IDENTITY AMID SOCIAL CONFLICTS: JUDEAN IDENTITY IN NEHEMIAH 1–6

by

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ABSTRACT

"Identity amid Social Conflicts: Judean Identity in Nehemiah 1–6"

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The Nehemiah memoir in Neh 1–6 narrates a series of group conflicts between the Judean community and peoples from the surrounding provinces, and among the social groups within the community. The research questions are: Who were the entailing social groups in the intergroup and intragroup conflicts? How does the final text of Neh 1–6 depict the Judeans' self-perception of their group identity? The investigation employs textual analysis and draws on social identity approaches (SIT/SCT). This study argues that Neh 1–6 depicts the formation of the Judean community's self-perceived group identity in the wake of external and internal challenges, considering the contextual implications of the sociopolitical and socioeconomic polemics of Judah in the Persian period. Ethnicity and group beliefs (norms, values, goals, ideology, and prayers) are key identity markers that draw the group boundary between the Judean community and the opposition and members within the Judean community.

תְּחִלַּת חָכְמָה יִרְאַת יְהוָה

To my parents

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ABRL	The Anchor Bible Reference Library
ABS	Archaeology and Biblical Studies
AIL	Ancient Israel and Its Literature
AnnRevPsych	Annual Review of Psychology
ARSoc	Annual Review of Sociology
ASBT	Acadia Studies in Bible and Theology
BHRG	A Biblical Hebrew Reference Grammar. Van der Merwe, C. H. J., et al. A Biblical Hebrew Reference Grammar. 2nd ed. London: Bloomsbury T. & T. Clark, 2017
BI	Biblical Intersections
BibInt	Biblical Interpretation
BibInt	Biblical Interpretation Series
BritJSP	British Journal of Social Psychology
BTB	Biblical Theology Bulletin
BZ	*Biblische Zeitschrift*
BZAW	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft
ConC	Concordia Commentary
CritC	Critical Commentaries
DCH	The Concise Dictionary of Classical Hebrew
EJSP	European Journal of Social Psychology
EMSP	European Monographs in Social Psychology

ESSP	European Studies in Social Psychology
ET	English Bible Numbering
FAT	Forschungen zum Alten Testament
HALOT	Köhler, Ludwig, et al. *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*. Edited by M. E. J. Richardson. 5 vols. Leiden: Brill, 1994–1999.
HS	Heritage of Sociology
HUCA	Hebrew Union College Annual
IVPBDS	IVP Bible Dictionary Series
JAGK	Jahrbuch für altorientalische Geschichte und Kultur
JBL	Journal of Biblical Literature
JHebS	Journal of Hebrew Scriptures
JQR	The Jewish Quarterly Review
JSI	Journal of Social Issues
JSOT	Journal for the Study of the Old Testament
JSOTSup	Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series
LHBOTS	The Library of Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Studies
LSTS	Library of Second Temple Studies
mp	Masculine Plural
ms	Masculine Singular
NASB	New American Standard Bible
NCBC	New Century Bible Commentary
NGC	New German Critique
NICOT	New International Commentary on the Old Testament

NIV   New International Version Bible

NJPS   New Jewish Publication Society Tanakh

NRSV   New Revised Standard Version Updated Edition Bible

NT   New Testament

OT   Old Testament

OTL   Old Testament Library

PSPB   Personality & Social Psychology Bulletin

QI   *Qualitative Inquiry*

SBL   Society of Biblical Literature

SBLDS   Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series

SBLMS   Society of Biblical Literature Monograph Series

SBT   Studies in Biblical Theology

SOTSMS   Society for Old Testament Study Monograph Series

StBibLit   Studies in Biblical Literature

VT   Vetus Testamentum

WBC   Word Biblical Commentary

CHAPTER 1: APPROACHING JUDEAN IDENTITY IN THE PERSIAN PERIOD

Judean identity in the Persian period has prompted substantial research efforts. Various methodological approaches, such as biblical historical, historiographical, theological, sociological, and social psychological approaches, have been employed in studying the subject.[1] Group identity issues are primarily associated with the various social groups in and surrounding the province of Judah. These issues reflect the complexities of group relations in the social setting of Persian Judah. The book of Ezra–Nehemiah comprises several conflict narratives that are informative about the relations between the people groups in the fifth century BCE. The Nehemiah memoir in Neh 1–6 narrates a series of group conflicts between the Judean community and peoples from the surrounding provinces, and among the social groups within the community. Two historical and legitimate questions will aid the understanding of the social situations. First, who were the social groups involved in the social conflicts at the time of Nehemiah's governorship? Second, how does the final text of Neh 1–6 depict the Judeans' self-perception of their group identity?

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[1] Ahn, *Exile as Forced Migrations*; Berquist, "Construction of Identity"; Cohen, *Global Diasporas*; Crouch, *Israel and Judah Redefined*; Esler, "Ezra–Nehemiah as a Narrative"; Fried, "Ezra 4:4"; Jonker, ed., *Historiography and Identity*; Kessler, "Persia's Loyal Yahwists"; Rom-Shiloni, *Exclusive Inclusivity*.

Historical Orientation

The sixth century BCE marked the final days of the kingdom of Judah. The Babylonian

invasions in 597 BCE (2 Kgs 24:10–16; Jer 29:1–2; 52:28) and 586 BCE (2 Kgs 25:1–21;

Jer 39:1–10; 52:29)[2] resulted in the deportations of Judeans to Babylonia, with the latter

leading to the dissolution of the kingdom of Judah.[3] Further deportation in 582 BCE (Jer

52:30) and self-dispersion of the Judeans to the surrounding regions caused further

devastations of Jerusalem.[4] The displacements resulted in generational discontinuity of

Judeans from the land of Judah.[5] The question of whether Judah was inhabited or left

empty after the Babylonian deportations has also prompted significant interest from

archeologists, historians, and biblical scholars. Daniel L. Smith raised a historical

question when he considered the sociology of the exiles and the aftermath of the fall of

Jerusalem: "What happened to the Judeans left behind?"[6] Current scholarship has not

reached any consensus on this issue. The views are diverse but can be broadly grouped as

"populated land" or "empty land." The former group suggested a continuation of the

Judean population in Judah, though scholars held different opinions about the scale and

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[2] Several Assyrian deportations took place prior to the Babylonian deportations. See Knoppers, "Exile, Return, and Diaspora," 30–35.

[3] Ackroyd, *Israel under Babylon and Persia*, 1–34; Albertz, *Israel in Exile*; Faust, *Judah Neo-Babylonian Period*, 21–32; Lipschits, *The Fall and Rise*; Stern, *Assyrian, Babylonian, and Persian Periods*, 303.

[4] The books of Jeremiah and 2 Kings depict several Judean migrations to Moab, Ammon, and Edom (Jer 40:11–12), Ammon (Jer 41:15), and Egypt (2 Kgs 25:26; Jer 41:16–18; 43:4–7) after the assassination of Gedaliah.

[5] See Ahn, *Exile as Forced Migrations* for discussions on generational and intergenerational issues arising from the Babylonian deportations.

[6] Smith, *Religion of the Landless*, 26.

locations of the inhabitation.[7] The latter group has argued for a desolate Judah based on 2 Chr 36:21 or a "post-collapse society."[8]

After the Persian Empire took over political dominion from Babylon in the late sixth century BCE, dispersed Judeans were allowed to return to Judah in 538 BCE (Ezra 1). One of the emerging issues in the fifth century was the identity of Judeans living in Judah.[9] The co-existence of Judean and non-Judean groups aggravated the tensions between the various social groups in Judah and the nearby provinces. The social tensions in turn threatened the Judeans' identity. Intergroup tensions can be traced in Ezra 3:3 when the returned Judeans rebuilt the altar in the temple site. Ezra 4 recaptures the hostility the Judeans faced during the rebuilding of the Jerusalem temple. Numerous social conflicts are depicted in the rest of Ezra–Nehemiah, either between Judeans and peoples from the surrounding provinces (e.g., Neh 2:19–20; 3:33–35 [4:1–3 ET]; 13:1–6) or within Judean society (e.g., Ezra 10; Neh 5:1–13; 13:10–13). Three antagonists are named in the Nehemiah memoir: Sanballat of Samaria in the north, Tobiah of Ammon-Gilead in the East, and Geshem of Arabia-Idumea in the South.[10] Adding Ashdodites in the West, Ezra–Nehemiah portrays a sociopolitical world of diverse ethnicity and disparate power between Judeans and other ethnic groups. Comprehending the social constituents in this period will provide more insights into how the different social groups perceived their group identity.

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[7] Only populations in the Persian period are quoted here. Carter estimated a population of 13,350 in Persian I (538–450 BCE) and 20,650 in Persian II (450–332 BCE), and a maximun of 1,500 residents in Jerusalem in these two periods. Lipschits estimated 30,000 in Yehud and 2,750 in Jerusalem in mid-fifth century BCE. See Carter, *Emergence of Yehud*, 201; Lipschits, *Fall and Rise*, 270.

