recognize changes in facial expressions if their facial muscles are constrained by holding a pen and cannot mimic those expressions spontaneously (Oberman, Winkielman, and Ramachandran 2007). Evidence that people with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) use only cold (rule-based) rather than hot (embodied) strategies for emotion recognition reinforces the sense that embodied modalities are essential for

spontaneous, rapid, effective emotional responses of normal interaction (Winkielman, McIntosh, and Oberman 2009). Those diagnosed with ASD show less rapid mimicry (McIntosh et al. 2006), and appear to have less response in the so-called “mirror neuron areas” when processing emotional information (Dapretto et al. 2005).

Linkages to Sociology

On the face of it, psychology’s movement from a symbolic representation of emotional processing to embodiment theories would seem to conflict with the central tenets of symbolic interactionism, which dominates sociological thought. However, the suggestion that other modalities interact with symbolic representations to create a “lived experience” of emotional life is consistent with this sociological framework. Attention to the new field of neurosociology (TenHouten 1997; Franks 2010) and an increasing interest in the evolutionary basis of emotion (Turner and Stets 2005) provides additional connections between work in the two fields. The work on embodiment within psychology can illuminate how emotion management techniques work in “deep acting” emotion management (Hochschild 1983), and how rituals evoke common emotional energy in their participants (Collins 2004). Finally, the fact that even abstract emotion concepts are embodied provides a mechanism through which social structure can literally get “under the skin” and convert a symbolic meaning to a physical experience (see also Lakoff and Johnson 1999).

CONCLUSIONS: TRENDS AND AGENDA SETTING

Attention to neuroscientific foundations is shaping both sociological and psychological understanding of emotion and its role in social interaction. One area where interdisciplinary development might benefit both fields is the closer linkage between this neurological work and theoretical models. For example, there has been a debate in sociology about the impact of identity verification on emotions. Identity theory (Burke and Stets 2009) implies that lack of verification always

results in negative emotion, while affect control theory (Heise 2007) implies that the character of emotion that results from identity disruption varies depending on the nature of the identity and the direction of its disruption (see a more complete discussion in Smith-Lovin and Robinson 2006). Data from fMRI studies might help to disambiguate the mixed findings in this domain, since the neural structures involved in evaluation, potency, and activation as well as those involved in the processing of uncertainty are fairly well understood.

Sociological work can enrich psychological findings by adding a framework to the systematic observations that are made in social interactions. Things that are regarded as “habit” by psychologists are structured by institutional surroundings (Wood and Neal 2007). There is little attention paid to the situational constraints within which behavior occurs.

Decision-making, the core concern of the new study of neuroeconomics, views choices as shaped by information and valuation. Sociological theories can show how information and its acquisition are structured, and how symbolic labeling then shapes reactions by shaping responses to new information. For example, a recent study shows that brain structures involved in responses to primary rewards (e.g., erotic pictures) overlap with those representing symbolic rewards (e.g., money); this phenomenon results in mutual influence, driving actual gambling choices (Knutson et al. 2008). However, a sociological perspective on money and sex would predict that neural and psychological representation of these “goods” can dissociate under different symbolic description, as their linkages are specific to a particular sociocultural settings. In short, integrating sociological, psychological, and neural levels of analysis can result not only in more comprehensive theories, but in specific novel empirical predictions.

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Bridging Emotion Research: From Biology to Social Structure

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Emotion research demonstrates, perhaps more clearly than any other subarea in social psychology, that problems of theoretical interest or practical significance are not divided neatly along disciplinary boundaries. Researchers acknowledge both organic and social underpinnings of emotion, but the intersections between biological and structural processes can be difficult to negotiate. We review recent findings about the hormone oxytocin in the context of sociological theory to offer a concrete illustration of these intersections, revealing the value of transdisciplinary research to the field of emotion. We suggest that traditional boundaries and distinctions such as nature versus nurture will need to be replaced by a systemic approach, allowing for more complex conceptions of process and mutual feedback across levels of analysis.

Studies of the hormone oxytocin illustrate the complexity of explaining emotions as the outcome of environmental and social interactions with human biology. Oxytocin and its close analogues are broadly involved in reproductive activity across species, and in bonding to conspecifics in a subset of these species, including humans. Controlled experiments suggest that differences in the locations of receptors for this hormone influence the formation of long-term pair bonds in rodents (Carter et al. 2008) and that a lack of oxytocin during early development may decrease bonding in later life (Carter 2003). Though controlled experiments involving humans are few, intranasal administration of the hormone can increase humans' tendency to engage in cooperative behavior (Kosfeld 2005), and

variation in genes known to govern oxytocin is related to both the ability to recognize others' moods and the tendency to empathize with others (Domes et al. 2007). These human tendencies affect the processes by which social networks are formed and maintained, socioaffective information is transmitted, and norms develop.

Sociocognitive processes also act upon these structures. People are more likely to form relationships with those who are demographically and behaviorally similar, and those who provide opportunities to enact valued social identities. This generates social networks that are largely homogeneous. In some cases, social and biological processes can be mutually reinforcing. For instance, oxytocin release increases in response to supportive physical contact and nonverbal affiliation cues (Morhenn et al. 2008), reinforcing bonds between individuals who are socially linked. In this example, both social and biological processes support the extant social structure, increasing the emotional bond for ties that are more physically proximate and socially intimate. In cases where biological and social cues conflict we may find unexpected emotional outcomes, difficult to explain by biology or structure alone.

Similarly, social structure shapes the processes that influence human biology. Patterns of social interaction, structural status and power dynamics, and the influence structure of our social network determine how we weight information, which norms we perceive as consensual, and our emotional experiences during social interaction. Additionally, embeddedness in a social network

reinforces the salience of a given repertoire of identities, increasing our commitment to those identities and our drive to maintain our beliefs about them. In so doing, the social order structures cognitive performance, situated emotional activity, and opportunities for biological features to become manifest. Thus, social structural processes can influence the release of oxytocin via the patterning of behavior, and may have behavioral and emotional implications that shape sociality.

A recent upsurge in emotion research focusing on the mutual interdependencies between biological and micro- and macro-level social processes suggests a growing interest in transdisciplinary and systems-oriented research. The example discussed here raises questions that could be addressed by such research. Do cross-cultural variations in norms of touching affect social network formation by shaping patterns of bonding? In the Internet age, will social relationships be fundamentally different as a function of decreased physical contact? Might natural

variation in bonding behaviors influence the diversity of a person's social connections? These possibilities seem plausible in light of the research outlined above, but developing multi-level research methods to test these questions is a challenge that spans the disciplines.

