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The Oxford Handbook of Identity Development

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Theoretical Foundations of Identity

Phillip L. Hammack

Abstract

Across the social sciences and humanities, identity is a conceptual tool to think about sameness and difference, both in terms of individual continuity and change over time and social categorization or group affiliation. This chapter traces the theoretical lineage of the identity concept, focusing on the foundational theories of William James and George Herbert Mead. In contrast to the relative emphasis on the exterior world of social meaning found in Mead's perspective, James's theoretical emphasis on the interior experience of self-sameness and continuity inspired a distinct line of theory, including Erikson's theory of identity crisis, identity status theory and its derivatives, theories of racial and ethnic identity development, and narrative theories of identity development that emphasize life-story construction. The chapter reviews these distinct lines of theoretical development in the social sciences and concludes with a discussion of pluralism, identity politics, and social ethics in an increasingly interconnected and globalized world.

Key Words: identity, theory, development

Identity, Sameness, and Difference

In the twenty-first century, we inhabit a world of fluid borders, of rapidly moving ideas, of swift and seamless migration, of ever-expanding connectivity (Arnett, 2002). Yet, as our bodies and our words are transported, they remain subject to the universal human process of categorization. They may be *English, Arabic, or Chinese* language words; the product of *American, Palestinian, or Taiwanese* hands. I may be an *American gay man*, she a *Kurdish artist living in Australia*, he a *secular-minded Pakistani Muslim*, or she a *Black South African lesbian feminist*. We inhabit a world of meaning in which people are in constant states of identification, or naming and categorizing, what or who one is and to which larger categories he or she may belong, categories like gender, class, race, ethnicity, nationality, sexual identity, occupation, and the like.

Identity is the anchoring concept for thinking about difference and sameness in our time. It is not a concept confined to the jargon of the social sciences or the humanities; it permeates our everyday conversations, our moment-to-moment cognitive processes of sense-making in a world increasingly characterized by human diversity. In an era of appreciation for cultural pluralism—an era in which difference is no longer automatically considered a ground for oppression, colonization, or enslavement—identity is the tool we have to render the world of difference sensible and to confer rights through recognition (Mohanty, 2010; Taylor, 1994; Verkuyten, 2006). Identity is also the tool we have to think about conflict and continuity within an individual person at a time of rapid social change and challenges to local cultural views of self (Arnett, 2002; Hermans & Dimaggio, 2007; Jensen, Arnett, & McKenzie, 2011; Kinnvall, 2004).

Identity is thus concerned with sameness and difference at the level of social categorization, group affiliation, and intergroup relations, as well as at the level of individual consciousness or subjectivity.

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a brief sketch of the theoretical foundations of identity. Identity is a concept of study in philosophy, history, anthropology, sociology, psychology, cultural studies, gender and sexuality studies, politics, economics, literature—truly an idea that spans the borders of disciplinary thought and inquiry. This multidisciplinary conceptual “ownership” is reflected in the numerous and diverse handbooks of identity that have begun to proliferate (e.g., Elliott, 2011; Leary & Tangney, 2012; Schwartz, Luyckx, & Vignoles, 2011; Wetherell & Mohanty, 2010). It is not possible to do justice in this chapter to the incredibly vast and rich theoretical work on identity in these fields. I anchor my review both in the two disciplines with which I most closely associate (psychology and sociology) and in the intended focus of the current handbook on identity *development*. My aim is to be as integrative as possible and to link major theoretical strands in psychology and sociology to discussions in other disciplines, to provoke cross-disciplinary analysis and conversation.

The chapter is organized to reflect the historical arc of the identity concept. I begin by situating the concept in intellectual history and particularly European philosophy of the Enlightenment era—the intellectual origins of the disciplines of psychology and sociology themselves. I then focus on how these philosophical ideas were imported into the early theories of William James and George Herbert Mead. The next sections of the chapter trace the distinct theoretical strands inspired by Mead and James, respectively. I conclude the chapter with a discussion of identity politics, social ethics, and pluralism in a global context of increasing interconnectivity and inequality.

Two issues warrant explicit discussion at the outset: (1) the terminological distinction between *self* and *identity*, and (2) my own theoretical position on identity. The terms *self* and *identity* have frequently been used interchangeably, and they share a conceptual history (Baumeister, 1987; Taylor, 1989). Few have attempted to clearly distinguish the terms (e.g., Owens, 2006), although many theorists do distinguish the concepts (e.g., McAdams, 2013). The distinction I propose here centers on the relative emphasis placed on the *interior* world of perception or cognition and the *exterior* world of social meaning. In my view, *identity* deals explicitly with

properties of sameness and distinction that link the interior world of psychological experience and the exterior world of language and categorization. *Self* deals chiefly with the interior world and one's perception of it (or “consciousness”). This distinction is reflected in definitions of these terms offered in the *Oxford English Dictionary* (Identity, 2013). Owens (2006) distinguishes the concepts by positing *self* as an individual psychological “process” and *identity* as a social-relational “tool” through which individuals and groups understand the social and psychological world. McAdams (2013) views *identity* as one aspect of *self* or the self-development process (“self as author”). It is through *identity* that the self becomes presented to the exterior world. Theories of *identity* are thus relatively more concerned with the exterior or the link between the interior and the exterior—the personal and the social (see also Bamberg, 2011). My focus in this chapter is concretely on *identity* as a concept that links individual cognition with the social world of meaning and categorization.

My own theoretical position integrates many of the perspectives I review in this chapter. In my view, the *identity* concept evokes the dialogic idea of sameness and difference, in that *identity* provides a sense of internal coherence and continuity for the person in a particular social context but also serves to divide the social world into meaningful categories. *Identity* thus operates at both the level of individual psychology and social organization. This perspective is influenced by James's (1890) emphasis on personal coherence but also Mead's (1934) view of the self as socially constructed and Tajfel's (1981) view of social identities as significant determinants of thought, feeling, and action. Poststructural approaches provide a framework for thinking about the relationship among power, social categories, and individual subjectivity (e.g., Foucault, 1978). My emphasis on the role of language as the mediational mechanism through which *identity* develops leads me to posit narrative theories as central to the study of *identity* development (e.g., Bruner, 1990; McAdams, 2001), and my work has viewed continuity in personal *identity* and the social construction of *identity* through a narrative theoretical framework (e.g., Hammack, 2008, 2011a). My framework is also highly influenced by cultural psychological ideas of learning through guided activity or social practice (e.g., Vygotsky, 1978) and dialogism (e.g., Bakhtin, 1981), which have historically had less to say explicitly about the *identity* concept (cf. Hermans, 2001; Pasupathi, 2001). Nonetheless,

my work seeks to bring these theoretical perspectives into dialogue through a commitment to the study of individual lives in social and political context.

Historical and Philosophical Foundations of Identity

The fundamental concepts that underlie self and identity have distant historical roots. Whereas Burkitt (2011) traces these concepts to Greco-Roman ideas of *persona* and later Stoic emphasis on self-mastery, Harbus (2002) emphasizes ideas of self in early medieval English literature. Earlier historical treatments connected concerns with selfhood and identity to Augustine's *Confessions* (Taylor, 1989) and to the Protestant Reformation, which linked ideas of personhood and agency through the concept of a "calling" or vocational mission (Baumeister, 1986).

