
On Being Both With Us and Against Us: A Normative Conflict Model of Dissent in Social Groups

Dominic J. Packer

The Ohio State University

Although past research has demonstrated a positive relationship between collective identification and normative conformity, there may be circumstances in which strongly identified members do not conform but instead choose to challenge group norms. This article proposes a normative conflict model, which distinguishes between nonconformity due to dissent (challenging norms to change them) and nonconformity due to disengagement (distancing oneself from the group). The normative conflict model predicts that strongly identified members are likely to challenge group norms when they experience conflict between norms and important alternate standards for behavior, in particular when they perceive norms as being harmful to the group. Data in support of the model are reviewed, mechanisms by which external variables may influence dissent in social groups are elaborated, and the model is linked to contemporary perspectives on collective identity.

Keywords: *social identity; collective identification; norms; conformity; dissent; deviance*

It is easier to say what loyalty is not than what it is. It is not conformity. It is not passive acquiescence to the status quo. . . . It is the realization that America was born of revolt, flourished on dissent, became great through experimentation.

—Henry Steele Commager (1947)

The dissenting spirit stands with the party of things-as-they-might-become. . . . Dissent is what rescues democracy from a quiet death behind closed doors.

—Lewis H. Lapham (2004)

It is interesting to compare the statements of these two contributors to *Harper's Magazine* with most contemporary

social psychological and sociological perspectives on deviance. Commager and Lapham asserted that dissent is a mark of loyalty to a group, that dissenters act to improve their groups and as such have the interests of their groups at heart. In contrast, the social science literature tends to assume (at least tacitly) that it is individuals who are weakly identified with their groups, who care the least, who are the most likely to deviate from group norms (e.g., Blanton & Christie, 2003; Ellemers, Spears, & Doosje, 2002; Hare, 1962; Hovland, Janis, & Kelley, 1953; Johnston & White, 2003; Spears, Doosje, & Ellemers, 1997; Terry & Hogg, 1996; White, Hogg, & Terry, 2002; cf. Hornsey, 2006). In a dramatic summary of this perspective, sociologist Albert Cohen (1966) began his classic book on deviance by stating that “the subject . . . is knavery, skullduggery, cheating, unfairness, crime, sneakiness, malingering, cutting corners, immorality, dishonesty, betrayal, graft, corruption, wickedness, and sin” (p. 1). These are certainly not the sorts of behaviors one would expect of strongly identified group members, at least with respect to their own groups!

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Empirical evidence demonstrates that there is indeed a positive association between the extent to which someone identifies with a group and the likelihood that they will conform to the norms of that group. In other words, strongly identified group members do behave, on average, in a manner more consistent with salient group norms than do weakly identified members (e.g., Johnston & White, 2003; Terry & Hogg, 1996; Terry, Hogg, & White, 1999; White et al., 2002). This article explores a possible exception to this general rule: the special case of strongly identified group members who choose to deviate from group norms. The failure to consider these cases may be the result of faulty syllogistic reasoning. Even if all conformers are strongly identified group members (not true as it turns out; see Jetten, Branscombe, Spears, & McKimmie, 2003; Jetten, Hornsey, & Adarves-Yorno, 2006), it does not necessarily follow that all strong identifiers conform or that all nonconformists are weakly identified. It is my contention that strongly identified group members do, on occasion, choose to deviate from their groups if they believe that group norms are harmful to the group and that they do so in the hope of changing the collective in ways that they perceive as being better for the group (see also Hirschman, 1970; Hornsey, 2006; Kelley & Shapiro, 1954; Moscovici & Faucheux, 1972; Nail, MacDonald, & Levy, 2000).

It could perhaps be argued that deviance in service of a group is a relatively contemporary notion; after all, democracy, which is dependent on the expression of a multiplicity of opinions to function, is a modern experiment. As such, dissent may simply be a current cultural value, advocated in particular by Western philosophers and political commentators (e.g., de Tocqueville, 1856; Heath & Potter, 2004; Klein, 2000; Thoreau, 1849). On the other hand, history is replete with dissenters stretching back far beyond the modern era and in very different cultural circumstances. Consider Socrates, Jesus Christ, Martin Luther, Thomas Beckett, Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, Joan of Arc, and even the Dixie Chicks: None of these people can be accused of deviating in a time or a society in which it was easy or acceptable to do so. At the same time, none of them can be described as unidentified with or uninterested in their groups. To quote Socrates immediately before he was sentenced to death for being a corrupting influence on the young, "Men of Athens, I honour and love you, but I shall obey God rather than you . . . and I believe that no greater good has ever happened in the State than my service to the God" (as cited in Russell, 1946/1996, p. 93).

Laboratory studies often observe high levels of conformity to a wide variety of social norms, including norms regarding visual perception (e.g., Asch, 1956; Sherif, 1967), littering (e.g., Cialdini, Reno, & Kallgren,

1990), eating behavior (e.g., Herman, Roth, & Polivy, 2003), and prejudice (e.g., Crandall, Eshleman, & O'Brien, 2002; Ford & Ferguson, 2004). That said, most if not all conformity studies also have a subset of "annoying" participants who do not conform to the norm (see Hornsey, Majkut, Terry, & McKimmie, 2003). Indeed, in the original Asch conformity studies (1956, 1962), only 30% to 40% of participants conformed to group pressure on any given trial, and the modal response across all trials was nonconformity (see Hodges & Geyer, 2006). Likewise, more than 35% of participants disobeyed the orders of an experimenter to shock a fellow participant in Milgram's (1963) baseline obedience experiment (Miller, Collins, & Brief, 1995; Packer, 2007a).

There is also clear evidence that deviant individuals and subgroups can have a substantial influence on their groups. Taking again the example of Asch's (1962) conformity studies, the presence of a single nonconforming other all but eliminated conformity among experimental participants (Allen & Levine, 1968). Similar effects were observed in Milgram's (1974) obedience experiments, and a long tradition of research on minority influence demonstrates that subgroups expressing deviant opinions exert an indirect but potentially powerful effect on the attitudes of others (e.g., Moscovici & Faucheux, 1972; Moscovici & Nemeth, 1974; see Wood, Lundgren, Ouellette, Busceme, & Blackstone, 1994, for a review). Importantly, whereas conformity may result in group-think and suboptimal decision making (Janis, 1972), the expression of deviant opinions appears to have a beneficial effect on group-based decisions (e.g., De Dreu, 2002; De Dreu & West, 2001). There is good reason, therefore, to believe that nonconformity represents a significant aspect of group behavior and that its prevalence and importance may, with some important exceptions, generally be underestimated and understudied. Although a certain amount of research examines how groups respond to nonconformist members (e.g., see Hornsey, 2006; Tata et al., 1996; Wood et al., 1994, for reviews), much less attention has been paid to factors that may motivate members to challenge their groups. Indeed, it is not unreasonable to think that Moscovici and Faucheux's (1972) sentiments are as applicable today as they were more than 30 years ago when they stated that "it is seldom even considered that the individual might ask himself: 'What should I do in order to make the majority adopt my point of view? How can I change the conceptions of the members of the group?'" (p. 151).

This article presents a novel normative conflict model of dissent that strives to predict the conditions under which strongly identified group members may choose to deviate from, rather than conform to, group

norms. I relate the model to other frameworks in the literature and review preliminary evidence for the central tenet of the normative conflict model, namely that strongly identified group members are willing to challenge norms when they perceive those norms as being harmful to their groups. I conclude by outlining a number of theoretical nuances and extensions of the normative conflict model, including the potential influence of external variables, and I link it to contemporary perspectives on collective identity.

PREDICTING DISSENT: THE NORMATIVE CONFLICT MODEL

Tajfel (1981) defined social identity as “that part of an individual’s self-concept which derives from his knowledge of his membership in a social group (or groups) together with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership” (p. 255). Models of collective identification tend to share the two facets implied in Tajfel’s original definition (although they sometimes contain others as well; see Ashmore, Deaux, & McLaughlin-Volpe, 2004, for a review), which can be termed *cognitive* and *emotional identification*, respectively (Ellemers, Kortekaas, & Ouwerkerk, 1999). Cognitive identification refers to the extent to which people classify or define themselves as a member of a particular group, and it is influenced by both the chronic and the contextually variable salience of an identity (Turner, 1982; Turner, Oakes, Haslam, & McGarty, 1994). Emotional identification refers to the feelings that people have about their membership in the group and reflects a sense of affective commitment to the group. Measures of collective identification typically contain items related to both cognitive and emotional identification, and these facets tend to be highly correlated (e.g., Correll & Park, 2005). As such, consistent with Tajfel, collective identification can be conceptualized as the value placed on membership in a group with which one has self-categorized.

When a valued social identity is salient, individuals are posited to act in a manner that is consistent with the prototype of a typical group member. Self-categorization theory refers to this as *depersonalization*, “the process of ‘self-stereotyping’ whereby people come to perceive themselves more as the interchangeable exemplars of a social category than as unique personalities defined by their individual differences from others” (Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher, & Wetherell, 1987, p. 50). Depersonalization can thus account for the positive relationship often observed between identification and conformity to group norms; norms outline typical or appropriate patterns of behavior and define how depersonalized members should act

in the context of valued groups (e.g., Abrams, Wetherell, Cochrane, Hogg, & Turner, 1990; Haslam et al., 2006; Hogg & Turner, 1987). Importantly, however, collective identification may have consequences in addition to depersonalization. Strongly identified group members are motivated to attain and maintain a positive identity for their group (Tajfel, 1981) and, more generally, to act in the best interests of their group (even when it involves harming their own personal interests; e.g., Haslam et al., 2006; Van Vugt & Hart, 2004; Zdaniuk & Levine, 2001). For this reason, strongly identified group members may do more than simply treat group norms as guides to behavior; they may also be capable of evaluating the ramifications of norms for the identity and interests of the group.