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Gender: An Interdisciplinary Perspective

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How can researchers undertake a vigorous cross-disciplinary research agenda on gender? This question might seem unnecessary given that the study of gender, which addresses the many origins and consequences of being male or female, already is highly interdisciplinary. In principle, most social psychologists agree that both

individual and societal factors are needed for a complete understanding of gender. Most sociologists recognize that gendered social structures work through influences on individual men and women, and most psychologists acknowledge that the meaning of maleness and femaleness is embedded within the broader structures of society.

In our many years of studying the psychology and sociology of gender, however, we have found that, in practice, social psychological research on gender typically is conducted

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from either a sociological or a psychological perspective. Although researchers in the two social psychologies might acknowledge the wide range of factors that are involved in understanding the differences between men's and women's behavior, many empirical studies and theoretical explanations recognize only a small part of this larger puzzle. It is easy to understand why researchers often limit their work to a largely sociological or psychological tradition. It is most straightforward to collect empirical data in the research paradigms already established in a discipline. Also, because of disciplinary department structures, conferences, and publication outlets, it may seem that the primary audience for one's work lies within one's own discipline, and so it is logical to tailor research to that audience.

In this article, we explain why a truly interdisciplinary approach is necessary to study gender and offer our current thinking about how to pursue this goal. We first provide a description of gender as it plays out at the individual, interpersonal, and societal levels. We then give examples, drawing from wage disparities and from rates of sexual maturation, to illustrate the value of treating gender as comprised of inherently linked processes operating at multiple levels of analysis. As we explain, social psychologists often focus their investigation of gender on the interpersonal level, and in so doing psychologists may miss that gender is embedded in broader societal structures, and sociologists may miss that gender is enacted by individuals who differ in important ways. Finally, we provide some initial thoughts on how to study the interconnectivity across individual, interpersonal, and societal processes.

GENDER INHERENTLY IS A MULTI-LEVEL PHENOMENON

The central reason for taking an interdisciplinary approach is that gender is a variable that exists across individual, relational, and societal levels of analysis and exerts influence at each level. At essence, gender refers to the socially shared meanings that people and societies ascribe to males and females. These meanings rest on a biology in which

most humans possess the standard XX or XY chromosomes. The biological differences are culturally and materially elaborated in societies into a multi-level system of gendered social practices including cultural beliefs and institutional structures at the societal level, gendered patterns of interaction at the interpersonal level, and gendered selves and bodies at the individual level.

Although resting on physical difference, the specific content of the shared meanings a society attaches to gender reflects the social division of labor between men and women in that society (Wood and Eagly 2002). These culturally shared understandings then shape the way that individuals conceive of themselves as men and women in their society and, thus, the way that they behave and organize their social relations with others. Illustrating this complexity, contemporary research findings on gender demonstrate that gender can only be understood adequately through multiple levels of analysis.

NEED FOR AN INTERDISCIPLINARY APPROACH

A striking example of the multiple levels necessary to explain gender comes from sociological research efforts to explain gender inequality in wages and authority solely at a socioeconomic level. A second compelling example comes from psychological efforts to explain age of menarche in girls solely at an individual, biological level.

With respect to the workplace, gender inequality in wages and authority in America have been shown to be largely a product of sex segregation of the occupational structure and of organizational procedures for structuring jobs, hiring, and evaluating pay (Reskin, McBrier, and Kmec 1999). Nonetheless, this research has yet to explain the mechanisms through which gender inequality is infused into organizational structures. Such mechanisms most plausibly include cultural beliefs and associated social psychological processes that govern interpersonal relations (Ridgeway 2006). For example, Steinberg (1995) describes how cultural beliefs about gender influenced the judgments of those who originally devised a set of

pay-setting procedures that have since been widely used in organizations. The resulting procedures, Steinberg argues, make it more likely that the type of work typically done by men will be rated as more complex and assigned higher pay than that typically done by women.

In recognition of the explanatory gap, Barbara Reskin (2003), in her presidential address to the American Sociological Association, acknowledged that cognitive and social identity processes that work within organizational structures are the underlying source of most gender or racial bias in the contemporary workplace. She also points out, however, that the specific designs of organizational structures act to either suppress or encourage individual tendencies toward implicit gender and racial bias within these organizations. In this way, organizational structures also contribute importantly to the degree of gender and racial inequality in the workplace. In this view, then, understanding a gendered pattern of inequality at the socioeconomic level requires a joint consideration of processes at the socioeconomic and interpersonal, social psychological level.

With respect to sexual development, the age of menarche in girls was once believed to be entirely genetically determined through the biological maturation of the adrenal glands and the hypothalamic-pituitary-gonadal axis. However, recent research has shown that this maturation is influenced by girls' psychosocial environment, especially psychosocial stressors such as father absence and emotionally distant mother-daughter relations (Ellis 2004). Societal and ecological factors also are important in that girls begin menstruating as early as around 12 years in some urban postindustrial societies and as late as 18 years or more in some rural highland areas such as Papua New Guinea or high altitude Nepali groups. The age of first menarche is a socially important signal of emerging womanhood that is celebrated in some societies with rituals and greater assumption of adult roles. Addressing sexual development solely through biological processes fails to capture the ways in which maturation depends on and is elaborated through psychological and societal features.

In these examples, gendered phenomena at one level of analysis cannot be adequately explained by reference only to processes at that level. When researchers begin to incorporate processes from other levels of analysis in their explanations, they are not simply adding new variables to the list of factors to be statistically controlled in their analyses. By seriously considering processes at multiple levels of analysis, researchers are forced to reconceptualize their understanding of gender. Thus, sociologists studying gender and work must rethink the processes by which organizational structures become inscribed with gendered meanings for individuals. Researchers studying sexual maturation are forced to appreciate the ways that social processes influence and elaborate on hormonal regulation. These reconceptualizations, spurred by cross-level analyses, are necessary first steps to the development of more comprehensive and explanatory theories of gender.

SOCIOLOGICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES ON GENDER

Given that social psychology draws on sociological and psychological perspectives, it should be well positioned to integrate multi-level perspectives on gender. Yet, social psychologists often fail to recognize the full potential of linking gendered interpersonal processes to both societal and individual manifestations of gender.

Consider how each discipline addresses the nature of the beliefs that people hold about men and women. Psychologists have focused on gender stereotypes, especially beliefs that women are particularly communal (i.e., warm, caring) and men are particularly agentic (i.e., dominant, assertive; Wood and Eagly 2010). These stereotypes influence a range of social interactions by, for example, forming the basis for self-fulfilling prophecies in which perceivers act on stereotypic beliefs and thereby influence targets' behavior. Sociologists have focused on widely shared gender status beliefs that culturally link men to greater worthiness and competence than women. Gender status beliefs shape judgments and behaviors in ways

that create contextually varying degrees of gender inequality in interaction (Ridgeway and Correll 2004).

