Identification, discourse, and intergroup communication in organizational contexts

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Research that focuses on the identification of employees with their employing organization has a long tradition. Over the last decade or more, major advances in this area have derived their impetus from social identity theory (SIT, Abrams & Hogg, 1990; Hogg & Terry, 2000; Tajfel & Turner, 1979, 1986). Social identity theory provides a robust framework for examining employee identification in organizations, and for an intergroup perspective on employee and organizational outcomes (Haslam, 2001). While there has been an increasing level of research that adopts this perspective in organizational contexts, work that specifically examines organizational communication processes from an intergroup perspective is limited (Gardner, Paulsen, Gallois, Callan, & Monaghan, 2001), and the contributions of alternative perspectives for theorizing the formation of groups and group identities are relatively less developed in organizational contexts.

In this chapter we briefly review the application of SIT to organizational contexts and suggest areas of organizational communication research in which an intergroup perspective can potentially contribute. Further, we outline the complementarities between SIT and discourse analysis (DA) for more successful investigation of identity, identification, and intergroup communication in organizational studies. SIT and DA offer perspectives on organizational communication that combine the delicate qualitative linguistic depth of DA with the rigorous quantitative methods developed in SIT for comprehending the significance of 'multimodal' meaning choices typically made by people from different social groups.

We begin by arguing that organizations are contexts where intergroup dynamics are paramount. Second, we briefly review the application of SIT to organizational contexts. Next, we outline ways in which SIT could be further developed and applied to communication in organizational contexts. Finally, we

examine how DA can provide an alternative 'way in' to investigate identities, identification and organizational communication, and show how this approach may complement SIT approaches for examining communication as an intergroup phenomenon.

Organizations as Dynamic Intergroup Contexts

Individuals in organizations relate to and communicate with one another in a context that is essentially intergroup in nature. While structural and functional arrangements are designed to achieve organizational goals, such arrangements also set the boundaries for a highly differentiated social system (Scott, 1998; Trice & Beyer, 1993). As Hogg and Terry (2000) suggest, organizations are "internally structured groups that are located in complex networks of intergroup relations characterised by power, status, and prestige differentials" (p. 123). Within such a system, individuals are differentiated from each other through membership of departments, work units or teams, ranks or levels of management, and/or specialised roles with specific skill sets. While such groups often represent different and competing interests, they nevertheless assist employees to define themselves and their social relationships within the organization. Within this social milieu, issues related to control, power and influence, status, competition for scarce resources, and contested group boundaries are inevitably present, almost without exception.

Within the interdependent nature of organizational arrangements, organizational actors rarely function in isolation from their group or team contexts. Kramer (1991) conceptualises the individual in organizations "not as an independent or socially isolated decision maker, but rather as a *social* actor embedded in a complex network of intra- and inter-group relationships" (p. 195). Consequently, when individuals interact, they do not simply act as individuals but also as members

of the organizational groups to which they belong (see also Paulsen, 2003). Individuals in organizations relate to one another as members of such groups, and interpersonal communication encounters are thus, in most cases, intergroup encounters (see also Gallois, Giles, Jones, Cargile, & Ota, 1995). The behaviour of individuals can be understood in the context of relevant group memberships, the system within which groups are embedded, the power relations that exist between groups, and the permeability of the boundaries that define group memberships (e.g., see Alderfer, 1987).

As organizations move toward organic or network structures with an increased reliance on taskforces and cross-functional project teams, the importance of groups and intergroup communication in organizations has never been more apparent. Intergroup activity increases as individuals are required to "represent their own group to other groups or must interact as a group with others in order to achieve goals" (Hartley, 1996, p. 398). Furthermore, organizational capabilities are increasingly developed through intensely social and communicative processes, and these may not be directly tied to physical resources or locations (Galunic & Eisenhardt, 2001; Panteli, 2003; Wiesenfeld, Raghuram, & Garud, 2001). In addition, the increased diversity within organizations means that communication must occur across age, cultural, and professional boundaries (Nkomo & Cox, 1996). In the context of strategic alliances, strategic positioning within industries, and joint ventures or partnerships, intergroup issues arise at the organizational level (Swaminathan, 2001; von Corswant, Dubois, & Fredriksson, 2003). In the international business context, inter-organizational relations may become more complex as cultural identities become salient. In fact, it is hard to imagine the contemporary organization as anything other

than a context in which organizing and communication processes are essentially intergroup in nature.