Consistent with this, Louis, Taylor, and Neil (2004) demonstrated that, in addition to self-stereotyping in response to norms, strongly identified group members also engage in group-level cost-benefit analyses regarding different courses of action (see also Louis, Taylor, & Douglas, 2005). In these studies, strongly but not weakly identified group members’ behavioral intentions were predicted by their estimates of how various actions would affect the group; importantly, that the influence of group-level concerns was independent of personal-level cost-benefit analyses as well as the extent to which actions were considered to be normative. Given that group members are capable of weighing the costs and benefits of group-relevant behaviors, I suggest that a desire to serve the best interests of their groups can motivate strongly identified members to stop behaving like prototypic exemplars of their groups and, instead, deviate from group norms if they perceive a good reason for doing so.

What reasons might strongly identified group members have for deviating from group norms? Blanton and Christie (2003) noted a distinction between deviance that violates “norms of correctness” (p. 127), which is generally punished by the group, and deviance that occurs when someone behaves in a rare but socially desirable way, which may be rewarded by the group (e.g., outstanding athletic or intellectual performance). The organizational behavior literature makes a similar distinction between positive and negative deviance (e.g., Spreitzer & Sonenshein, 2004). In both literatures, positive or desirable deviance is deviant in a numerical (or descriptive) sense but is normative in the sense that it is broadly consistent with the ideals of the group and is likely to be approved of (Warren, 2003). This type of deviance tends to be motivated by a desire to set oneself apart from the group but in a way that results in praise, positive social comparisons, and increased acceptance by the group (see also Abrams, Marques, Bown, & Dougill, 2002; Hornsey & Jetten, 2004). As such, positive deviance can be conceptualized as a type of superconformity to group norms as opposed to a violation of them.

In contrast, I propose that nonconformity that (intentionally) violates group norms occurs when group members perceive conflict between the norms of the group and another standard for behavior. These conflicts represent disjunctions between the behavior of the group and how one believes members of the group should behave. Perceptions of normative conflict give rise to negative appraisals of the group's current behavior, which can range in severity such that norms may be perceived as irritating, counter-productive, dangerous, harmful, or immoral (e.g., Iyer, Schmader, & Lickel, 2007). Thus, whereas a desire to surpass or exceed group norms motivates positive deviance, perceptions of normative conflict motivate behavior in a direction away from group norms.

Whereas some researchers differentiate between types of deviance, others make distinctions between different types of norms. According to Cialdini et al. (1990; see also Kallgren, Reno, & Cialdini, 2000), descriptive norms represent behavioral base rates (e.g., most people litter), whereas prescriptive norms represent agreed-on conceptions of how people should behave (e.g., most people believe that they should not litter). On occasion, a group's descriptive norms fail to match or live up to its prescriptive norms; to the extent that this type of discrepancy gives rise to perceptions of normative conflict, it may be widely shared by group members, and deviance from descriptive norms in this situation may be similar to the notion of desirable or positive deviance described above. For instance, initiating a campaign to reduce litter is likely to be rewarded in a group that litters but holds a prescriptive norm against littering. More relevant to this discussion and dissent in particular are instances of normative conflict in which an individual's prescriptions for the group (conceptions of how it should behave) are nonnormative; that is, they are discrepant both from current group behavior (descriptive norms) and how the group generally believes it should behave (prescriptive norms).

Sources of Normative Conflict

If normative conflict is defined as a perceived discrepancy between the current norms of a group and another standard for behavior, it is worth considering where these alternate standards might come from. It is my contention that normative conflict often arises from inconsistencies between aspects of identity, either between separate identities held by the individual or within the group identity itself.

Human identity is multifaceted; people possess multiple personal, interpersonal and collective selves, which vary not only in terms of the way the self is conceptualized but also in terms of their standards for behavior

(Amiot, de la Sabionnière, Terry, & Smith, 2007; Ashforth & Johnson, 2001; Baldwin, 1999; Brewer & Gardner, 1996; Chen, Boucher, & Parker Tapias, 2006; Festinger, 1950; Higgins, 1987; Hovland et al., 1953; James, 1890; Merton, 1968; Roccas & Brewer, 2002; Sherif & Sherif, 1967). The norms for behavior in a friendship group may, for example, be quite different from the norms in a work group. At times, individuals are able to shift smoothly between identities, unbothered by inconsistencies between the standards that these identities hold for behavior. At other times, however, inconsistencies between different aspects of self may be more problematic (e.g., Amiot et al., 2007; Ashforth, 2001; Ashforth, Kreiner, & Fugate, 2000; Biddle, 1986).

I propose that normative conflict can arise when individuals perceive discrepancies between a group norm and other, inconsistent aspects of their identities. For instance, a particular group norm may conflict with personal aspects of self (e.g., personal values). Consistent with this notion, Hornsey et al. (2003) found that individuals with a strong moral basis for their beliefs were less likely to shift their attitudes in response to normative pressure than were individuals without a moral basis for their beliefs. Similarly, normative conflict may arise from other group memberships; that is, individuals may reject one group's norm because they accept another group's conflicting norm (Biddle, 1986; Merton, 1968; Sherif & Sherif, 1967; Warren, 2003; Willis, 1965). As Cooley (1902) noted, nonconformity "may be regarded as a remoter conformity. The rebellion is only partial and apparent; and the one who seems to be out of step with the procession is really keeping time to another music" (p. 301).

In both of the cases above, alternate standards for behavior are imported into a group from other identities; however, normative conflict may often come from within the group itself. In particular, individuals may feel that the group is failing to live up to its own standards and values (e.g., Sani & Reicher, 1998, 1999; Sani & Todman, 2002). As Merton (1968) put it, this response is often "described as 'reactionary,' particularly when it constitutes an effort to re-introduce values which have been superseded or have simply fallen into neglect" (pp. 413-414). Similarly, Reicher and colleagues (Reicher, 2004; Reicher & Hopkins, 1996) have pointed out that social identities are not static entities; rather, they are continually contested and negotiated by group members. Within any group there is rarely a single notion of what the group should be and how it should behave. Individual members as well as subgroups within a larger group often have different ideas about the group's ideal identity, which they vocalize, debate, and attempt to implement (see also Hornsey, 2006; Postmes, Baray, Haslam, Morton, & Swaab,

2006). As such, group members are likely to be exposed to alternate standards for behavior within the group itself, which may give rise to normative conflict.

One might expect there to be a negative correlation between identification and perceptions of normative conflict. That is, strongly identified group members may be less likely than weak identifiers to detect or be concerned about conflict between group norms and other standards for behavior. To the extent that a group membership is a particularly important part of someone's identity, the standards for behavior set by that group may be relatively more imperative to them than standards associated with other aspects of his or her identity (e.g., personal values, norms of other groups). As such, discrepancies between group norms and alternate standards for behavior may be experienced as less worrisome and worthy of correction by strongly rather than weakly identified group members, which may, in part, explain the persistent positive relationship observed between identification and conformity (e.g., Hovland et al., 1953; Terry & Hogg, 1996). That said, the normative conflict model is premised on the notion that strong identifiers are capable of detecting and responding to normative conflict; indeed, if and when they perceive normative conflict, strong identifiers are likely to be particularly mindful of the problems that norms may pose for their groups (Hornsey, 2006).

The Impact of Normative Conflict on (Non)Conformity

The central hypothesis of the normative conflict model posits that perceptions of normative conflict moderate the relationship between collective identification and conformity to group norms. As outlined above, the more someone identifies with a group, the more motivated they are to behave in a manner consistent with collective interests (e.g., Haslam et al., 2006; Lewis et al., 2004; Tajfel, 1981). Speaking figuratively, when they find themselves in a collective context, strongly identified group members are posited to ask themselves, "What is the best thing I can do for the group in this situation?" As such, when individuals experience little or no conflict with group norms, the standard relationship between identification and conformity is expected to hold. Strong identifiers are expected to conform to group norms because normative behavior is perceived as being in the best interests of the collective; weak identifiers are, on average, less likely to conform because they tend to care less about the interests of the group.

Importantly, however, when perceptions of normative conflict are high, strong identifiers are not expected to necessarily conform more than weak identifiers. If strongly identified group members believe that certain

norms are inconsistent with the best interests of the group, they may, in fact, be motivated to deviate from those norms. Thus, both strongly and weakly identified group members are expected to display nonnormative behavior in response to normative conflict, albeit for different reasons. According to the normative conflict model, weak identifiers are motivated not to comply because they are concerned about other aspects of their identity with which a norm is inconsistent, whereas strong identifiers are motivated not to comply because they care about the group and believe that a norm is harmful for the collective.

As shown in Figure 1, crossing collective identification with normative conflict (i.e., plotting their interaction) gives rise to four rough quadrants, each of which can be described in terms of likely responses to group norms (i.e., conformity versus nonconformity) as well as the motives underlying those reactions. The labels applied in each quadrant are intended to capture a sense of both the behaviors and the motives of individuals within them. The term *dissent* describes nonconformist reactions motivated by a desire to change group norms and initiate improvement within a group. Dissent is predicted among strongly identified group members perceiving high levels of normative conflict; that is, when members disagree with the norm(s) of a group but when the group remains important to them. In this situation, strongly identified members may challenge group norms with the goal of changing them for the benefit of the collective (see also Hornsey, 2006; Kelley & Shapiro, 1954; Nail et al., 2000). For example, a strongly identified citizen who believes that her country's foreign policy is harmful to the group (e.g., is damaging the country's reputation or is needlessly endangering the lives of fellow citizens) may challenge her country's current policies by engaging in political protest in an effort to initiate change. Thus, strongly identified group members may engage in dissent as a means of supporting their group.