The sociological account of how gender status beliefs shape interaction overlaps substantially with the psychological account of how stereotypes influence behavior. In both views, for example, gender beliefs can suppress or boost performance in interpersonal settings—through gender status beliefs in sociology (Ridgeway and Correll 2004) and through stereotype threat in psychology (Steele 1997). Additionally, Foschi's (2000) documentation in sociology of status-based double standards for judging ability corresponds in some ways with Biernat's (2003) psychological demonstration of shifting standards in stereotype judgments.

Despite the many similarities in perspective, neither gender status researchers in sociology nor gender stereotype researchers in psychology have fully appreciated the implications of these bodies of work for one another. Sociologists studying gender status often fail to define and explain their concept of widely shared status beliefs in connection to the psychological concept of gender stereotypes. In particular, sociologists' emphasis on a single dimension of gender difference—status beliefs—neglects the communal stereotype of women and thereby limits the range of phenomena that can be explained in this framework. In turn, psychologists often fail to appreciate how the strength and direction of gender biases in interaction vary systematically with the nature of the context. Although gender stereotype research in psychology documents such contextual effects, these findings are not organized—as is gender status research—into a systematic set of predictions concerning gender biases in meaningful social settings. As Webster and Rashotte (2009) show, taking seriously the systematic ways that gender varies by context changes our understandings of how individual and societal level gender processes are connected.

In general, psychological accounts often fail to recognize that gender phenomena are embedded in broader social structures. For example, gender stereotypes and status beliefs

are especially powerful because they reflect the broader, consensual culture and thereby act as default rules for coordinating behavior (Ridgeway and Correll 2004). People within a society reason as follows: "I assume that you share my gender stereotypes and gender status beliefs, and so I expect you to judge me accordingly. As a result, I take those beliefs into account in guiding my own behavior." In support, when women were motivated to cooperate with others, they acted consistently with gender stereotypes that they thought others endorsed (Leander, Chartrand, and Wood forthcoming). Furthermore, because gender stereotypes and gender status beliefs are embedded in broader social structures, they may change over time with changes in the roles of men and women in society. For example, Seguino (2007) demonstrated that increases in women's labor force participation across countries were associated with increasing beliefs in equality between the sexes.

Sociological explanations, in turn, often fail to recognize that gender beliefs are influenced by individual-level factors. For example, people differ in the extent to which they hold gender identities, or personally identify with a sex category. Although identities often reflect categories of male or female, they also may include alternatives (e.g., intersex, transgender). The specific content of gender identities can include communal or agentic personality attributes, gender-typed interests and occupations, or gendered ways of relating to others (Wood and Eagly 2009). Men and women act in gendered ways as they regulate their behavior in line with a valued gender identity (Witt and Wood 2010; Wood et al. 1997). Thus, people may do gender because it enhances their self-esteem and positive feelings.

Despite these limitations of some of the existing work on gender in psychology and sociology, we are encouraged by the growing interest in integrating across the often separate disciplines. As scholars become more aware of the payoff to multidisciplinary thinking, these integrative trends are likely to develop further. Below, we offer some initial thoughts on how to move the field of gender in this direction.

HOW CAN SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGISTS STUDY GENDER ACROSS LEVELS OF ANALYSIS?

Social psychologists are uniquely situated to take on the challenge of addressing the emerging complexity in empirical findings on gender. Because social psychologists on both disciplinary sides focus on gendered interpersonal interaction, this common feature represents an initial building block for theories linking across multiple levels of analyses.

In one such approach, psychologists might examine how individual gender processes that play out in social interaction are embedded in the larger societal structure. When testing social psychological ideas against societal patterns, researchers are attempting to validate their ideas by comparing upward with more macro-level phenomena—reasoning that if an explanation for social behavior is correct, then the behavior should relate in particular ways to societal patterns. In another approach, researchers might examine how societal-level patterns that play out in social interaction are enabled and constrained by individual-level processes. When testing social psychological ideas against individual processes patterns, researchers are attempting to validate their ideas by comparing downward with more micro-level phenomena—reasoning that if an explanation for social behavior is correct, then the behavior should relate in particular ways to biological and other individual-level processes.

A number of innovative gender studies already provide these sophisticated tests across multiple levels of analysis. For example, integrating across masculine roles and biological indicators, Berg and Wynn-Edwards (2001) reported that fathers' anticipation and performance of the parental role is associated not just with behavioral changes but also with hormonal changes that appear to prepare men for nurturing and that can mimic the changes that occur in mothers. The assumption and performance of caretaking roles also influence women's hormones, with testosterone levels low among mothers and women in close relationships (Kuzawa et al. 2010). The models of gender developed

in these investigations could be further developed with demonstrations of the social psychological processes that enable the link between societal roles and hormonal processes. These are likely to include societal expectations for caretaking roles, along with personal identities of men and women as parents and close relationship partners. We anticipate the field developing to provide many more such integrative investigations in the future.

CONCLUSION

This article is intended to identify research opportunities for gender scholars in all disciplines. We argued that gender inherently is a multi-level phenomenon, but that social psychologists from both disciplines tend to limit themselves to certain levels of this analysis in their theoretical and empirical investigations. We considered a number of potential avenues for integrative approaches that provide a more adequate account of gender as it emerges across individual, social interaction, and social structural levels. Social psychology is by definition a field at the point of intersection between individual and social levels of analysis. On both sides of the disciplinary divide, we social psychologists are well positioned to provide these more complete understandings of gender.

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The future of the Gender System: An Interventionist Approach

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Gender is one of the primary organizers of social life. Given this importance, gender has been studied from multiple vantages, including biological, sociocognitive, interpersonal, network, and institutional perspectives. The diversity of these approaches illustrates the complex nature of gender as a multilevel social construction and that the processes and consequences of the gender system—including the creation of difference and inequality—are

essentially overdetermined (see Ridgeway and Smith-Lovin 1999 for an overview).

Still largely unanswered, however, is the question of how to intervene in the processes that promote and sustain gender inequality through the individual, interpersonal, and structural levels of our social world. The systematic study of the mechanisms that reduce gender inequality is not yet comprehensive, but this understanding is needed if we are to produce effective social change. Because the causes of gender difference and inequality are essentially overdetermined, such that a beneficial change at one level may be undermined by stagnancy in others, we must seek solutions that simultaneously

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address processes at all levels: from individual to structural. Sociologists have begun to conduct research on potential ways to intercede in the reproduction of gender differences and inequality through the use of status and organizational interventions (Kalev 2009; Ridgeway and Correll 2000). In addition to expanding our collective knowledge of implicit, explicit, hostile, and benevolent forms of sexism and the evolution of gender stereotypes, research in psychology is seeking greater understanding of the circumstances under which the activation and application of stereotypic information is impeded (Glick and Fiske 2001; Mitchell et al. 2009; Rudman and Killanski 2000).