[8] Faust, *Judah*, 174–75; Stern, *The Assyrian*, 246.

[9] Judah here refers to the postexilic Judah or the province of Yehud

[10] Harrington, *Ezra and Nehemiah*, 23; Williamson, *Ezra, Nehemiah*, xliv, 224. The antagonists are mentioned in Neh 2:10, 19; 4:7; 6:1, and also in Neh 4, 6, and 13.

Judean Identity in the Persian Period

Judean identity is the central theme of this study. The research interest is on collective identity. Many scholars have commented on the complexities of defining Judean identity in the Babylonian and Persian periods. In his elucidation of the boundary between Jews and non-Jews during the formative period of Judaism, Shaye J. D. Cohen surveyed the occurrence of the terms Greek *Ioudaios*, Latin *Iudaeus*, and Hebrew *Yehudi* in ancient writings and documentary evidence.[11] He concluded that all these terms meant Judean (or Cohen's Judaean) before the end of the second century BCE. He further defined Judean as an ethnic-geographic term—"a Judaean is a member of the Judaean people (*ethnos*) and hails from Judaea, the ethnic homeland. In the diaspora, a 'Judaean' is a member of an association of those who hailed originally from the ethnic homeland; a person might be a Judaean even if he or she had not been born in Judaea or ever set foot there."[12] Cohen's definition differentiates Judeans by *ethnic homeland* and links the homeland community with communities dispersed outside Judah in the Persian period. Based on his definition, those who stayed behind, the returning Judeans, the diasporic communities in regions outside Judah, and the descendants of all these groups were Judeans ethnically.

Jon L. Berquist observed the different usages of the term *Judean* across scholarship when referring to the identity of Judeans in Achaemenid Yehud. He summed up five modes through which scholarship approaches the subject: identity as ethnicity, nationality or geography, religion, role, and identity formed out of imperializing and decolonizing.[13] Ethnic identity refers to lineage and genealogy and was inherited. This is

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[11] Cohen, *Beginnings of Jewishness*. Chapter 3, "*Ioudaios*, *Iudeaeus*, *Judaean*, Jew."
[12] Cohen, *Beginnings of Jewishness*, 104–5.
[13] Berquist, "Construction of Identity," 55–58.

similar to Cohen's ethnic identity except that the geographical element was not considered. National or geographic identity was defined based on a Judean's affiliation with a political entity or the geographic boundary of that entity. However, those residing outside the Judean polity, e.g., the diasporic communities, would be excluded even though they were Judeans by birth ethnically. Identity as religion was associated with Yahwistic worship. The counter-argument is that not all Judeans shared one single religion. The fourth was based on role theory. Judeans would be identified by their social roles (e.g., artisan, merchant, and farmer) apart from the formal named roles (e.g., priests and prophets). The fifth mode is an identity formation process. Berquist suggested that this process shifts the classical identity paradigm from static definitions to a fluid process of continuing identity formation under the forces of imperialization and decolonization.[14] Berquist's perspective provides an overall picture of the different conceptual identities. His approach puts the first four modes as fluid identity formation processess under one umbrella— the imperialization and decolonization interplay.

Berquist approached the identity formation from the postcolonial context. Gary N. Knoppers and Kenneth A. Ristau also acknowledged the complexities of defining Judeans in the neo-Babylonian and Persian periods. They approached the subject from a biblical historiographical dimension. They also perceived the fluid nature of identity, that the group identity of the self and the other is interrelated and constantly changing, and "one may speak of identity formation and reformation rather than presuppose any kind of ongoing static identity."[15] Nevertheless, the identity markers included in the question "What are the markers of the Judean identity" shed light on some of the conceptual

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[14] Berquist, "Construction of Identity," 63.
[15] Knoppers and Ristau, eds., "Introduction," 2.

definitions of Judean identity in the Persian period, such as, a tie to the land, an ancestral link, a prior link to the ancestor Israel/Jacob, centralization of worship in Jerusalem, political administration by the Davidic family, allegiance to the Torah, shared social memory, the experience of exile, common religious practices, or some combination of the above.[16]

The above scholars have attended to the international and national dimensions of issues concerning Judean identity formation. The ethnic, social, political, and religious boundaries form the social context. The identity issues depicted in Ezra–Nehemiah cannot be rightly examined apart from these contexts.

Judean Identity in Ezra–Nehemiah

In his work on homeland relations in Ezra–Nehemiah, Peter R. Bedford perceived that the Judean community in Judah was composed solely of the repatriates returning from the diaspora.[17] Based on the three return episodes (Ezra 1–4, 7–10, Neh 1–7), Bedford concluded that the diaspora and homeland community exhibited a parent-dependent relationship.[18] Stemming from this relationship was the loss of autonomy of the homeland community who was unable to develop a new identity. The proposal is partly grounded on the inability of the repatriate community to develop leadership in the homeland, as Ezra and Nehemiah were sent by the diaspora community, and partly because the community's identity was inherited from the diaspora. Smith offered a different opinion about Nehemiah being the governor of Judah. Based on Neh 5 and the

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[16] Knoppers and Ristau, eds., "Introduction," 2–3.
[17] Bedford, "Diaspora," 149.
[18] Bedford, "Diaspora," 158.

reconstruction of the Persian governors from archeological sources, Smith postulated that *governor* was a military leader appointed by the Persian government who was also responsible for overseeing the affairs of the assigned province.[19]

John Kessler has identified six groups of people in the Achaemenid period based on their roles and functions: (1) Golah returnees; (2) Golah remainees in Babylonia; (3) Yehudite remainees; (4) Egyptian Yahwists; (5) Samarian Yahwists of diverse origins; and (6) other Yahwists in the Levant.[20] In his proposal, the Golah returnees functioned as the Charter Group in the Yehudite society. Kessler's group typology provides a backdrop to understanding the composition, ethnicity, and group identity of the postexilic Judean community in the Persian period.

Sara Japhet also identified the various communities in the Persian period (what she called the Restoration period) and commented on the diversity of these communities.[21] Japhet rightly perceived Ezra–Nehemiah's witness to "the centrality of the questions of identity, continuity, and self-definition" of the community in Persian Judah, as well as the influence of the internal tensions and religious, cultural, political, and economic factors on the community's characteristics.[22] The final text of Ezra–Nehemiah indeed testifies to the challenges and struggles the Judean community faced when negotiating their communal identity. Ezra–Nehemiah undoubtedly exemplifies a Judean society full of social tensions. Delineation of the Judeans' group identity requires

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[19] Smith, *Religion of the Landless*, 109, 111.

[20] Kessler, "Persia's Loyal Yahwists," 96.

[21] Japhet, *From the Rivers*, 97–100. Japhet identified seven people groups settled in or outside Judah: the "returned exiles", the Judean inhabitants remaining in the land, Israelite inhabitants of northern Israel, the Judean exiles settled in Babylonia and Persia; the Judeans in Egypt, Israelite community in Ammon, and the "ten tribes" who were exiled by the Assyrian kings and settled on the Assyrian borders.

[22] Japhet, *From the Rivers*, 432.

an in-depth understanding of the intragroup and intergroup dynamics between the various

social groups.

Dalit Rom-Shiloni argued that the internal Judean conflicts in the sixth to fifth

century BCE were expressions of the dynamics of exclusivity between the Babylonian

repatriates and those who stayed behind in Judah.[23] A similar exclusivity ideology is

applied to the identity issue of Ezra–Nehemiah. By positing the Judean group in Neh 1:2

and 7:6 as the Babylonian repatriates, Rom-Shiloni argued that the Nehemiah memoir

shows a clear "exclusive conception of the Babylonian Repatriate community."[24] The

argument is based on the descriptor of the Judean group in Neh 1:2 הַיְּהוּדִים הַפְּלֵיטָה אֲשֶׁר־

נִשְׁאֲרוּ מִן־הַשֶּׁבִי. Rom-Shiloni called this group "the Returnees as those 'from the

captivity'" and applied the same interpretation to the group depicted in Neh 7:6.[25]

Contrary to exclusivity, Joseph Blenkinsopp and H. G. M. Williamson perceived the

nuance of inclusiveness. Blenkinsopp understood הַפְּלֵיטָה as "escaped remnant," meaning

"those who had never left the land."[26] Likewise, Williamson commented, "the context is

sufficient to make clear that the remnant terminology is applied loosely by Nehemiah to

all surviving Jews in Judah,"[27] implying an inclusion of all who survived the exile,

including the returning exiles.

