MOTIVATING INDIVIDUALS AND GROUPS AT WORK: A SOCIAL IDENTITY PERSPECTIVE ON LEADERSHIP AND GROUP PERFORMANCE

NAOMI ELLEMERS
Leiden University

DICK DE GILDER
Free University, Amsterdam

S. ALEXANDER HASLAM
University of Exeter

We argue that additional understanding of work motivation can be gained by incorporating current insights concerning self-categorization and social identity processes and by examining the way in which these processes influence the motivation and behavior of individuals and groups at work. This theoretical perspective that focuses on the conditions determining different self-definitions allows us to show how individual and group processes interact to determine work motivation. To illustrate the added value of this approach, we develop some specific propositions concerning motivational processes underpinning leadership and group performance.

In theoretical accounts of work motivation, scholars examine the factors that *energize*, *direct*, and *sustain* work-related behavior (e.g., Pinder, 1998). They aim to understand (1) which conditions encourage people to invest behavioral energy in their work (energize), (2) which activities people are likely to focus their efforts on (direction), and (3) what makes people persist in such efforts over time (persistence). This has resulted in the development of a range of work motivation models (see Steers, Porter, & Bigley, 1996). These show how the different aspects of motivation operate, as well as how they are interrelated.

Some of these models primarily address energizing factors, describing the needs that may be fulfilled by work-related behavior (e.g., Maslow, 1943), and specify how workers may be motivated by appealing to particular needs (e.g., Hackman & Oldham, 1976). Others provide insight into the direction work-related efforts are likely to take by examining the cognitive processes that underlie behavioral choices (e.g., expectancy theory [Vroom, 1964], equity theory [Mowday, 1979]). Finally, reinforcement theories (e.g., Komaki, Coombs, & Schepman, 1996), based on psychological learning principles (e.g., operant conditioning), help us understand why certain behaviors are more likely to be sus-

tained than others. Some theories also address multiple components of the motivation process—in particular, goal-setting theory (e.g., Locke & Latham, 1990), which relates to both motivational direction and persistence.

Over the years, empirical research has provided support for the validity of each of these motivational processes (Ambrose & Kulik, 1999) and has demonstrated their relevance to work-related behavior (see also Mitchell, 1982). Yet despite the different focus of each of these approaches to work motivation, one striking commonality is that, to date, they have been used mainly to understand processes underlying the behavior of individual workers *as separate agents*. That is, theory and research in work motivation have focused mainly on the individual needs people may have, their own independent goals and expectations, or the personal outcomes they find rewarding. At the same time, developments in the workplace have created a range of situations in which the function of individual needs, goals, expectations, or rewards is less clear, not least because individual workers have to function in concert and cannot always be seen as representing independent entities. As a result, workers are not necessarily driven by personal considerations only; instead, individual motivation is projected on, informed

by, and adapted to the needs, goals, expectations, or rewards of the team or organization in which individuals work.

For instance, with the increasing proportion of workers involved in exchange of knowledge or provision of services, instead of production of goods (Cascio, 1995; Gutek, 1995), it has become more difficult to define individual work performance (see also Brief & Motowidlo, 1986) or to assess individual productivity unambiguously. As a result, it is not always clear how insights with respect to individual goal setting or reinforcement might apply in these situations (Kohn, 1993; Pearce, 1987). Additionally, people nowadays tend to work more in (self-managed) teams than before (Parker, 1993; Smith, 1997), requiring them to support each other to achieve common goals (e.g., in multidisciplinary project teams), instead of focusing only on the achievement of individual outcomes (Schaubroeck & Ganster, 1991).

While motivational processes may apply to the achievement of collective goals or outcomes in exactly the same way they do individual goals or outcomes, we do not know the implications of such a shift from the individual to the collective, since this has not constituted a systematic topic of research (see also Ambrose & Kulik, 1999, and Wegge & Haslam, 2003). Furthermore, it is unclear how these motivational principles operate when personal goals or expectations (e.g., achieving individual performance targets) are *incompatible* with collective goals or expectations (e.g., helping new colleagues adapt).

Finally, given that lifetime employment nowadays is exceptional and that organizations offer less security than before (Smith, 1997), long-term exchange relationships between individual workers and organizations have become less viable as a reinforcement tool. The challenge for motivation theorists, therefore, is to cater to these contemporary work situations—for instance, by helping us understand (1) how people are *energized* to engage in behaviors that are significant primarily at a collective level, such as "service provision" or organizational citizenship behavior (Brief & Motowidlo, 1986; Organ, 1988); (2) how people *direct* their activities toward individual as well as collective goals, particularly when these seem incompatible; and (3) how people *sustain* behavioral effort on behalf of the collective through organ-

izational changes or in the face of insecure job prospects (see also Meyer & Allen, 1997).

In this article we consider more explicitly how current insights into work motivation may be developed to incorporate these more complex situations. In doing this, we use social identity and self-categorization principles—that is, the social identity approach (Tajfel, 1978; Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher, & Whetherell, 1987; see also Ashforth & Mael, 1989)—to develop a metatheoretical perspective that can help define different behavioral motives in individual as well as in collective terms (e.g., applying to the team or organization). We propose that a social identity approach can help specify the circumstances under which workers are likely to conceive of themselves either as separate individuals or as part of a collective (Ellemers, Spears, & Doosje, 2002). Furthermore, we review some initial evidence showing how this can help us understand behavioral motivation in contemporary work settings (see also Haslam, 2001; Haslam & Ellemers, in press; Haslam, Van Knippenberg, Platow, & Ellemers, 2003; Hogg & Terry, 2000; Van Dick, 2001), and we develop some specific predictions with respect to leadership and group performance that follow from this theoretical perspective.

INDIVIDUALS AND GROUPS AT WORK

As we argued above, an important defining characteristic of contemporary work situations is that they often require individuals to align—at least to some extent—with a collective, such as their work team or the organization as a whole. As a result, workers are expected to adopt converging goals and to sacrifice (short-term) individual interests (e.g., by working overtime) in order to achieve (more long-term) collective outcomes (e.g., attracting new business). Accordingly, others before us have concluded that further developments in motivation theory should focus on its applicability to teams as well as individuals (e.g., Erez, Kleinbeck, & Thierry, 2001; Sussmann & Vecchio, 1982). However, in their recent review of over 200 empirical studies on work motivation, Ambrose and Kulik (1999) conclude that relatively little is known about motivation in workgroups. At the same time they maintain, "As organizations continue to move toward group-based systems, research

on motivation within groups is increasingly important" (1999: 274).