In contrast, *disengagement* describes nonnormative responses motivated by a desire to distance oneself from a group or perhaps even exit it entirely. Disengagement is predicted among weakly identified group members perceiving high levels of normative conflict. In this situation, group members disagree with the norm(s) of a group that is not particularly important to them. Rather than challenging a norm to effect collective change, weakly identified members are expected to distance themselves from the group (e.g., Merton, 1968; Prislum & Christensen, 2005; Sani & Todman, 2002; Sherif & Sherif, 1967). The activeness with which an individual pursues disengagement likely varies along a continuum (e.g., Farrell, 1983; Hirschman, 1970); for instance, disengagement may

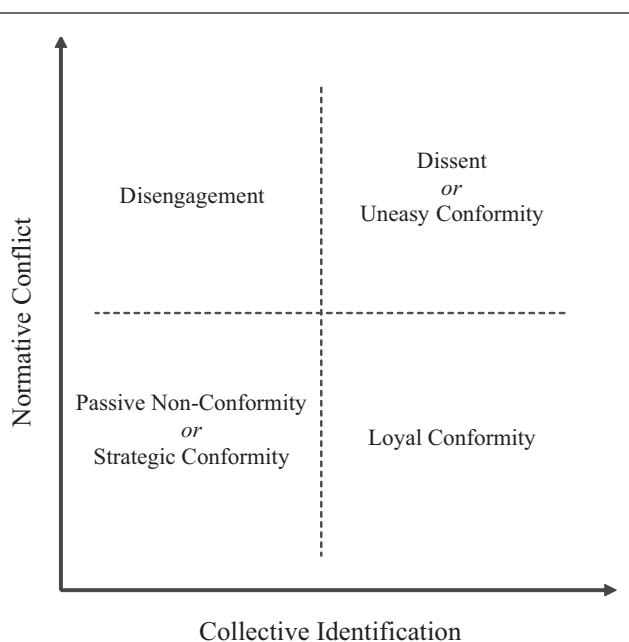


Figure 1 The normative conflict model.

simply involve the neglect of group-related obligations. Alternatively, disengagement may entail active attempts to physically exit or secede from the group (Merton, 1968; Prislin & Christensen, 2005; Sani & Todman, 2002; Sherif & Sherif, 1967; see also Crocker & Knight, 2005). Taking again the example of a citizen concerned about foreign policy, to the extent that she is weakly identified with her country, normative conflict may result in reduced civic participation (e.g., render her less likely to vote), reduced willingness to label herself as a citizen, and perhaps even an attempt to emigrate elsewhere.

It is important to reiterate that the psychological experience of normative conflict that motivates nonconformity among strong versus weak identifiers (i.e., that motivates dissent versus disengagement) is likely to be quite different. Strong identifiers are expected to challenge group norms when they believe that those norms are harmful to the group in some way; that is, they deviate with the goal of helping, improving, or protecting the group. Weak identifiers, on the other hand, are less likely to be concerned about whether norms are detrimental to the group. Instead, they are likely to deviate from group norms when they believe that those norms are harmful to some other, more important aspect(s) of their identity; perhaps in particular when they believe that norms are detrimental to their own personal interests. This is in contrast to strong identifiers, for whom perceiving that a group norm is harmful to their personal interests is unlikely to motivate dissent (e.g., Van Vugt & Hart, 2004).

Additional responses to group norms are predicted at low levels of normative conflict. When there is little normative conflict, strongly identified group members are predicted to engage in *loyal conformity*, conformity motivated by a desire to support the group. This is akin to the ideal situation for a group member: One is happy to conform to the norms associated with a valued group. A somewhat different response is predicted among weakly identified group members experiencing low levels of normative conflict. In general, these individuals are expected to behave in a manner consistent with other, more important aspects of their identity (e.g., norms associated with other group memberships or their own personal values). This type of behavior is termed *passive nonconformity* because it does not reflect a direct reaction or opposition to group norms (in contrast to the more active nonconformity of disengagers and dissenters). Instead, passive nonconformity is a symptom of the fact that weakly identified group members care little for the group's interests and are unlikely to invest substantial amounts of time or energy into complying with the group's norms. As such, passive nonconformity tends to be unrelated or indifferent to group norms.

It is interesting that weakly identified individuals may, on occasion, also engage in *strategic conformity* if they believe that there is something to be gained conforming to group norms. Rather than being motivated by a desire to support the group (as with loyal conformity), strategic conformity is motivated by benefits that may accrue to the individual. Jetten et al. (2003), for example, found that when members on the periphery of a group anticipated becoming more accepted by the group, they were more willing to engage in group supportive behavior; importantly, however, they were only willing to do this when their behavior could be observed and thus rewarded by the other members of the group (Jetten et al., 2006).

Cost-Benefit Analyses and Uneasy Conformity

The possibility for both nonconformity and conformity among weak identifiers experiencing little normative conflict illustrates that specific configurations of identification and normative conflict are not necessarily associated with a single type of response. This is also the case among strongly identified group members experiencing normative conflict. As discussed, dissent against group norms is predicted to be most likely when levels of collective identification and normative conflict are both high. Dissent is by no means a foregone conclusion in these circumstances, however. A great deal of research has documented the negative responses of groups to nonnormative behavior by their members (Emerson, 1954; Hare,

1962; Israel, 1956; Schachter, 1951; cf. Hornsey, 2006; Hornsey, Oppes, & Svensson, 2002). A meta-analysis by Tata et al. (1996) concluded that there is a strong tendency for deviates to be more rejected than conformist group members. Research on the black sheep effect has further shown that in-group members who deviate from group norms are regarded more negatively than members of an out-group behaving in exactly the same fashion (e.g., Abrams, Marques, Bown, & Henson, 2000; Marques & Yzerbyt, 1988; Marques, Yzerbyt, & Leyens, 1988). As such, the decision to dissent against group norms is not one to be taken lightly.

To the extent that strongly identified group members are concerned about maintaining their status as accepted members of the group or are worried about rejection (e.g., Downey & Feldman, 1996; Levy, Ayduk, & Downey, 2001), the potential negative reactions of fellow group members may serve to inhibit dissent. Indeed, any decision to dissent likely weighs the potential benefits of nonconformity (i.e., the possibility of improving a beloved group) against the potential costs of nonconformity, which include rejection and exclusion (Hirschman, 1970; Homans, 1958; Hovland et al., 1953; Miceli & Near, 1984).¹ To the extent that changing group norms is perceived to be achievable and the likely costs of nonconformity are perceived to be small, individuals may choose to dissent. For this reason, dissent is most likely when there are (semi)legitimate means of challenging group norms. Many groups do provide outlets (e.g., authorized protests, suggestion boxes) and roles (e.g., union representatives, journalists) for at least mild expressions of dissent (e.g., De Dreu, De Vries, Franssen, & Altink, 2000). Much of the time, however, individuals may anticipate that high costs in terms of resistance and rejection will result from efforts to change group norms. As a result, some strongly identified group members may spend time in a state of *uneasy conformity*, in which they comply with norms that they disagree with because the perceived potential benefits of violating those norms are too low relative to the potential costs (see also Farrell, 1983; Hirschman, 1970). Thus, *uneasy conformity* is associated with a desire to change the group but an inability or unwillingness to engage in the nonnormative behaviors required to do so.

Consistent with the idea that strongly identified group members will vary in their willingness to express dissent, Kelley and Shapiro (1954) observed that individuals who placed higher (relative to lower) value on a group displayed greater variability in conformity behavior when conformity was detrimental to group performance on a visual judgment task. They inferred that norms that harm group performance in this type of task place strongly identified group members in a “conflict situation,” in

which some strong identifiers “resolve the conflict in favor of the norm while others resolve it in favour of the physical evidence” (p. 677). At some level, the notion of a cost–benefit analysis is metaphorical; I do not mean to imply that individuals necessarily deliberately or consciously tally lists of pros and cons to reach some sort of optimal or rational decision. Rather, the idea of a cost–benefit ratio provides a useful heuristic for understanding why some strongly identified group members dissent in response to normative conflict and others do not and remain in a state of uneasy conformity. Different types of people in different situations are expected to vary with regard to the attention they give to potential costs versus benefits as well as how they weight them. Someone with an abject fear of rejection (e.g., Downey & Feldman, 1996; Levy et al., 2001), for instance, is unlikely to consider the potential benefits of dissent. On the other hand, someone who fears rejection somewhat less may strive to balance his or her qualms with the hope that attempts to change the group will succeed (see the section on external variables for elaboration).

The cost–benefit approach can also be applied to the model’s other quadrants, and doing so reveals certain similarities between cells. Although strong identifiers experiencing low normative conflict and weak identifiers experiencing high normative conflict are obviously in dramatically different situations, there is an interesting symmetry between them. In both cases, there is an alignment between individuals’ preferred responses to group norms (i.e., how they are motivated to respond) and the contingencies associated with those responses. Strongly identified group members experiencing low levels of normative conflict are motivated to comply with group norms and are likely to be rewarded by the group for doing so. Weakly identified group members experiencing high levels of normative conflict are motivated not to comply with group norms and either do not care about negative reactions from the group or find those reactions rewarding because they are consistent with a goal of increasing distance from the group. The alignment between preferred responses and their consequences in these two quadrants suggests that the behavior of group members in these cells is likely to be relatively stable across time and situations (within individuals) as well as between individuals; that is, cost–benefit analyses are generally going to come out in favor of the preferred response.

For individuals in the other two quadrants, however, the alignment between preferred behaviors and group-related contingencies is likely to be less stable and more situationally determined. As discussed above, strongly identified group members experiencing high normative conflict may desire to challenge and change group norms but must weigh this goal against possible negative reactions by

their group; depending on the circumstances, individuals in this quadrant may either engage in dissent or remain in a state of uneasy conformity. Conversely, weakly identified group members experiencing low normative conflict are generally unmotivated to conform to group norms, and they are less likely to do so to the extent that conformity imposes costs in terms of effort or time. However, in certain circumstances, these individuals may anticipate rewards as a consequence of their conformity; as such, individuals in this quadrant may shift between passive nonconformity and strategic conformity depending on the perceived consequences of these responses. The shifting contingencies associated with conformity versus nonconformity in these two quadrants suggest that the behavior of group members in these cells is likely to be relatively unstable; the cost–benefit ratio associated with a particular response is likely to vary as a function of context as well as individual differences. For example, a strongly identified group member experiencing normative conflict may feel comfortable expressing dissent in the company of certain group members and not others, depending on their anticipated reactions; thus, the same individual may sometimes be observed to dissent and at other times conform to group norms.