The literature review has shown that scholars have examined Judean identity in

Ezra–Nehemiah from ethnic, political or national, religious, and geographic perspectives,

as well as roles and functions. Their focus is more on the identity negotiation between the

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[23] Rom-Shiloni, *Exclusive Inclusivity*, 29.
[24] Rom-Shiloni, *Exclusive Inclusivity*, 35.
[25] Rom-Shiloni, *Exclusive Inclusivity*, 35.
[26] Blenkinsopp, *Ezra–Nehemiah*, 207.
[27] Williamson, *Ezra, Nehemiah*, 107.

Diaspora and the homeland community or identity legitimacy centered on the group of

returnees. On the other hand, this study employs a different approach. It focuses on the

depiction of the Judean community's self-perceived identity in the final text of Neh 1–6

through the lens of social identity approaches. In addition to employing common identity

markers such as ethnicity and group beliefs, this study also consolidates the self-

perception of group membership based on sociological and biblical interpretations of the

emotional dimension of the social group's behavior and the temporal dimension of

cultural traits such as objectified symbols and religious traditions.

The present study approaches the Judean identity in the Persian period by

delineating the group relations depicted in Neh 1–6. The significance and implications of

both intergroup and intragroup dynamics will be examined. Textual analyses will be

performed based on the final text of Ezra–Nehemiah represented in the Hebrew

Masoretic tradition. However, the authorship, dating, and composition of the book are not

in the scope of this study. The methodology draws on social psychological approaches,

specifically the social identity and self-categorization theories. These conceptual

frameworks will provide a tool to delineate the group behaviors arising from intergroup

and intragroup tensions. Ultimately, this study will attempt to answer the membership

issues prompted by the final text of Neh 1–6. This study argues that Neh 1–6 depicts the

formation of the Judean community's self-perceived group identity in the wake of

external and internal challenges, considering the contextual implications of the

sociopolitical and socioeconomic polemics of Judah in the Persian period. Ethnicity and

group beliefs (norms, values, goals, ideology, and prayers) are key identity markers that

draw the group boundary between the Judean community and the opposition and members within the Judean community.

Overview of Study

Chapter 1 has introduced the historical and sociological background relevant to Judean identity in the sixth–fifth centuries BCE. This chapter reviewed recent literature on the definition of *Judean* and evolving scholarly perspectives on Judean identity in the Persian period and the book of Ezra–Nehemiah. Corresponding to the complexity of group relations in Persian Judah, the methodological section in Chapter 2 will lay down the conceptual frameworks for intergroup and intragroup relations. Social identity theory (SIT) focuses on the intergroup dimension while self-categorization theory (SCT) centers on the intragroup dimension. Both SIT and SCT draw on group distinctiveness in assessing the social identity of the ingroup and outgroup. This chapter highlights two distinctives, ethnicity and group beliefs, which this study employs to categorize the ingroup and outgroup identities. The section on biblical studies of the OT introduces recent research in applying the social identity concepts in the OT studies. As a summary, the research procedure and generic interpretive model illustrate how to achieve this study's research goal. Lastly, the emotional and temporal sections explain how this study ultilizes these two dimensions. Chapters 3 and 4 will expound on the identity delineation in the intergroup and intragroup contexts by SIT and SCT respectively. The corresponding interpretive model for each group analysis can be found in the appendices. As an overall conclusion of this study, Chapter 5 will conclude with the implications and prospective research areas stemming from the intergroup and intragroup results.

CHAPTER 2: METHODOLOGY AND INTERPRETIVE MODEL

The conflict narratives in Neh 1–6 testify to the intergroup and intragroup conflicts faced by the Judean community. This study employs social psychological approaches to examine the group relations depicted by the final text of Ezra–Nehemiah. Social identity theory (SIT) is the overarching theoretical framework that deals with intergroup relations, while self-categorization theory (SCT) is a theory founded on SIT and deals with intragroup relations. SIT and its extended concepts form the analytical basis for this study.

Social Identity Theory (SIT)

Over the past five decades, SIT has emerged as a useful social psychological tool for explaining intergroup relations and social group identity formation.[1] Michael Hogg describes SIT as "a social psychological analysis of the role of self-conception in group membership, group processes, and intergroup relations."[2] The pioneering work of SIT was conducted by Henri Tajfel and colleagues in the 1970s. In a study of the effects of social categorization processes on intergroup behavior, Tajfel and colleagues found that social categorization led to ingroup favoritism and discrimination against the outgroups unambiguously, disregarding that individual benefit was unaffected and maximum

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[1] For reviews on SIT and later development of interrelated theories, see Brown, "Social Identity Approach"; Esler, "An Outline"; Hogg, "Social Identity Theory."
[2] Hogg, "Social Identity Theory," 111.

utilitarian advantages could be achieved for the ingroup and outgroups.[3] John C. Turner

argued that ingroup favoritism or outgroup discrimination was an attempt to achieve

positive distinctiveness for one's own group in the social situation.[4] The findings led to

questions such as: What is a group? What is the difference between interindividual

behavior and intergroup behavior?[5]

SIT concerns the intergroup extreme of the interindividual–intergroup behavior

continuum. This extreme provides a theoretical framework to explain the ingroup–

outgroup behavior in intergroup situations. Tajfel commented that in the intergroup

extreme, "all of behaviour of two or more individuals towards each other is determined

by their membership of different social groups or categories."[6] In a later article of Tajfel

and Turner, they proposed that "the more intense is an intergroup conflict, the more likely

it is that the individuals who are members of the opposite groups will behave toward each

other as a function of their respective group memberships, rather than in terms of their

individual characteristics or interindividual relationships."[7] In other words, group

membership determines the ingroup's behavior toward the outgroup. Tajfel made two

generalizations of the social behavior in an intergroup situation: (1) ingroup members

show more uniformity in behavior toward outgroup members, and (2) ingroup members

show a stronger tendency to treat outgroup members as "undifferentiated items in a

unified social category . . . reflected simultaneously in a clear awareness of the ingroup–

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[3] Tajfel et al., "Intergroup Behaviour," 150, 172.
[4] Turner, "Social Identity," 529.
[5] Tajfel, "Interindividual Behaviour," 28.
[6] Tajfel, "Interindividual Behaviour," 41.
[7] Tajfel and Turner, "Intergroup Behavior," 8.

outgroup dichotomy."[8] The second generalization, the dichotomy, can also be understood as "a matter of collective self-construal—"we" and "us" versus "them.""[9]

Answering *what is a group* will enhance the understanding of the social conflicts and thereby the social identity issues in Ezra–Nehemiah. Instead of a single definition, Tajfel characterized group membership by three components that form the foundation of the SIT framework. The three components are cognitive, evaluative, and emotional.[10] The cognitive component refers to the knowledge that one belongs to a group. The evaluative component refers to the notion that one's membership may have a positive or negative value connotation. The emotional component relates to the emotions that may accompany the cognitive and evaluative aspects of one's membership and are directed toward one's own group or the outgroups. Turner defined a social group cognitively as "a collection of people that share the same social identification or define themselves in terms of the same social category membership."[11] Social categorization is the psychological process underlying social group formation. It is a process of "bringing together social objects or events in groups which are equivalent with regard to an individual's actions, intention and system of beliefs."[12]

Tajfel defined social identity as "that *part* of an individual's self-concept which derives from his knowledge of his membership of a social group (or groups) together with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership."[13] Evidently,

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[8] Tajfel, "Interindividual Behaviour," 45.
[9] Hogg, "Social Identity Theory," 115.
[10] Tajfel, "Interindividual Behaviour," 28.
[11] Turner, "Social Identity," 530. Hogg provided a more general definition that "a group exists psychologically if three or more people construe and evaluate themselves in terms of shared attributes that distinguish them collectively from other people." See Hogg, "Social Identity Theory," 111.
[12] Tajfel, "Social Categorization," 62.
[13] Tajfel, "Social Categorization," 63.

social identification influences both intergroup and intragroup relations, and it is the

cognitive process that makes group behavior possible.[14] Social identity is neither static

nor completely secure in social relationships between groups. An ingroup's social

identity must be preserved by means of social comparison.[15] In a dichotomous situation

of "us" and "them," social categorization differentiates one's own group members from

other group members by comparing and contrasting the distinctiveness between one's

own group and the outgroups. In this way, social categorization defines the place of

individuals in a society,[16] thereby leading to group (or ingroup) and social identity

formation.