Prior to the formation of the social sciences in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, questions about selfhood and identity were the domain of philosophy. The modern idea of identity emerged from Enlightenment-era philosophical perspectives on memory and perception, which were later appropriated by the first generation of psychologists and sociologists. Probably the earliest statement related to identity came from Rene Descartes (1637/2000), whose famous dictum "cogito, ergo sum" ("I think, therefore I am") prized the role of self-conscious cognition in human existence. John Locke (1694/1998) viewed identity and diversity as concepts concerned with sameness or distinction of perception. He emphasized that similar properties of objects or persons create coherence in consciousness, providing a sense of unity to our experience of the sensory world.

In the eighteenth century, philosophers such as David Hume and Immanuel Kant challenged the idea that the sense of identity resided in the properties of persons or objects themselves, suggesting instead that the *memory process* creates this unity (e.g., Hume, 1739/1986; Kant, 1781/2007). In other words, identity entails the perception of sameness or invariability constructed in memory. Kant emphasized that we can only know the self in relation to the world. Hence, our engagement with the material world is rendered sensible as we stitch together perceptions from various experiences (Baumeister, 1986).

In the transition from philosophy to psychology proper in the late nineteenth century, Wilhelm Dilthey argued for the centrality of meaning in his articulation of a hermeneutic approach to psychology (e.g., Dilthey, 1923/1988, 1976). He suggested

that we make meaning through perceiving unity in events and that we use language to construct a unified account of who we are in the social world. This view presaged later narrative theories of identity and hermeneutic approaches in the social sciences (Tappan, 1997).

Early philosophical perspectives thus emphasized the significance of *memory, meaning, relationality*, and the perception of *sameness* or *difference* in the identity concept. These conceptual emphases would go on to greatly influence the theories of William James and George Herbert Mead, foundational theorists whose ideas continue to form the core of contemporary theoretical approaches (e.g., Hammack, 2011a; McAdams, 2013; Serpe & Stryker, 2011; Thorne, 2000). In the next section, I review the perspectives of these foundational theorists.

James and Mead: The Foundational Theorists

The two most prominent early theorists of identity in the social sciences were William James and George Herbert Mead. James, an American philosopher and psychologist, defined personal identity as a "consciousness of personal sameness" (James, 1890, p. 331), consistent with earlier philosophical perspectives emphasizing individual cognition and self-reflection. James's view emphasized perception of continuity and unity in mind, as well as a somatic sense of "warmth," providing a positive physiological sensation. James thus sought to integrate cognition, emotion, and physiological response in his view of identity. As he put it, "resemblance among the parts of a continuum of feelings (especially around bodily feelings) experienced along with things widely different in all other regards, thus constitutes the real and verifiable 'personal identity' which we feel" (James, 1890, p. 336).

As psychology and sociology emerged from philosophy as distinct fields of social science inquiry, the theoretical foundations of identity shifted from a largely private, interior view to one in which the private and public were considered in tandem. In psychology, James (1890) famously spoke of the social self, positing that "*a man [sic] has as many social selves as there are individuals who recognize him and carry an image of him [sic] in their mind*" (p. 294). Charles Horton Cooley (1902) coined the term "looking glass self" to refer to the self as constructed in the reflections provided in social interaction. Although these scholars preferred the term *self* to *identity* in these articulations, we can see an opening of the identity concept from a largely private,

interior view to a public, distributed view in which identities are made in social acts.

George Herbert Mead (1934) offered one of the earliest systematic treatments of the idea of self as socially constructed, positing that “the self is something which has a development; it is not initially there, at birth, but arises in the process of social experience and activity” (p. 135). Laying the foundation for the theoretical perspective in sociology that came to be known as “symbolic interactionism” (Blumer, 1969), Mead argued for an early, radical form of social constructionism in which mind, self, and society emerge through small-scale social interactions. The sense of sameness and difference that underlies “identities” arises as we participate in what Mead (1934) called the “conversation of gestures” (p. 43). Hence, we can only comprehend ideas and concepts through our engagement with the symbolic—the gesture, the word, the representation.

Both James and Mead theorized an *I/me* distinction. For James (1890), the *me* represents the “empirical self,” or the self as object: “*The words ME, then, and SELF, so far as they arouse feeling and connote emotional worth, are OBJECTIVE designations, meaning ALL THE THINGS which have the power to produce in a stream of consciousness excitement of a certain peculiar sort*” (p. 319). The *me* represents the apparent, visible identity that arouses a response in others. The *I*, by contrast, represents the private, interior sense of self: “...[P]ersonality implies the incessant presence of two elements, an objective person, known by a passing subjective Thought and recognized as continuing in time. *Hereafter let us use the words ME and I for the empirical person and the judging Thought*” (James, 1890, p. 371). If the *me* is the empirical object, the *I* is the cognitive process that constructs it as possessing meaning and unity in perception (see McAdams & Cox, 2010; McAdams, 2013).

Whereas James’ *I/me* distinction implies a social world in which identity is negotiated in individual cognition, Mead (1934) is more explicit in the significance of the community in self-perception and self-construction: “The ‘I’ is the response of the organism to the attitudes of the others; the ‘me’ is the organized set of attitudes of others which one himself assumes” (p. 175). For Mead (1934), the *me* embodies the “generalized other”—“the organized community or social group which gives to the individual his [sic] unity of self” (p. 154). It is the version of self identifiable to a larger community of shared meaning. The *I* represents individual agency to operate within that community to either uphold or challenge its system of symbolic meaning: “The

‘I’ is his [sic] action over against that social situation” (Mead, 1934, p. 175). Hence, Mead’s version of the *I* retains the interpretive freedom of James’s, but it diverges in the degree to which it explicitly theorizes a link between cognition and social action.

As they translated foundational philosophical ideas about identity for social science inquiry, both James and Mead retained the centrality of internal psychological processes seeking unity and coherence. But their theories of identity diverged in the extent to which they either privileged the private world of interior thought (in James’ case) or the public world of symbolic meanings (in Mead’s case), thus also constructing divergent pathways for the study of identity in psychology and sociology over the twentieth century. In the next two sections of the chapter, I trace these divergent pathways in theoretical formulations of identity.

Mead’s Lineage: Identities in Interaction

Mead’s focus on the development of self in social interaction inspired theoretical perspectives that placed a relative emphasis on the public, exterior world. Compared with theoretical perspectives more linked to James, these perspectives place less emphasis on individual cognition and agency and more on the constraints of social context. Consistent with Kant’s emphasis on *relationality* as the basis for the memory process, these perspectives placed greater weight on the relational basis of identities in interaction. Most notably, Goffman’s (1963) theory of stigma, McCall and Simmons’s (1966) role-identity model, Stryker’s (1968) identity theory, and Tajfel and Turner’s (1979, 1986) social identity theory (SIT) are situated in this theoretical lineage.

Stigma and Identity Management

Goffman’s (1963) theory of stigma emphasizes the idea of identities as performances managed in social interaction. Rooted in his dramaturgical theory of self-presentation (Goffman, 1959), in which he uses the metaphor of the theater to explain social interaction, Goffman (1963) argues that an individual with a stigmatized identity (e.g., a disabled person or a minority) constantly engages in practices of identity management in social interaction. These practices control the impressions of others through control of what aspects of one’s biography are revealed, a process Goffman (1959) calls *impression management*.

Goffman (1963) distinguishes among *personal*, *ego*, and *social* identity. He defines *ego* identity as

"the subjective sense of [one's] own situation and [one's] own continuity" (Goffman, 1963, p. 105). Both *social* and *personal* identity, unlike ego identity, are concerned with the perceptions of others with whom one interacts. *Social identity* is linked to social role and status and informs the interaction in terms of whether those interacting view themselves as part of the same group. *Personal identity* represents aspects of biography that are shared or available in social interaction, and thus is the product of intentional self-presentation. Stigmatized individuals engage in *information control* as they decide what aspects of their personal identity to disclose in interaction. These decisions have implications for the nature of the interaction and its consequences for our ego identities.