The traditional approach to this problem has been to adopt an exchange orientation and to create situations in which the ultimate achievement of individual goals or outcomes (e.g., getting a pay raise) depends on the attainment of collective goals (e.g., an increase in organizational profits). Thus, even when the aim is to motivate workers to exert themselves on behalf of the collective, traditional approaches to work motivation tend to locate the primary motivating mechanism in the individual *as a separate entity*. That is, the desired behavior is reinforced by pointing to the interdependence between personal and collective outcomes. Essentially, this implies that the motivation to achieve a collective performance is regarded as *derived from individual concerns and motives* (e.g., Ilgen & Sheppard, 2001). In other words, the common assumption underlying previous work on group motivation is that people tend to behave in ways that seem to be rewarding from an *individual* point of view, without systematically considering how individual behavioral preferences may be adapted to align with collective concerns or joint goals (see Shamir, 1991, for a similar observation).

Although we would not dispute that the capacity of a workgroup or organization to provide rewards or other desired outcomes may constitute a powerful motivating force for individual workers, we think that our understanding of the range of motivational processes that may operate in workgroups could be enriched by also considering the ways in which groups may come, *in and of themselves,* to represent internalized values and important identities (see also Tyler, 2002). Indeed, to the extent that current theories of work motivation focus on the *individual* as the primary or sole source of self-conception (e.g. Brief & Aldag, 1981), all expectations, goals, and outcomes that relate to the workgroup or organization are considered to be *extrinsic* to the self. However, the proposition that there are circumstances in which people may come to adopt a primary definition of the self in *collective* terms opens up the possibility that group-based expectations, goals, or outcomes are sometimes regarded as *intrinsic* sources of motivation.

This shift from a conception of self in individual terms to a conception of self in collective terms and the resulting redefinition of motivational forces as external or internal to the self are relevant for issues of work motivation, implying that, compared to the motivation to work toward common goals that is derived from perceived interdependence of individuals or from an exchange relationship between the individual and the group, a concern with the collective self provides a much broader and more powerful source of group-based motivation (see also Coates, 1994, and Lembke & Wilson, 1998). Indeed, a self-conception in collective terms would *energize* people to exert themselves on behalf of the group, facilitate the *direction* of efforts toward collective (instead of individual) outcomes, and help workers *sustain* their loyalty to the team or organization through times in which this is not individually rewarding.

As a result, when the definition of self shifts from being personal ("I") to collective ("we"), exactly the same motivational processes that apply to the individual self may come to apply to the collective self. Thus, whereas needs, goals, or expected outcomes are still likely to motivate the behavior of individual workers, when they conceive of themselves in collective terms, these are needs of the *group*, *collective* goals, and expected *group* outcomes. In this article we propose that an analysis of the circumstances under which the self tends to be defined in collective instead of individual terms can help predict *in which situations* the group may come to represent an intrinsic source of motivation, or when it is more likely to remain extrinsic to the self.

SELF-CATEGORIZATION AND SOCIAL IDENTITY

The central assumption underlying social identity theory (Tajfel, 1974, 1975, 1978) is that while in some social situations people think of themselves as independent individuals who interact with each other on the basis of personal characteristics or preferences (e.g., in friendship groups), there are many social settings in which people primarily think of themselves and others in terms of particular group memberships (e.g., in terms of their professional roles). In early versions of social identity theory, Tajfel (1978) and Tajfel and Turner (1979) specified three intrapsychological processes that underlie such group-based social interaction—namely, *social categorization, social comparison,* and *social*

identification. In later elaborations of the social identity approach, which are subsumed under the term *self-categorization theory* (Turner et al., 1987), researchers specified the conditions under which different definitions of self are likely to become salient (focusing on category accessibility and category fit) and detailed the consequences of those different definitions for social perception and social behavior (e.g., Oakes, Haslam, & Turner, 1994; Spears, Oakes, Ellemers, & Haslam, 1997). A more detailed discussion of this theoretical perspective is beyond the scope of this article and can be found elsewhere (e.g., Ellemers, Haslam, Platow, & Van Knippenberg, 2003; Haslam, 2001; Haslam & Ellemers, in press). Here, though, we briefly outline the psychological mechanisms that are most pertinent to our current analysis.

Social categorization refers to the notion that in many situations people *organize* social *information* by categorizing individuals into groups. This enables them to focus on collective properties that are relevant to the situation at hand (e.g., students versus teachers), while neglecting the "noise" of other variations (e.g., differences in age or clothing style) that occur among individuals within the same group. Generally, a particular categorization is more likely to be used when group memberships are relatively invariable over time, whereas any category becomes less useful as an information-organizing principle to the extent that individuals are likely to change from one group to another (group boundary permeability [e.g., Ellemers, 1993]). For instance, when people work in a career system where they are only judged on the basis of individual merit, this encourages a conception of self in individual terms and makes employees focus on individualistic motives (e.g., self-development, career progress). However, a work situation in which people are systematically excluded from certain rewards or opportunities on the basis of their category membership (e.g., their age, gender, or ethnic background) induces them to think of themselves in terms of that categorization (Schmitt, Ellemers, & Branscombe, 2003), with the result that their category membership becomes more cognitively *accessible* (Oakes, 1987).

Social comparison is the process by which a social categorization is invested with *meaning*. While people may have a relatively clear idea of the range of properties that apply to a particular group, proponents of the social identity approach maintain that social comparisons with other groups (e.g., sales persons versus customers in a store/sales persons versus production workers in the organization) determine which features or behavioral norms help to define the group in a particular situation. Generally, these features are those that *distinguish* the group from relevant comparison groups (e.g., Spears, Doosje, & Ellemers, 1997; Van Rijswijk & Ellemers, 2002). Thus, which different possible group memberships will become salient depends on the so-called *comparative and normative fit* of a particular categorization to the situation at hand (Haslam & Turner, 1992; Oakes, 1987; Oakes et al., 1994).

For instance, when production workers and sales representatives try to improve the logistics of a production process, differences between them are likely to become salient, not only because the individuals belonging to these two groups have systematically different work experiences (comparative fit) but also because the nature of the problems they are likely to encounter depends meaningfully on the content of their work (normative fit). However, when these same individuals are concerned with the development of an affirmative action program, a categorization in terms of ethnic or gender identity will provide a better comparative and normative fit and, hence, will constitute a more appropriate guide for defining their position in relation to others than distinctions based on professional roles. As a result, what defines members of the group may differ from one situation to the next, depending on the comparative context and the ways in which group members are distinct from others in that context (e.g., Barreto & Ellemers, 2001).