Ingroup-favoring behavior occurs when there is a need to acquire or preserve a

positive group distinctiveness to "protect, enhance, preserve, or achieve a positive social

identity for members of the group."[17] The effect is maximizing the differences between

the ingroup and the outgroups. Hence, intergroup differentiation behavior is intrinsically

competitive[18] as "the aim of differentiation is to maintain or to achieve superiority over

an outgroup on some dimensions."[19] An important sub-process in social categorization is

stereotyping. It is a cognitive process involving the ingroup members' self-perception of

the outgroup members, which tends to be negative. In the case of intergroup conflicts,

ingroup members tend to differentiate one's own group from the outgroup by

accentuating the differences, e.g., in personal traits, values, or normative behaviors with

negative emotions.[20] In this way, ingroup members preserve positive distinctiveness or

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[14] Turner, "Cognitive Redefinition," 21.
[15] Tajfel, "Group Differentiation," 87–88.
[16] Tajfel, "Social Categorization," 63.
[17] Tajfel, "Social Psychology," 24.
[18] Turner et al., *Rediscovering*, 27.
[19] Tajfel and Turner, "Intergroup Behavior," 17.
[20] Stangor, "Stereotyping," 628.

social identity by stereotyping the outgroup negatively. Stereotyping leads to the homogenization and depersonalization of outgroup members.[21]

Social comparison reflects an individual or a group's social status in a society in terms of some evaluative dimensions. The outcome of social comparison is accentuation or attenuation of social status, which reflects the ingroup and outgroup's relative position in society. The conceptual strategies to improve an individual's or a group's status are *social or individual social mobility* and *social change*.[22] *Social mobility* operates under the assumption that the social system is flexible and permeable enough to allow free movement from one social group to another. It is the individual or group's self-perception that they can improve their position in a social situation by upward mobility.[23] In a stratified society with different social groups, social mobility may be a strategy for lower-status group members to acquire a more positive social identity and to improve their life conditions. *Social change* refers to a social situation where the group boundary is impermeable and the only way to improve one's social conditions is to act as a group.[24] Among various social change strategies, the one pertaining to the interest of this study is the strategy of *social creativity* for intense conflict of interest in intergroup situations. This is a social creativity variant that functions by "changing the values assigned to the attributes of the group, so that comparisons which were previously negative are now perceived as positive."[25]

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[21] Turner, "Cognitive Redefinition," 28.
[22] Tajfel and Turner, "Intergroup Behavior," 19.
[23] Tajfel, "Interindividual Behaviour," 52; Tajfel and Turner, "Intergroup Behavior," 9, 19.
[24] Tajfel, "Interindividual Behaviour," 53.
[25] Tajfel and Turner, "Intergroup Behavior," 20 (italic original).

Self-Categorization Theory (SCT)

Being an extended theory of SIT, self-categorization theory seeks to explain intragroup

behavior regarding how individuals can act as a group.[26] The theory focuses on the

distinction between personal and social identity and the shift of an individual's self-

perception of being a unique self in a group (personal identity is salient) to being an

ingroup member (social identity is salient).[27] The individual's awareness of common

group membership is the determinant for the individual to feel to be and act as a group.[28]

Thus, SCT provides a conceptual understanding of the social interactions between an

individual and other ingroup members, as well as the antecedent and consequential

effects on the social identity of the ingroup as a whole. Turner suggested that intragroup

relations are characterized by six attributes: the perceived similarity of members, social

cohesion, mutual esteem, emotional empathy or contagion, altruism and cooperation, and

attitudinal and behavioral uniformity.[29]

The fundamental psychological process enabling ingroup formation is

depersonalization. The concept is that an individual's self-perception tends to become

depersonalized when shared social identity becomes salient.[30] According to Turner,

depersonalization is the change from the personal to social level of identity, or in terms of

stereotyping, subjective stereotyping of the self makes individuals perceive themselves

more as the interchangeable representatives of the ingroup membership than unique

personalities.[31] A consequential significance is the formation of a "perceptual identity"

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[26] Turner et al., *Rediscovering*, 42.
[27] Turner, "Self-Categorization Theory," 502.
[28] Turner, "Cognitive Redefinition," 27.
[29] Turner, "Cognitive Redefinition," 29.
[30] Turner et al., *Rediscovering*, 50; Turner, "Self-Categorization Theory," 502.
[31] Turner et al., *Rediscovering*, 51; Turner, "Self-Categorization Theory," 502.

among individuals who perceive the similarity of other individuals to self in attitudes and

values, sharing a common fate, shared threat, and a common enemy, and so on.[32] Hogg

viewed the depersonalization process more from intragroup prototypicality. He

articulated the causal relationship between prototypicality and self-depersonalization

concretely: "[Prototype-based depersonalization] transforms self-conception so that we

conceive of ourselves prototypically (prototypes define and evaluate the attributes of

group membership), and our behavior assimilates or conforms to the relevant ingroup

prototype in terms of attitudes, feelings, and actions."[33] Depersonalization, coupled with

self-stereotyping and prototypical processes, is the basic process that makes intragroup

behavior possible. The importance of depersonalization lies in its consequential effects on

intragroup behavior. The ones pertinent to this study are attitudinal and behavioral

uniformity, group cohesiveness, and cooperation. As elaborated in the following, these

phenomena are closely related to the ingroup formation.

Like ingroup–outgroup categorization, personal self-categorization is based on

social comparison with other ingroup members.[34] This means that in specific intragroup

contexts, the distinctiveness of individual members is being compared, and the members

"are evaluated positively to the degree that they are perceived as prototypical

(representative, exemplary, etc.) of the next more inclusive (positively evaluated) self-

category."[35] The prototypical representative or ingroup prototype is like an ideal self and

exerts attraction to other ingroup members. This prototypical ingroup member is assumed

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[32] Turner et al., *Rediscovering*, 52.
[33] Hogg, "Social," 61.
[34] Turner et al., *Rediscovering*, 48.
[35] Turner et al., *Rediscovering*, 57.

to be the best representative of the group's stereotypical attributes as a whole.[36] Hogg introduced the term "prototypical leaders" and associated leadership with ingroup members who are perceived to have higher prototypicality within the group.[37] Prototypical leaders exert social influence on other ingroup members and act as a focus for attitudinal and behavioral depersonalization. They are influential by effectively assimilating members' behavior to the prototypical norms.[38]

Self-stereotyping is an intragroup process affecting ingroup formation and identity. Stereotyping bears a negative connotation when it operates in the ingroup–outgroup differentiation process in intergroup relations. Contrarily, intragroup stereotyping connotes a positive evaluation of the ingroup membership.[39] When the shared social identity is salient, ingroup members tend to depersonalize the self (self-stereotyping), perceive themselves and others based on the similarity of ingroup membership, and infer common ingroup characteristics from the ingroup prototypes.[40] Stereotypic characteristics include evaluative status or prestige, emotional experiences, needs and goals, normative attitudes and behaviors, and well-studied personality or behavioral traits.

The first concerned effect of categorical depersonalization is social conformity, which is directly derived from the social influence process, specifically the referent information influence process (RII). The RII refers to "the idea that we tend to perceive as normative—and conform to—the stereotypical attributes defining some salient ingroup

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[36] Turner et al., *Rediscovering*, 79. Margaret Wetherell conducted a series of experiments on prototypical attributes. See Wetherell, "Group Polarization."
[37] Hogg, "Social," 69.
[38] Hogg, "Social," 70.
[39] Turner, "Cognitive Redefinition," 30.
[40] Turner, "Cognitive Redefinition," 29.

identity."[41] As the ingroup prototype is the exemplary representative of stereotypical

attributes, prototype-based depersonalization causes ingroup members to convert to the

prototype's consensual attitude and normative behavior. Consequently, the combined

effect of prototypicality and self-stereotyping leads to intragroup conformity. The second

effect is group cohesiveness. The concept was first postulated by Turner and later

revisited by Hogg. Turner defined group cohesion as the mutual attraction between

ingroup members and interpersonal attraction between members and the ingroup

prototype.[42] Turner's model predicts that intragroup cohesion increases with increasing

mutually perceived similarity or identity among ingroup members (as in mutual

attraction), and with more positively distinctive prototypicality of the member being

compared (as in interpersonal attraction).[43] In this sense, group cohesion is subject to

personal or interpersonal likes or dislikes. Hogg equated group cohesiveness with

intragroup attraction based on the perceived common ingroup membership and shared

attributes.[44] Hogg's theory bridges group cohesiveness with prototype-based

depersonalization in the way that an evaluatively positive ingroup prototype accentuates

ingroup likings of other members.[45] The third effect is social cooperation.[46] Similar to the

depersonalization of the self, self-interest is also depersonalized. When ingroup identity

is salient, ingroup members tend to perceive own and other's goals as mutually shared

goals and increase the degree of intragroup cooperation. Factors like common fate likely

increase intragroup cooperation.

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[41] Turner et al., *Rediscovering*, 80. Social conformity is discussed throughout Ch. 4 "The Analysis of Social Influence," pp. 68–88. See pp. 81–82 for specific details of referent informational influence.
[42] Turner et al., *Rediscovering*, 57.
[43] Turner et al., *Rediscovering*, 59–60.
[44] Hogg, "Group Cohesiveness," 114–15.
[45] Hogg, "Social," 65–66.
[46] Turner et al., *Rediscovering*, 65–66.