The Identity of the Organization

Before we continue with a discussion of the application of SIT to organizational dynamics, it is important to distinguish between research with a primary focus on the identity *of* the organization, and research with a primary focus on the identification of employees *with* the organization. In an early treatment of organizational identity that draws on perspectives from anthropology, sociology and psychology, Albert and Whetten (1985) focused primarily on the enduring, central characteristics that identify and distinguish a particular organization from others in the environment. Their approach explored how organizations present an external identity (or image) to key stakeholders, and examined the mechanisms that shape the identities negotiated internally. Not surprisingly, this approach has spawned research primarily directed at the identity of the organization as a whole (for a discussion, see Bouchikhi et al., 1998). In general, this approach does not directly address the process of employee identification *with* their organization, or how individual members enact their identities within organizational contexts. This perspective continues to produce interesting lines of research (e.g., Foreman & Whetten, 2002; Hatch & Schultz, 2002; Whetten & Mackey, 2002). However, this chapter focuses upon the processes of individual identification with groups in organizational environments (or the making of *individual* identities) and the implications of this for communicative practices, and not on the identity of the organization (or the making of *organizational* identity) as significant stakeholders may perceive it (e.g., Scott & Lane, 2000).

Social Identity Theory and Organizations

While SIT has been used in recent times to examine organizational identification, the construct is not new to the organizational literature (e.g., Foote, 1951; Tolman, 1943). Notions of employee involvement and loyalty to the organization are prominent in a number of different formulations (e.g., in the cosmopolitan-local construct developed by Gouldner, 1957). Simon (1947) included a chapter examining identification in terms of organizational loyalty, and which discussed the implications for employee decision-making (see also March & Simon, 1958), while other studies were informed by Kelman's influence theory (1958). For example, in an extensive study of the Tennessee Valley Authority, Patchen (1970) conceptualised organizational identification as a multifaceted construct, involving loyalty, solidarity, and perceived similarity with the organization. The study examined various antecedents of identification, and entertained the notion of employee identification with subunits of the organization. Other studies examined the conditions that encourage employee identification (Brown, 1969), creativity and targets of identification (Rotondi, 1975a, 1975b), socialisation (Schein, 1968), and tenure (Hall & Schneider, 1972; Hall, Schneider, & Nygren, 1970; Schneider, Hall, & Nygren, 1971). Cheney (1983a) provides a detailed list of studies published around this time that link organizational identification constructs to a range of organizational issues and employee outcomes. These works draw on the presumption that employee identification leads to a range of benefits such as commitment to organizational goals and their achievement, quality of performance, and job satisfaction.

This line of investigation did not continue at the same pace in the following years. However, given the conceptualisations that define acceptance of the values and goals of the organization as part of the identification construct (e.g., Schneider et al., 1971), it is not surprising to find these researchers pursuing lines of research in

organizational culture, including service culture (e.g., Schein, 1991; Schneider, 1990; Schneider, Gunnarson, & Niles Jolly, 1994). In North American scholarship, a revival of interest in organizational identity constructs occurred when Albert and Whetten (1985), and Ashforth and Mael (1989) published their seminal papers, although Rupert Brown and others were already developing applications of SIT in organizational contexts (e.g., Brown, 1978; Brown, Condor, Mathews, Wade, & Williams, 1986; Oaker & Brown, 1986).

Details of the history of SIT and the development of key tenets of the theory can be found in a number of recent sources (this volume, Hogg & Abrams, 1999; Hogg & Williams, 2000; Robinson, 1996; Turner, 1999). The core of SIT can be summarised as: a) individuals are motivated to achieve or maintain a positive self-esteem; b) the individuals' self esteem is based partly on their social identity derived from group memberships; and c) the quest for a positive social identity enhances the need for positive evaluations of the group in comparison to relevant outgroups. For these assumptions to hold, identification with a group must occur, and membership in a particular group will be psychologically relevant (or salient) in a given social context (adapted from van Dick, 2001).