Social identification is the process by which information about social groups is related to the *self*. That is, it refers to the inclination of a particular individual to perceive himself or herself as representative of a particular group, which makes the individual perceive characteristic group features as self-descriptive and leads him or her to adopt distinctive group norms as guidelines for his or her own behavior. While most of us belong to multiple groups simultaneously, the *relative degree* to which we see each of these different identities as self-descriptive in a particular situation or at a given point in time will determine the extent to which these identi-

ties tend to affect our motivated behavior *in that context*. A well-known phenomenon reflecting the operation of this process is that people are relatively willing to identify with groups that seem to contribute to a positive sense of self, such as high-status or high-power groups (Ellemers, 1993; Haslam, Powell, & Turner, 2000; Spears et al., 1997).

However, additional concerns may moderate or even override such identity enhancement motives (see also Ashforth & Kreiner, 1999, and Ellemers & Barreto, 2000). For instance, as a result of the search for distinctive group features (see also Mlicki & Ellemers, 1996) when groups have equal status, members of minority groups generally identify more strongly with their group than members of majority groups (see Brewer, 1991; Ellemers & Van Rijswijk, 1997; Simon & Brown, 1987). Furthermore, people are ready to identify with groups that compare unfavorably to other groups (e.g., low-status groups), to the extent that they believe in the potential of the group to improve its plight—that is, where intergroup differences are unstable (e.g., Doosje, Spears, & Ellemers, 2002; Ellemers, Van Dyck, Hinkle, & Jacobs, 2000)—or perceive their group's disadvantage as unjust—that is, where intergroup differences are illegitimate (e.g., Ellemers, 2001a).

The cognitive tool of social categorization and the evaluative implications of social comparison processes can elicit a person's emotional involvement with a particular social group (Tajfel, 1978; see also Ellemers, Kortekaas, & Ouwerkerk, 1999): their sense of social identification. In this way, the social identity approach addresses the possibility that definitions of self *vary* across different situations or over time, and it specifies the conditions under which a particular self-definition or social identity is likely to become salient. That is, it enables us to predict in any given situation whether people are likely to define themselves as individuals or as parts of a collective and to understand when particular group memberships will tend to become more powerful determinants of behavior than others (Haslam, Postmes, & Ellemers, 2003).

While scholars have previously documented the general relevance of situational features to the development of a collective identity, the application of this thinking to understand the mechanisms involved in work organizations is relatively novel. In fact, some of the conditions

social identity theory elaborates on refer to individual instrumentality and interdependence principles (resulting, for instance, in the greater inclination to identify with groups that offer access to status, power, or other desirable outcomes) and, thus, converge with current insights in organizational psychology.

Additionally, however, the social identity approach enables us to formulate further predictions about work conditions that encourage feelings of identification, since this approach also informs us about the circumstances under which people tend to identify with the collective *in the absence* of interdependence or individual instrumentality considerations. Specifically, the assumption that people tend to focus on categories that offer a *distinct* identity would imply that they are less likely to identify as groups become larger and more inclusive. This reasoning is consistent with observations (Ellemers, 2003; Terry & Callan, 1998) that people tend to resist organizational changes (e.g., mergers or moves toward privatization in the public sector) when they see these changes as undermining the distinctiveness of their professional identities, whereas the adoption of such changes is facilitated when groups of workers can somehow maintain their distinct identity within the new structure (e.g., Hornsey & Hogg, 1999; Jetten, O'Brien, & Trindall, 2002; Van Leeuwen, Van Knippenberg, & Ellemers, 2003).

> *Proposition 1: People will identify more with a particular collective (e.g., their work team) to the extent that it meaningfully distinguishes them from other relevant collectives (e.g., other teams in the organization).*
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> *Proposition 2: In a given comparative context, people are more* likely *to identify with more distinctive collectives (e.g., smaller units such as their work team) than with more inclusive collectives (the larger organization in which they work).*

Additionally, social identity theory and research indicate that the conviction the current standing of the group can be improved (because the outcomes of the group are unstable or illegitimate) fosters group identification, since these conditions help maintain people's beliefs in the value of their group, even when the group

has little to offer to the individual at present. In a similar vein, the threat of position loss (due to instability or illegitimacy of current intergroup relations) challenges people to affirm the value of their group and, hence, increases identification.

> *Proposition 3: In the absence of collective success, individuals' identification with the collective (e.g., the organization) will be stronger to the extent that external circumstances (e.g., market developments) or collective practices (e.g., human resource management) make it seem more likely the collective will be successful in the future.*

> *Proposition 4: When a collective (e.g., a work team or organization) is currently successful, individuals' identification with this collective will be enhanced when external circumstances threaten this success.*

SOCIAL IDENTIFICATION AND WORK MOTIVATION

Having examined some of the situational characteristics that may lead people to identify in collective instead of individual terms, we now consider the implications of social identification for motivated behavior in work situations (see also Haslam et al., 2000). A first assumption that follows from a social identity approach to motivation is that when people think of themselves as part of a collective, they are *energized* by different experiences or events than when they identify themselves as separate individuals (Ellemers et al., 2002). That is, we propose that identification as a member of a particular group implies people are activated by situations that *challenge* their inclusion in that group. In contrast, when they are less inclined to identify with a group, those same people are energized to undertake action when they are being treated as *indistinct* from other group members (see also Barreto & Ellemers, 2002). For example, newcomers who are proud of their membership in the organization are prompted into action to underline their collective identity when they are not recognized as such (e.g., by their coworkers or clients). However, to the extent that they conceive of themselves in terms of specific personal achievements or abilities, these same workers should be inclined to enact their individual identity when management proposes installing team rewards instead of individual rewards.

As a result, the *direction* of the resulting effort is expected to differ, again depending on the extent to which the situation induces a definition of the self either as separate from the group or as part of a collective. That is, while scholars predict group identification leads individuals to demonstrate loyalty to the group and induces adherence to group norms, we argue that situations in which individuals are led to conceive of themselves as separate from the group should make them behave in ways that show how they differ from other group members. For example, when female workers aim for advancement in their career, they tend to adopt a typically masculine behavioral style while continuing to emphasize feminine traits of other women in the organization (Ellemers, 2001a; Schmitt et al., 2003).

Finally, we expect that when circumstances induce individuals to identify with the group, they are more likely to *sustain* their efforts on behalf of the group across changing circumstances, whereas situational features that encourage a conception of self in individual terms should lead people to adapt their group-related efforts, depending on the extent to which these seem to be individually rewarding. For instance, those who do not feel emotionally involved with the group are only induced to direct their efforts toward the achievement of collective goals if they are likely to be personally sanctioned for failing to do so (i.e., in public situations but not in private), while those who identify strongly with the group consistently work for their group, regardless of whether their behavior is open to scrutiny from others (Barreto & Ellemers, 2001). This is in line with our previous contention that a self-definition in collective terms may help people internalize group goals as intrinsically motivating, whereas a self-definition as a separate individual implies that displays of group-oriented behavior depend on the presence or absence of external pressure to do so (in this case, public accountability [see also Barreto & Ellemers, 2002, and Barreto & Ellemers, 2003]).