The intersections between these research areas remain to be fully understood, and future research could examine the effectiveness of interventions based on these two approaches. Related questions would include: Does a change in structural advantage lead to a similar shift in the content of gender stereotypes? Can situational factors that promote the deactivation of gender stereotypes—such as environments that orient individuals to perceive similarities across gender lines (e.g., Galinsky and Moskowitz 2000)—transform the nature of gender interactions in new situations and in the long term? How do status and power arrangements affect the spread of new knowledge related to the content of gender stereotypes and expectations through social networks and in various organizational environments? Overall, if a beneficial change appears at any level of the gender system, what mechanisms facilitate the extension and legitimation of this change to other social arenas?

One promising approach for addressing the processes that undermine the inequities in the current gender system—at all levels—is to increase the focus of cross-disciplinary

gender research on social engineering (see Turner 1998 for a discussion). It is precisely *because* the gender system operates at all levels of our social world that sociologists and psychologists must work together to develop effective interventions and constructive social policy recommendations. If we continue to build a bridge between sociological and psychological perspectives through open dialogue and a cross-fertilization of ideas, we will have a more comprehensive understanding of the processes that sustain gender inequality and how best to overcome them.

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Bridging Inequality from Both Sides Now

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Because inequality is one of the central concerns of sociologists, it has been addressed, in various ways, by virtually all of the major traditions of sociological social psychology—social structure and personality, symbolic interactionism, and group processes (Cook, Fine, and House 1995). For those who work in the social structure and personality tradition, inequality refers to inequalities in power, privilege, and resources among sets of actors defined by the major social categories on which society is stratified, including gender, race, and social class. Survey work in this tradition examines how actors' locations on these dimensions affect a variety of individual-level outcomes, ranging from mental health to self-esteem to attitudes. Symbolic interactionists have also studied aspects of inequality, typically by examining the social construction of identities related to inequality (e.g., the identity of a homeless person) and the implications of inequality for self, emotions, and affect. Finally, work in the group processes tradition addresses inequality at a more abstract level, by developing formal theories that examine how structures of power and status produce inequalities in interaction, influence, and benefits. They also consider how actors respond to inequality, including actors' perceptions of injustice and responses to injustice. This tradition, and more specifically exchange theories of power and

inequality, is the primary focus of the sociological perspective presented here.

Social psychologists in psychology departments do not typically work in an area called inequality—there are no courses by that name, for instance—but they work on related topics of *prejudice* (closest to the social structure and personality approach in sociology), *stigmatized identity* (closest to symbolic interactionism in sociology), and *power relations* (closest to group processes in sociology). Of these topics, social psychologists have focused most frequently on prejudice, so the psychology part of this article focuses on the unique insights offered by these analyses. Others in this special issue address identity more generally (Deaux and Burke). And the psychology of power relations will appear here in psychological commentary on the sociology of exchange theories of power and inequality.

SOCIOLOGICAL SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY: SOCIAL EXCHANGE, POWER, AND INEQUALITY

The social exchange perspective proposes that power and inequality arise out of actors' dependencies on one another for things they value—not only material goods and services, but socially valued outcomes such as status and support.¹ Mutual dependence brings people together, but unequal dependencies create imbalances in power that produce inequalities in exchange benefits: Actors who are less dependent have greater power in the relation and are able to obtain relatively more of what they want. These processes occur in numerous

We thank Gary Alan Fine and Alice Eagly for organizing the interdisciplinary conference that began this collaborative effort, and thank our fellow attendees for their insightful comments on our papers and the topic of inequality at that conference. Order of authorship is alphabetical; our contributions are equal.

¹ For reviews of this literature, see Cook and Rice (2003) and Molm (2006).

settings, at multiple levels—in families, in the workplace, in communities, even among nation states.

The early development of the social exchange tradition was a truly interdisciplinary effort, with major contributions from both psychologists and sociologists. Beginning in the late 1970s, however, sociologists began to focus primarily on the network structures that govern power and exchange, independent of the characteristics of actors. Exchange networks connect dyadic relations into larger structures that give some actors greater opportunity than others to acquire valued resources. In general, actors who have more alternative partners, better alternatives, and/or more available alternatives than other actors are less dependent on those others and have greater power in their relations.

A key insight of this work is that inequalities in exchange can be produced by the structure of power and dependence alone, regardless of actors' intentions and without awareness of their relative power. The strength of these structural effects depends, however, on the network; some networks have a stronger, more deterministic effect on inequality, while others leave room for the influence of actors' power strategies and behaviors.

The inequalities in exchange outcomes produced by structures of imbalanced power lead, quite predictably, to perceptions of injustice and reactions against it, with actors in more advantaged positions regarding unequal exchanges as more "fair" than those in disadvantaged positions. Theories of distributive justice have their roots in the classical exchange theories, but more recent analyses of injustice in exchange also draw on psychological theories of justice, including procedural justice.

While the structural emphasis in sociology moved the exchange tradition away from its psychological roots, more recent work offers greater potential for interdisciplinary bridging by giving more consideration to the role of affect and emotion in exchange processes. Lawler's affect theory of social exchange, which builds on an earlier theory of relational

cohesion, proposes that the effects of exchange structures are mediated by emotional reactions that, when attributed to the relationship itself, influence the formation of commitments and affective bonds (Lawler, Thye, and Yoon 2009). Commitments also develop in response to risk and uncertainty, as does trust; both trust and commitment can reduce power use and inequality (Cook 2005). Finally, the form of exchange has emerged as a key element in these processes, affecting both the use of power and the affective bonds that form between exchange partners. Molm's (2010) work comparing *negotiated exchange* (in which actors bargain over the terms of strictly binding agreements) and *reciprocal exchange* (in which actors engage in unilateral acts of reciprocal benefit, without negotiation or assurance of reciprocity) shows lower inequality in reciprocal exchange and weaker effects of structural power. More importantly, reciprocal exchange also reduces the differences in how actors in unequal power relations feel about each other, by promoting stronger feelings of trust, affective regard, fairness, and solidarity in disadvantaged as well as advantaged actors.