Through categorisation processes, individuals identify themselves as members of particular groups, and as non-members of others, and group identification occurs as this process becomes self-referential (Pratt, 1998). Tyler and Blader (2001) favour a definition of identification that emphasises the "cognitive intermingling of self and group" (p. 211). At the level of social categorisation, individuals identify themselves *as* members of one group or another. It is the affective dimension or attachment to that group that defines an individual's strength of identification *with* that group (van Dick, 2001). So, at one level, an individual may see her/himself as a member of a

group or category, but the importance of that membership may vary from individual to individual. Furthermore, it is the contextual salience of that group membership that is likely to trigger perceptions and behaviour that favours the group. Organizations and the subgroups within them can become sources of employee identification (Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Dutton, Dukerich, & Harquail, 1994; Paulsen, 2003). In other words, organizational identification is a specific form of social identification.

Much of the early research based on SIT was conducted in experimental settings and examined identities based on membership of broad social categories such as race, ethnicity, or gender. Some time ago, a number of authors (e.g., Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Kramer, 1991) encouraged researchers to examine the application of SIT to organizational contexts (see also Brown et al., 1986; Scott, 1997). Since then, SIT has been used to theorise many aspects of organizational life (e.g., Whetten & Godfrey, 1998) and has been applied as an explanatory framework for a range of different employee and organizational outcomes (Haslam, 2001). A corpus of research is now emerging, and the field remains open to fruitful areas of research (Albert, Ashforth, & Dutton, 2000; Hogg & Terry, 2000, 2001). It is not our intention here to review this corpus of research. Instead, we focus on research that examines sources of identification in organizations as a means of focusing attention on intergroup contexts, and on research that focuses on organizational communication issues.

Sources of Identification in Organizational Contexts

Individuals in organizations have a range of possible sources of identification available to them. Kramer (1991) represents the individual self at different levels of categorisation, which are similar to, and adapted from, the levels of self-definition described by Turner et al. (1987, p. 45). At the interpersonal level, individuals differentiate themselves from others at the level of personal identity–a self-conception

based on those attributes that establish individual uniqueness. At the intergroup level, individuals perceive themselves (and others) as members of particular categories (groups or subgroups) within the organization. Attributes that are common to members of one group serve to identify them as a group, but also help to distinguish them from members of other groups. In a similar line of thinking, Nkomo and Cox (1996) argue that diversity in organizations is related to diversity of identities based on membership in social and demographic groups as well as organizational groups, and concluded that "the identity of people in organizations is a function of their identity group membership(s) and their organizational group membership(s)" (p. 342). In other words, the intergroup level of comparison is the most salient.

In a recent review, van Dick (2001) identifies a number of primary sources of identification for employees. The work of a number of researchers (e.g., Ellemers, de Gilder, & van den Heuvel, 1998; Roccas, 2003; Roccas & Brewer, 2002; van Knippenberg & van Schie, 2000) suggests that employees may feel attached to different work-related entities at the same time (e.g., career, work unit or team, the organization as a whole, occupational or professional group), and Morgan et al. (2004) report evidence of the influence of extra-organizational sources of employee identification. It is the salience of the source of identification in a particular social context that is likely to trigger group related perceptions and behaviour, including communication.