> *Proposition 5: When situational features induce workers to identify in collective terms, they will be energized*

when their inclusion in the collective is not acknowledged, they will bring their behavior in line with what is distinctive for the collective, and they will sustain a concern with collective goals across different situations and over time.

Proposition 6: When the situation leads workers to disidentify with the collective (because they identify either as individuals or with some other collective), they will be energized to express this lack of identification when they are treated as part of the collective, they will direct their behavior in ways that show how they differ from the collective, and they will only sustain a concern with collective goals in situations where this is individually rewarding (in the case of individual identification) or when these converge with the goals of another collective (in situations where they prefer to identify with that other collective).

IDENTIFICATION VERSUS COMMITMENT IN ORGANIZATIONS

The general idea that identification in collective terms helps people orient their behavioral efforts toward collective goals seems consistent with insights on organizational commitment (Mowday, Steers, & Porter, 1979) maintaining that feelings of commitment can motivate individual workers to behave in accordance with organizational goals. Indeed, high levels of commitment are accompanied by low levels of individual "withdrawal" behavior, as indicated by empirical research on absenteeism, tardiness, and turnover (for a meta-analysis see Mathieu & Zajac, 1990). Commitment is also predictive of a general willingness to engage in discretionary work-related effort, such as organizational citizenship behavior (e.g., Meyer & Allen, 1997). Therefore, we now examine how the concepts of identification and commitment relate to each other, and in what way a conceptualization in terms of social identity might provide additional insights into work motivation that would be difficult to derive from current knowledge about organizational commitment.

In order to interpret previous attempts to directly compare the value of organizational identity and organizational commitment as predictors of work-related behavior, we should note that, in these studies, identification is conceptualized as the cognitive/perceptual awareness that the self constitutes part of the organization, while the term *commitment* is used to refer to the affective ties between the individual and the group (e.g., Mael & Tetrick, 1992). However, social identification (Tajfel, 1978; see also Hinkle, Taylor, Fox-Cardamone, & Crook, 1989), as well as organizational commitment (Allen & Meyer, 1996; Meyer & Allen, 1991), is commonly defined as a multidimensional construct, and *both* these constructs carry a reference to the cognitive awareness of some interdependence, as well as incorporate a sense of emotional involvement with the collective.

Indeed, studies that have taken these different aspects of organizational commitment or social identification into account have yielded consistent results in the sense that, for both constructs, affective involvement of the individual with the group emerges as a relevant predictor of group-oriented efforts (Allen & Meyer, 1996; Burke & Reitzes, 1991; Ellemers et al., 1999; Ellemers, Spears, & Doosje, 1997). In contrast, perceived interdependence may tie individuals to the organization (so that they are less likely to leave) but fails to induce optimal work behavior (as is the case with continuance commitment [Meyer & Allen, 1997]). Thus, it seems that both work on organizational commitment and research within the social identity tradition are consistent with the general notion that, independent of more individually instrumental considerations reflecting perceived interdependence between individual outcomes and collective outcomes, the affective sense of *emotional involvement* of the self with the group under consideration can motivate individuals to direct their efforts toward group goals.

Nonetheless, the question remains whether theorizing about social identity instead of organizational commitment yields novel insights. We would argue that the added value of thinking about organizational commitment as a form of social identification with the work organization is that it opens up the possibility of applying additional knowledge about *conditions* that may foster a concern with collective rather than individual conceptions of self. As a result, we

believe that the adoption of a social identity perspective may deepen our understanding of the *psychological processes* that may either elevate or depress resulting feelings of commitment, as well as help predict *which* alternative possible source of collective self-definition is likely to emerge as primary in any given situation.

Previous researchers of organizational commitment have acknowledged that a sense of involvement can be derived from different organizational constituencies or can have multiple foci (Becker, 1992; Reichers, 1986), but a social identity analysis helps to specify *when* a particular focus of commitment tends to become more relevant than others, as well as what the likely *motivational consequences* are of such feelings of commitment. As we argued above, proponents of the social identity approach maintain that people are likely to consider themselves and others in terms of groups that help them distinguish in meaningful ways between those present in the situation at hand. For instance, in work situations that imply interactions with representatives of other organizations or with external customers, people should be inclined to perceive the organization as a salient entity, since this distinction provides them with a relevant behavioral guideline. However, when these same individuals interact with coworkers *within* the organization, a conception of the self and others as organizational members is less informative, since this is the identity they *all share*. Instead, they are more likely to focus on a categorization that *distinguishes* between different coworkers, resulting, for instance, in the work team becoming the relevant focus of commitment (Ellemers, de Gilder, & Van den Heuvel, 1998; see also Van Knippenberg & Van Schie, 2000).

Being able to understand and anticipate such shifts in people's use of different categories is relevant to predicting the behavioral consequences of the resulting feelings of commitment. That is, although commitment to the organization as well as commitment to the work team may motivate people to pursue collective goals instead of focus on their individual outcomes (Ellemers, de Gilder, & Van den Heuvel, 1998), it is important to note that team goals are not necessarily aligned with broader organizational goals. For instance, when workers primarily identify as team members, they are less likely to share information with other work teams, although the exchange of this information could contribute to the success of the organization as a whole (see also Haslam, 2001, and Postmes, 2003).

Thus, the application of a social identity approach enables us to consider identification as a *dynamic* outcome of situational features, instead of as a property that emerges consistently in particular individuals or cultures (such as individualism versus collectivism [Hofstede, 1980; Triandis, 1995]). On the one hand, this implies that we should not view the tendency to identify with a collective as a generic inclination but, rather, as group specific. That is, where people can be seen as belonging to multiple groups, in any one situation they may opt to define themselves in terms of particular categories—for example, their work team—while they are much less inclined to identify with others—for example, the organization as a whole (see also Ellemers, de Gilder, & Van den Heuvel, 1998). On the other hand, it means that, when focusing on a particular group, we should not regard the willingness or reluctance to identify with that group as a stable predisposition of the individual in question but, rather, as context dependent. For instance, while a female doctor may try to avoid being seen as a member of her gender group when at work, she may be perfectly happy to act as a representative of women in a discussion on neighborhood provisions.