Group Distinctiveness

Social groups evaluate themselves through social comparison of group distinctiveness. Positively valued distinctiveness aims to achieve an adequate form of social identity.[47] A social group will keep its positively valued distinctiveness from other groups in order to protect the social identity of its members.[48] For the purpose of this study, a set of group distinctives are defined. These distinctives will be used in the categorization and differentiation processes to (1) identify the concerned social groups, and (2) evaluate the perceived social identity salience of the groups. As each intergroup or intragroup interaction has its own specific social context, the distinctives for each situation may vary. The following section intends to provide a general picture of the factors that may affect group distinctiveness.

Ethnicity and Ethnic Group

This study utilizes the concept of ethnicity to categorize the social groups in Ezra–Nehemiah. Building on Richard Schermerhorn's definition of an ethnic group,[49] John Hutchinson and Anthony D. Smith characterized an ethnic group or community (*ethnie*) with six social and cultural-based features:

    1. a common *proper name*;
    2. a myth of *common ancestry* that incorporates Horowitz idea of "super-family";[50]
    3. shared *historical memories*;

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[47] Tajfel, "Group Differentiation," 95.

[48] Tajfel, "Social Categorization," 67.

[49] Schermerhorn, *Comparative Ethnic Relations*, 12–14; Schermerhorn, "Ethnicity and Minority Group," 17.

[50] Citing Donald L. Horowitz, Horowitz, *Ethnic Groups*., chapter 2. A brief idea is that the membership of an extended family can be by birth or by choice (p. 55) and that an extended family is a form of extended kinship (p. 57).

  4. one or more *elements of common culture*;
  5. a *link* with a homeland, may be its symbolic attachment to the ancestral land;
  6. a *sense of solidarity*[51]

These features are cognitive parameters and contribute to the cognitive component of the

categorization process. These features are also helpful for differentiating ingroup

membership since they bear an evaluative sense. Hogg rightly pointed out that "groups

are rarely homogeneous. In almost all cases they are structured into roles, subgroups,

nested categories, crosscutting categories, and so forth."[52] This is precisely the situation

in Ezra–Nehemiah. The group conflicts in Ezra–Nehemiah are multifaceted and involve

different social groups. The complexity poses a challenge for the ingroup categorization.

  Frederick Barth defined an ethnic group as a culture-bearing unit and a form of

social organization. Being culture-bearing means that group members in an ethnic group

must exhibit common cultural traits.[53] Moreover, as a social organization, the group is

characterized by a categorical identity ascribed by the self and others. The categorical

identity or ethnic identity is an individual's general identity determined by the person's

origin and background. Noteworthy is that Barth's ethnic group is operative based on two

aspects. First, an ethnic group's exclusiveness and continuity depend on the maintenance

of a group boundary. Second, group membership is validated by socially relevant factors

instead of personal factors.[54] Boundary maintenance dichotomizes others "as strangers, as

members of another ethnic group," and implies "a recognition of limitations on shared

understandings, differences in criteria for judgment of value and performance, and a

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[51] Hutchinson and Smith, eds., "Introduction," 6–7. The original concept is found in Smith, *Ethnic Origins*, 21–31.
[52] Hogg, "Social Identity Theory," 117.
[53] Barth, ed., *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries*, 11–14.
[54] Barth, ed., *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries*, 14–15.

restriction of interaction to sectors of assumed common understanding and mutual interest."[55] Nevertheless, the second aspect seems to offer a way for inclusiveness as Barth elaborated that members from category B can become members of category A if "they are willing to be treated and let their own behaviour be interpreted and judged as A's and not as B's."[56] In a social world having multi-ethnicity like Ezra–Nehemiah, group boundaries are indicators of group differentiation. The second aspect sheds light on membership differentiation and the exclusivity/inclusivity of the members from the concerned social groups.

Other contemporary researchers employ social scientific descriptors to characterize ethnic groups. Paul Spickard and W. Jeffrey Burroughs suggested that shared political or economic interest, shared ethnic institutions, and shared culture are the primary factors affecting the formation and maintenance of ethnic groups and identities.[57] Stephen Cornell described ethnic identities as labels that individuals claim or assign. Accompanying ethnic identities are consequences and capabilities, and attached to the labels are meanings "that lend them power as organizers of relationships, resources, experience, and action."[58] The Nehemiah memoir employs ethnic labels extensively in the intergroup narrative. This study will demonstrate the role of these labels in shaping the group identity of the ingroup and outgroup.

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[55] Barth, ed., *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries*, 15.
[56] Barth, ed., *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries*, 15.
[57] Spickard and Burroughs, "We Are a People," 8.
[58] Cornell, "The Story," 42.

Group Beliefs

Daniel Bar-Tal suggested that individuals in a group "hold common beliefs which define their reality, not only as persons, but also as group members."[59] Group beliefs are group members' convictions that they share certain beliefs, and they consider these shared beliefs as defining their group cohesiveness. The fundamental group belief is "We are a group."[60] This posits group beliefs as a cognitive basis of group categorization.[61] This study will first focus on four widely adopted contents: group norms, values, goals, and ideology. Group norms are "shared standards that guide group members' behavior."[62] Group norms regulate group members' behavior by prescribing appropriate behavior and judging inappropriate ones, and provide an impression to group members that the norms categorize their membership. Group values can be formal or informal values group members share. When group members perceive these values as categorization criteria, the values become group beliefs.[63] Examples of values include truth, justice, equality, and charity. Group goals are beliefs of the attainment of desired future states. They offer shared direction and cohesiveness to group members. Bar-Tal summarized the functions of group goals to "frequently keep group members together, provide a basis for solidarity, and give direction for activity."[64] Group ideology refers to the mental characteristics of a group. It reflects the common experience of group members and is a basis for members' cooperation, morale, order, and rationale for their behavior. It defines the group's identity

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[59] Bar-Tal, *Group Beliefs*, 1.
[60] Bar-Tal, *Group Beliefs*, 36–37.
[61] Bar-Tal, "Expression," 93–95. The relationship between group beliefs and social identity is discussed.
[62] Bar-Tal, *Group Beliefs*, 49, qouting Smelser, ed., *Sociology*.
[63] Bar-Tal, *Group Beliefs*, 51.
[64] Bar-Tal, *Group Beliefs*, 53.

and exclusivity.[65] As the contents of group beliefs have unlimited scopes,[66] this study will include prayers as a religious content of group beliefs in the intergroup analysis. In sum, group beliefs reinforce the uniqueness of a group and provide positively valued ingroup distinctiveness. This study will demonstrate the formative role of group beliefs in ingroup identity formation.

Social Identity and Biblical Studies

The social identity framework is an evolving methodological approach in biblical studies. In reviewing SIT and its utilization in biblical interpretations in the OT and NT, Coleman A. Baker pointed out that SIT is "a helpful model for interpreting biblical documents regarding their attempts to shape the identity of their respective audiences."[67] In NT studies, Philip F. Esler has made substantial contributions since the 1990s.[68] Among Old Testament scholars, Jan Petrus Bosman studied the identity of ancient Israel by a theological-ethical pathway utilizing the "oracles concerning the nations" in the book of Nahum.[69] Antonios Finitsis studied the group identity of the people, *the Other*, in Yehud through the books of Haggai and Zechariah 1–8.[70] Peter Lau explored the tensions between personal and social identities of the three main characters in the book of Ruth and the rhetorical impact the Ruth narrative brings to an implied reader concerning ethical norms.[71] A more recent work by Linda M. Stargel has approached the collective

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[65] Bar-Tal, *Group Beliefs*, 56.
[66] Bar-Tal, *Group Beliefs*, 36.
[67] Baker, "Social Identity Theory," 129.
[68] Esler, "Hebrews"; Esler, *Identity in Romans*; Esler, "Galatians"; Esler, "Matthew"; Esler, "Romans."
[69] Bosman, *Social Identity in Nahum*.
[70] Finitsis, "The 'Other.'"
[71] Lau, *Identity and Ethics*.

identity of ancient Israel more analytically.[72] Stargel's interest is in the identity

construction of ancient Israel using the exodus narrative in Exod 1:1—15:21 and eighteen

retold exodus stories in the OT. Stargel's work displays two significant differences from

former SIT scholarship, as the focus is on *how*.[73] First, the interpretative model used in

the study renders a more analytically oriented methodology to approach the identity

issues in biblical studies. Second, instead of the conventional cognitive–evaluative–

emotional SIT components, Stargel consolidated the various SIT criteria into a five-

dimension model with the addition of behavioral and temporal components. The temporal

component extends the SIT concept to the continuation and maintenance of group

identity. Stargel's five components will be further discussed in the Interpretive Model

section. Referencing Stargel's analytical model, Daleen M. Seal studied the socially

formative function of the Corinthian letters and how Paul's reinterpretation of Exod 34

shaped the Corinthians' social identity.[74] These works have showcased the applicability

of social identity approaches in biblical studies and contributed to the research design of

this study.