Interdependency Between Identification and Normative Conflict

The normative conflict model's two predictor variables, collective identification and normative conflict, have thus far been described as if they were more or less orthogonal to one another. It is important to note, however, that these variables may actually be related in at least two ways. As described above, there may be a negative correlation between identification and perceptions of normative conflict. In addition, there may also be an asymmetry between strongly and weakly identified group members in terms of the effects of normative conflict on nonconformity. That is, the amount of normative conflict that is required to trigger (active) nonconformity may be dependent on individuals' levels of collective identification. Weakly identified group members may possess a lower tolerance for discrepancies between group norms and important alternate standards for behavior. As such, relatively low levels of normative conflict may be enough to shift weak identifiers from relatively passive forms of nonconformity (or strategic conformity) to the more active forms of nonconformity that characterize disengagement from the group. In contrast, the amount of perceived normative conflict required to shift a strongly identified group member from loyal conformity to dissent (or from uneasy conformity to dissent) may be significantly larger. Because strongly identified group members value their group membership and are more likely than

weakly identified members are to be concerned about the negative consequences of nonconformity (e.g., rejection), they may be reluctant to challenge group norms unless they perceive those norms as particularly egregious.

Summary and a Caveat

The normative conflict model predicts that group members engage in behaviors that actively oppose group norms when they experience high levels of normative conflict. The model proposes, however, that the type of nonnormative behavior displayed will differ depending on the extent to which the individual identifies with the group. If individuals are strongly identified, the model predicts that they are more likely to engage in acts of dissent in an effort to change objectionable norms for the benefit of the group. If, on the other hand, they are weakly identified, individuals are expected to disengage and distance themselves from the group. According to this model, acts of nonconformity motivated by a desire to set oneself apart from the group (either positively in the case of socially desirable deviance or negatively in the case of disengagement), due to unawareness of or lack of concern for group norms, or simply due to a general pigheadedness, are not considered to be acts of dissent. Rather, dissent refers to nonnormative action intended not only to challenge but also to change group norms. Like Commager (1947) and Lapham (2004), I propose that individuals who dissent do so because they care about the group and that dissent is intended as an act of loyalty rather than treachery. I suggest that strongly identified individuals will sometimes dissent from the group when they believe that a norm is harmful to the collective and that they hope by doing so to bring about change to the group and its norm(s).

It is important to clarify how exactly dissent is an act of loyalty. According to the normative conflict model, dissent is loyal in a psychological but not necessarily an objective sense; that is, dissenting individuals act according to what they believe is best for the group, regardless of whether this is actually the case. There is nothing intrinsically moral or righteous about the dissenter; indeed, from the perspective of other group members, as well as outside observers, dissent may often appear to be motivated by blatantly misguided or immoral principles. For every dissenter who can be extolled as a virtuous force for positive change (e.g., Martin Luther King Jr.), there is a dissenter who can legitimately be damned as an impetus for evil (e.g., Adolph Hitler). In both cases, however, the psychology of dissent is posited to be similar; King and Hitler both acted to change beloved groups in ways that they believed were for the best. As such, the model is value neutral; normative conflict can arise from any set of alternate

behavioral standards and is not a phenomenon intrinsic to a particular type of philosophy or political agenda (see the section on political orientation for elaboration).

EVIDENCE FOR THE MODEL: DO STRONGLY IDENTIFIED GROUP MEMBERS DISSENT?

The hypothesized responses of group members within three of the normative conflict model's four quadrants are relatively uncontroversial. As reviewed above, the oft-observed positive relationship between collective identification and conformity to group norms (e.g., Hovland et al., 1953; Terry & Hogg, 1996) is captured by the model in terms of the posited passive nonconformity and loyal conformity responses. Recent work by Jetten and colleagues (2003, 2006) has identified an important qualifier of this relationship; specifically, weakly identified group members have been shown to engage in strategic acts of conformity when conformity to group norms has the potential to benefit them personally. There is also growing evidence consistent with the prediction that weakly identified members may disengage in response to conflicts with their groups. Haslam et al. (2006) found, for instance, that members who were experimentally induced to feel weakly identified with a group displayed less ongoing commitment than strong identifiers to a group project, particularly as they began to encounter difficulties and incur costs (see also Kelley & Shapiro, 1954). Research has also shown that weak identifiers are more motivated than are strong identifiers to leave a low-status group for a higher status one (i.e., engage in individual mobility in an attempt to increase their own status; e.g., Ellemers, Spears, & Doosje, 1997). Weak identifiers are more likely to leave a group when doing so has personal benefits (Van Vugt & Hart, 2004); indeed, even when leaving a group entails personal-level costs, weak identifiers are more likely to do so than are strongly identified group members (Zdaniuk & Levine, 2001). Further research is required to directly assess the impact of perceived normative conflict on the responses of weak identifiers; however, findings in the literature to date are broadly consistent with the model's predicted disengagement response.

With respect to dissent, there is certainly no lack of rhetorical support for the contention that strongly identified group members do, on occasion, challenge group norms as a means of trying to help or improve their groups. As illustrated by several of the eminent personalities quoted above, politicians and writers (as well as social scientists) frequently justify challenges to the status quo by stating that dissent is motivated by a desire to improve a beloved group. In an eloquent example of this tradition, Senator Fulbright (1966) accounted for his criticism of American foreign policy thus:

To criticise one's country is to do it a service and pay it a compliment. It is a service because it may spur the country to do better than it is doing; it is a compliment because it evidences a belief that the country can do better than it is doing. (p. 25)

A recent content analysis of online Web sites found that these sorts of arguments are not limited to public figures (Packer, 2007b; Packer & Chasteen, 2007). The advent of the personal Web site (e.g., blog) has created an entirely new form of communication via which ordinary people can make their opinions, thoughts, and ideas freely (albeit potentially anonymously) available to the entire world. A sample of Web sites containing phrases related to collective identification was coded for the presence or absence of a challenge to the status quo within the author's group. More than 65% of Web sites expressing feelings of collective identification used identification as a justification for some type of opposition to their group (e.g., "I oppose the war because I love my country"). In contrast, Web sites invoking a lack of identification (e.g., "because I hate my country") as a reason for nonconformity were extremely rare (less than 5%).

It is not possible to infer motivational causality from this data; that is, we cannot be sure that strong feelings of identification necessarily motivated expressions of nonconformity as predicted by the normative conflict model. It may be that some of the expressions of identification observed among famous deviates as well as online Web sites represent a rhetorical strategy to justify acts of nonconformity that are actually motivated for other reasons (e.g., personal gain). However, the results of recent experiments support the hypothesis that collective identification may, on occasion, motivate dissent (Packer, 2007b; Packer & Chasteen, 2007). In two studies, strongly (but not weakly) identified group members were more willing to challenge a group norm after having thought about why the norm might be harmful to their group. Importantly, however, nonconformity did not increase among strongly identified members who thought about the negative consequences that a norm might have for individuals but not the group as a whole. These results demonstrate that strongly identified group members are responsive to a very particular type of normative conflict; that is, they are willing to challenge a group norm when it is perceived as harmful to their group but not when it is perceived as having negative individualistic consequences. Further research is obviously required to examine the decision-making processes underlying dissent as well as the hypothesized tension between dissent and uneasy conformity (some evidence for which has been presented above; see Kelley & Shapiro, 1954). However, the results of these experiments, which are among the

first to examine dissent empirically, provide promising support for the model.

OBSERVABLE DIFFERENCES: OPERATIONALIZING RESPONSES TO GROUP NORMS

The normative conflict model's predictions regarding behavior at varying levels of collective identification and normative conflict have to this point been described in conceptual terms, focusing on the motives underlying different types of conformity and nonconformity. It is, however, worth considering in more detail the manner in which posited responses to group norms may be manifested, with particular attention to their observable and distinguishing characteristics. The model outlines six types of responses to group norms: three varieties of conformity (loyal, strategic, and uneasy) and three varieties of nonconformity (passive, dissent, and disengagement). Hypotheses regarding several observable differences between these responses are summarized in Table 1, and collectively they provide an operational profile for each type of response. In particular, the behavioral manifestations of responses are expected to be influenced by the goals that underlie them; that is, the particular goals that group members hope to achieve by engaging different types of conformity or nonconformity are likely to shape the manner in which these responses are enacted and expressed.

For instance, the motivation underlying individuals' responses may affect the specificity of their reactions to group norms. If dissent is indeed an act intended to benefit the group by changing it, dissenters are presumably only interested in challenging those norms that they regard as objectionable. That is, individuals who reject a particular group norm but who still desire to support and remain a member of the group are only likely to act against a limited subset of the group's norms; they are still likely to (loyally) conform with group norms in other domains. On the other hand, individuals who are in the process of disengaging or who have disengaged from the group are likely to violate a wider set of group norms, regardless of whether they strongly disagree with all of them. As noted above, disengaging individuals may actively challenge group norms to distance themselves from the group. Similarly, passive nonconformity may entail deviance from a wide gamut of group norms; however, rather than reflecting active opposition, this type of nonconformity results from a general disinterest in group norms. These individuals deviate simply because the group's norms do not serve as a guide to their behavior (i.e., their behavior is not driven by the norms of a group they consider unimportant). A similar analysis can be applied to differences between types of

conformity. Loyal and uneasy conformity should be marked by compliance with a wide range of group norms, whereas individuals are likely to strategically conform only to those norms with which they believe compliance is most likely to be noticed and rewarded.