Indeed, the added value of the social identity approach is that it helps us understand how issues of collective motivation apply in these more complex situations where multiple (and possibly conflicting) group memberships operate simultaneously. It does this by providing the conceptual tools to specify the psychological processes that operate in such situations, as well as delineating the factors that determine the relative salience of one identity over other alternative identities in any given situation.

LEADERSHIP

In the previous sections we examined the situational features that may contribute to a person's self-concept being defined in individual or in collective terms, and we assessed the likely consequences of these different self-definitions for work-related behavior. We now illustrate some implications of this social identity ap-

proach to work motivation by examining how processes of leadership are affected by self-categorization and social identity. This is relevant to work motivation, since it helps us understand *who* is most likely to be accepted as a motivating force by others and under which conditions they will be most *successful* in mobilizing their followers.

We propose that the potential of leaders or managers to communicate and create a sense of *shared identity* is an important determinant of the likelihood that their attempts to energize, direct, and sustain particular work-related behaviors in their followers will be successful (see also Reicher & Hopkins, 1996). In doing this, we move beyond approaches to leadership that attribute the emergence and effectiveness of leaders to specific behavioral styles (e.g., Kirkpatrick & Locke, 1991), to their talent to inspire others (e.g., charismatic or transformational leadership [Bass, 1985]), or to special interpersonal relationships they develop with their followers (Graen & Scandura, 1987). Instead, we focus on the ways in which leadership acceptance is contingent on situational features (Hollander, 1964) that affect the likelihood *followers* will either focus on the identity they share with the leader or consider the ways in which the leader is distinct from them.

For a range of practical reasons, leaders cannot always behave in ways that are individually rewarding for their followers, not least because their role requires that they supervise and correct the work carried out by those who fall under their responsibility. However, in view of the general (identity-enhancing) tendency to evaluate characteristics and behaviors of ingroup members more positively than those of outgroup members (e.g., Tajfel & Turner, 1979), followers should generally be more inclined to hold positive expectations about the underlying motives and intentions of their leaders, to the extent that these are perceived as ingroup (rather than outgroup) members (Duck & Fielding, 1999). One important consequence of this phenomenon is that deviations from the expected pattern tend to be "explained away"—for instance, by attributing negative leadership behaviors to external pressures in the case of a leader who is considered to be an ingroup member (Haslam, McGarty, Brown, Eggins, Morrison, & Reynolds, 2001). In contrast, people see events that confirm previous expectancies (negative behavior in the case of a leader who is regarded as an outgroup member, or positive behavior in the case of a leader who is perceived as an ingroup member) as more diagnostic of the true nature and intentions of their leader (see also Hewstone, 1990).

Such ingroup-favoring biases in the interpretation of leadership behavior may constitute an important mechanism that increases (when the leader is perceived as an ingroup member) or reduces (when the leader is perceived as an outgroup member) the ability of leaders to energize, direct, and sustain work-related efforts among their followers. Indeed, empirical evidence supports our contention that identical leadership behavior is interpreted differently depending on whether it is enacted by an ingroup or outgroup member (Ellemers, Van Rijswijk, Bruins, & de Gilder, 1998; see also Duck & Fielding, 1999). That is, as a result of attributional differences, subordinates tend to remain loyal to an ingroup leader, despite displays of undesirable leadership behavior (see also Bruins, Ellemers, & de Gilder, 1999). In contrast, subordinates' willingness to cooperate with an outgroup leader depends on whether this leader has treated them positively in the past (Ellemers, Van Rijswijk, Bruins, & de Gilder, 1998).

This implies that the extent to which followers perceive their leaders as sharing the same identity has important consequences for the motivating mechanisms that the leader can use effectively. That is, while the motivation to cooperate with a leader who is seen as an outgroup member depends on how rewarding the exchange relationship is for the subordinate, loyalty to an ingroup leader emerges more unconditionally. This general idea is consistent with insights that, compared to transactional leadership, charismatic or transformational leadership (e.g., Bass, 1985) is more broadly effective, as specified, for instance, in leader-member exchange (LMX) theory (Graen & Scandura, 1987). However, these types of theories approach the issue of leadership in individual terms, in the sense that they focus on individual properties (of leaders, of their followers, or both) that enhance the likelihood leaders and followers will develop a special relationship with each other (Hogg & Martin, 2003). In contrast, the application of insights from the social identity approach allows us to see leadership as a *group* phenomenon and to consider the *situational* features that may en-

able leaders to draw on their followers' sense of shared identity (see also Haslam et al., 2001).

> *Proposition 7: To the extent that followers perceive their leader to share a common identity with them, positive leadership behavior is more likely to be seen as indicative of the "true self" of the leader than negative leadership behavior, whereas the reverse pattern of behavioral attributions will emerge when the leader is perceived to be an outgroup member.*

We now apply the social identity perspective to help answer the question of *whose* guidelines are most likely to be accepted as a motivational force by others. A crucial concern here is the extent to which a (prospective) leader is seen to represent the group's distinct identity—that is, the extent to which the leader is perceived as prototypical for the group. However, a social identity approach also implies that the perceived prototypicality of a leader is *context dependent* (Hogg, Hains, & Mason, 1998). In other words, depending on other groups present in the situation and the ways in which the ingroup is distinct from *those particular outgroups,* members may come to see different properties as prototypical for the group and, hence, desirable for the group leader (Turner & Haslam, 2001). The novel contribution of this way of thinking is that it enables us to predict how—in an intergroup context—the willingness to follow particular leaders and not others depends on whether those leaders represent the characteristics or features that help distinguish the ingroup from other groups.

One implication of this reasoning is that, in some cases, leadership acceptance depends on characteristics that would be quite difficult, if not impossible, to derive from a more traditional analysis, based on individual processes. For instance, in a recent series of experiments, Haslam, Turner, and Oakes (1999) and Turner and Haslam (2001) demonstrated how the selection of a group leader depended on the perceived characteristics of the outgroup against which the group had to compete. When the leader of the other group excelled in terms of intelligence, people tended to endorse an ingroup leader who was *un*intelligent (but considerate). Presumably, this would help distinguish the ingroup from the outgroup in a meaningful

way, *in this particular context*. In a similar vein, additional research demonstrated that a leader who favored ingroup members that opposed the outgroup generally received more support and was better able to mobilize individual efforts than a leader who treated all ingroup members equally (Haslam & Platow, 2001a,b; Platow, Hoar, Reid, Harley, & Morrison, 1997). Again, this is consistent with the notion that it is not the desirability of the leader's behavior per se that determines acceptance by his or her followers but the extent to which the behavior of the leader represents the distinct meaning of their shared identity compared to other groups in that situation.