Goffman's (1963) theory of identity and stigma thus views identity as a tripartite construct reflecting (1) societal definitions of roles, statuses, and categories; (2) an individual's self-presented biography; and (3) a subjective sense of self. His view of identity is ambitiously integrative of the social and psychological, and he maintains that identity is not simply a matter of ascription but rather an agentic process of information control and impression management. Key to the symbolic interactionist frame, though, is the idea that the social process produces or reproduces society at large and that the psychological experiences involved in this process support that social structure (e.g., Mead, 1934). This idea would become even more prominent in other theoretical perspectives on identity influenced by Mead.

Role-Identity Theory

Like Goffman, McCall and Simmons (1966) emphasize the significance of identity in social interaction. In their role-identity model, they argue that all human behavior is characterized by intentional action to achieve some end. The decisions we make in behavior require that we identify persons as both known (i.e., *personal identity*) and classified into some social category (i.e., *social identity*). They define *role-identity* as "the character and the role that an individual devises for himself [sic] as an occupant of a particular social position" (McCall & Simmons, 1966, p. 67). Similar to Stryker's (2007) later view of identities as self-schemas, McCall and Simmons (1966) view role-identities as "imaginative views" of the self that confer meaning to daily interaction. Foreshadowing perspectives that would later develop in cultural psychology and narrative identity (e.g., Bruner, 1990; McAdams, 2013;

McAdams & Pals, 2006), they view role-identities as variants of "culturally established themes" (McCall & Simmons, 1966, p. 70). In other words, we appropriate role-identities and rely on them in interaction as the product of a socialization process in which we have internalized the matrix of social positions and the meaning of particular social categories.

Role-identity theory thus integrates earlier perspectives on both personal and social identity from James and Mead but emphasizes the way in which social interaction represents a site of role performance. Ideas about personal identity are maintained, but the relative emphasis of role-identity theory is on the significance of social categories, social positions, and their relative value and meaning in context. Anticipating later perspectives that would emphasize cognition (e.g., Stryker, 2007) and intentional action based on interpretation (e.g., Bruner, 1990), role-identity theory represented an early integrative treatment of the identity concept.

Identity Theory and Structural Symbolic Interactionism

Mead's (1934) focus on social interaction and the meanings provided by the social world is central to Stryker's (1968, 2007) identity theory. Stryker (1968, 1980) emphasizes that roles in interaction reflect positions in a larger social structure and that identities exist in a salience hierarchy determined by specific social situations. Identities in this framework reflect various social positions determined by linguistic classifications of roles (e.g., occupational, familial, political), and Stryker's identity theory is most concerned with explaining "the choices persons make in situations in which they have the possibility of enacting alternative role-related actions" (Stryker, 2007, p. 1084). In his later articulations of the theory, Stryker (2007) endorses a social cognitive view of identities as "self-cognitions" or "internalized role expectations attached to positions" (p. 1084). Rather than these choices being purely agentic, Stryker views our self-cognitions as closely linked to social structural positions enacted in social life. How we think about our identities and which identities become prominent in social interaction are determined by the way in which our social world is constructed with regard to relative meaning and position.

Structural symbolic interactionism hence views society as shaping self, which in turn shapes social interaction (Stryker, 2008). This perspective diverges from Mead's (1934) original formulation

in that society and its symbolic scheme of identity and meaning is a priori, and the self acts in such a way as to structure cognition according to this received social structure. Mead's theory of self places greater emphasis on society as emergent in social interactions, but Stryker (2008) sees interactions as determined by society and self as the mediator of this process. Identities are self-cognitions tied to roles determined by society (Stryker, 2008). The structural perspective is not purely deterministic with regard to social structure, however. Agency (or Mead's *I*) is maintained through the concepts of identity commitment and role choice in specific interactions (Serpe & Stryker, 2011).

Social Identity Theory

Social identity theory emerged in the 1970s in British social psychology as a new lens through which to understand ingroup bias and its real-world analogue, ethnocentrism (e.g., Tajfel & Turner, 1979; see Hornsey, 2008). Although more explicitly linked to cognitive views about categorization posited by Allport (1954), SIT can nonetheless be viewed as a descendant of Mead's theoretical emphasis on self-development in social interaction, for it places primacy on how social categorization influences behavior.

The concept of identity in SIT is both *social* and *cognitive* and is rooted in the social psychological idea of *categorization*. Tajfel and Turner (1986) define social identity as "those aspects of an individual's self-image that derive from the social categories to which he [sic] perceives himself [sic] as belonging" (p. 16). They include an important evaluative dimension to the concept, positing that social identities are "associated with positive or negative value connotations" and that individuals "strive for a positive self-concept" (p. 16). A fundamental assumption of SIT is that individuals act in ways that either maintain or enhance a positive self-concept with regard to social identity.

According to social identity theorists, we inhabit a world of social categories that can range from nationality, race, or ethnicity to small-scale community groups or, in the "minimal group" experimental paradigm pioneered by SIT, any arbitrary group assignment (Tajfel, 1981, 1982). In the experimental work of social identity theorists, the consistent finding was that random assignment to an arbitrary social identity in the lab (e.g., "underestimators" vs. "overestimators") was sufficient to activate ingroup bias (Tajfel, 1970). Thus, even when social categorization has little or no real-world relevance, the

experience of group affiliation seems to influence behavior related to the distribution of resources. The mere experience of belonging to a particular group may be all that is needed for individuals to act in ways that are unequal or unjust. The later terminological emphasis on "categorization," as opposed to "identity," reflects the desire to emphasize cognitive processes related to group formation (e.g., Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher, & Wetherell, 1987).

The findings of SIT research have profound implications for how we think about conflict, social relations, social injustice, and ethnocentrism, racism, and prejudice. Rather than rooted in competition over material resources (e.g., Sherif, 1958), hostile social relations and unjust and violent actions may rather be viewed as the *product of identity itself* (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). That is, if all that is needed to produce hostility is that individuals think of themselves as belonging to a group, identity may represent *the* tool of conflict and tension across the globe.

Social identity theory goes beyond the mere explanation of conflict and intergroup relations through processes of categorization and differentiation toward an explanation of social change through social identity processes (Spears, 2011). If individuals are motivated to enhance or maintain their sense of positive social identity, then SIT helps to explain why and how groups will work for social change. Tajfel and Turner (1986) outline specific strategies low-status groups use to change status hierarchies, such as individual mobility, social creativity, and direct social competition with high-status groups.

The identity concept in the SIT tradition is thus chiefly concerned with how social categorization and its cognitive internalization impact social behavior. Although SIT researchers have posited key processes related to social identity formation (e.g., "differentiation"; Tajfel, 1978), they are less concerned with the development of "identity cognition" (i.e., how individuals make meaning of group affiliation) than are personality and developmental psychologists. Rather, they are concerned with how group assignment or affiliation impacts intergroup behavior, including collective action (e.g., Reicher, 2004). Proponents of SIT's major offshoot, self-categorization theory (Turner et al., 1987), place greater emphasis on individual cognitive processes related to social categorization and have generated considerable research on social cognition (for review, see Hornsey, 2008).