The motives underlying different responses may also have an influence on the style with which individuals interact and communicate with their groups. For instance, the manner in which dissenters and disengagers challenge group norms is likely to differ dramatically. Dissenters are interested in challenging group norms not to alienate themselves from the group but in order to persuade others to think critically about and alter their own behavior. For this reason, I predict that non-compliance among dissenters will be greatest when they have an opportunity to explain why they are behaving in that manner and why they are challenging the norms of the group. I would further expect dissenters to accompany acts of nonconformity with expressions of ongoing concern for and loyalty to the group; in particular, criticism of group norms is likely to focus on their negative consequences for the group as a whole. Consistent with this, Hornsey and colleagues have found that group members' reactions to criticism of their group are more positive to the extent that criticism is perceived as being constructive and well intentioned (Hornsey, 2006; Hornsey & Imani, 2004; Hornsey et al., 2002). On the other hand, disengagers should be relatively unconcerned about the impression their nonconformity makes and may even actively attempt to incur the disapproval of other group members to facilitate their disengagement. Thus, any communication they make regarding nonconformity is likely to be more destructive than that of dissenting group members; that is, disengaging individuals are more likely to criticize norms without providing an explanation and are more likely to disparage the group while doing so. Interestingly, because their goals tend to be unrelated to the group in question, passive nonconformists may be unlikely to communicate with the group at all regarding their nonconformity.

Again, predictions can also be made regarding differences between conformity responses. Like passive nonconformists, loyal conformists may feel little need to communicate with the group regarding their behavior; conformity represents the standard response for strongly identified group members and little explanation is required. This is markedly different from the likely communication style of individuals engaged in strategic conformity. These weak identifiers do not typically concern themselves about conforming to group norms; however, they have temporarily decided to do so in the hope that their conformity will be rewarded by the group. To increase the likelihood of their conformity being noticed and rewarded, strategic conformers may display an ingratiating

TABLE 1: Observable Differences Predicted Between Responses to Group Norms

	<i>Nonconformity (NC)</i>			<i>Conformity (C)</i>		
	<i>Dissent</i>	<i>Disengage</i>	<i>Passive Nonconformity</i>	<i>Uneasy Conformity</i>	<i>Loyal Conformity</i>	<i>Strategic Conformity</i>
Underlying goal	Change or improve group	Distance self from group	Unrelated to group	Change or improve group	Support group	Personal gain
Specificity	NC limited to specific norms	NC to a wide range of norms	NC to wide-range of norms	C to a wide range of norms	C to a wide range of norms	C limited to specific norms
Communication style	Constructive	Destructive	None	Tentative	None	Ingratiating
Visibility	NC greater under high visibility	Unaffected	Unaffected	C greater under high visibility	Unaffected	C greater under high visibility

communication style, expressing heightened or even exaggerated concern for and loyalty to the interests of the group. Finally, I would suggest that the style of communication associated with uneasy conformity might be characterized as tentative or exploratory. Uneasy conformity is predicted among strongly identified group members who wish to challenge a group norm but are currently inhibited by the potential costs of doing so. As such, they may engage in attempts to assess the severity of the potential costs of dissent by inquiring into the opinions of other group members as well as expressing limited or qualified opposition to the norm to get a sense of others' likely reactions.

Along similar lines, it is interesting to consider the impact of visibility (i.e., public vs. private settings) on the behavior of individuals in each of the four quadrants of the model. Strategic conformers, for instance, who are predicted to engage in normative behavior when it has the potential to benefit them, are most likely to comply with norms when their behavior is visible to other members of the group. In a private setting, however, when their compliance cannot be observed or rewarded by other members of the group, strategic conformers are less likely to follow the norms of the group (Jetten et al., 2003, 2006). Interestingly, the opposite pattern might be observed among dissenters. If dissent is indeed an act intended to change the norms of the group, dissenting individuals should be most interested in displaying nonnormative behavior when the visibility of that behavior is high; noncompliance is only likely to have an impact when other group members are able to observe it. Importantly, however, this should only be the case once individuals have actually decided to dissent. Among individuals who are in state of uneasy conformity because the feared costs of nonconformity (e.g., rejection) are overly high, visibility is likely to inhibit a transition to dissent. Thus, somewhat paradoxically,

visibility to other group members may on average serve to inhibit dissent, but once a decision to dissent has been made, visibility may actually increase the activeness with which it is pursued.

Differences between public and private settings are unlikely to have much of an impact on the behavior of loyal conformers, passive nonconformers, or individuals disengaging from the group. Loyal conformers are likely to conform to group norms regardless of whether other group members can observe their behavior. On the other hand, passive nonconformers, who do not use group norms as guides to behavior, and disengagers, who are attempting to distance themselves from the group, are likely to behave in a nonnormative fashion in both public and private contexts, although disengagers may display more active or vocal nonconformity in public.

RELATION TO OTHER MODELS

The normative conflict model is informed by and augments other models in the literature. Merton (1968), for instance, distinguished between norms having to do with the overall goals of a group (or society) and norms specifying the appropriate means of achieving these goals. He noted that individuals may deviate from one or both types of norms. Paralleling this model's distinction between dissent and disengagement, Merton differentiated between deviates who rebel against norms to change them and deviates who retreat from norms to avoid them. Given his sociological perspective, Merton's examples of retreat tend to apply to individuals on the fringes of society (e.g., the homeless, vagabonds, drug addicts). Applied to a more micro group-based level, however, one can see that individuals may retreat from the norms of a particular group while remaining engaged with the norms of other groups as well as society at large.

Building from older taxonomies (e.g., Hare, 1962; Kelman, 1958; Moscovici, 1980; Willis, 1963, 1965), Nail et al. (2000) recently proposed a four-factor model, outlining 16 possible responses to social pressures. Their model classifies individuals' responses in terms of their public versus private opinions and behaviors before versus after a social influence attempt. Some reactions (e.g., independence and anticonformity) correspond to the normative conflict model's dissent and disengagement responses; however, the mapping is far from perfect, in part because Nail et al.'s (2000) model is intended to capture a much wider range of social behavior, including (non)conformity in group contexts and also (non)compliance to authority, minority influence, and contagion processes.

The normative conflict model differs from these models primarily with regard to the motivational role it posits for collective identification—in particular, how varying levels of collective identification are expected to interact with the experience of normative conflict to motivate different types of conformity and deviance. Whereas Merton (1968), Nail et al. (2000), and others provide useful taxonomies for classifying responses to normative pressure, this model generates specific predictions about the circumstances and goals that are likely to give rise to particular types of responses within social groups. Thus, although the types of behavior predicted by the normative conflict model are not new (or necessarily comprehensive), this model builds on previous work to elaborate how individuals' relationships with their social groups are likely to affect their reactions to group norms.

The normative conflict model is most similar in this regard to models outlining responses to dissatisfaction (e.g., Farrell, 1983; Hirschman, 1970; Rusbult, Zembrodt, & Gunn, 1982). According to Hirschman's (1970) Exit-Voice-Loyalty (EVL) model, which has primarily been applied to workplace contexts (and, more recently, personal relationships), individuals who are dissatisfied with aspects of an organization can respond in one of three ways: They may leave the organization (exit), express their concerns to relevant parties in the hope of instigating change (voice), or remain silent but committed (loyalty). The EVL model's exit response is analogous to the most active form of the normative conflict model's disengagement reaction, and voice may correspond to dissent. Similarly, this definition of loyalty can be construed as related to the state of uneasy conformity, when group members experience high levels of normative conflict but are not comfortable expressing dissent.²

Importantly, Hirschman (1970) also proposed a second and somewhat inconsistent conceptualization of loyalty, such that loyalty is defined as an attitude or attachment to an organization that predisposes individuals to engage in voice rather than exit in response to

dissatisfaction. Defined in this way, loyalty bears an obvious resemblance to collective identification in the current model. The existence of two distinct definitions of loyalty has caused some confusion in the EVL literature, with some researchers focusing on loyalty as a behavioral response and others viewing loyalty as moderating the relationship between dissatisfaction and behavior (see Leck & Saunders, 1992; Minton, 1992; Withey & Cooper, 1992). Recent extensions of the EVL model have included both constructs; Leck and Saunders (1992), for instance, suggested using the term *patience* to capture Hirschman's behavioral concept of loyalty while continuing to use *loyalty* to refer to the "attitudinal state that mediates the exit-voice decision" (p. 220). Alternately, in Rusbult et al.'s (1982) extension of the EVL model to personal relationships, the term *loyalty* captures the passive behavioral response a notion of *investment* approximates Hirschman's attitudinal loyalty construct. In this conceptualization, the likelihood of exit, voice, or loyalty responses is predicted in part by the individual's investment in the organization or relationship; higher levels of investment are associated with a greater likelihood of voicing concerns or remaining silent but committed (Farrell & Rusbult, 1992).

It is important that the construct of collective identification applied in the normative conflict model differs somewhat from the EVL model's notion of attitudinal loyalty or investment. The EVL approach tends to assume an individualistic economic-like decision-making process, such that individuals who are dissatisfied with a job or relationship act to improve the return on their personal investment. If they do not have much invested, individuals may choose to cut their losses and respond with exit; if they have invested a great deal, they may opt not to lose sunk costs by remaining silent or, alternately, trying to improve the situation (e.g., Farrell & Rusbult, 1992). Thus, even when it comes to voicing concerns in an effort to improve a group, the focus tends to be on maximizing personal gain or satisfaction. To quote Hirschman (1974) himself,

If active concern with the public happiness can on occasion be felt as a benefit and as an important contribution to the *private happiness* [italics added] rather than a subtraction from it and as a cost, then voice will have an occasional edge over exit in those situations that clearly impinge on the public happiness." (p. 10)

In contrast, the normative conflict model adopts a social identity perspective, which assumes that strongly identified group members are operating at a collective rather than personal level of identity (Brewer & Gardner, 1996; Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Turner et al., 1994). Strongly identified members are expected to behave in a

manner that, in their estimation, is likely to most benefit the group rather than maximize their personal well-being (see Louis et al., 2005). At times, collectively motivated decisions (both loyal conformity and dissent) may actually be detrimental to individuals' personal interests (e.g., Van Vugt & Hart, 2004; Zdaniuk & Levine, 2001). As discussed, to the extent that strongly identified members are concerned about personal costs, these likely have to do with the implications of their behavior for acceptance or rejection by the group.