The ability of the leaders to motivate their followers, in this research, would be difficult to explain from principles that assume the endorsement of leaders depends on their ability to show superior individual qualities (e.g., intelligence or fairness). This is not to say that traditional approaches to leadership do not provide useful insights. However, whether it is useful to think about leadership in terms of individual qualities or in terms of group processes depends on whether the situation induces people to identify as separate individuals or as parts of a collective. Indeed, research has shown that when people conceive of themselves and others primarily as independent individuals, it is possible to identify specific characteristics or behaviors that define an attractive leader, such as fairness (Platow & Van Knippenberg, 2001). However, when participants conceive of the situation in *intergroup* terms, they are more inclined to endorse a leader who is prototypical for the ingroup or favors the ingroup (Platow & Van Knippenberg, 2001).

> *Proposition 8: When group members define a situation in intergroup terms, they are most likely to endorse as leaders those who most clearly represent ways in which the ingroup can be positively distinguished from relevant comparison groups.*

It follows from the above arguments that leaders may engender greater loyalty and cooperativeness, to the extent that followers perceive them as ingroup members, while a failure to establish a sense of shared social identity will mean that leadership effectiveness depends on leaders' being seen as instrumental for the

achievement of individual goals. Again, an important contribution of the social identity approach to this line of reasoning is that the perception of a leader as representative of the group may vary across situations or over time, depending on whether specific circumstances or events enhance the salience of the identity that the leader shares with the group, or draw attention to differences between the leader and the rest of the group.

As an example of such processes, we predict the presence of a salient outgroup or "common enemy" (e.g., a competing organization) leads people to focus on their shared organizational identity (see also Rabbie & Bekkers, 1978). As a result, management should be able to draw on this sense of common identity as "entrepreneurs of identity" (Reicher & Hopkins, 1996) when attempting to motivate workers to make personal sacrifices (e.g., work overtime, accept lower raises) for the benefit of the organization as a whole. However, when these same organizational members are induced (e.g., by reward structures) to categorize themselves and others at a different level of inclusiveness (e.g., as members of competing work teams), similar attempts to induce organizational citizenship behavior may be much less effective, since people are more likely to turn to the leader who embodies team goals that are not necessarily compatible with those of the broader organization.

Now that we have examined how circumstances that lead people to think in terms of particular categorizations instead of others may influence the effectiveness of leaders representing these different categorizations, we turn to some less than evident consequences of this phenomenon. Again, this enables us to demonstrate how the application of insights about self-categorization and social identity leads us to make predictions that differ from more conventional insights on leadership derived from individual-level analysis. Specifically, we draw attention to the problem that while pointing out that a leader has exceptional skills may help legitimize his or her position, the downside of such a focus on distinctive individual qualities is that it may effectively set the leader apart from the rest of the group. An intriguing consequence is that while choosing a leader with superior individual abilities is often desirable for other reasons, this may not always be the best way to instill a sense of common identity in

the group. An experiment designed to test the validity of this reasoning demonstrated that a leader who was randomly selected from the group was more successful in motivating group members to work together on a joint task than a leader who stood out from the group in terms of individual competence (Haslam, McGarty, Brown, Eggins, Morrison, & Reynolds, 1998).

A similar mechanism may come into play when reward structures clearly differentiate between leaders and team members. Again, allocating more benefits to those in leadership positions makes perfect sense as long as we think of this issue in individual terms. That is, in order to retain equity and motivate leaders, leaders should receive greater rewards, to the extent that they are expected to carry more responsibilities, fulfill stricter requirements, or work harder than their subordinates. However, when such differences in rewards become too large, or when an appeal to workers to curb their requests for salary raises occurs while management receives huge bonuses, the adverse effect may be that the feeling that leaders and followers share a common identity is undermined (see Drucker, 1986). Haslam, Brown, McGarty, and Reynolds (1998) confirmed this possibility in research showing that while a differentiated reward structure may serve to motivate leaders, group members working under such a regime actually report less enthusiasm and display less effort on a collective task than they do under conditions where leaders and followers receive equal rewards.

> *Proposition 9: Circumstances that enhance a sense of shared group identity facilitate a leader's attempts to motivate his or her followers, whereas factors that set the leader apart from followers (in ways that do not enhance group identity or performance) can undermine leadership effectiveness.*

In summary, the application of insights from social identity theory to issues of leadership emphasizes the point that the secret of successful leadership lies in the capacity of the leader to induce *followers* to perceive him or her as the embodiment of a positive social identity that they have in common and that distinguishes them from others.

GROUP PERFORMANCE

During the past few decades the proportion of people who work in groups or (self-managing) teams has steadily increased. This is not only consistent with popular beliefs about the "synergy" that may emerge when working in groups but also seems in line with scientific knowledge on organizational psychology. Relevant considerations are that work teams may offer opportunities for job enrichment, may accommodate the need for autonomy of workers, may decrease the workload of supervisors, may increase performance on tasks that are too complicated for individuals, and so on. However, given the variety of reasons teams are used as an organizing principle, as well as differences in the circumstances under which they work, clearly it is difficult to draw conclusions about the general effects of teamwork (see Buchanan, 2000). A pertinent question, thus, is whether we can predict the conditions under which teams are likely to perform successfully and understand why this is the case.

Alongside the expected advantages of teamwork, relevant insights also point to a possible drawback of working in teams (Steiner, 1972). The so-called Ringelmann effect indicates that people expend less effort when they perform a collective task than when they work on the same task individually (Kravitz & Martin, 1986), presumably because of motivation losses. This phenomenon, typically called "social loafing" (see Karau & Williams, 1993), offers a rather pessimistic view of teamwork, since it suggests that people are generally less willing to exert themselves in group settings than when working individually. Accordingly, typical solutions to the social loafing problem all revolve around recommendations to make the work situation less social by treating team members more as individuals—for instance, by making the contributions of individual team members identifiable or showing how the contribution to group goals may help them obtain personally valued outcomes (Karau & Williams, 1995).

These solutions may be valid in some situations, but they run counter to current developments in the workplace, and, indeed, in many cases they are impossible to apply. A defining feature of self-managing teams, for instance, is that team members contribute to a common goal and motivate themselves and each other to do

so. An important question, therefore, is whether the expected benefits of installing workgroups and teams are undermined by these traditional measures to avoid social loafing. We propose that a social identity analysis not only offers insights that may help develop alternative ways to avoid social loafing that are more in keeping with the essence of teamwork but also may contribute to our understanding of relevant factors that are likely to enhance (instead of impair) the performance of the group compared to the performance of its individual members (social laboring).