Mead's theoretical lineage thus placed primary emphasis on the relational basis of identity and

the significance of social interaction and the exterior world of meaning and social categories. This emphasis can be linked to Mead's relative emphasis on the significance of the exterior world in the construction of self. By contrast, the line of theory that more explicitly traces itself to James has been chiefly concerned with the *interior* experience and *interior-exterior* negotiation of identity and more explicitly concerned with identity *development* at the level of the individual person.

James's Lineage: Identity, Personality, and Human Development

James's (1890) focus on identity as a sense of self-sameness and continuity in self-perception forms the theoretical foundation of much contemporary empirical work in developmental and personality psychology (e.g., McAdams, 2013), as well as in versions of social and cultural psychology that emphasize narrative (e.g., Hammack, 2008). James's views inspired Erikson's (1959, 1968) landmark theory of identity crisis and the several paradigms that followed, including identity status theory (Marcia, 1966). In this section, I review the theoretical lineage from James and Erikson to Marcia's paradigm and its derivatives (for an extended exceptional review, see Schwartz, 2001), as well as to theories of racial and ethnic identity development and narrative identity development. These theoretical approaches to identity share a concern with person-level processes of interior-exterior negotiation over time. That is, they seek to describe how individuals develop and maintain a sense of coherence and continuity in relation to the external world of social meaning, thus providing a closer focus on the individual as unit of analysis, in contrast to approaches inspired by Mead (1934).

Erik Erikson and Identity Crisis

Perhaps no scholar is more associated with the identity concept in the social sciences than Erik Erikson. Erikson's theory of identity was likely inspired by his personal experience with identity confusion (see Erikson, 1970), and his theory was so influential that one biographer dubbed him "identity's architect" (Friedman, 1999). The central premise of Erikson's (1950, 1959, 1968) theory of identity is that, in adolescence, we experience a normative identity "crisis" in which we ultimately determine the trajectory of our adult lives. Central to his theory—and a novel departure from philosophical and early psychological approaches to the concept—is the idea of identity *development*.

Erikson (1950, 1959, 1968) views identity as a process and an outcome of human development—across the lifespan but assuming centrality in the developmental stage of adolescence.

Identity is the centerpiece of Erikson's (1950) broader developmental theory, characterized by a series of successive psychosocial tasks to be successfully mastered if one is to proceed to the next stage of development. The fifth stage of development in Erikson's (1950) scheme, which occurs in adolescence, is concerned explicitly with the formation of identity. With the "physiological revolution" of puberty, adolescents become increasingly concerned with their social roles and "how to connect their earlier cultivated roles and skills with the ideal prototypes of the day" (Erikson, 1959, p. 94). He defines *ego identity* as "the accrued confidence that one's ability to maintain inner sameness and continuity . . . is matched by the sameness and continuity of one's meaning for others" (Erikson, 1959, p. 94). Hence, Erikson integrates James's (1890) cognitive perspective with Mead's (1934) emphasis on the self as a social product, all the while subsuming these within a psychoanalytic view of mind emphasizing the ego.

Erikson (1959) views adolescence as a moment of *psychosocial moratorium*—a transitional moment in which "the individual through free role experimentation may find a niche in some section of his [sic] society, a niche which is firmly defined and yet seems to be uniquely made for him [sic]" (p. 120). Identity is the term Erikson uses to explain this process, both for the individual and his or her sense of inner psychological understanding and the meaning he or she has for others in the form of some identifiable role.

The developmental process of identity may result in one of several outcomes in Erikson's (1959) view. Successful navigation of this process may result in a "healthy personality," in which one has "achieved" an identity that provides a sense of continuity, self-sameness, and meaning for others. Alternatively, the inability to master the demands of this stage may result in *diffusion* or *role confusion*, in which the individual struggles to perceive a sense of continuity and place in the world. Erikson's notions of identity development would inspire the identity status model developed by James Marcia (1966) to classify individuals according to their place in this process.

Although he theorized identity as a universal psychosocial process, the idea of an identity "crisis" was in many ways linked to the concerns of Erikson's time, as he himself acknowledged. Erikson theorized

identity as a central developmental process at a time of heightened attention to adolescence as a period of inevitable rebellion. As technological changes and industrialization created a longer gap between childhood and the assumption of adult roles in much of the world, adolescence increasingly became a "problem" of social scientific inquiry (Kett, 1977; see Arnett, 1999). G. Stanley Hall (1904) famously proclaimed the inevitability of "storm and stress" during this period, but others argued that rebellion during adolescence represents a cultural phenomenon unique to the industrialized world (e.g., M. Mead, 1928). On the one hand, Erikson identified with this latter approach, grounding his theory of identity in an explicit cultural-historical moment. On the other, he presented his theory of development as a universal, sequential model (see Arnett, this volume).

For Erikson, adolescence represents the moment at which the inner and outer worlds converge to create a person whose sense of self is grounded in an ideological moment—a point at which "the resources of tradition fuse with new inner resources to create something potentially new—a new person, and with that a new era" (Erikson, 1958, p. 20). The problem of identity is thus a project for psychosocial reconciliation at a particular moment in the life course and entails not just a proximal concern with one's family or community but rather an entire historical moment—an era in which youth are compelled to either reproduce or repudiate a status quo.

The developmental aspect of Erikson's theory was novel in two ways. First, earlier perspectives had emphasized identity as a momentary cognitive experience (e.g., James, 1890) or a product of social interaction (e.g., Mead, 1934). Erikson introduced the idea that this process, although anchored in psychological experiences (i.e., identifications, interactions) of childhood, was particularly pivotal at a moment in the development of an individual (i.e., adolescence). Second, Erikson's theory offered a broader and more integrative perspective on the relationship between individual psychology and social change. Whereas Mead's (1934) theory had theorized mind, self, and society as dynamically co-constructed through social acts, Erikson's theory conceived identity as the psychological process through which social orders are made, remade, or crushed. Hence, his theory was developmental not only in the sense of the psychological makeup of an individual but also of the ideological structure of a society. Erikson (1968) viewed identity as the key to understanding social and political change.

Identity Status Theory and Its Derivatives

While Erikson laid the theoretical foundation for attention to identity in developmental psychology, Marcia's (1966) identity status theory came to generate an extraordinary amount of empirical work in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries (for review, see Kroger, 2012; Kroger & Marcia, 2011; Meeus, 2011; Schwartz, 2001). Central to identity status theory is the idea that individuals may be classified according to one of four statuses with regard to dimensions of exploration and commitment in identity development—achievement, moratorium, foreclosure, and diffusion (see Crocetti & Meeus, this volume).

According to Marcia (1966), individuals high in both exploration and commitment are in a state of identity *achievement*. They reveal a high degree of exploration but are committed to a particular identity in terms of occupation and ideology. Individuals high in exploration but low in commitment are classified as in a state of identity *moratorium*. They are exploring possibilities in terms of occupation and ideology but have not made commitments. Individuals low in exploration but high in commitment are in a state of identity *foreclosure*. They have committed to an occupation and ideology before fully exploring options. Finally, individuals in a state of identity *diffusion* are low in both exploration and commitment. They are uncommitted and uninterested in matters of occupation and ideology.