Thus, the two models can be distinguished in terms of their predictions for strongly identified (normative conflict model) versus loyal or invested (EVL model) group members. According to the normative conflict model, strongly identified group members must perceive norms as harmful to the group to muster the motivation to challenge them. The normative conflict model does not predict, for instance, dissent among strongly identified group members who are dissatisfied with the level of respect they are personally receiving from fellow group members unless lack of respect is regarded as a violation of an important standard and perceived as harmful to the group. In contrast, the EVL model implies that perceiving norms or other aspects of group behavior as personally harmful should be sufficient for loyal individuals to challenge them. The EVL model remains an enormously useful framework for understanding and predicting change attempts; however, it is my contention that the current model clarifies the loyalty construct by interpreting it through the lens of social identity theory. In particular, the normative conflict model assumes that group members are willing to engage in dissent to the extent that belonging to the group forms an important part of their identity. Likewise, by addressing many of the phenomena and ideas discussed by Hirschman (1970) and his colleagues that have often been overlooked in the social identity tradition, the normative conflict model contributes to an increasingly sophisticated understanding of collectively motivated behavior.

PREDICTING A TRAJECTORY: FROM DISSENT TO DISENGAGEMENT AND ON TO REVOLUTION

According to the normative conflict model, dissent is motivated by a desire to help, protect, and improve one's group. A pressing question is, therefore, What happens in cases when dissent is met by rejection? A number of researchers have suggested that collective identification is related to the perceived utility of membership in a group or the extent to which a group satisfies a variety of needs or motives (e.g., Correll & Park, 2005; Hovland et al., 1953; Sherman, Hamilton, & Lewis, 1999). Sherman et al.

(1999), for instance, coined the phrase *social identity value* to refer to the benefits that individuals perceive themselves as gaining from their membership in a particular group (e.g., status, belonging, resources, etc.). Given that the need to belong and to be accepted by others is a powerful psychological motive (e.g., Baumeister & Leary, 1995) and that dissent often decreases the extent to which an individual is accepted by the group, over time dissent may result in a reduction of the value of the group and, consequently, the individual's level of identification with it. Put more simply, if their efforts to change the group are consistently rebuffed, individuals are likely to grow discouraged and come to care less about the group. The normative conflict model predicts that, if identification decreases while normative conflict remains high, individuals will eventually shift from a strategy of dissent to one of disengagement. Consistent with this, Sani and Todman (2002) found that clergy's perceptions of an inability to voice disagreement with new group norms regarding the ordination of female priests predicted their intentions to leave the Church of England (see also Dyck & Starke, 1999; Prislun & Christensen, 2005; Sani & Reicher, 1999). Similarly, Barreto and Ellemers (2002) observed reductions in identification among individuals whose self-chosen identities were not respected by their group (see also De Cremer, 2002).³

As the group's ability to meet the psychological needs of the individual is reduced, the individual may begin to look elsewhere for his or her satisfaction. One obvious place to look is within the group for like-minded individuals who share similar concerns about group norms. As the larger group ceases to satisfy motivations for acceptance and belonging, the individual may find solace in being accepted by a subgroup with norms that conflict less with important alternate standards for behavior (e.g., Jetten, Branscombe, Schmitt, & Spears, 2001; Sani & Todman, 2002; Sherif & Sherif, 1967). Over time, the individual may shift his or her allegiance entirely to the subgroup and move from a position of individual dissent to one of loyal conformity toward the new group. These may be the humble beginnings of revolutionary groups, which define their identity within the context of and in opposition to the identity of a larger and older group (e.g., Hofstadter, 1964; Merton, 1968). If a revolutionary subgroup reaches some sort of critical mass, I predict that nonconformity will come to be motivated less by individual dissent and more by intergroup conflict. Once a dissenting subgroup has reached a certain size, strength, or legitimacy, it can challenge the norms of the larger group not only by choosing to behave differently but also by force. At this point, we can expect a power struggle between factions for control of the identity of the larger group (e.g., Hornsey & Hogg, 2000; Mummendy & Wenzel, 1999). The revolutionary group

challenges the status quo, which in all probability is supported by another (reactionary) subgroup within the larger group. Interestingly, this suggests that, whereas individual dissenters are likely to be concerned about coming across as constructive in their criticism (e.g., Hornsey, 2006), there may be an increase in aggressive and derogatory behaviors as opposition to group norms shifts from an intragroup to an intergroup phenomenon. Subgroups may fight for control of the identity of the superordinate group with any and all of the intergroup strategies available, including stereotyping, derogation, discrimination, repression, and open conflict.

WHEN DISSENT AND DISENGAGEMENT FROM THE GROUP ARE DISSENT AGAINST THE SYSTEM

Research on system justification theory has demonstrated that the identities of single groups are embedded in larger social systems (Jost & Banaji, 1994; Jost & Burgess, 2000; see also Coser, 1956). Individuals have a stake not only in the status and circumstances of their groups but also in the stability and continuation of the overall system. These dual concerns can lead the members of a low-status group, for instance, to feel ambivalence toward their group, which they simultaneously like because it is an ingroup but dislike because it is not valued within the larger system (Jost & Burgess, 2000). Similarly, work by Fiske, Cuddy, Glick, and Xu (2002) has demonstrated that stereotypes about a group are a function of where that group stands relative to other groups in the system (i.e., relative levels of status and competitiveness determine perceptions of competency and warmth; see also Turner et al., 1994). When a low-status group attempts to gain higher status (e.g., female suffrage, the civil rights movement), it is effectively challenging its place within the social system, a challenge that may or may not be readily accepted by the system at large. In this way, when individuals (or a subgroup) seek to change the norms of a group to which they belong, they may run up against not only the status quo within the group itself but also the status quo within the larger social system. If, for example, individuals dissent against a group norm that they feel degrades the identity of their group, they can expect resistance from other groups in the social system (seeking to maintain their relative status; see Branscombe, Ellemers, Spears, & Doosje, 1999) as well as, potentially, from inside their own group. For this reason, dissent by members of low-status groups may represent a particularly courageous act.

Thus far, I have made the assumption that disengagement is always a viable alternative to dissent in the event of high normative conflict. However, which groups individuals are

and are not identified with is not solely a matter of their own choosing (e.g., Appiah, 2005; Branscombe et al., 1999). This is particularly true in the case of visible minorities, who are likely to go on being labelled as members even if they have psychologically disengaged from their groups. Indeed, it may be argued that disengagement is not a feasible option for the members of visibly distinguishable groups; what use is it to say one is not a member of a group if everyone insists otherwise? If individuals seek to cross what has been deemed an impermeable boundary, they again find themselves in opposition to the larger social system, which quite literally provides them with nowhere else to go. The inability to fully disengage from a group may, on occasion, force weakly identified group members into positions of dissent, whereby they seek to change for the better the identity of the group in which they are stuck. (See Hirschman, 1970, for an in-depth discussion of the relationship between disengagement/exit opportunities and dissent.)

Social identity theory (Tajfel, 1981; Tajfel & Turner, 1979) posits three strategies available to members of low-status groups who wish to improve their social status: namely, individual mobility (i.e., moving from a lower to a higher status group), social creativity (i.e., changing the dimensions or targets of intergroup comparisons; e.g., reclaiming historically derogatory labels) and social change or competition (i.e., mobilizing as a group to challenge the current intergroup hierarchy; e.g., civil rights movements). Social change attempts are more likely to the extent that intergroup boundaries are impermeable (i.e., individual mobility is not possible) and the status hierarchy is perceived as illegitimate and potentially changeable. Social change, therefore, can be construed as a type of dissent by a group against the larger social system. Importantly, however, mobilizing a group to take collective action may first require dissent by individuals within the group to alter other members' perceptions regarding the permeability of group boundaries and the legitimacy of the current social system that are inimical to social change attempts (see Taylor & McKirnan, 1984).

INFLUENCE OF EXTERNAL VARIABLES

Although the normative conflict model has been presented as applicable across types of groups and types of people, there are a number of pressure points within the model at which systematic differences between people and groups are predicted to have an impact. Individual, cultural, and situational variables may affect the model's two predictor variables, exerting an indirect influence; external variables may exert an indirect influence on behavior by influencing levels of collective identification

or perceptions of normative conflict. That is, identification and normative conflict may mediate the effects of other variables on (non)conformity. Alternately, individual, cultural, and situational variables may moderate the effects of identification and normative conflict on behavior, in particular by affecting perceptions of the costs versus benefits of different courses of action. Given equivalent levels of identification and normative conflict, different types of people in different situations may vary in the extent to which they perceive their group-related goals as achievable (whether these goals are to change group norms, disengage from the group, be more accepted by the group, etc.) as well as in the costs that they perceive goal-related actions as entailing (see Louis et al., 2005). In summary, external variables are predicted to influence the operation of the normative conflict model in at least three potential ways:

1. They may affect levels of identification with a group.
2. They may affect perceptions of normative conflict.
3. They may moderate the effects of identification and normative conflict on (non)normative behavior by affecting judgments of the costs versus benefits of different courses of action.

As an illustration, past research has observed a relationship between self-esteem-type variables and nonconformity, such that individuals with high levels of self-worth are thought to be more likely to express nonconformity are than individuals with low self-worth (e.g., De Dreu et al., 2000; Santee & Maslach, 1982). Within the context of social groups, this analysis posits that individual and situational variables influence the likelihood of dissent via any or all of the three mechanisms described above. Self-esteem may exert its greatest impact by affecting group members' judgments of the relative costs and benefits of dissent. Individuals with higher levels of self-esteem tend to have a greater sense of self-efficacy (Judge, Erez, & Bono, 1998; Judge, Erez, Bono, & Thoresen, 2002; Tafarodi & Swann, 1995), which may increase perceptions of the likelihood that efforts to influence and change the group will be successful. Conversely, individuals with low self-esteem, who tend to feel less accepted by others (Leary, Tambor, Terdal, & Downs, 1995), may be particularly attentive to the potential costs of nonnormative behavior (e.g., rejection; Downey & Feldman, 1996). Group members with low self-esteem may be especially unwilling to risk further rejection by engaging in dissent and more likely remain in a state of uneasy conformity when levels of identification and normative conflict are high.