Linkages to Psychology

Psychologists would recognize the sociological definition of power as resulting from asymmetrical dependence (Fiske 1993). However, psychologists' most frequent use of exchange theories and power took formal theory into a more topical turn in developing the psychology of attraction and close relationships.² Analyses of interdependence in close relationships have explained, for example, emotion as resulting from facilitation or hindrance of partner goals, as well as the development of commitment, and the dynamics of power asymmetry. More recently, beyond close relationships, the psychological study of power has blossomed with insights about its effects on face-to-face interactions of all kinds, with a focus on power facilitating individual agency, approach motivation, positive

² For an overview, see Kelley et al. (1983).

affect, and self-focus (Keltner, Gruenfeld, and Anderson 2003).³ This mostly experimental research has moved away from formal analyses of interdependence structures, though it might profit from that approach more active in sociology. The sociological analyses of power relations between advantaged and disadvantaged actors relates more closely to prejudice as psychology's view of inequality, to which we turn next.

PSYCHOLOGICAL SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY: SUBTLE AND BLATANT PREJUDICE

Psychological social psychologists have focused much of their energy in the last half of the twentieth century on prejudice, namely disadvantageous attitudes toward outgroup others.⁴ A decade into the twenty-first century, these researchers have considered various levels of prejudice. In particular, blatant prejudice, which is hot-blooded and bloody-minded, coming from perceived threat, afflicts one margin of the population. Blatant prejudice overlaps psychological and sociological processes, openly resenting outgroups and rejecting intimacy. Its origins lie in perceived threat to the ingroup's economic interests (e.g., group-based social dominance) or to the ingroup's cherished values (e.g., right-wing authoritarianism). Blatant prejudice reflects broad ethnocentrism, preference for the status quo, and propensity for group-based aggression.

At the opposite extreme are pure egalitarian orientations, which are open, liberal, and humanitarian, coming from felt security and values; these represent the opposite margin of the spectrum. Here, again, psychological and sociological insights overlap. Beliefs endorse group equality, individual freedom, and social welfare. Going beyond mere tolerance, egalitarian values stem from extensive intergroup contact, outgroup friendships, and multicultural enthusiasm.

Though research has gone beyond common sense, these extremes fit everyday understandings of prejudice. Into the vast middle between these two margins comes subtle prejudice, which is cool, calm, and collective, mostly indirect and norm-driven. Even well-intentioned people are nonetheless influenced by the culture's prejudiced portrayals, as well as by culture's anti-prejudice norms. The internal conflict drives people's biases into more subtle forms. Demonstrating this is psychology's unique contribution. Cutting-edge methods and theories reveal the automaticity, ambiguity, and ambivalence of subtle prejudices.⁵

Automatic prejudice operates unconsciously, unintentionally, and effortlessly; favoring one's own groups is breathtakingly fast. People instantly categorize each other's race, sex, age, and maybe social class. The in-group-outgroup distinction immediately follows, with "us" being better than "them." As priming experiments show, white people exposed (even subliminally) to the concept black go on to recognize words associated with African American racial stereotypes faster than irrelevant words. As facilitation experiments show, people can quickly pair "us" and positive words together, as well as "them" and negative words, compared with the reverse pairings. As neuroimaging studies show, brain regions associated with alarm and disgust, for instance, come online with sheer exposure to images of outgroup members. A variety of methods show just how automatic and unconscious are people's biased associations.

Ambiguous prejudice describes a variety of biases that carry hidden implications, so they all are difficult to identify; they tend to come in under the radar. Stealth bias emerges, for example, in favoring the ingroup, but not necessarily derogating the outgroup; in a zero-sum situation, the outgroup therefore suffers. People also blame the outgroup for bad behavior but excuse the ingroup, whereas they credit the ingroup for good behavior but

³ For reviews of this literature, see Fiske (2010) and Magee and Galinsky (2008).

⁴ For psychological reviews of this literature, see Fiske (1998) and Dovidio and Gaertner (2010).

⁵ For a sociological review of part of this literature, see Blanton and Jaccard (2008).

shrug it off in the outgroup. As another example, exaggerating cultural differences in language, religion, sexuality, or beliefs is ambiguous in that a kernel of truth becomes an overgrown harvest of excuses. Group cultural or circumstantial differences appear to be group biological essences, supposedly deterministic expressions of genes, reinforcing biases.

Finally, subtle prejudice is ambivalent, being mixed, showing a variety of emotions beyond simple antipathy. In the Stereotype Content Model (Fiske, Cuddy, and Glick 2007), ingroups may either disrespect or dislike outgroups, or sometimes both, revealing stereotypes of varying (un)warmth and (in) competence. Within the warmth \times competence space, each quadrant elicits distinct emotions (pity, envy, disgust, or admiration) and distinct forms of discrimination. Warmth predicts active help or harm; competence predicts passive help or harm. What's more, the warmth dimension results from structural relationships of perceived cooperation (leading to perceived warmth) or competition (leading to perceived coldness). The perceived competence dimension results from structural relationships of status, with status conferring presumed competence. Other models also address mixed prejudices.

In all its guises—automatic, ambiguous, and ambivalent—subtle prejudice predicts everyday discrimination: uncomfortable encounters, avoidance, self-fulfilling prophecies, and ingroup-favoring decisions in voting, housing, education, and employment.

Linkages to Sociology

The task of integrating sociologists' emphasis on structural inequalities in exchange with psychologists' study of subtle and blatant prejudice seems, on first glance, to be a formidable challenge. But the challenge is a welcome one. Because exchange theorists have traditionally focused on structural rather than cultural sources of inequality and on actors' positions in exchange networks rather than actors' social categories, the field's contributions to the study of inequality have sometimes been

underappreciated. And, indeed, they have been incomplete: By taking network structures as a given, exchange theorists have not addressed how actors come to occupy positions of structural advantage or disadvantage—a question that is surely related to actors' gender, race, and social class. By privileging structure over actor characteristics, the contemporary exchange tradition has demonstrated the important role of power structures in creating inequality. But it may now be time to bring actors, and social categories, into the structural picture. Doing so immediately connects us to the processes that psychologists have documented so well: ingroup/outgroup distinctions and the strong (as well as subtle) emotions and prejudices that such distinctions provoke. The broad conception of actors in exchange theories allows for analysis of intergroup as well as interpersonal processes, and recent consideration of emotions and affect in exchange sets the stage for incorporating emotions associated with prejudice.⁶ Similarly, exchange theories of injustice already draw on attributional processes involved in some forms of prejudice.⁷ Linking structure with social categories, power with prejudice, and justice evaluations with hostility toward outgroups offers a potent mix for a potentially deeper understanding of inequality.

CONCLUSIONS: TRENDS AND AGENDA SETTING

We hope this brief discussion offers some sense of the influential theories that could result from bridging sociological and psychological approaches to inequality. But how do we get there from where we are now? What trends in our two disciplines offer promising avenues for moving us in the right direction?