Marcia's (1966, 1967) original studies and many that followed revealed a link between particular identity statuses and authoritarianism, self-esteem, and performance on conceptual tasks (for a review of early studies, see Bourne, 1978*a*; for more recent review, see Meeus, 2011), and the extraordinary amount of empirical work that the identity status paradigm inspired has examined various antecedent and consequent factors associated with particular statuses (see Kroger & Marcia, 2011). Inspired by identity status theory, more recent theoretical innovations have proposed that identity formation is a "dual-cycle" process and that two cycles (one emphasizing "commitment-formation" and one emphasizing "commitment-evaluation") may more accurately reflect the complexity of identity formation (e.g., Luyckx, Goossens, & Soenens, 2006). Exploration and commitment are thus multidimensional, and recent theoretical and empirical work has revealed the utility of "unpacking" these processes (e.g., Crocetti, Rubini, Luyckx, & Meeus, 2008; Crocetti, Rubini, & Meeus, 2008; Luyckx,

Goossens, Soenens, & Beyers, 2006; Luyckx, Goossens, Soenens, Beyers, & Vansteenkiste, 2005; see also Kunnen & Metz, this volume).

Given the amount of empirical work that the identity status paradigm has generated, it is not surprising that it has come under close scrutiny among identity theorists. The first critique emerged in 1978, with Bourne's (1978*b*) contention that the paradigm fails to address fundamental aspects of Erikson's theory, such as ego synthesis, temporal continuity, and role stability. Bourne (1978*b*) also raised concerns about the external validity of identity status research, given its reliance on US college students. A decade later, Côté and Levine (1988) argued that identity status theory significantly underrepresented Erikson's notion of identity and used much of Erikson's terminology inappropriately. Côté and Levine (1988) also raised concerns about the limited attention to social context, including historical and cultural factors, which were central to Erikson's original formulations. The idea of identity "status" also problematically categorizes individuals in such a way as to reify identity development processes as "outcomes," thus failing to appropriately conceive of identity as a process of temporal-spatial continuity consistent with Erikson's theory (Côté & Levine, 1988). More recent critiques of identity status theory have focused on the lack of attention paid to issues of race and ethnicity or to theories of racial and ethnic identity development (Sneed, Schwartz, & Cross, 2006).

Proponents of identity status theory and its derivatives have countered critics by arguing that the theory was not intended to capture all aspects of Erikson's original theory but that it is appropriate to view Eriksonian theory as foundational to the identity status approach (e.g., Berzonsky & Adams, 1999; Waterman, 1988, 1999). Kroger and Marcia (2011) suggested that identity status research became too focused on measurement at the expense of theoretical richness (see also Kroger, this volume). Theoretical offshoots of identity status theory have continued to emphasize the importance of clear operationalization and measurement but have focused on social-cognitive processes related to identity exploration and commitment. For example, Berzonsky and colleagues proposed the idea of *identity style* to describe information-processing approaches with regard to identity development processes (Berzonsky, 1989; Berzonsky & Neimeyer, 1988). Grotevant (1987) proposed a process model of identity development rooted in

Eriksonian theory and emphasizing developmental contexts, individual differences, and a broader range of domains (e.g., values, relationships) than the identity status paradigm (see also Grotevant, Thorbecke, & Meyer, 1982). Common among all theoretical offshoots of identity status theory has been a concern with the measurement of identity processes, suggesting a more nomothetic approach to identity than Erikson (Waterman, 1988).

Research inspired by the identity status paradigm has undergone a significant empirical shift in the twenty-first century, with an abundance of longitudinal studies designed to address unresolved theoretical issues. In his comprehensive review of these studies, Meeus (2011) concludes that identity formation may represent a less "dynamic" process than previously considered, as studies reveal more continuity at the person-level than conflict. Identity status research thus has increasingly suggested an identity formation process marked by coherence and continuity and less by the "crisis" Erikson (1968) emphasized. In addition, theoretical refinements to the identity status paradigm have revealed exploration and commitment to be multidimensional processes revealing the complexity of identity formation (Meeus, 2011).

Theories of Racial and Ethnic Identity Development

Early theorists of identity, including Erikson, did not emphasize a distinct developmental process with regard to racial and ethnic identity, beyond the notion that minorities had to navigate the potential experience of a "negative identity" (Erikson, 1968). Beginning in the 1970s,¹ psychologists began to formulate theoretical approaches to race and ethnic identity, recognizing the way in which racial and ethnic minorities underwent a unique psychological experience (for review, see Quintana, 2007). Compared to the identity status paradigm and its derivatives, these theoretical perspectives more explicitly integrated concern with the interior world of psychological experience and the exterior world of social meaning with regard to social identity (see Way & Rogers, this volume). Their aim was to provide an account of the distinct psychological process minorities undergo as they navigate a social world characterized by racial and ethnic hierarchy. Unlike social psychological approaches that focused more on identity processes in social interaction (e.g., Goffman, 1963), these perspectives were more person-centered and explicitly concerned with identity development as a sequential process.

Cross (1971) posited a stage-based theory of black identity development in which African Americans gradually come to internalize and commit to a strong black identity, having gone through previous stages of encounter with white majority culture in the United States. Cross (1971) describes this process as a "Negro-to-black conversion" experience (or *nigrescence*), in which a once devalued and negative identity (the "Negro") becomes ultimately transformed into a positive, meaningful social identity as a black person (see also Cross, 1978; Parham, 1989; Worrell, this volume). Cross's (1971) theory is rooted in a particular historical moment for African Americans in the post-Civil Rights Movement era in which political activism called for a rejection of former assimilationist models of black identity and politics in favor of the formation of a distinct and positive counter-identity.

Although identity status theory and its derivatives have been criticized for lack of attention to theories of racial and ethnic identity development (e.g., Sneed et al., 2006), it is noteworthy that Phinney's (1989) theory of ethnic identity has its origins in the identity status model. Based on research with ethnic minority youth in the United States, she proposed a three-stage model of ethnic identity development in which youth have either not explored their ethnic minority identities (*diffusion/foreclosure*), are in an active process of exploration (*moratorium*), or have committed to an ethnic identity (*achievement*) (Phinney, 1989). She subsequently developed a measure of ethnic identity development that has been widely adopted in the literature as the primary tool to assess ethnic identity (Phinney, 1992; for review, see Phinney & Ong, 2007; for a critique, see Gjerde, 2014). The measure emphasizes an individual's level of affiliation with an ethnic group with which he or she identifies, assessing factors such as sense of belongingness and ingroup pride. This approach to ethnic identity development has recently been integrated with narrative approaches (Syed & Azmitia, 2008, 2010), providing a richer account of the content involved in identity development processes for ethnic minorities (McLean & Pasupathi, 2012).

In the 1990s, Sellers and colleagues developed the multidimensional model of racial identity (MMRI) and accompanying measure to assess identity among African Americans in a more global way than did previous approaches (Sellers, Rowley, Chavous, Shelton, & Smith, 1997; Sellers, Smith, Shelton, Rowley, & Chavous, 1998). Tracing the intellectual origins of their approach to identity theory in

structural symbolic interactionism (Stryker & Serpe, 1994), they argue that African Americans possess multiple social identities and must make decisions about salience in the context of social interaction. Their concept and measure posits four dimensions of African-American racial identity: salience, centrality, regard, and ideology (Sellers et al., 1998). The idea of *salience* comes directly from identity theory in symbolic interactionism, suggesting that African Americans' racial identity may assume significance to self-concept depending on the particular social setting of interaction. The related notion of *centrality* speaks to the extent to which African Americans may or may not view their racial identities as of central importance to their overall sense of self. The idea of *regard* brings an evaluative, affective dimension to identity, referring to the extent of positive or negative sentiment an African American has about his or her racial identity. Finally, *ideology* speaks to the content of beliefs about the ingroup and its political stance that African Americans may endorse. Hence, Sellers and colleagues (1998) attempt to bridge the literature on the uniqueness of black identity and the black self-concept (e.g., Smith, 1980) with broader theoretical perspectives on identity from sociology.