Space limitations preclude an in-depth analysis of all possible variables of interest. I outline the potential influence of three external variables that may be of particular importance (status, culture, and political orientation), and discussion

focuses primarily on the effect these variables may have on the likelihood of dissent. It is important that the possibility for three separate mechanisms suggests that the impact of any given individual difference or situational variable has the potential to be quite complex: A single variable may, for instance, simultaneously increase the likelihood of dissent via one mechanism and decrease it via another.

Intragroup Status

All group members are not equal; instead, they vary in terms of the respect they receive from other group members as well as the influence they are able to exert on group functioning (e.g., Brown, 1988; Hogg, 2001; Ohtsubo & Masuchi, 2004). As such, some group members possess what may be regarded as higher status within a group than others. The relationship between status and nonnormative behavior is potentially complex, with status simultaneously increasing and decreasing the likelihood of dissent via different mechanisms. As described above, Correll and Park (2005; see also Sherman et al., 1999) have suggested that identification varies as a function of the extent to which a group satisfies various psychological needs. To the extent that status within a group satisfies needs for such things as self-enhancement (e.g., Tajfel & Turner, 1979) or belonging (e.g., Baumeister & Leary, 1995), high-status members are likely to identify more strongly with a group than are low-status members. For this reason, if high-status group members perceive normative conflict, they may be more likely than low-status members (who should, on average, be less identified) to dissent rather than disengage from the group. Also increasing the likelihood of dissent among high-status (relative to low-status) members may be greater expectations that their dissent will be successful (Hirschman, 1970). Research suggests that high-status members exert more influence on other group members than do lower status members (e.g., Brown, 1988; Sherif & Sherif, 1964; Whyte, 1943), making their dissent more likely to be effective. Similarly, high-status group members are allowed a greater latitude of deviance before being punished by their groups, implying that acts of dissent by high-status members may incur fewer costs than would accrue to lower status members (see Hollander's, 1958, notion of idiosyncrasy credit; Kelley & Shapiro, 1954; Moscovici & Faucheux, 1972).

Importantly, however, the likelihood of dissent by high-status members may be mitigated by the fact that these individuals achieved their status within the bounds of current group norms and by succeeding under the status quo (see Hogg, 2001; Hornsey, 2006). Hogg (2001), for example, posited that group leaders are among the most prototypic of group members and that they exert influence on the group via processes of social

attraction (i.e., people follow them because they exemplify the group prototype). Because they may have gained status by conforming to the current group prototype, high-status members are perhaps less likely than are lower status members to perceive conflict between the norms of the group and other standards for behavior. Furthermore, high-status group members may have a vested interest in maintaining the status quo and may thus be less likely to look for and act on normative conflict. In summary, then, to the extent that they experience normative conflict, high-status group members may be more likely than lower status members to dissent, but their chances of experiencing normative conflict may, in fact, be smaller.

Cultural Differences

In addition to individual-level variables, cultural differences might also be expected to affect the normative conflict model. Recent work in cross-cultural psychology has made much of the distinction between individualistic and collectivistic societies (e.g., Triandis, 1995; cf. Spiro, 1993), and it seems likely that differences along these dimensions (or the similar dimensions of independence and interdependence; Markus & Kitayama, 1991) may affect the extent to which members identify with the groups to which they belong. Individuals who are higher in a collectivist orientation might, for instance, be more motivated by the types of needs (e.g., acceptance) that can be readily satisfied by membership in groups (e.g., Kim & Markus, 1999). Likewise, groups in collectivist societies may be better constituted than groups in more individualistic societies to satisfy individuals' needs (e.g., because they are more cohesive, have a greater impact on daily life, etc.). For both of these reasons, group members in collectivist or interdependent cultures may be, on average, more likely to identify with the groups to which they belong than are group members in more individualistic or independent societies. Consistent with this, Prentice, Trail & Cantor (2004; see also Prentice, 2006) found that (Western) students who scored more highly on a measure of independence tended to belong to more extracurricular groups but felt less embedded in any one of them.

To the extent that levels of collective identification tend to be higher in collectivist societies, loyal conformity may be more likely in these places but this is, of course, codependent on the degree of normative conflict that individuals experience. Generally speaking, research has found that individuals from collectivist (predominantly East Asian) cultures appear to have a stronger tendency to conform to normative standards than do more individualistic North Americans (see Bond & Smith, 1996). However, in circumstances when people from collectivist

cultures experience high levels of normative conflict, this model would predict that they would be more likely to dissent and less likely to disengage from groups than people from more individualistic cultures.

The degree to which group members are bothered by or even notice normative conflict might be influenced by another cultural variable having to do with a multiplicity of selves. As discussed so far, the normative conflict model makes the tacit assumption that people experience conflict between group norms and other standards for behavior as a negative state or at least as something that they want to resolve. As a number of cultural researchers have noted, however, the value placed on the unity and indivisibility of self may be particular to certain cultures; it is particularly important in contemporary Western cultures, for example, for the self to appear stable across time and across contexts (e.g., Campbell et al., 1996; Geertz, 1984; Lakoff, 1997; Tafarodi, Lo, Yamaguchi, Lee, & Katsura, 2004). In cultures where possessing a multiplicity of selves and behaving differently at different times and in different places is not considered unusual or undesirable, discrepancies between the norms of one group and standards for behavior in other contexts may not be experienced as negative in the same way (Tafarodi et al., 2004). Accordingly, dissent is predicted to be a less likely consequence of discrepancies between group norms and other aspects of identity in these cultures.

Finally, cultures (and groups) can differ in terms of the sanctions they impose on nonnormative behavior. As Blanton and Christie (2003) have observed, people are less likely to dissent in cultures in which the punishment for so doing is high. Other cultures may view certain types of nonnormative behavior more kindly and in some circumstances even try to foster nonconformity (e.g., dot-com businesses as well as individualistic cultures more generally), resulting in a paradoxical norm of dissent (e.g., Hornsey & Jetten, 2005; Hornsey, Jetten, McAuliffe, & Hogg, 2006; Jetten, Postmes, & McAuliffe, 2002; Kim & Markus, 1999). Indeed, fostering nonconformity may be important in some settings (e.g., workplaces), given research showing that it can enhance creativity and innovation (De Dreu, 2002; De Dreu & West, 2001; Kelley & Shapiro, 1954). However, even those cultures that believe nonconformity to be a good thing are only likely to let it go so far and will tend to distinguish between desirable and undesirable nonconformity (Blanton & Christie, 2003).

Political Orientation

There may be a tendency among lay and psychological theorists alike to view nonconformity as a phenomenon more intrinsic to politically liberal than politically conservative individuals. In fact, this is one of the most

frequent comments I receive when I describe the normative conflict model to friends and colleagues. I do not believe, however, that this is necessarily the case; rather, I would suggest that associations between nonconformity and liberal versus conservative ideologies depend on the political environment specific to a time and place. In contexts where conservative ideologies and perspectives are dominant, liberals are naturally more likely to come into conflict with and deviate from group norms. However, in contexts where liberal ideologies and perspectives are dominant, conservatives are more likely to experience conflict with and deviate from group norms.⁴ Most psychological research is currently situated in relatively conservative political environments (particularly in the United States), and from this vantage point it may seem that dissent is a predominantly liberal phenomenon. It is, however, worth taking a more historical perspective and recognizing that only 50 years ago the American political environment was significantly more liberal (following Roosevelt's New Deal), and conservatives felt like a marginalized minority (e.g., Barry Goldwater's 1964 presidential campaign; see Dean, 2006).

I suggest that although political ideology does not constrain the experience of normative conflict, it probably has an impact on the type of conflict that individuals experience. It is important when considering the potential impact of political ideologies to separate their contextually variable content (e.g., positions on abortion) from the psychological processes or orientations that may underlie them (see Jost, Glaser, Kruglanski, & Sulloway, 2003). With respect to their core orientations, conservative and liberal ideologies have traditionally been differentiated from one another in several domains, the most psychologically important of which may be their perspectives on human nature and attitudes regarding change. Conservatives are posited to believe that "human nature is corrupt, and therefore . . . reject utopian solutions to social problems." Similarly, they tend to believe that "tradition must be respected, and when change is unavoidable it must be undertaken cautiously" (Dean, 2006, p. 9; paraphrased from Burnham, 1959). In contrast, liberals are thought to believe in the perfectibility or the potential improvement of the human condition via social mechanisms and, as such, embrace possibilities for change. On the surface, then, because dissent is defined as an act intended to change one's group for the better, liberal ideologies seem to provide a more fertile ground within which to foster dissent. Critically, however, conservatives may dissent from change itself; more specifically, they may advocate change back to an earlier, past set of behavioral standards that they perceive as having been better for the group. As Merton (1968) put it, "When nonconformity represents conformity to the values, standards and practices of an earlier condition of

society which are still enduring but not uniformly accepted, it is often described as 'conservatism'" (p. 413). As such, I do not predict relationships between political ideologies and dissent that can be understood without attention to the current political context (i.e., I do not expect political ideologies to exert main effects); indeed, in many contexts, one might expect to observe both conservative and liberal varieties of dissent in which conservatives feel the group has strayed too far from its founding principles and liberals feel that the group has not changed enough.