Research Procedure

Based on the SIT conceptual framework and the analytical approaches of Stargel and

Seal, the following outlines a generic protocol for examining the intergroup and

intragroup relations in Neh 1–6. Group characteristics and behavior will be examined

based on textual evidence.

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[72] Stargel, *Construction,* 30–31. See Stargel's classification of the various components and categories.

[73] Stargel, *Construction*, xvii.

[74] See Seal's imterpretive model, Seal, "These Things," 90–92.

1. Identify the concerned social groups in each social situation based on textual data.

2. Categorize the ingroup and outgroup by examining the four categorization components.

   2.1 Cognitive Component

      2.1.1 Common Ancestry

         2.1.1.1 Genealogical descent: Identify the textual features that express the bloodline relationship between the concerned social groups.

         2.1.1.2 Kinship: Identify the kinship terms used by the text and delineate their contextual application and implications.

      2.1.2 Plural Personal Pronouns and Plural Verbs: Identify these plural literary units and delineate their functions in group identification.

      2.1.3 Group Beliefs

         2.1.3.1 Group norms: Identify any normative or imperative words, phrases, or statements in the text.

         2.1.3.2 Group values: Identify the formal and informal values shared by group members, either explicitly stated or implied.

         2.1.3.3 Group goals: Delineate any immediate or future goals shared by the group members.

         2.1.3.4 Group ideology: Delineate any group ideology based on textual features and context.

         2.1.3.5 Prayers: Explore the role of prayers as a shared belief of the Judean community.

2.1.4 Boundaries: Identify the intergroup or intragroup boundaries using cognitive

criteria.

2.2 Evaluative Component

2.2.1 Differentiation

2.2.1.1 *Us* and *Them*: Identify the textual features that differentiate the

ingroup (*we*-group) from the outgroup (*them or you*-group).

2.2.2.2 Prototypicality: Identify the ingroup prototype and delineate the

influence on group behavior and ingroup formation.

2.2.2.3 Stereotyping or self-stereotyping: Identify the textual features that

substantiate stereotyping or self-stereotyping and delineate its

influence on group behavior and ingroup formation.

2.2.2 Negative Evaluation: Identify the literary devices that substantiate the

negative evaluation of the outgroup and non-prototypical members.

2.2.3 Positive Evaluation: Identify the literary devices that substantiate positive

evaluation of the ingroup and the group prototype.

2.3 Emotional Component

2.3.1 Awareness of being a group: Identify the textual features that substantiate

membership awareness.

2.3.2 Expression of social conflict: Identify the textual features and contextual

evidence that substantiate intergroup or intragroup conflict.

2.3.3 Expression of Feelings

2.3.3.1 Reflex emotions: Identify the textual features that express the

spontaneous feelings of the ingroup and outgroup members.

2.3.3.2 Affective emotions: Identify the textual features that express affective attachments of the ingroup and aversions of the outgroup members.

2.3.3.3 Moral emotions: Identify the moral expressions, e.g., honor and shame, and the contextual evidence attached to the ingroup or outgroup members.

2.4 Temporal Component

2.4.1 Continuity: Identify the textual evidence that substantiates the sharing of life stories and social identity of the past.

2.4.2 Maintenance: Identify the textual evidence that links the past communal identity to the future expected identity.

3. Section Summary: Summarize each categorization component's implications on the shaping of ingroup identity.

4. Chapter Conclusions: Conclude the findings and implications for each group analysis.

5. Thesis Conclusions: Synthesize the significance and implications of the intergroup and intragroup chapters. Suggest future studies.

Interpretive Model

The five-component interpretive models of Stargel and Seal have laid the groundwork for my interpretive model. The major differences in my interpretive model are the placement of the behavior component and part of the temporal component's criteria (Table 1). Stargel examined the behavioral component independently to magnify the component's maintenance and enhancement role.[75] Seal recognized that the behavioral component "is

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[75] Stargel, *Construction*, 46.

not strictly part of Tajfel's definition of social identity."[76] Yet, Seal's behavioral criteria

closely resembled Bar-Tal's group norms. Due to its categorizing and differentiating

distinctiveness, this study places the behavioral component under group beliefs in the

interpretive model. The differentiating characteristics also render group norms as

cognitive boundaries of intergroup and intragroup relations. The criterion "common

ancestry" is similar to Stargel and Seal's "genealogical descent." Both of them placed this

criterion under the temporal component. Hutchinson and Smith also noted the temporal

and locative characteristics of this element.[77] This study groups genealogical descent

under common ancestry in the cognitive component while noting its temporal

significance.

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[76] Seal, "These Things," 87.
[77] Hutchinson and Smith, eds., *Ethnicity*, 7.

Table 1: Generic Interpretive Model

Group Categorization	
1. Concerned Social Groups	proper names, ethnic labels, group names or labels, social roles
2.1 Cognitive Component	
2.1.1 Common Ancestry 2.1.1.1 Genealogical descent 2.1.1.2 Kinship	 terms showing bloodline relationship kinship terms
2.1.2 Plural Personal Pronouns and Plural Verbs	e.g., we, you, they; we pray, we build
2.1.3 Group Beliefs 2.1.3.1 Group norms 2.1.3.2 Group values 2.1.3.3 Group goals 2.1.3.4 Group ideology 2.1.3.5 Prayers	 prescribed standards, imperative statement formal or informal immediate or future attainment mental commonality shared by group members religious content shared by group members
2.1.4 Boundaries	e.g., social, ethnic, religious
2.2 Evaluative Component	
2.2.1 Differentiation 2.2.1.1 *Us* and *Them* 2.2.1.2 Prototypicality 2.2.1.3 Stereotyping	 ingroup favoritism, outgroup discrimination representation of normative attitude and behavior attitude, feeling, and behavior conformity or homogeneity
2.2.2 Negative Evaluation	e.g., rhetorical question, curse language
2.2.3 Positive Evaluation	e.g., assertion, cooperative attitude and behavior
2.3 Emotional Component	
2.3.1 Awareness of being a group	e.g., common fate
2.3.2 Expression of social conflict	e.g., complaint, hostility, threat
2.3.3 Expression of feelings 2.3.3.1 Reflex emotions 2.3.3.2 Affective-attachments, aversions 2.3.3.3 Moral emotions	 e.g., anger, fear, displease, distress, joy e.g., commitment; humiliating rhetoric, disliking e.g., grief, honor, shame, guilt, injustice
2.4 Temporal Component	
2.4.1 Continuity	shared life stories of the past
2.4.2 Maintenance	future expectation or orientation

Emotional Component: A Supplementary Note

The emotional component refers to the emotions attached to the cognitive and evaluative dimensions of ingroup membership, which can be directed toward one's own group or outgroup.[78] Stargel rightly pointed out that the emotional dimension of SIT has received little attention by the SIT theorists and she made a classification of the component into positive and negative emotions.[79] Seal perceived the relational aspect of positive and negative emotions as two sides of the same coin.[80] Both Stargel and Seal's interpretations are referenced in drawing up the emotional criteria in this study.

The delineation of the emotional component requires an understanding of the concept of emotion.[81] Françoise Mirguet argued about the appropriateness of applying the modern concept of *emotions* to the Hebrew Bible. Mirguet suggested that *emotions* "also include actions, movements, ritual gestures, and physical sensations, without strict dissociation among these different dimensions."[82] A given example was *fear* and its meanings range from experience of terror to an attitude of reverence that leads to specific actions.[83] Mirguet also suggested that the Hebrew Bible emphasizes the social dimensions of emotion.[84] Mirguet's argument and proposals provide a semantic guideline for examining emotional terms in social situations involving intergroup or intragroup

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[78] Tajfel, "Interindividual Behaviour," 28–29.

[79] Stargel, *Construction*, 10.

[80] Seal, "These Things," 110.

[81] For example, see Paul A. Kruger, "On Emotions" on how emotions are expressed in the Hebrew Bible; and Thomas J. Scheff, "Toward Defining" on modern concept of emotions.

[82] Mirguet, "Emotion," 443.

[83] Mirguet, "Emotion," 450–51. Bill T. Arnold's work was the basis of deriving the meanings, see Arnold, "Love–Fear Antinomy."

[84] Mirguet, "Emotion," 444.

context. James M. Jasper's sociological typology of feelings suggests four types of

feelings entailed in social movements: (1) *reflex emotions*, e.g., anger and fear; (2)

moods, including energizing or de-energizing feelings; (3) *affective commitments*, either

attachments or *aversions*, e.g., love and hate; and (4) *moral emotions* including feelings

of approval or disapproval, e.g., shame and pride.[85] This study employs Jasper's typology

as the framework to delineate the feelings of the ingroup and outgroup members.