Another theoretical approach to racial identity development emerged in the 1990s, in the work of Helms and colleagues on white racial identity development (e.g., Helms, 1995; Helms & Carter, 1990). Like the work of Phinney and Sellers and colleagues, a central aim of this theoretical development was to establish a measure of white racial identity for use in the United States. Based on Cross's (1971) theory of black racial identity development, Helms (1984) proposed a five-stage model of white racial identity development. Her theoretical model posited that, like blacks, whites develop a racial consciousness through a stage-based progression based on their encounter with members of other racial groups. Unlike racial minorities, whites have the privilege to decide whether they will undergo this process of racial consciousness and may, as a member of the racial majority in the United States, not develop a sense of white racial identity consciousness. Those who do develop this consciousness proceed from initial *contact* with non-whites to stages of *disintegration* (acknowledgment of white identity), *reintegration* (hostility toward non-whites), *pseudo-independence* ("an intellectual acceptance and curiosity" about race and race relations; Helms, 1984, p. 156), and ultimately *autonomy* (acknowledgment of and acceptance of racial differences).

Psychometric studies of the theoretical model revealed that individuals can be classified according to their stage of white racial identity development using a measure of racial attitudes (Helms & Carter, 1990). Although her theoretical model was not rooted in identity status theory, Helms (1995) later adopted the language of identity *status* to describe the developmental stage a white individual may be in at the time of assessment, and she also linked identity development status to *information processing* approaches, implicitly linking her theoretical model to the work of identity status theorists such as Berzonsky (1989).

In sum, theories of race and ethnic identity development that emerged in psychology in the 1970s and 1980s attempted to characterize the progression of both minorities (e.g., Cross, 1971) and majorities (e.g., Helms, 1984) through a process of consciousness and were largely concerned with classification and measurement of individuals along a sequential trajectory. These theories derived from diverse traditions in psychology and sociology, including the identity status paradigm (e.g., Phinney, 1989) and identity theory in sociology (e.g., Sellers et al., 1998). Theories of racial and ethnic identity development placed a greater emphasis on the individual's interior navigation of the world of social meaning than identity status theory and its derivatives. Their relative emphasis on identity as a developmental, stage-based process of interior navigation situates these theoretical approaches in the theoretical lineage typically traced to Erikson and James, compared with approaches emphasizing identity in interaction (e.g., Goffman, 1963; Tajfel & Turner, 1986), with the work of Sellers and colleagues (1998) representing an approach that bridges theoretical lineages.

Narrative Identity Development

Inspired by approaches in philosophy that emphasized the narrative structure of meaning making (e.g., Ricoeur, 1984), theorists in psychology began to argue in the 1980s that the defining feature of identity is the formation of a personal narrative (e.g., Cohler, 1982; Freeman, 1984; McAdams, 1988, 1990; Polkinghorne, 1988) and that we make meaning of the social world through narrative processes (e.g., Bruner, 1986, 1990). In the narrative perspective, the sense of sameness, continuity, and coherence James (1890) identified as the defining feature of identity develops over time, across the life course, as we link events and experiences in a personal narrative or life story (Cohler, 1982; McAdams, 1988, 1990).

The earliest theoretical perspectives on narrative identity development challenged the anchoring ontogenetic paradigm in developmental psychology that viewed individuals as progressing through universal sequential stages (Cohler, 1982; Freeman, 1984). Cohler (1982) argued that human development is better characterized as a process of *narrative development* in which individuals construct and reconstruct their identities across the life course. Human development is an interpretive process chiefly concerned with meaning making (intelligibility) in context; the aims of developmental science are interpretive rather than explanatory (Cohler, 1982; see also Bruner, 1986). Cohler (1982) placed emphasis on the significance of generation cohort in the construction of personal narratives, and his later work was particularly concerned with how the personal narrative varies as a function of generation cohort (e.g., Cohler, 2007, 2008; Cohler & Hammack, 2006; Cohler & Hostetler, 2003).

McAdams proposed an integrative theory of personality with narrative identity at its conceptual center (McAdams, 1988, 1995, 1996, 2001; McAdams & Pals, 2006). He defines identity as "an internalized and evolving life story" (McAdams, 2001, p. 117) and acknowledges the origins of his theory in Erikson's (1959) view of identity. McAdams (1996, 2013) also explicitly links his theory to James's (1890) *I/me* distinction, arguing that the *I* represents the process of personal narrative construction, whereas the *me* represents the personal narrative as an object or product ("the self that the *I* constructs"; McAdams, 1996, p. 295; see also McAdams & Cox, 2010). Consistent with Cohler's (1982) view, McAdams (1988, 1990, 1996, 1997) posits that life stories function to provide a sense of unity, purpose, and coherence, which may assume particular psychological significance in the context of modern or late modern social organization (Giddens, 1991; McAdams, 1996, 2001; Schachter, 2005). Life stories can be studied for their tone, imagery, structure or form, thematic content, and ideological setting, among other components (McAdams, 1988, 1990, 1996), all of which may evolve within a person over time and vary according to historical time and place (McAdams, 1996, 2008; McAdams & Cox, 2010; McAdams & Pals, 2006; Nelson, 2003).

Since the life story represents an evolving personal narrative concerned with the reconstructed past and anticipated future, it stands to reason that different processes are at work at different developmental moments in the course of an individual

life (McAdams, 1996, 2001). Autobiographical memory begins to develop in childhood (Nelson & Fivush, 2004), but life-story construction requires particular cognitive and social skills not present until adolescence in most societies (Habermas & Bluck, 2000). In adolescence and early adulthood, establishing the ideological setting for the life story becomes central as the individual develops awareness about the social and political surround (McAdams, 1996). This perspective on the significance of ideology in personal narrative development can be linked to Erikson's (1958, 1968) theory of identity and has been further examined among narrative psychologists working with youth in settings of political conflict (e.g., Hammack, 2008, 2010, 2011a). The life story continues to develop in adulthood, as self-event connections shift over time (Pasupathi, Mansour, & Brubaker, 2007). In midlife, narrative identity development becomes more concerned with harmony and reconciliation (McAdams, 1996), as well as generativity (i.e., care for the next generation; McAdams, 2006; McAdams, Diamond, de St. Aubin, & Mansfield, 1997) and a satisfying ending for the life story (McAdams, 1996).

In a similar line of theoretical development, Schachter (2004, 2005) revived Erikson's (1959) concept of *identity configuration*. Erikson (1959) argued that the identity formation process is characterized as "an *evolving configuration*...., integrating *constitutional givens, idiosyncratic libidinal needs, favored capacities, significant identification, effective defenses, successful sublimations, and consistent roles*" (p. 125). Schachter (2004) seeks to revitalize this aspect of Eriksonian theory to explain the individual's negotiation of multiple and competing identifications and roles, particularly in the context of late modernity, in which multiplicity abounds (Schachter, 2005). Schachter's (2004, 2005) empirical work examining narrated accounts of identifications and commitments among modern Orthodox Jews in Israel provides examples of identity formation as a process of evolving configurations, addressing the need in identity research for a renewed emphasis on process rather than outcome (Grotevant, 1987, 1997).