In sociology, the exchange tradition has drawn on insights from psychology about social cognition and has begun to incorporate emotion and affect into its theories, but it has not dealt in any direct way with questions of stereotyping, prejudice, or discrimination.

⁶ For an interdisciplinary discussion of emotions, see Smith-Lovin and Winkielman (this volume).

⁷ For a review of this literature, see Hegtvædt (2006).

Nor has it considered ingroup-outgroup distinctions, even though the actors who exchange can be groups (or their representatives) as well as individuals. The expectation states tradition in sociology is closer to these concerns, particularly notions of categorization and stereotyping. Therefore, one of the most promising trends in sociological social psychology for the goal of interdisciplinary bridging is the effort to integrate social exchange theories of power with expectation states theories of status (e.g., Thye 2000). Status structures are based on cultural beliefs about relative worth, while power structures are based on differential control over resources, but both contribute to social inequality and each may reinforce effects of the other. Unlike ingroup favoritism, however, status beliefs involve *consensual* evaluations of worth, shared by both the advantaged and disadvantaged. This distinction involves a basic tension between status characteristic theories and social categorization theories; in order for ingroup/outgroup distinctions to occur, and prejudice to develop, members of different social categories—different statuses—must develop divergent, rather than consensual, conceptions of worth. Bringing power into the picture may contribute to understanding how this occurs, but it may also be necessary to identify different conditions that activate these different processes.

In psychology, experimental social psychology both draws on sociology and offers new venues. A persistent interest in social issues keeps psychological social psychologists reading sociology and respecting structural variables.⁸ Public policy implications enter psychology through the sociology end of the bridge. On the far end of the bridge, social psychology also links to the more biological end of psychology, providing a translation of social neuroscience and health implications that may aid sociological social

psychology. A bibliometric analysis indicates that social psychology is a hub within psychology (Yang and Chiu 2009), and another one indicates that sociology is a close neighbor (Boyack, Klavans, and Börner 2005), so bridges provide access to the rest of the field for sociology and other social sciences. In this case, bridges, not fences, make good neighbors.

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The Future in Inequality

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Recently an article in *Personality and Social Psychology Review* urged social psychologists to reacquire their "sociological imagination" and incorporate broader, structural factors in their work (Oishi, Kesebir, and Snyder 2009). Studies of social inequality in particular seem ripe for this kind of collaboration.

Psychological investigations relating to inequality typically center on interpersonal prejudice, stigma, or power relations. To some extent, these perspectives incorporate sociostructural factors, but only rarely (a notable exception is the Stereotype Content Model; Fiske et al. 2002). In contrast, sociology has much to offer in explaining how dimensions of stratification (e.g., race or occupation) drive psychological reactions between people at the face-to-face level.

The sociological concept of *social capital*—loosely, benefits derived from social networks—has great relevance to social

psychological theories of prejudice and discrimination. Psychologists often conceptualize prejudice as exclusion from ingroup resources and status based on a stigmatized characteristic (e.g., race, gender). Sociometric analyses have come a long way toward explaining why these disparities occur. For instance, being impoverished as well as black compounds the discrimination problem and may foster deficiencies in other types of capital (e.g., cultural, physical) that cannot be explained by race alone (Grusky and Ku 2008).

Research on the reciprocal relationship between neural and social networks also shows interdisciplinary promise. In a recent effort to explain the self, LeDoux (2003) argues that the structure of neural networks in the brain is the driving factor for many observable individual traits. At the same time, however, the structuring of neural networks is subject to change throughout the life course (Greenough, Black, and Wallace 1987). These biological processes should be incorporated into a structural theory of behavior. As argued by Mayhew (1980:346): "structuralists generally consider that there

We thank Linda D. Molm and Susan T. Fiske for their guidance. Order of authorship is alphabetical; our contributions are equal.

are two fields of study relevant to understanding human society: biology and (the structural version of) sociology.” Much as cognitive psychologists map behavioral processes in the brain and determine how brain anatomy changes as a result of experience, social network researchers can now model dynamic networks in conjunction with other forms of non-relational data. From this perspective, psychologists and sociologists both can model, for example, the diffusion of stereotypes or racial prejudice in a social system based on assumptions about how people process outgroup information and the likelihood of intergroup interaction. Together, these independent streams of research can jointly develop a structural theory of action that explains how neural and social networks change reciprocally. It is here that the future (understanding) of inequality lies.

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Culture and Social Psychology: Converging Perspectives

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CONVERGING PERSPECTIVES

Views of culture in psychology and sociology have converged markedly in the past two decades. Both have rejected what Adams and Markus (2004) refer to as the “entity” conception of culture—the view that culture is coherent, stable, and located in the heads of collectivities’ members—in favor of more supple and dynamic constructs. Culture, in this new view, entails dynamic interactions between mind and environment, each of which serves as a selection regime for the other (mental structures selecting aspects of the

environment as salient, and environments selectively reinforcing mental representations) (DiMaggio 1997). Because environments vary, this view implies that people know *more* culture—have a larger stock of representations enabling them to function in multiple environments—and that these representations are less coherent, with many elements specific to particular domains or settings. It further implies that we cannot understand culture as isomorphic with groups: Instead this perspective raises the salience of *identities* (self-schemata that serve as organizational foci for cultural material characterizing the self and its relationships), *institutions* (environmental scaffolds that organize cultural material around places and symbol systems), and *networks* (which replace groups as the social

The authors names are in alphabetical order. This was a fully collaborative effort.

carriers of cultural elements). Thus the study of culture focuses on “the reproduction, maintenance and modification of cultural patterns” (Adams and Markus 2004: 344); and less upon the content of culture and more upon the processes or mechanisms, cognitive and social, through which cultural elements are acquired, rendered salient, linked to broader patterns of meaning, and displaced.

CULTURE AND SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY IN PSYCHOLOGY

Within psychology, the emerging analysis of culture provides an opportunity to reclaim and extend several key social psychological theoretical insights. These include 1) that people everywhere exist in social networks, in groups, in communities, and in relationships, 2) that being a person is fundamentally a social transaction, and 3) social formations and psychological formations are fully interdependent, both contemporaneously and historically. Despite this early powerful theorizing about how people and their sociocultural environments mutually constitute one another (e.g., Lewin 1948; Mead 1934), within psychology, the majority of social psychology’s empirical attention has been directed to the power of the immediate situation. These studies reveal that people are chronically and powerfully sensitive to others in every aspect of behavior, and while some of this influence is explicit, much of it is implicit or automatic and outside the span of conscious analysis or control (Fiske, Gilbert, and Lindzey 2010).