Contemporary sociology of emotions suggests that the emotions of shame and pride are a

vital aspect affecting the social bond between groups. Shame is believed to be the major

emotion that causes and signals a threatened relationship, resulting in the escalation of

conflict between groups.[86] Coupling both biblical and sociological concepts of emotions

provides a practical approach to interpret the emotional component of the SIT/SCT

pertaining to this study. This study also benefits from scholars whose works attend to the

semantics and symbolic meanings of honor and shame in the OT.[87]

Temporal Component: A Supplementary Note

The temporal component concerns temporal continuity and maintenance of a social

group's identity over time. It is not in the original SIT/SCT frameworks but serves as an

expansion of the theories to cover the issues of social identity continuation and

maintenance. Stargel proposed this aspect as another interpretive dimension to address

the question how a group might maintain *us-ness* over time.[88] The question stems from

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[85] Jasper, "Emotions," 286–87.

[86] Scheff, *Bloody Revenge*, 3–4; Scheff, "Socialization of Emotions," 295.

[87] Arnold, "Love–Fear"; Bechtel, "Shame as Sanction"; Jumper, "Honor and Shame"; Kuriyachan, "Metaphorical Language"; Laniak, *Shame and Honor*; Matzal, "Preaching."

[88] Stargel, *Construction*, 53.

the temporal concepts of Susan Condor and Marco Cinnirela. Condor addressed the

membership issue on group members' subjective perception of social groups and their

own group, and raised two concerns.[89] The first is whether members perceive the self as a

co-existing collective acting coherently at any moment in time or as serial generations of

social actors. The second is the effect on members' social behavior. She perceived an

ontological continuity existing in the groups' social identity, which is characterized by

the sense of belonging and enduring toward group membership.[90] The temporal

significance of this continuity connotes a sense of a past self and a future self. As such,

the continuity is experienced "not only as a sense of co-evalness (of synchronic co-

existence with other group members) but also in terms of serial connectedness with other

ingroup members."[91] Condor's proposal highlights a perceived generational continuity of

group membership, as the interconnectedness comes from successive generations of

social actors in the group. Cinnirela's concept of *possible social identities* adds a

temporal dimension to social identity maintenance. The term *possible social identities*

refers to the conceptions of current membership and possible group memberships in the

past and future.[92] The theory postulates that "social groups will create shared 'life stories'

or narratives of the group which tie past, present, and predicted futures into a coherent

representation."[93] In other words, "ingroup members will be motivated to re-interpret and

re-construct past, present and future-oriented possible social identities so that a sense of

temporal continuity is perceived to exist."[94]

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[89] Condor, "Social Identity and Time," 303.
[90] Condor, "Social Identity and Time," 304.
[91] Condor, "Social Identity and Time," 306.
[92] Cinnirella, "Exploring Temporal Aspects," 230.
[93] Cinnirella, "Exploring Temporal Aspects," 235.
[94] Cinnirella, "Exploring Temporal Aspects," 236.

This chapter has explored the SIT/SCT principles relevant to this study. The following chapters will examine the textual evidences that demonstrate intergroup and intragroup relations respectively based on the four-component interpretive model, and elucidate the possible Judean identity.

CHAPTER 3: INTERGROUP RELATIONS IN NEHEMIAH 1–4, 6

The narratives of Ezra–Nehemiah provide a source for studying the relations between

Judeans and other ethnic groups in the fifth century BCE. This chapter will focus on the

narrative involving the wall restoration in Neh 1–6. Nehemiah 1–6 is generally

recognized as part of the first-person account of Nehemiah (or the Nehemiah memoir)

though its unity is a debated issue among scholars.[1] This unit may be considered one unit

from the perspective of rebuilding the Jerusalem wall. Embedded in the narratives are a

series of conflicts between Judeans and the foreign neighbors. Nehemiah 1–2 narrates the

mission of Nehemiah and the commission of King Artaxerxes. Nehemiah 2–4 and 6

inform that during Nehemiah's term as the governor of Judah,[2] Nehemiah and the Judean

community constantly faced threats from the foreign peoples in the neighboring

provinces. Based on Neh 2:10, 19; 3:33 [4:1 ET], the wall construction project is believed

to be the proximate cause leading to intergroup conflicts.[3] The social tensions between

Judeans and the foreign neighbors and between Nehemiah and the governors of the

neighboring provinces escalated as the rebuilding work progressed.[4] Hostile attitudes and

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[1] Williamson, *Ezra, Nehemiah*, xxiv, the memoir is found in Neh 1–7, parts of 12:27–43, and 13:4–31. Some scholars have suggested that Neh 3 was inserted into the memoir by a later editor, see Blenkinsopp, *Ezra–Nehemiah*, 231; Wright, *Rebuilding Identity*, 119, 124. Boda argued that Neh 7:1 divides Neh 1–13 into two phases, Neh 1–6 and 7–13, see Boda, "Prayer as Rhetoric," 276–77.

[2] The commission of Nehemiah as governor of Judah is mentioned in Neh 5:14 and 12:26. It is not clear if he was a governor in his second return mentioned in Neh 13:6. See Williamson, *Ezra, Nehemiah*, xliv; Boda, "Nehemiah," 721.

[3] Nehemiah 2:10 depicts the initial reaction of the foreign neighbors.

[4] This study adopts the term *governors* for the three antagonists mentioned in the text, with reference to Fried and Williamson's assessments. See Fried, *Nehemiah*, 58–60, 74–5; Williamson, *Ezra, Nehemiah*, 182–83, 191.

behavior can be traced in various places in Neh 2, 4, and 6. This chapter examines the intergroup dynamics between Judeans and their foreign neighbors. The aim is to identify the ingroup using the SIT approach and seek an understanding of who belonged to the ingroup and who did not. The findings are expected to shed light on how the intergroup narrative (Neh 1–4, 6) constructs the identity of the concerned social groups and addresses the membership issue. Textual data pertaining to this chapter can be found in Appendix 2.

The structure of the intergroup narrative depicts the advancement of the intergroup tensions. Examining the structure will get a preliminary idea of the intergroup behavioral pattern. Williamson observed the recurring שׁמע *shema* pattern in Neh 2–4, 6 (Neh 2:10, 19; 3:33; 4:1, 9 [4:1, 7, 15 ET]; 6:1, 16).[5] He considered this literary pattern a probable authorial intention to mark off the advancement of each major step of Sanballat and the other antagonists. The authorial use of the שׁמע *shema*-formula in various forms[6] seems to have a threefold function. First, it functions as a literary pointer to mark the beginning or closing of a conflict account. Second, it signals the advancement of the conflict account into the next major step throughout the rebuilding process. Third, in terms of intergroup interactions, each *shema*–formula introduces the antagonists' reactions progressively before the rebuilding was completed. The accentuation is evidenced from the initial attitudinal *displeased* (Neh 2:10), to stronger verbal insults (Neh 2:19; 3:33 [4:1 ET]), and to scheming the attack against the builders (4:1–2 [4:7–8 ET]). The exception is Neh 4:9 [4:15 ET] where the memoir does not mention the

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[5] Williamson, *Ezra, Nehemiah*, 177, 215, 224, 251.

[6] The verb שׁמע appears in the form of 3ms *Qal* waw-consecutive (Neh 1:10, 19), 3ms *Qal* perfect (3:33 [4:1 ET]; 4:1 [4:7 ET]), 3mp *Qal* perfect (4:9 [4:15 ET]; 6:16), and 3ms *Niphal* perfect (6:1).

opposition's reaction. This may be explained by the change of the narrative setting from external to internal affairs. This section (Neh 4:9–17 [4:15–23 ET]) primarily focuses on the set-up of internal defense strategy. Intergroup tensions re-emerge when the antagonists' reaction heightened to its climax and shifted their strategy to attack Nehemiah (Neh 6:1–2). The last *shema*-formula (Neh 6:16), placed after the completion of the wall (Neh 6:15), introduces a dialectical conclusion to the reaction of the opposition. Jacob L. Wright also surveyed the placement of the *shema*-formula in Neh 2–4, 6 and highlighted the formula's transitional function of concluding or introducing a given conceptual unit.[7] He suggested that the conceptual units typically consist of a restoration advancement, a disruptive maneuver by the antagonists, and Nehemiah's response or counteractive measures. The first unit (Neh 2:1–10) is probably an exception to Wright's suggestion, as the unit ends with the *shema*-formula without mentioning Nehemiah's response or counter-measures. This study proposes an alternate pattern considering the third function of the *shema*-formula suggested above. The general behavioral pattern is *Nehemiah and/or communal action–opposition heard–opposition's reaction* from the perspective of intergroup behavior, or *rebuilding progress–opposition heard–opposition's reaction* in terms of the wall rebuilding (Appendix 1). The only variant is Neh 4:9–17 [4:15–23 ET]. God's action replaces Nehemiah or the communal action while communal action replaces the opposition's reaction. This may be explained by a change of social setting and the manifestation of God's power over human scheme. This alternate pattern focuses on the intergroup behavior of the Judean community and

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[7] Wright, *Rebuilding Identity*, 28. See also Blenkinsopp's proposed structure which focuses on "the theme of opposition confronted and overcome," Blenkinsopp, *Ezra–Nehemiah*, 225.

the opposition and provides an overview of how intergroup dynamics shift throughout the intergroup narrative.