Other organizational groups may also become sources of identification. Research has investigated the role of professional group (and sub-group) identity in the nursing profession (Millward, 1995; Oaker & Brown, 1986; Skevington, 1981; van Knippenberg & van Oers, 1984) and in journalism (Russo, 1998). Studies have investigated the relationship between professional identity at work and the

proportional representation of women in senior management (Ely, 1994), and the moderating role of occupational (or professional) identification in moderating the relationship between work assignment and organizational commitment (Witt, 1993). Other researchers have attempted to examine the role of multiple group identifications, and to determine the degree of overlap and congruence, or comparison between multiple sources of identification (Bennington, Carroll, Trinastich, & Scott, 2000; Fontenot & Scott, 1999; Foreman & Whetten, 2002; Grice, Jones, Callan, Paulsen, & Gallois, 2003; Morgan et al., 2004; Roccas, 2003; Scott, 1997, 1999; Scott et al., 1999; Scott & Timmerman, 1999). Once again, the issue is one of salience. In some contexts, professional identity rather than the work unit or team may be the primary target of identity (Millward, 1995; Oaker & Brown, 1986; Skevington, 1981; van Knippenberg & van Oers, 1984).

In presenting a case for the primacy of intergroup level categorisation in organizations, Kramer (1991) argues that most employees interact within and across primary organizational groups (usually work units). The interdependence of tasks, coupled with a preference amongst employees for proximal interaction reinforces the importance of this level of categorisation (Ashforth & Mael, 1989). Research supports the assertion that the work unit is a primary target of identification (Barker & Tompkins, 1994; Lembke & Wilson, 1998; Shute, 1997; van Knippenberg & van Schie, 2000). Haslam (2001) argues that this is because a) employees are "more likely to make comparisons between different work groups than between different organizations, and b) sub-organizational identities allow employees to feel that their ingroup is in some way 'special' or distinct from others" (p. 110) (see also Mueller & Lawler, 1999). Individuals are more likely to identify with smaller groups (see also Brewer, 1991), are more likely to have more in common with their work unit than

with the organization as a whole, and spend most of their organizational life in their work units or teams (van Knippenberg & van Schie, 2000). Furthermore, individuals in organizations are more likely to be approached as members of their work unit rather than as members of the organization, and to encounter members of other units rather than members of other organizations (although see the research on boundary spanning activities Bartel, 2001; Cross, Yan, & Louis, 2000; Yan & Louis, 1999). In their study in two separate organizations, van Knippenberg and van Schie (2000) found that employees identified more strongly with their work unit than the organization as a whole and that work unit identification was a significant predictor of job satisfaction, job involvement, and intention to remain in the organization.

A number of important observations arise from the research cited above. Firstly, an understanding of the salience of particular categories is critical for assessing the influence of group identifications on employee outcomes and for an intergroup perspective on communication. For example, in one context, professional identifications may be particularly salient (e.g., in a hospital); in another context, identification with functional units may be important (e.g., in a manufacturing environment). The impact of multiple group identifications in organisational contexts and their influence on communication processes in organizations is an underdeveloped area of research. Such a focus provides great possibilities for the development of new insights into the effectiveness of communication processes in organizations such as supervisor-subordinate communication, communication in and between groups and teams, as well as the communication of organizational change. The challenge for researchers examining organizational communication is to ascertain those groups that are salient to employees, and to assess the group boundaries that effective communication must cross.

Secondly, one of the striking features of the research conducted to date is the limited attention paid to intergroup perspectives in the context of organizational change. The work on organizational restructuring, mergers and acquisitions is one exception (e.g., Haunschild, Moreland, & Murrell, 1994; Jetten, O'Brien, & Trindall, 2002; Kamsteeg, 2003; Terry, 2001; Terry & Callan, 1998; Terry, Carey, & Callan, 2001; van Knippenberg & van Leeuwen, 2001). Organizational life is characterised by change processes including the introduction of new systems, mergers and acquisitions, takeovers, downsizing, or restructuring. As new structures and working arrangements are created, individuals are required to form new groups and teams, as well as different reporting lines or lines of authority. Such changes rearrange the existing order and the connections between units, modify the ways in which each unit is differentiated from others, and alter how individuals and groups relate to each other in the organization. As new groups form during the change process, one of the many challenges for employees in adjusting to the change is to renegotiate their identification with and within the new organization (e.g., see Chreim, 2002). There is still little research that examines the impact of organizational change from an intergroup perspective and the extent to which employees who identify with different groups feel that details of change are communicated effectively to them (Lewis & Seibold, 1998). Again, an intergroup perspective that evaluates the impact of multiple and sometimes competing identities on the communication and implementation of organizational change shows great promise for further contributions to organizational studies (see Hogg & Terry, 2001).