A social identity analysis would predict that workers who identify with the group in question should be energized to act in terms of their group membership, instead of in terms of what seems individually rewarding. Accordingly, research has revealed that groups of close friends or teammates display less social loafing than groups composed of strangers or mere acquaintances (Williams, Karau, & Bourgeois, 1993). Jehn and Shah (1997) have shown this effect is also caused by the higher levels of commitment observed in friendship groups. Thus, in addition to traditional remedies to social loafing that focus on workers as separate individuals, measures that enhance the salience of a collective identity can also contribute to the motivation to achieve collective goals and, hence, to avoid motivation losses in group performance situations (see also Ellemers, 2001b, and Tyler & Blader, 2000).

However, work globalization and technological progress imply that the collaboration in work teams often is virtual, with team interactions mainly occurring via the exchange of written information through computer networks. According to traditional approaches to group performance, the comparative anonymity of team members that is likely to result would seem to encourage social loafing. At the same time, collaboration in virtual teams is not particularly conducive to the development of the interpersonal interactions or friendships that have been found to elicit feelings of commitment. Here again, it becomes apparent how a social identity approach can extend insights derived from individual-level processes. That is, according to this perspective, identification as a group member is not only derived from interpersonal ties between group members but also is facilitated by situational factors that enhance the salience of the categorization. Consistent

with this reasoning, research suggests that when members of multiple groups are present, computer-mediated communication can facilitate (instead of hinder) a definition of the situation in group terms (Lea, Spears, & Rogers, 2003; Postmes, Spears, & Lea, 1999). In other words, this form of interaction discourages team members from attending to individual differences and helps them focus on the group membership of the people they communicate with (see also Worchel, Rothgerber, Day, Hart, & Butemeyer, 1998).

> *Proposition 10: Collectives that are not bound together by interpersonal ties (e.g., work teams) can nevertheless be energized to work on joint tasks when the circumstances under which they work enhance the salience of their common identity and prevent them from focusing on interpersonal distinctions.*

As we have argued in previous sections, the perception of a common identity and the resulting feelings of identification with the workgroup constitute an important factor that motivates group members to work toward collective goals. However, whether the resulting behavior actually enhances or diminishes the group's performance further depends on the relevant comparative context and its implications for the group's distinct identity (see also Van Knippenberg & Ellemers, 2003). For instance, when examining group performance on an orange-picking task, Erev, Bornstein, and Galili (1993) observed that the introduction of an intergroup competition (encouraging a definition of the situation in group terms instead of individual terms) effectively ruled out the occurrence of social loafing. But the greatest effort on the group task was observed when the competing teams were similar to each other and could only establish a distinct identity by showing a superior team performance.

This example illustrates how the search for a distinct identity may direct group members' efforts toward behaviors that set them apart from other groups, but it is important to note that the adoption of behavioral norms that characterize the group as distinct from other groups will not necessarily result in greater group productivity. Indeed, systematic underperformance or excessive absence can also result when workers di-

rect their behavior toward specific group norms that are perceived to be undesirable from a managerial point of view—as in the case of so-called soldiering, where a group sets norms for underperformance (Taylor, 1911; see also Gellatly & Luchak, 1998).

A counterintuitive consequence of this process is that enhanced group identification can even increase the amount of effort directed at the achievement of *individual* goals when distinctive group norms prescribe individualistic behavior (Barreto & Ellemers, 2001)—for instance, when the organizational culture emphasizes individual competitiveness. Conversely, when group members establish their collective identity by setting distinct goals for the group, this not only fosters their sense of identification with the group but also increases their efforts to achieve these group goals (see Wegge & Haslam, 2003).

> *Proposition 11: The emergence of collective identification directs workers' efforts toward the enhancement of their joint performance when this helps achieve or maintain a distinct collective identity. However, collective identification will diminish joint performance when the distinctive norm is for collective underperformance.*

When aiming to establish the circumstances under which group members will *sustain* their efforts on behalf of the group, it is important to consider whether the group members consider a change in their collective performance, which can imply either improvement or deterioration, to be a realistic prospect (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). In line with the social identity approach, this depends on the comparative context in which group members find themselves. That is, when the group is currently performing worse than relevant comparison groups, the awareness that other groups have achieved a higher performance level makes a performance *improvement* of the group seem feasible and helps group members actually achieve a superior group performance (Ouwerkerk, de Gilder, & De Vries, 2000; Ouwerkerk, Ellemers, & de Gilder, 1999). According to social identity theory, this is particularly likely when differences in the relative standing of the groups seem unstable (Doosje et al., 2002) or illegitimate (Ellemers, Wilke, & Van

Knippenberg, 1993). Likewise, whereas the knowledge that the group consistently outperforms relevant other groups elicits satisfaction with the group's achievements, resulting in a sense of complacency (Ouwerkerk & Ellemers, 2002), the awareness that the group is *losing* its competitive edge (e.g., because other groups are improving their relative performance) can help sustain a high level of collective effort (Ouwerkerk et al., 1999).

> *Proposition 12: Individuals will sustain their efforts on behalf of a collective either when they consider collective performance improvement to be a realistic prospect or when they are concerned with the possibility of collective position loss.*

In sum, the application of a social identity perspective enables us to explain how group performance can be optimized when circumstances prevent the application of more traditional remedies to social loafing (e.g., because individual contributions cannot be monitored, or when contributions to collective performance clearly are not individually rewarding). At the same time, we have established that providing groups with a sense of collective identity is only a first step toward achieving optimal group performance. That is, in addition to energizing individuals to work toward collective goals, group norms should direct members' efforts to achieving superior performance. However, these efforts will only be sustained when collective performance improvement seems feasible, or under the threat of collective position loss (see also Ellemers, 2001b, and Van Knippenberg & Ellemers, 2003).

CONCLUSIONS AND DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

In this article we have argued that our understanding of motivated behavior in the workplace can be enriched by considering the possibility that the self can be defined in different ways. In many situations individual considerations may have a role to play (e.g., in the achievement of individual goals and rewards, or the avoidance of sanctions). However, in many other situations people may be motivated to behave in ways that express or support a social identity that is shared with others in the work

situation (see also Tyler, 2002). The social identity approach provides an interesting perspective on these alternative sources of motivation, implying that neither of these mechanisms should be seen as more important or more valid than the other but specifying the conditions under which each is likely to operate (see also Barreto & Ellemers, 2001, and Haslam, 2001).

When the situation fosters a definition of the self in individual terms, individually instrumental considerations are crucial determinants of work motivation. If, however, the situation induces workers to identify as parts of a collective, they are more likely to be concerned with the enhancement of that collective identity—for instance, by pursuing shared goals or behaving in ways that are normative for that identity. Thus, there is no a priori reason to privilege one form of identification over another, or to see one form of self-definition as deriving straightforwardly from the other, since the same individuals may perceive themselves in other terms and behave differently from one situation to the next.