IMPLICATIONS FOR CONCEPTIONS OF COLLECTIVE IDENTITY

Social identity theory and its descendant, self-categorization theory, propose a qualitative distinction between personal and social identities; personal identities define the self in terms of idiosyncratic traits, whereas social identities define the self in terms of group memberships and features that the individual shares with fellow group members (Tajfel, 1981; Turner et al., 1987). Although the originators of these two theories did not intend to imply that personal and social selves are completely separate entities, functionally antagonistic to one another, this is often how they have been interpreted (see Postmes & Jetten, 2006; Tajfel, 1978; Turner, Reynolds, Haslam, & Veenstra, 2006). There is a tacit assumption that personal identities are unimportant within the context of social groups and that the behavior of one group member is essentially the same as the behavior of any other. Treating personal and social identities as opposite ends of a continuum has led to a relative neglect of the roles that individuals and individuality can play within groups (Postmes & Jetten, 2006). That is, the relationship between groups and individuals has generally been treated as unidirectional: In group contexts, the group is expected to exert a large influence on the identity and behavior of individuals. In contrast, the bidirectional relationship, how individuals influence the identity and behavior of their groups, has received much less attention.

Groups are not isomorphic entities, however. They consist of different people playing different roles and asserting different agendas. There tends, for instance, to be a division of labor within groups (e.g., Baumeister, 2007; Bettencourt, Molix, Talley, & Sheldon, 2006; Bettencourt & Sheldon, 2001); even in large-scale collectives, some members take on leadership roles (e.g., Martin Luther King Jr.), whereas others play the role of follower. Importantly, these differences cannot be accounted for simply by levels of collective identification. Members who identify equally with a group may

take on very different roles and responsibilities. Similarly, group members are not necessarily uniform in terms of their conceptions of and visions for the group. Rather, collective identities are subject to constant contestation and negotiation, in which individual members and sub-groups within larger superordinate groups attempt to shape the group's identity and behavior (e.g., Coser, 1956; Moscovici & Faucheux, 1972; Postmes & Jetten, 2006; Reicher, 2004; Reicher & Haslam, 2006; Reicher & Hopkins, 1996).

Work in the social identity tradition has tended to distinguish between interpersonal behavior (which occurs when personal identities are salient) and intergroup behavior (which occurs when social identities are salient). However, the possibility for differences among group members as well as the potential for individuals to influence their groups recently led Postmes and Jetten (2006) to propose a third type of intragroup behavior:

In intragroup behavior (as in interpersonal behavior) the individual remains a significant factor, but (unlike in interpersonal behavior) their contribution is evaluated in terms of the framework of a shared identity. Intragroup behavior is, therefore a dialogue between group members concerning their group. (pp. 264-265)

The normative conflict model addresses behavior at this intragroup level. It is concerned with attempts by strongly identified group members to change their groups when they believe that the behavior and norms of their groups are harmful to collective interests. As such, it attends to the potential influence that individual members can have on their groups, and it elucidates the circumstances under which people cease behaving like prototypic, depersonalized exemplars and, instead, assert alternate standards for behavior that they believe are more productive, beneficial, or moral than current group norms.

Recent research in the interpersonal domain has suggested that individuals possess relational selves, which "reflect who a person is in relation to his or her significant others" (Brewer & Gardner, 1996; Chen et al., 2006, p. 153; see also Baldwin, 1999). Relational selves are cognitive conceptions of the self within the context of specific relationships, which may assimilate the self and other (i.e., represent their similarities) as well as contrast the self and other (i.e., represent their differences). A similar analysis could be applied to collective selves, such that collective identities consist not only of the knowledge that one belongs to a group (Tajfel, 1981) but also conceptions of who one is in relation to the group. As such, in addition to containing information about what it is to be a prototypic group member, collective identities may also represent information about the qualities that make one unique and

about one's specific role within the group, allowing for both assimilative and contrastive processes.

Conceptualizing collective identity as an understanding of who I am within particular groups can account for stability as well as flexibility in self across contexts. Even within the context of a specific group, I carry with me certain idiosyncratic characteristics, beliefs, and values that can influence the way I interact with and behave in the group. My identity-related task as a group member is to determine how I fit into the group and the role(s) that I should play there. If I am strongly identified with the group, this will generally entail behaving in a manner that furthers group interests, which at times may involve assimilating myself to the group (e.g., presenting a unified front to an out-group) and at other times may involve contrasting myself to other group members and contributing my unique talents (e.g., taking a leadership role; Bettencourt et al., 2006) or perspectives (e.g., dissenting).

This perspective also aligns with a recent model addressing the processes that allow different (social) identities to be integrated into a coherent sense of self (see Amiot et al., 2007). Conflict between a particular group identity and other aspects of self can trigger various intrapersonal cognitive strategies (e.g., invoking a superordinate identity), which serve to resolve inconsistencies via a reconstrual of the identities involved. Importantly, however, the motivation to reconcile discrepant aspects of self may, on occasion, go beyond cognitive strategies and trigger active, behavioral attempts to actually change an identity. When, as in the case of social groups, identities are shared with others, successful change attempts may require acts of dissent (see also Hornsey, 2006; Postmes et al., 2006; Reicher, 2004; Reicher & Hopkins, 1996).

CONCLUSIONS AND DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

In response to criticisms of his administration, President George W. Bush recently stated that it was "patriotic as heck to disagree with the President," but he went on to say that it was unacceptable for people to play politics (Bumiller, 2005). A slight refinement of his previous "you are either with us or against us" (2001) assertion, President Bush appeared to suggest that criticism of one's own group (country in this case) is acceptable so long as it does not entail an attempt to actually exert influence on policy or change the status quo. The implication, of course, is that any criticism that is motivated by a desire to initiate change is unpatriotic. I would suggest that social psychological models that do not attend to the potential for nonconformity

among strongly identified group members risk validating the questionable assumptions of the Commander in Chief. Perspectives that view nonconformity as the prerogative of individuals who care little for their groups and conformity as an inevitable consequence of strong identification are inherently conservative (i.e., opposed to the possibility of change), as they do not recognize the potential for principled attempts to influence the status quo (see Billig, 1976; Reicher & Haslam, 2006). More troubling from a scientific perspective, these models cannot capture or account for the full breadth of human behavior in group contexts.

The normative conflict model is intended to fill this gap in current theorizing on the relationship between identification and (non)conformity. I have outlined predictions regarding the circumstances in which strongly identified group members may be expected to challenge group norms—specifically, when they believe that those norms are harmful to the group in some way. By this definition, dissent is a psychologically loyal act (Commager, 1947; Lapham, 2004). Importantly, the normative conflict model is consistent with recent theorizing on intragroup behavior and the influence that individuals can have upon their groups. It is my hope that the ideas outlined herein will serve to inspire further investigation of these issues. It will be important, for instance, to investigate more directly the conditions that give rise to normative conflict as well as its subjective experience. Under what circumstances do individuals not only disagree with group norms but believe they possess a solution? From what types of sources (e.g., personal values, other groups' norms, the group's own founding principles) do group members typically derive alternate standards for behavior that they believe provide a better course of action for the group? How does someone decide that his or her vision for the group is more legitimate, productive, or moral than the majority perspective? Future studies should also examine potential relationships (or interdependencies) between collective identification and normative conflict. Are strong identifiers less likely than weak identifiers to experience normative conflict? Is the severity of normative conflict required to trigger a shift from conformity to nonconformity different for strong and weak identifiers?

Research is also required to investigate the cost-benefit judgment processes that underlie decisions to engage in nonconformity in the event of normative conflict. To what extent and in what circumstances are these judgments conscious or deliberate? What sorts of benefits (e.g., group improvement) and costs (e.g., personal rejection) are salient in the minds of would-be dissenters? I have suggested that strong identifiers may, for

a time, exist in a state of uneasy conformity when they disagree with group norms but believe that the costs of nonconformity are too high to justify dissent. Can this state of uneasy conformity be captured empirically, and what is its subjective experience? There is a pressing challenge to develop paradigms that allow for the direct observation of public acts of dissent, particularly in laboratory settings (e.g., Santee & Maslach, 1982). A paradigm that places participants in actual group contexts and measures interactive attempts to alter group behavior would allow for more direct investigation of dissent.

In conclusion, the proposed normative conflict model resolves the seeming discrepancy between the notion that dissent can be an act of loyalty to the group on one hand and the positive association typically observed between identification and conformity on the other. By distinguishing between nonconformity that is due to dissent versus that due to disengagement, I suggest that noncompliance with norms is not solely the prerogative of weakly identified group members. Although prior research has theorized and demonstrated a main effect of identification on conformity (e.g., Hovland et al., 1953; Terry & Hogg, 1996; White et al., 2002), this model proposes the existence of a crucial moderator in the form of normative conflict. When conflict with group norms is taken into account, the case of a highly identified dissenter no longer appears strange or paradoxical. Supporting a group does not preclude the possibility of disagreeing with and dissenting from aspects of that group's behavior; to the contrary, a group member can be both with us and against us at the same time.

NOTES

1. Strongly identified group members may also be concerned about other potential costs of dissent, such as the impact dissent has on group cohesion as well as the external reputation of the group (see Hornsey, 2006).

2. Some more recent elaborations of the Exit-Voice-Loyalty model also include a neglect response (see Rusbult, Zembrodt, & Gunn, 1982), which corresponds to more passive forms of disengagement described in the normative conflict model.

3. The notion of disengagement from a group has interesting parallels to research on disidentification in performance domains (e.g., academics). This research suggests that individuals distance their self-concepts from domains in which they believe they are unlikely to succeed (e.g., because of a negative stereotype about their group; Crocker, Major, & Steele, 1998; Major, Spencer, Schmader, Wolfe, & Crocker, 1998; Nussbaum & Steele, 2007). Just as individuals disidentify with performance domains in which they experience adverse outcomes, they may also disidentify (disengage) from groups with which they are having difficulty.

4. Unlike Ann Coulter (2003) and her ilk, I do not believe that political ideology has any systematic relationship to how much one cares for and identifies with one's groups; being a liberal does not make you a traitor, being a conservative does not make you a patriot, and vice versa.

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