SIT and Intergroup Communication

In a case involving strategic technological change in a service organization, Hutt and colleagues (Hutt, Walker, & Frankwick, 1995) analysed cross-functional

barriers to change as an intergroup communication and change issue involving functional unit identification. In another line of research, Suzuki (1998) has demonstrated that workers' level of identification is related to the perceived adequacy of their communication with both their ingroup and outgroup. Researchers have investigated the role of communication and perceived social support in developing organizational identity amongst virtual workers (Wiesenfeld, Raghuram, & Garud, 1999; Wiesenfeld et al., 2001). Scott and his colleagues (1999) have investigated the role of communication perceptions and multiple identification targets on intent to leave the organization concluding that identifications do influence turnover intent (see also Abrams, Ando, & Hinkle, 1998; Scott & Timmerman, 1999). While there are other studies that have investigated the relationship between group identification and communication processes in organizations (e.g., see Postmes, Tanis, & de Wit, 2001; Scott et al., 1999; Wiesenfeld et al., 1999), more work is needed to investigate this relationship.

If it is true to say that identification in the organization has an explanatory role in understanding organizational dynamics, then it is surprising that relatively few studies have conceptualised the role of organizational and group identification in organizational communication and change processes (Chreim, 2002). As we have argued elsewhere (Gardner et al., 2001), organizational communication research in general has not been driven by an integrated, multilevel theoretical framework that incorporates an intergroup level of analysis. The research instead focuses mainly on interpersonal and organizational levels of analysis. In the next section, we suggest a number of areas of organizational communication research that could benefit from a theoretical framework that adopts an intergroup perspective on organizational

dynamics in order to focus research attention on communication at the intergroup level of analysis.

Areas for Further Research

SIT can provide insights into the difficulties of communication and conflict in and between diverse and cross-functional teams (e.g., see Lovelace, Shapiro, & Weingart, 2001). An intergroup perspective can potentially contribute to the development of effective strategies for maximising the benefits of working in multidisciplinary and diverse teams. The role of intergroup dynamics in virtual teams and computer mediated communication in groups is an open area of research (see work of Spears and colleagues into this issue, e.g., Lea, Spears, & de Groot, 2001).

Applications of network theory to interorganizational communication have been developed (e.g., see Taylor & Doerfel, 2003, on relationship building among NGO's). Strong ties to other organizations can mitigate the impact of uncertainty during change and promote adaptation by increasing communication and information sharing (Kraatz, 1998). Further, networks can enhance the social learning of adaptive responses, rather than less productive forms of interorganizational imitation (see Kenis & Knoke, 2002). However, these approaches do not take account of the dynamics of identification in interorganizational relationships and the influence this may have on communication and the flow of information and knowledge within networks. An intergroup perspective offers a different focus for this research effort.

New work arrangements such as the casualization of the workplace and the increased use of temporary employees can potentially change the psychological contract that employees have with an organization. The identification of 'permanent' versus 'temporary' workers with their employing organization and their work units

will influence employee attitudes, and this has implications for the study of communication and other organizational processes (e.g., Chattopadhyay & George, 2001; Garsten, 2003). Of further interest is the role of telecommuting and the boundary between home and work, particularly the degree to which individuals may differ in the ability to separate and effectively manage their identities as individuals and as organizational members (e.g., Nippert-Eng, 2003).

Knowledge processes in organizations are a major focus in organizational theory and practice (Alvesson, 2000, 2001). Research on the management and transfer of knowledge, and the role of technology and social networks in this process, can be theorised from an intergroup perspective. Further research is required to examine the impact of employee identification on the effectiveness of knowledge processes. An organization's interaction with external stakeholders (Bhattacharya & Mitra, 1998) involves intergroup interactions and would benefit from further application of intergroup perspectives. Similarly, interorganizational communication in strategic alliances, networks and boundary spanning activities (e.g., Bartel, 2001) are intergroup phenomena.