Indeed, whether a particular identity is relevant to understand (or to change) work motivation depends on the focus of the motivation one aims to address and on the forms of behavior one wishes to predict (or induce). When the aim is to examine why a broad range of people are leaving an organization, or what is motivating them to stay, the organization represents an appropriate level of inclusiveness at which identification (or lack of it) should be assessed. However, when the intention is to promote people's efforts directed toward a particular team performance, one should focus on the extent to which they identify with that team, instead of with the organization as a whole. At the same time, the common practice of treating workers as separate individuals, in the hope that their efforts to fulfill their individual ambitions will benefit the organization as a whole, seems less worthwhile from this point of view.

In the domain of *leadership*, we have argued that the perception of a common identity with the leader is crucial for the leader's effectiveness in mobilizing individual efforts toward collective goals. In line with this reasoning, we have reviewed research findings that would be difficult to predict on the basis of traditional thinking about leadership. We have considered how contextual characteristics may induce group members to accept or even expect traits or

behaviors that seem prototypical for the group, even when these are not considered attractive for leaders in a more individualized context. Additionally, we have illustrated how some common practices in organizations (e.g., emphasizing superior qualities of leaders, or introducing substantial reward advantages for managers) may, in fact, interfere with leadership effectiveness, to the extent that they foster a conception of the leader as someone who stands outside the group rather than being part of it.

Turning to *group performance*, we have argued that enhancement of collective identity constitutes a significant way of avoiding social loafing and optimizing collective performance. It is important to note that this principle is not necessarily incompatible with contemporary demands for workers to collaborate in virtual environments (e.g., ones that are based on computer-mediated communications). At the same time, we have argued that enhancing a sense of collective identity only constitutes a first step toward the achievement of an optimal group performance, for even when people identify as group members and are motivated to exert effort on behalf of the group, the way their behavior will actually be directed depends on specific features of the social context. This is for two reasons: (1) because contextual features determine the nature of salient group goals and distinctive group norms, and these can also elicit less desirable outcomes (e.g., when they lead to soldiering), and (2) because social contextual features determine whether or not collective performance improvement seems feasible or even desirable.

While we have tried to demonstrate some possible consequences of social identity processes that seem difficult to predict or understand from a more individualistic perspective on work motivation, this is not intended to imply that individual needs, goals, outcome comparisons, or reinforcement mechanisms are unimportant. However, we do wish to emphasize that these same principles of motivation may have fundamentally different implications when applied at a collective level. Furthermore, we think of the tendency to define the self primarily in individual or in collective terms (or more in terms of one particular group than as a member of another group) as an adaptive response to the situation at hand, instead of as a stable property that is determined by the individual's disposition or by cultural norms. For this reason, it becomes important to establish whether evaluation and reward structures reinforce a self-definition in individual or collective terms, whether relevant work goals apply to individuals or to groups, and whether equity considerations derive from interpersonal comparisons or from intergroup comparisons.

Indeed, we have developed some concrete propositions derived from the general prediction that individual needs, goals, or comparisons are the primary source of motivation in work situations that foster a conception of the self as an independent individual, while collective needs, goals, and comparisons are likely to predominate in situations that facilitate a definition of the self in collective terms. In Table 1 we have summarized how these propositions address (1) issues of self-definition (Propositions 1–4), (2) situational influences (Propositions 5 and 6), (3)

TABLE 1
Collective Identification and Work Motivation: Overview of Propositions

Self-Definition (Propositions 1–4)	Situational Influences (Propositions 5 and 6)	Acceptance of Leadership (Propositions 7–9)	Performance Consequences (Propositions 10–12)
When do people define the self as part of a particular collective?	How does the situation induce a particular motivational focus?	Who can mobilize the motivation to direct individual efforts toward collective goals?	How does collective motivation impact group performance?
• Comparative distinctiveness • Relative inclusiveness • Current success and future expectations	• Compatibility of internal and external definitions of self • Expression of individual vs. collective identity	• Social identity–based expectations • Embodiment of group distinctiveness • Shared social identity	• Salience of shared social identity • Distinctive group norms • Future prospects

acceptance of leaders (Propositions 7–9), and (4) consequences for work performance (Propositions 10–12).

At the practical level, our approach thus implies that there is no one best way to motivate people at work and that there is no quick and easy solution for problems of motivation. Instead, it is crucial to first establish who should be motivated to work toward which goal, before the work situation can be geared toward addressing the definition of self that is relevant to that goal. Such measures should not be restricted to formal features of the work situation (such as the nature of the reward structure) but should also encompass more informal aspects of the organizational culture, as well as the culture's enactment by management. Indeed, the effectiveness of specific measures intended to motivate people to engage with collective goals is likely to be undermined when the broader organizational structure and culture continue to foster a consideration of the self as a separate individual. We think that, from a managerial point of view, this is, in fact, an interesting notion, in the sense that it offers scope to encourage the operation of either individual or collective motives by adapting salient features of the work situation, such as the reward system or promotion opportunities. Conversely, to the extent that organizational practices resist such change (e.g., because they are legally anchored), management should be aware that this is likely to limit the effectiveness of its attempts to influence the focus of workers' motivation and effort.

We have tried to show that the social identity approach may provide a useful analytical framework for understanding motivational processes of individuals and groups at work. However, the research we have reviewed in support of our argument consists largely of experimental work focusing on these psychological processes as they operate in relatively contrived situations. Thus, while we think this provides a solid basis for our reasoning and results in predictions that are highly relevant to issues of work motivation, we believe further research is clearly necessary to examine the concrete implications of our arguments in particular work settings. We hope the present contribution may inspire researchers in the field to address the mechanisms and variables we have described in their future studies.

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Naomi Ellemers currently is professor of social and organizational psychology at Leiden University. She studied at the University of California at Berkeley and at the University of Groningen, the Netherlands, where she received her Ph.D. Her research focuses on the role of social identity in group interactions and intergroup relations.

Dick de Gilder currently is assistant professor of public administration and organization at the Free University in Amsterdam. He studied at the University of Amsterdam and received his Ph.D. from the University of Groningen, the Netherlands. His research interests include organizational commitment, error management, and research management.

S. Alexander Haslam currently is professor of social and organizational psychology at the University of Exeter, where he investigates a range of social and organizational topics. He studied at Macquarie University, Emory University, and the University of St. Andrews, where he received his Ph.D. He recently published a book on the social identity approach to psychology in organization.