In a recent theoretical formulation, McAdams (2013) subsumes his life story theory of identity development within a broader perspective on self-development across the lifespan (see also McAdams & Cox, 2010; McAdams & Zapata-Gietl, this volume). Again anchoring his theory in James's (1890) I/me distinction, McAdams (2013) posits that the self progresses in the course of development

from a "social actor" to "motivated agent" by the end of childhood, then to "autobiographical author" in adolescence and emerging adulthood. He refers to this process as a "developing I-me configuration" (McAdams, 2013, p. 272). The *self as actor* develops in early childhood and is primarily concerned with self-regulation. The contents of self at this stage are characterized by social roles, skills, and traits. The *self as agent* develops in mid to late childhood and is primarily concerned with self-esteem. The contents of self at this stage are characterized by personal goals, plans, values, hopes, and fears. Finally, the *self as author* develops in adolescence and emerging adulthood and is primarily concerned with self-continuity (see also Habermas & Köber, this volume). The life narrative characterizes the content of self at this stage. Like his integrative theory of personality, McAdams's (2013) theory of self-development is rooted in ideas about the self as both process and product of development, which can be traced to both James (1890) and Erikson (1959). Positing identity as a life narrative, McAdams (2013) suggests that identity development is chiefly concerned with the integration of interior and exterior meaning through intentional autobiographical work.

Whereas narrative theorists like Cohler and McAdams are chiefly concerned with "big stories," in the sense of whole autobiographical narratives, other theorists have emphasized the role of "small stories" and storytelling as a situated process in identity development (for review, see Thorne & Nam, 2009; see also Bamberg, 2011; Korobov, this volume). This line of theory in narrative identity development is more explicit in its emphasis on the co-constitutive or social basis of narrative, thus making links to Mead's (1934) theoretical emphasis on self and society as co-constructed. For example, Thorne (2000) views personality development through the lens of the personal memory telling process. She views narrative not as a private process of personal formation but rather as developing in interaction, and she places greater emphasis on storytelling as *process* rather than the life narrative as a *product* (see also Thorne & Nam, 2007). Similarly, Pasupathi (2001; this volume) suggests that autobiographical memories are socially constructed, and Bamberg (2004) argues that narratives develop in small-scale social interaction as interlocutors collectively construct meaning. McLean, Pasupathi, and Pals (2007) argue that storytelling is central to self-development and that situated stories have a reciprocal impact on the developing self-concept

and life story. These perspectives on narrative identity development place relatively more emphasis on the socially constructed nature of self (e.g., Mead, 1934) than on identity development as an interior process of perceptual continuity (e.g., James, 1890).

Another line of narrative theory emphasizes the cultural and political situatedness of autobiographical memory and personal narrative. These theorists recognize the socially constructed nature of identity, suggesting that individuals appropriate cultural themes and are also constrained by the received system of social categories and version of collective memory (e.g., Fivush, 2010; Hammack, 2008, 2010; Nelson, 2003). The relative emphasis in these perspectives is on narrative identity development as a cultural process highly influenced by the relative value of one's social identity and on the negotiation between dominant and resistance narratives in interaction (e.g., Fivush, 2010; Hammack, 2010). For example, subordinate status on the basis of gender, sexual identity, ethnic identity, or the like may create unique processes for personal narrative development, and concordance between personal and collective ("master") narratives may be linked to social status (e.g., Fivush, 2010; Hammack, 2008, 2010, 2011*b*; Thorne & McLean, 2003).

Although many narrative theorists do not directly engage with poststructural social theory (e.g., Butler, 1990), the narrative turn in psychological understandings of identity can be viewed as part of the broader turn toward language and discourse in the social sciences (Hammack & Pilecki, 2012). A theoretical alliance thus exists between poststructural theories emphasizing the production of identities through language (e.g., Butler, 1990; Foucault, 1977, 1978) and narrative theories in psychology. In both theoretical traditions, individual self-understandings are conceived as products of historical moments, although poststructural theorists are more likely to emphasize the political context of these processes than are narrative psychologists (for exceptions, see Fivush, 2004, 2010; Hammack, 2011*a*; Hammack & Cohler, 2011).

In sum, narrative theories of identity posit that individuals construct coherent life stories that provide a sense of meaning and purpose across the life course (Cohler, 1982; McAdams, 1990, 1996, 1997), that this process is especially salient in adolescence and emerging adulthood (Habermans & Bluck, 2000; McAdams, 2001; McLean, 2005), and that this process involves engagement with "master narratives" or dominant storylines about the meaning of social categories (Fivush, 2010; Hammack,

2008, 2011*b*; McLean, 2008; Thorne & McLean, 2003). A growing movement in developmental, personality, and social psychology has come to see human development and autobiographical memory as guided by story-making (Hammack, 2008, 2010; McLean et al., 2007; Pasupathi et al., 2007; Thorne, 2000). At both the individual and collective levels, identities are not simply descriptive labels but rather prescriptive storylines that inform human motivation and action. Narrative theories thus privilege the idea that cognition involves a process of linking concepts and events into a story form (Bruner, 1987, 1991) and that this process is inherently social and co-constitutive (Hammack, 2008; Pasupathi, 2001; Thorne, 2000).

The emergence of narrative theories of identity development speaks to a continuing concern with personal coherence and selfsameness expressed initially by James (1890) and Erikson (1959). Social, personality, and cultural psychologists who take a narrative approach also link their work to Mead's (1934) ideas about the social construction of self in interaction (Pasupathi, 2001; Thorne, 2000) and social identity theory (Hammack, 2010) and thus link the anchoring theoretical perspectives on identity posited by James and Mead. In this way, narrative theories of identity development have the potential to bridge theoretical traditions across the social sciences and humanities that emphasize individual cognition, social cognition, social categorization, and the power of language and discourse.

Pluralism, Identity Politics, and the Postmodern Challenge

As noted at the start of this chapter, the identity concept is not strictly the intellectual purview of psychology or sociology. Rather, it has come to dominate how we think about difference and social organization in an era characterized by a global ethic of pluralism (Gutmann, 2003; Taylor, 1994). The social movements of the postwar, postcolonial era propelled a concern with identity to disciplines beyond psychology and sociology (Hammack, 2010; Sampson, 1993). Beyond psychology and sociology, identity emerged as a theoretical concern within the humanities, in new fields like cultural studies and in revolutions within established fields like literature and philosophy. The idea of *identity politics*—that self-understandings are linked to political forces that attempt to control and regulate persons, bodies, and minds, and that political claims can and should be made on the basis of these self-understandings (see Bernstein, 2005; Sampson,

1993)—began to permeate numerous fields within the academy.

The postwar, postcolonial era witnessed a global ideological transition in which received notions of the status associated with particular identities (e.g., colonial subjects, women, minorities) were called into question. The psychological effects of colonialism and systemic forms of oppression such as racism and anti-Semitism became a major concern for scholars across a number of fields (e.g., Fanon, 1952, 1961; Memmi, 1965; Said, 1978; Sartre, 1948). Gradually, the theoretical emphasis of this line of work became concerned with interrogating how social categories influence “subjectivity,” understood through the lens of theorists such as Foucault (1982) as both sense of self-consciousness and sense of subjection through control and dependence.