Our contention is that organizational research can benefit greatly from an increased focus on intergroup dynamics and the application of insights derived from perspectives such as SIT. Along with Singelis (1996), we foresee a robust future for the continued application of intergroup perspectives on organizational communication research (Gardner et al., 2001). Furthermore, we see the benefit of applying alternative theoretical perspectives and methodologies. As one example of this, we explore the value of discourse analysis (DA) for developing fresh insights into identities, identification, and intergroup communication.

Identities, Discourse Analysis and Intergroup Communication

SIT provides a useful theoretical framework for improving our understanding of organizational communication from an intergroup perspective. However, it is essentially a theory of intergroup relations and not a communication theory per se. Singelis (1996) argues that research in intergroup communication needs greater consideration of context, an integration of levels of analysis, and an expansion of methodologies. While SIT can provide a useful framework for achieving these goals, communicative interaction is a complex dynamic system, which SIT cannot adequately address on its own. Consequently, it would be instructive to integrate SIT with insights derived from other communication theories and methodologies in order to better understand the dynamics of intergroup communication. Applications using an integrative framework such as Communication Accommodation Theory are an example of this effort (e.g., Gardner & Jones, 1999).

As a cognitive approach, SIT generally conceives of collective identities in terms of shared conceptions of a group in the minds of group members. Another way to think about how groups represent their identities is to examine the ways in which group members represent themselves based in their talk, conversations, or production of texts (e.g., see Morgan et al., 2004). Discursive approaches conceive of collective identity as a discursive object embodied in talk and other forms of text rather than a cognitively held belief (Hardy, Lawrence, & Grant, in press). Such approaches do not focus primarily on the attentions and attitudes of individuals, rather they focus on observable linguistic practices and the effects of these on social relationships and action (Ainsworth & Hardy, 2004). Collective identity is situated in the language in use amongst members rather than in a degree of convergence across the minds of individuals (Hardy et al., in press). A focus on the role of discourse in the construction of identities allows researchers to examine ways in which discourse frames intergroup

communication. Further, the analysis of organizational discourse provides an avenue to investigate the construction of organizational identities and the interdependence of communication in organizational contexts (Grant, Keenoy, & Oswick, 1998).

As we have argued above, a significant amount of communication in organizations can be considered as intergroup communication. It is important to recognize that when individuals interact, they also interact as group members, and in so doing represent the interests of their groups. An examination of the language used or the texts produced in the acts of communicating can reveal the extent to which group memberships frame the discourse between individuals and groups and provide referents for the construction of meaning. Communication is a reflexive process of meaning making that helps to define and redefine our experiences as well as the way we relate to one another. The ways in which people make meaning also define and delineates the multiple social domains, or discourse communities, which they both inhabit and produce (Graham & Paulsen, 2002). As a result, communication reflects, shapes and reshapes our identities. The discourse we use and the discursive strategies we adopt are a clue to the ways in which we define our group memberships and ourselves.

In recent years, organizational scholars have begun to draw on discursive approaches for expanding the study of organizational identities and identification (Grant, Hardy, Oswick, & Putnam, 2004; Putnam & Fairhurst, 2001). The role of language and discourse in identity construction has been well established, although applications of these perspectives to organizational contexts are more recent. The literature contains a wide diversity of discourse analytic approaches, and a number of reviews of the application of discursive processes to organizational contexts have been conducted (Alvesson & Kärreman, 2000; Fairhurst & Putnam, 2004; Grant et al.,

2004; Iedema & Wodak, 1999; Putnam & Fairhurst, 2001). In the remaining section of this chapter we examine the ways in Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) in particular may complement SIT approaches for the analysis of group identities and intergroup communication. We believe that there is considerable potential for CDA methods to contribute to the analysis and development of SIT concepts in organizational studies. While SIT and CDA overlap in their research and conceptual interest in organizational issues, there is more divergence in the dominant methods used to examine organizational aspects of identity formation and management. While discursive approaches to studying organizational identification and communication issues have been developed (e.g., see Ainsworth & Hardy, 2004; Alvesson, 2001; Barker & Tompkins, 1994; Cheney, 1983a, 1983b; Fairhurst & Cooren, 2004; Fiol, 2002; Iedema, Degeling, Braithwaite, & White, 2004; Iedema & Scheeres, 2003; Scott et al., 1999; Tompkins & Cheney, 1983), there is relatively little research in the area that utilizes the detailed qualitative analytical tools of CDA.