A focus on culture puts a wide angle lens on the situation and expands what social psychologists examine when they consider the social environment. Culture indeed inheres in the ideas and practices of particular immediate social situations that afford and constrain psychological tendencies, but these situations are themselves nested within and organized by networks and institutions that give form and structure to these situations. These social systems are animated by a variety of often tacit, taken-for-granted ideas

about what is good, what is moral, and what is self that provide a normative orientation for both self-systems and the social systems. Further, psychological experience and the social systems with which self-systems are interdependent are continually shaped by ecological, economic, and historical forces (Markus and Kitayama 2010). Culture then is not a bundle of traits or a stable set of norms but implicit and explicit patterns of representations, actions, and artifacts that are distributed or spread through networks of social interaction (Atran, Medin, and Ross 2005; Kashima 2000; Kroeber and Kluckhohn 1952).

The emerging view of culture as explicit and implicit cultural patterns emphasizes that individuals are not separate from their social contexts and that social contexts do not exist apart from people. Social situations or contexts are the products of human activity, the repository of previous psychological activity. Further, social situations do more than influence behavior. They constitute (as in create, make up, or establish) these psychological tendencies. From this perspective, the situation, the context, or the environment then is not just an overlay on a set of basic psychological processes that provides the content for the processes. Instead, as the rapidly expanding volume of empirical studies makes evident (Kitayama and Cohen 2007; Heine 2008), people think and feel and act in culture-specific ways—ways that are shaped by particular patterns of historically derived meanings, practices, products, and institutions.

There are a variety of approaches to culture within social psychology (Markus and Hamedani 2007). Some theorists have sought to specify certain key dimensions of culture or cultural syndromes—individualism/collectivism, autonomy, hierarchy, egalitarian commitment—along which cultural contexts differ (e.g., Triandis 1995). Others locate the sources of cultural variation in the cultural toolkits that reflect a culture’s intellectual history and guide the way individuals perceive and construct meaning (Nisbett et al. 2001).

Some conceptualize culture as a loose network of knowledge structures, mental constructs, and representations that guide information when activated (Hong et al. 2000). Still others index culture through cultural models that are widely shared ideas and practices about how to behave and which give form and direction to individual experience (Markus and Kitayama 2003).

Sociocultural psychologists have recently ventured beyond what Henrich, Heine, and Norenzayan (2010) term the WEIRD contexts, that is, contexts that are Western, educated, industrialized, rich, and democratic. Many processes of perception, cognition, emotion, motivation, relational and intergroup behavior—previously thought to be basic, universal, and natural to human functioning—have been found to be strikingly different in non-WEIRD contexts. This empirically documented cultural variation in patterns of thinking, feeling, acting, or “relating” reveals that it is human nature to shape and be shaped by one’s sociocultural contexts.

While expanding the analysis and understanding of the environment, the study of culture is also renewing psychology’s understanding of the self, identity, or agency as central to the analysis and interpretation of behavior. Experience is socioculturally patterned, and the self or identity (the two terms are often used interchangeably) reflects the individual’s engagement with the world that is the source of this patterning. A self or an identity is the “me” at the center of experience—a continually developing sense of awareness and agency that guides action and takes shape as the individual, both brain and body, becomes attuned to the various environments it inhabits. Selves are thus psychological realities that are both biologically (LeDoux 1996) and socioculturally (Markus and Kitayama 1991) produced. Selves and identities are schemas of past behavior as well as patterns for current and future behavior. They are always situated and, as a consequence, they always reflect their contexts in significant ways.

CULTURE AND SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY IN SOCIOLOGY

The sociological case is complicated by the fact that self-identified sociologists of culture were long indifferent to psychology, whereas social psychologists whose work addressed matters central to the study of culture, like identity and sense-making, rarely recognized the connection. Fortunately, the walls separating these fields have begun to crumble (DiMaggio 1997; Cerulo 2002).

Otherwise sociology’s trajectory has been similar to that of psychology. Whereas sociologists once viewed culture as comprising internally coherent and largely stable sets of guiding principles (values) and behavioral prescriptions (norms), ordinarily understood to map neatly onto societies (cultures) or groups within them (subcultures), they increasingly have come to understand culture as comprising social representations, mental models, and ordering schemata (Ridgeway 2006) and the environmental conditions (institutional arrangements, material culture, media programming) that sustain or challenge them. Sociologists also increasingly perceive culture as contingent, domain-specific, and often incoherent, a repertoire of meanings and competencies among which persons shift depending on context and environmental cues. Understanding culture in this way enables us to apprehend such phenomena as the socialist world’s transition to capitalism or sudden flare-ups of intergroup tension that resist explanation given the traditional view. The duality of mind and environment suggests questions about the match between individual repertoires and external representations, regularities in priming mechanisms that evoke particular schemata, and the distribution of rules and representations across groups and throughout material, institutional, and symbolic environments. Increasingly, students of culture look to social psychology to illuminate the mechanisms that articulate systems of meaning across person, time, and place.

This happened none too soon. Without psychology, sociology of culture is given to strong assumptions and weak theory. For

example, dualistic approaches to culture that, following Lévi-Strauss, depict culture as organized around a few enduring binary oppositions, have persisted in the absence of empirical support. More complex models of culture that posit correspondences between different life spheres (speech, family relations, school, and work) have likewise tended to underestimate domain independence and undertheorize mechanisms generating correspondence. (Kohn, Miller, and Schooler's [1986] research program on cognitive effects of work on family life was an admirable exception that most cultural sociologists ignored.)

To be sure, a few prescient scholars anticipated the new synthesis. Berger and Luckmann (1967) emphasized the institutional scaffolding of cognition and challenged prevailing views of culture as intrinsically coherent. Fine and Kleinman (1979) challenged conventional approaches to "subcultures," presenting a more dynamic view of cultural formation and diffusion. Swidler (1986) argued that humans' cultural repertoires consist of inconsistent representations, ideas, and models, among which they shift as conditions and surroundings change. These authors' intuitions would soon be affirmed empirically by psychologists studying the acquisition of representations, the inferential nature of source and credibility monitoring (Gilbert 1991; Johnson, Hashtroudi, and Lindsay 1993), domain specificity (Hirschfeld and Gelman 2004), and the relationship between automatic (system 1) and controlled (system 2) cognition (Lieberman et al. 2002; Kahneman 2003).

Several developments in social psychology have contributed to these movements. Fine's work on such topics as subcultures (1979), interpersonal diffusion (Fine and Turner 2001), and collective memory (Fine and McDonnell 2007) has uniquely influenced *both* cultural sociology and social psychology, introducing linkages between these fields, especially around the study of microcultures. The influence of research by social psychologists on institutional

scaffolding, identity, and the social psychology of networks should spread within sociology of culture as well.