Through this line of theory and research, the identity concept became increasingly viewed as a product of modernity and a tool for control and domination, particular along the lines of identities based on race (e.g., Memmi, 2000) and sexual identity (e.g., Foucault, 1978). The postmodern challenge to identity emerged in the 1980s and 1990s in philosophy (e.g., Lyotard, 1984), cultural studies (e.g., Sarup, 1996), and, eventually, psychology (e.g., Kvale, 1992) and sociology (e.g., Bauman, 1988). In brief, postmodern theorists argued that the nature of late modern life commanded a reconsideration of the assumed stability of self and identity (e.g., Gergen, 1991, 1994). Technology now made discontinuity in time and space the norm, and the idea of a coherent self or social category was rendered dubious as a result (cf. Smith, 1994). The postmodern emphasis on multiplicity and discontinuity, whether in communication, art, literature, or architecture, challenged the theoretical foundations of identity in a romantic and rationalist vision of individual unity (Gergen, 1991). In place of this romantic vision, Gergen (1991, 2009) proposes a more radical form of social constructionism emphasizing the self as constructed in relation (“relational being”; Gergen, 2009), harkening back at least to some extent to Mead’s (1934) theory of self.

One problem with the postmodern critique of identity is that it undermines the basis upon which individuals continue to make meaning of themselves and the basis upon which historically subordinated groups make claims for recognition (Hammack, 2010). In other words, claims about the constructed, relative, and discontinuous nature of identity may unwittingly support those groups withholding recognition of minorities and minority

rights in numerous contexts. Recent theoretical perspectives have sought to recognize the constructed and historical basis of identity categories while arguing that this recognition does not obviate the need to acknowledge identity-based claims. For example, the recognition that contemporary Palestinian national identity is a product of the encounter with Zionism and the failure of pan-Arabism in the postcolonial Middle East (Khalidi, 1997), as opposed to some primordial index of identity, does not delegitimize the individual or collective experience of Palestinian identity or the national aspirations of Palestinians for their own state. Recognizing identities as products of time and place does not make them any less psychologically or politically salient (Hammack, 2010). Social organization across the globe continues to be characterized along the lines of various social identities, be they termed nationalities, ethnicities, races, cultures, or the like, and hence the claims of postmodern theorists of identity may have prematurely predicted the demise of identity. It is also noteworthy that postmodern theoretical claims about the fragmented, discontinuous nature of self or identity have not received clear empirical support.

Because identity has become an anchoring concept for the understanding of sameness and differences across human communities, scholars in political philosophy have argued for identity as the basis for a global ethic of social justice and respect for cultural pluralism. Taylor (1994) has argued that recognition is the basis for a just social ethics in the context of a multicultural, pluralistic world. Gutmann (2003) has argued that democracies must manage identity politics in ways that address the legitimate needs for security and recognition of all groups. Sen (2006) has argued that identity (understood broadly as affiliation) is not a singular matter and that violence in the name of identity is the product of injustice in matters of diversity and recognition. Finally, Appiah (2005, 2006) has argued for a “cosmopolitan” code of identity ethics in which individuals recognize the value of pluralism, diversity, and hybridity in matters of identity.

Although the emergence of identity as a critical concept in political philosophy and related fields speaks to its continued and expanding relevance, it is noteworthy that this body of work does not link to theory and empirical research in either psychology or sociology (Hammack, 2008; Moshman, 2007). As a consequence, identity is generally conceived in these works as both affiliation (in the individual psychological sense) and ascription (in the social

psychological sense), with little or no attention paid to the way in which processes of identity development unfold in political context. Greater connections between disciplinary perspectives on identity would be beneficial and likely result in enhanced theoretical work.

Prospects for Theory and the Identity of Identity

In this chapter, I have argued that identity represents the key way in which we understand sameness, difference, and categories in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. I traced our contemporary concern with identity to the theories of William James and George Herbert Mead, and I charted the distinct and sometimes overlapping trajectories these theories took in sociology and psychology. I briefly illustrated the way in which identity is now being mobilized as a valuable concept beyond these disciplines, especially in fields in the humanities such as cultural studies and political philosophy.

If one views the historical arc of this theoretical work, two observations come immediately to mind. First, since most of the twentieth century saw the project of disciplinary differentiation in the social sciences as key (Wallerstein, 2001), identity theory “split” into two branches that only occasionally referred to one another. Hence, there was significant theoretical fragmentation in identity over the course of the twentieth century, and theories of identity began to have different identities. Questions of recognition, legitimacy, and differentiation abounded (e.g., Côté & Levine, 1988; Waterman, 1988). Theoretical perspectives beyond psychology and sociology (e.g., in the humanities), in fact, rarely called on the theoretical work conducted in psychology and sociology and hence contributed to insular disciplinary conversations about the concept (Hammack, 2008; Moshman, 2007). Second, although there is evidence of an interest in theoretical integration (e.g., Hammack, 2010, 2011a; McAdams & Cox, 2010; McLean & Pasupathi, 2012; Syed & Azmitia, 2008, 2010), the fragmentary nature of the knowledge production industry endures and, hence, can support both continued fragmentation and enhanced integration.

In other words, identity theories themselves are the products of scholars who inhabit social identities that prescribe a set of parameters within the knowledge production industry. Like all social identities, disciplinary identities command distinctiveness, and this need for distinctiveness has created relative emphases within different theoretical

approaches. For example, identity theories can be categorized according to their relative emphasis on the private interior world of individual cognition (a greater concern within psychology) or the public exterior world of marked affiliation (a greater concern within sociology, political philosophy, and cultural studies) (see Schachter, this volume). Because Enlightenment philosophy and its intellectual descendant, the discipline of psychology, is the product of a cultural milieu that privileged individualism, it stands to reason that the earliest theories of identity were more concerned with individual perception (e.g., Locke, 1694/1998), memory (e.g., Hume, 1739/1986), meaning making through language (e.g., Dilthey, 1928/1988), and cognition (e.g., James, 1890). These theoretical perspectives were the product of privileged European and American men whose social identities were unproblematic and hence less likely to concern them in their intellectual inquiry.

The US context of identity pluralism and the rapid differentiation of the social sciences in the early twentieth century (Wallerstein, 2001) can likely be credited with the emergence of new identities for identity theory, with Mead’s (1934) “social behaviorism” (later termed “symbolic interactionism”; Blumer, 1969) shifting concern away from the interior world of cognition toward the social act as unit of analysis: Over the course of the century, “identity” would move from margin to center in both the scholarly and popular discourse. It came to provide a vocabulary with which to make meaning of the social and political challenges and changes of the time, as well as the individual’s attempt to navigate an increasingly complex world (e.g., Erikson, 1968).

The identity of identity in the twenty-first century has in many ways demonstrated coherence with earlier formulations. Scholars in the social sciences and humanities continue to consider many of the same dimensions of identity posited by early theorists. They understand identity as an aspect of the person that develops over time (e.g., McLean & Pasupathi, 2012); a tool for individual and collective meaning-making (e.g., Hammack, 2010); a product of the modern project of social organization on the basis of categories such as race, ethnicity, gender, nationality, sexual identity, religion, and the like (e.g., Warnke, 2008); and an opportunity for unity and division. In other words, identity transcends disciplines, levels of analysis, and planes of human experience in ways that bring sensibility and intelligibility to the muddle of human existence.

The narrative arc of identity theories holds hope for integration and cross-disciplinary conversation, provided the various social identities that make up the knowledge production industry of our time are comfortable enough in their own positive distinctiveness to acknowledge the benefits of that conversation. This handbook represents an important attempt at theoretical integration.

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Note

1. Du Bois's (1903) early notion of "double consciousness" with regard to the psychological experience of African Americans represents an important contribution that was unfortunately not widely adopted in psychological theories of identity. He argued that African Americans construct two different senses of self—one reflecting the dominant white majority and one reflecting their own experience as racial minorities. This idea has been somewhat revived by recent theorists in social psychology examining the psychological experience of "hyphenated" identities (Fine & Sirin, 2007).

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