Critical Discourse Analysis as a Tool for Social Identity Analysis

The complementarities between SIT and CDA are both theoretical and methodological. While it would be misleading to present CDA as a "unified church", we can identify key theoretical assumptions that are identical with those of SIT: that human social systems of all sorts are comprised of sub-systems, each of which is key in the development of identity and identification; that these sub-systems, or groups, can be antithetically or sympathetically related, and the character of groups' relatedness changes according to internal and external influences; that the constitution of groups is both contextual and historical; that the character of relatedness between groups is also an essential part of identity formation; that relative power and status between groups is a determining factor in how those groups relate; that the effects of

proximity and intensity upon group interactions are unpredictable; and that group identity is manifest in the attitudes, behaviors, and understanding expressed by group members.

The clearest theoretical disjunction between CDA and SIT is in the directionality of analysis into the relationship between social and individual phenomena. Being primarily psychological in its provenance, SIT places empirical emphasis on the individual, beginning and returning to that sociological point as an anchor (although this was not the intention of early SIT theorists, see Hogg & Williams, 2000). Conversely, with its provenance in critical social science and anthropology, CDA typically privileges the social unit over the individual and moves inwards and outwards from that point in its analytical trajectories. While there are fundamental differences between SIT and CDA, it is not our purpose to discuss those here. We wish to emphasize complementarities rather than tensions between SIT and CDA, and we see the disjunctions identified above as much as potential points of departure for the development of complementary syntheses between SIT and CDA as potential sources of perceived incompatibilities. Our purpose is to identify ways in which CDA and SIT can complement each other.

First, CDA is ethnographic, dynamic, internalist (or 'immanent'), and concerned with seeing text-in-context (here we use 'text' in its broadest sense). As a dynamic perspective on the social implications of meaning making, CDA is useful for seeing manifestations of organizational change, the attitudes expressed therein, potentials for successful interventions in potentially destructive situations, and potential spaces for change in organizational relations. Second, CDA is explicitly concerned with discerning relations of power and how these affect social dynamics, an essential focus for any study of organizations in a global context characterized by

rapid changes in power relations. Third, CDA is concerned with identifying the historical layering of intergroup interactions – it is an historicized, contextualized, and grounded approach to understanding how groups of people historically constitute themselves. It therefore provides ways of seeing processes of identification (and disidentification) between and within groups over time.

CDA is a sociolinguistic endeavor. For the most part, it has its foundations in anthropologically developed, functionalist theories of language. At the heart of CDA is an assumption that human social organizations are constituted, coordinated, and maintained, and changed by meaning (meant here as a verb). Social systems of all sorts are seen as meaning systems, and groups of people are recognizable as such primarily by the way they represent themselves and others, or, to put it another way, how they represent their group (ingroup) in contradistinction to another (outgroup). At the most subtle and fundamental levels, the way we speak both organizes and expresses our realities and those of the groups we inhabit. CDA can therefore provide a useful and complementary suite of tools for the analysis of social identities.

At a methodological level, SIT and CDA are also complementary. The notion of texturing can help SIT to complement, balance, and bridge the psychological dimension with the social, if and when necessary. It can also add a distinctly qualitative dimension to analysis. Each group (re)creates itself through unique means of expression, by engaging in more or less regular patterns of actions, and by deploying unique combinations of modes of speech. These complex combinations of expression, actions, and modes manifest themselves in the particular patterns through which groups and organizations quite literally reproduce and transform themselves whilst remaining quite recognizably themselves—organizations maintain their social

identity through the generic texturing of their members' experiences (Lemke, 1995, p. 31-32).