Work on institutional scaffolding (Zerubavel and Smith, this volume) emerged from constructivism and ethnomethodology (Garfinkel 1964), which emphasized the precariousness of intersubjectivity and the dependence of interactants on background knowledge and visible cues. A classic example, Zucker's (1977) extension of the Asch experiments, demonstrated that symbols of institutional authority (one treatment was simply to dress assistants in lab coats) increased the persistence of judgmental errors. Similarly, Vohs et al. (2006) found that the mere presence of images of currency in an experimental setting reduced cooperative behavior, apparently cueing schemata associated with market institutions.

Social psychologists have done critical work on how identities shape individual behavior. The status-expectations-states tradition in sociology complements research on stereotyping in psychology, demonstrating how marked identities in task-focused groups elicit behaviors that reinforce intergroup boundaries and prejudices. Recent work in this tradition engages issues of culture directly (Ridgeway 2006). Role-based identity theories likewise entail examination both of meaning systems (the set of salient roles in a community) and mechanisms (through which alternative identities are combined and shape interaction) (Owens, Robinson, and Smith-Lovin 2010).

Studies of both cultural diffusion and identity construction have highlighted the role of networks in enacting, triggering, and defining identities (Deaux and Martin 2003). Such work emphasizes both the ways that interaction between similar persons affirms and standardizes ingroup identities (e.g., White 2008 on identities as equivalence classes facilitating network formation); and interaction between dissimilar actors in imposing identities through categorization (Hogg and Ridgeway 2003).

DIFFERENCES AND DIRECTIONS

Psychology and sociology typically have different endgames and thus social psychologists of different disciplinary persuasions sail past each other in the night. Yet the current notable convergence between psychological and sociological social psychologists in definitions and approaches to culture, as well as their shared view that cultures and selves/identities constitute each other in a cycle of mutual constitution, suggests that the time may be right for sustained interdisciplinary work. Psychologists could benefit from sociological theorizing on roles, networks, institutions, and on how ideas and practices diffuse and cultures change. Sociologists could benefit from psychological research on when and how specific psychological tendencies vary with specific features of context.

Sociology's emphasis on culture as domain-specific, contingent, and often incoherent and psychology's emphasis that both cultures and selves are dynamic can productively deflect the charge of stereotyping that is an ongoing concern for psychologists. Culture is dynamic in that the sociocultural ideas, practices, institutions, products, artifacts, economic factors, and ecological factors that constitute it are constantly invented, accumulated, and changed over time. Selves are dynamic in that they change as the various cultural contexts they engage in change. A focus on the sociocultural grounding of the self does not deny the individuality and idiosyncrasy observable in even the most tight-knit and coherent collectives. Even those inhabiting similar configurations of cultural contexts or similar social spaces will diverge in the specifics of their everyday experiences and will differentially attend to features of these experiences.

A gathering of wisdoms among social psychologists of various persuasions is clearly needed. The economic model of individual behavior in both its rational and less rational forms is well-developed, as is the individual psychological model and the medical or biological model of behavior. Yet the social psychological model of behavior which points to the powerful role of distributions of relations,

networks, norms, practices, and meanings is not equally elaborated among social scientists or in the larger cultural imagination. For example, research revealing a strong gradient between social class and health (Marmot 2005), or a relationship between threats in the social environment and academic performance (Steele 2010), will stimulate growing interest in how to index or capture the significant aspects and categories of sociocultural environments and their intersections, and how to theorize the specific mechanisms by which these aspects constitute psychological functioning. The significant questions will include how much of the mind or the psyche is in the head and how much is in the world, and how best to account for persistence in behavior or, instead, for behavioral change and innovation.

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Using Culture to Explain Behavior: An Integrative Cultural Approach

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While savings rates among low-income families vary greatly, a 2008 National Poverty Center report finds that over 40 percent of low-income families fail to save any money. For decades policy makers and social scientists have sought to explain this phenomenon. Even after accounting for the fact that low-income families have less money to save, why do they often have lower rates of savings than their middle- and high-income counterparts?

Most social science research on this question either examines the individual characteristics (e.g., cognitive factors) that influence how low-income people make decisions about their savings (e.g., Mullainathan and Shafir 2009), or focuses on the material features of one's environment that shape behavior, such as whether people have access to the types of organizational resources (e.g., formal financial services) that promote savings.

Our (brief) argument is that explaining social phenomena like low savings rates requires attention to the role of culture. Markus and colleagues' (2003) emphasis on the mutual constitution of culture and psyche and DiMaggio's (1997) description of culture as the interaction between mental processes and the external environment provide useful frameworks for understanding culture. Specifically, these approaches recognize that individuals and their material and social contexts are

interdependent: People are both shaped by and architects of their social worlds.¹

An integrative cultural approach that considers the ongoing interdependence between the behavior and psychological processes of individuals and their sociocultural contexts is essential for social scientists who seek to explain behavior like low savings rates and for policy makers who seek to design interventions to change behavior. The following examples represent the types of factors that such an integrative cultural approach would consider.²

1. **Models, representations, and symbols**

An analysis of representations involves examining the content and the ecology of representations (i.e., their spatial and social distribution) in both individual minds and in the external world.

a. Mental representations (in the mind)

How do people with low incomes understand the nature of their financial decisions and how does this understanding affect their saving behavior? Do people who inhabit working-class contexts, which offer fewer material resources and opportunities for choice than middle-class contexts, perceive their actions as

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¹ This formulation accommodates the fact that some people are less able to enact their intentions in the world than others.

² We acknowledge and sidestep distinctions between income and social class here and use the terms interchangeably. The factors listed here are not comprehensive and an integrated approach would also need to take into account issues such as the availability of financial services and the effects of instability in income.

freely chosen? (See Stephens et al. 2009)

- b. Social representations (in the world) What are the types of social representations of money and saving that are available to people in different social class contexts? What are the implicit models, normative assumptions, and rules of the game that are built into institutions like banks? What are their effects? Do these models benefit some people and disadvantage others?

2. Networks, groups, and social comparison

- a. How do behaviors within one's social networks—often structured by income—shape saving behavior? How do perceived social norms in one's community and the process of comparing one's self to one's group influence savings behavior? How are the effects of networks and social comparison mediated by individuals' social identities?

3. Trust in and familiarity with financial institutions

- a. How do levels of trust in banks and individuals' comfort interacting with representatives of these institutions differ by social class and impact saving behavior? Do high-income individuals have more of the knowledge and skills (cultural

capital) that are needed to navigate financial institutions?

The task for researchers who seek to explain behavior is not only to examine these factors in isolation, but also to consider how they work together and inform one another. Studies that take into account all of these factors are not always possible, however a comprehensive understanding of behavior depends on such an approach.

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