Whereas SIT may be criticized for a tendency to under-theorize social context from the strong historical and socially grounded perspective of CDA, CDA may be criticized from a SIT perspective for its lack of rigor in sampling, measurement, and significance testing. While some SIT theorists see the potential for systemic functional linguistic approaches to the analysis of social identity, there is an overwhelming reliance on quantitative methods to capture identification constructs in SIT. Group membership has often been defined or manipulated in experimental settings in order to test assumptions based on SIT. Strength of identification with particular groups in organizational contexts is most often captured through self-reports in survey instruments. Both approaches have much to gain from each other in offsetting these methodological differences. The 'thick' descriptions provided by qualitative methods, combined with the discipline of measurement required by quantitative approaches, provides a sound basis for grounding research in the 'real life' context of organizations.

How might CDA assist the conceptual and methodological development of SIT and the study of intergroup communication? One way in which CDA might assist these endeavors is an approach based on the work of Jay Lemke (1995), though numerous other models might be equally as effective. The theoretical model emphasizes the sociality of discourse; its socially delineating, transformative, and (re)productive force; and the force of the social group in preserving knowledge, recruiting some persons and rejecting others, subtly imposing ways of seeing, being, and representing upon its members. As we have outlined elsewhere, the approach is organized around the concepts of *presentational*, *orientational*, and *organizational*

meaning (Graham & Paulsen, 2002, p. 446). An analysis of texts can reveal how a specific community typically describes and relates elements of its world (presentational meaning), how members of a discourse community evaluate their world (orientational meaning), and that which provides a text with coherence (organisational meaning). These different aspects of meaning – the presentational, orientational, and organisational – happen at once in any given instance of meaning-making, and are best seen as interdependent conveniences for analysis. The approach can reveal key values that inform the actions and meanings of actors, as well as the ways in which particular groups or discourse communities shape meaning and define their memberships.

Just as these dimensions of meaning can help anchor SIT's individual more firmly to their social contexts, the inverse theoretical move entailed by SIT in the course of analysis—the move from individual to group to individual—can help CDA to better explain social change by more clearly specifying the role of individual creativity in the transformation of social identity (see Ellemers, 1993; Tajfel & Turner, 1979). In fact, the synthesis of CDA and SIT provides extra theoretical dimensions to the concept of social identity. SIT's theoretical orientation allows CDA to see group identities manifested in the activities of particular persons as they move through their dynamic complex of group contexts. CDA's emphasis on the primacy of the social allows analysis of group identity at the group level, not as a theoretical abstraction arrived at inductively from observing the actions of individuals that constitute a given group, but as a concrete system of actions that is realized through the patterned actions of people who are, in turn, socialized and written upon by their groups to the degree that they literally embody their group membership. Such a synthesis permits a view of polysemic personalities alongside the polysemic groups of

people who constitute ever-changing organizations. It therefore permits an especially dynamic view of social dynamics at the intergroup level.

Integrating SIT and CDA

A theoretical and methodological synthesis of SIT and CDA offers a powerful approach to understanding intergroup communication in an organizational context. Despite fundamental paradigmatic tensions, we argue that the two approaches can complement each other without necessarily subordinating or reducing one approach to the other. In other words, we are arguing that an integration of perspectives derived from SIT and CDA can help clarify further the role of individuals and groups in the formation of social identities at multiple levels of human existence. Further, by combining the analytical movements peculiar to each approach, intergroup communication researchers can achieve a finer-grained analysis in respect of reproductive and transformative practices within organizations.

The quantitative analyses of SIT can complement CDA's qualitative methods, and vice versa. CDA offers rigorous and fine-grained tools for identifying the qualitative aspects of group membership but has been criticized for its seeming arbitrariness in text selection and other sampling issues. Conversely, SIT has developed rigorous statistical tools for modeling quantitative expressions of identity and intergroup communication. Taken together, SIT and CDA offer a powerful combination of analytical tools and theoretical advances that neither abolishes nor discounts either group or individual agency, and which can potentially combine qualitative and quantitative methods to comprehend past, present, and future dynamics in intergroup communication contexts such as organizations.

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