Identification—Concerned Social Groups

This section aims to identify the social groups involved in the intergroup conflict. A social group can be defined as "two or more individuals who share a common social identification of themselves or . . . perceive themselves to be members of the same social category."[8] Common proper name, group name, ethnic label, or role label that characterizes the group are common group markers. Cornell commented on the distributional and provocative implications of ethnic labels, "in distributing persons among categories, societies also, inevitably, distribute things among persons: honor or recognition or power or opportunity or disadvantage. Such distributions also may arouse those persons to action."[9] What Cornell said is reflected in the intergroup behavior in Neh 1–4, 6. In this part of the memoir, the engaging social groups bore different ethnicities and power differentials. The frequent use of ethnic labels implies that ethnicity was a key factor affecting the ingroup–outgroup membership. As a preliminary step of ingroup–outgroup identification, social groups appearing in the text are grouped into four categories: (1) ethnic labels/proper names in the voice of Nehemiah, the first-person narrator; (2) ethnic labels/proper names in the voice of the antagonists represented by Sanballat whether explicit or implied by the context; (3) Judean group labels; and (4) role labels of Judeans or the opposition. For this study, ethnicity assumes the rigid end of

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[8] Turner, "Cognitive Redefinition," 15.
[9] Cornell, "The Story," 42.

Horowitz's continuum of ethnic affiliation, i.e., membership of an ethnic group is gained at birth.[10]

Group distinction is evidenced in the way the memoir differentiates people from other provinces. In the conflict accounts, ethnic labels are used to identify the antagonists and foreign peoples. The ethnic labels are הַחֹרֹנִי *the Horonite* (Neh 2:10, 19), הָעַמֹּנִים/הָעַמֹּנִי *the Ammonite(s)* (Neh 2:10, 19; 3:35 [4:3 ET]; 4:1 [4:7 ET]), הָעַרְבִים/הָעַרְבִי *the Arabian(s)* (Neh 2:19; 4:1 [4:7 ET]; 6:1), and הָאַשְׁדּוֹדִים *the Ashdodites* (Neh 4:1 [4:7 ET]). These labels represent the four ethnic groups which Nehemiah addressed collectively as אוֹיְבֵינוּ *our enemies* (Neh 4:9 [4:15 ET]; 6:1, 16) or צָרֵינוּ *our adversaries* (4:5 [4:11 ET]). The repeated use of ethnic labels is suggestive of the memoir's depiction of this group's non-Israelite origin. As such, this part of the memoir deliberately excludes the opponents from the Judean group. The first three ethnic groups were represented by Sanballat the Horonite, Tobiah the Ammonite, and Geshem the Arabian. The scriptural narration informs that these three people actively engaged in the conflict accounts. They were the leading opponents who mobilized the intergroup maneuver against Nehemiah and the Judeans participating in the wall-rebuilding project. The antagonists also employed ethnic labels in a similar fashion. For example, Sanballat and Tobiah labeled Nehemiah and the Judeans as בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל *sons of Israel* (Neh 2:10). On other occasions, Sanballat regularly used הַיְּהוּדִים *the Judeans* as a collective term to address the Judean community (3:33, 34 [4:1, 2 ET]; 6:6). In this sense, the concerned social groups appearing in the conflict accounts may be represented by two broad categories, the Judean community and the neighboring peoples collectively treated as the opposition of the Judeans. Within the

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[10] Horowitz, *Ethnic Groups*, 55. Horowitz conceptualized ethnic affiliations as being located in a continuum with voluntary membership and membership by birth being the two ends of the continuum.

Judean group, Nehemiah was the most prominent figure, as seen from his role as the

leader directing the rebuilding and defense strategies in the restoration of the wall.

Various Judean social groups appear in the memoir besides the opposition. The

groups participating in the rebuilding project are first identified as יְהוּדִים the *Judeans*,

כֹּהֲנִים *the priests,* חֹרִים *the nobles*, סְגָנִים *the officials* and יֶתֶר עֹשֵׂה הַמְּלָאכָה *the rest who were*

to do the work (Neh 2:16). These categories reappear in the subsequent stages of the

building account. The category *priests* is less debatable. The remaining categories have

been interpreted differently by scholars and hence need a preliminary understanding for

the sake of ingroup identification. Williamson commented that *the Judeans* referred to

"the population at large," and *the nobles*, *official*s, and *the rest* were administrative

functionaries who shared similar functions in the community.[11] Joseph Blenkinsopp

argued that *the Judeans* were more likely the diaspora Jews, *the nobles* and *officials* were

the community's respective civic and religious leaders, and *the rest* referred to the

common people.[12] Lisbeth S. Fried commented that *the nobles* were land aristocrats

having Persian descent and *the officials* were satrapal officials appointed by the satrap or

king, and they were of Persian or Babylonian descent.[13] This study argues that this group

consisted of Judeans from the Judean community based on the semantics expressed in the

sequential connection of Neh 2:16 and 2:17. First, they were expected to join the

rebuilding work (Neh 2:16) and second, they belonged to the emphatic *we* who shared the

national disgrace in Nehemiah's address (Neh 2:17). Besides, the participating Judeans

are identified as a collective group of הַבּוֹנִים *the builders* (Neh 3:37; 4:11, 12 [4:5, 17, 18

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[11] Williamson, *Ezra, Nehhemiah*, 191.
[12] Blenkinsopp, *Ezra–Nehemiah*, 223–24.
[13] Fried, *Nehemiah*, 68–69, 72, 81–2. For additional scholarhip on Persian adminstrative
functionaries, see Dandamayev, "Neo-Babylonian."

ET]), עָם *people* (Neh 3:38 [4:6 ET]), יְהוּדָה Judah (4:4 [4:10 ET]); and כָּל־בֵּית יְהוּדָה *the*

whole house of Judah (4:10 [4:16 ET]). These collective terms, especially the last three,

are suggestive of the involvement of a wider Judean community in the rebuilding project.

The memoir also depicts two social groups in the wider Judean society. These are the

groups of נוֹעַדְיָה הַנְּבִיאָה וּלְיֶתֶר הַנְּבִיאִים *Noadiah the prophetess and the rest of the prophets*

(Neh 6:14) and חֹרֵי יְהוּדָה *the nobles of Judah* (Neh 6:17). This study will examine their

role in the intergroup conflicts.

Categorization—Cognitive Component

The identification of social groups and related group dynamics suggest that the

interactions between the Judean group and antagonistic group entailed intergroup

relations. Hence, the methodological approach primarily follows the SIT framework for

intergroup relations. In intergroup behavior, "all of behaviour of two or more individuals

towards each other is determined by their membership of different social groups or

categories."[14] The attitudinal and behavioral patterns of the concerned social groups

would suffice to reflect the groups' perception of self-identity. Delineating the cognitive

component of the social categorization process will aid the understanding of the ingroup

and outgroup membership.

Common Ancestry

The Judean group and their opposition have been identified textually as the two broad

categories in the intergroup conflict. The use of ethnic labels has illustrated that both

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[14] Tajfel, "Interindividual Behaviour," 41.

groups viewed each other as a different ethnic group. The question then becomes how the two groups perceived their own group identity.

Genealogical Descent

Genealogical descent refers to the descent from a common ancestor traced through biological linkage.[15] The origin of Sanballat, Tobiah, and Geshem has been widely discussed based on ancient sources and biblical evidence.[16] Among the comments, the ones in common for Sanballat are: (1) Sanballat was a Babylonian name (*sin-uballit*, "Sin [the moon god] has given life"). (2) He was named in an Elephantine letter dated 408 BCE as governor of Samaria and father of Delaiah and Shelemiah.[17] (3) Sanballat's two sons were given Yahwistic names, which suggested that he himself was a Yahwist. Speculations about Sanballat's origin are primarily associated with his ethnic label, הַחֹרֹנִי *the Horonite*, named in the memoir. The first is that he came from Upper or Lower Beth-Horon in Ephraim in Samaria, northwest of Jerusalem.[18] Other speculations include Harran in Mesopotamia, a worship center of the moon god *Sin*; Hauran, a once Assyrian province in Northern Transjordan; and Horonaim in Moab.[19] Alongside these speculations is the hypothesis of Sanballat's Israelite lineage, which is also this study's interest. Scholars have held different opinions about the genealogical likelihood. For

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[15] Smith, *Myths and Memories*, 57–58.

[16] Cowley, *Aramaic Papyri*, 108–19; Blenkinsopp, *Ezra–Nehemiah*, 216–19, 225–26; Clines, *Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther*, 144–45, 147–48; Fried, *Nehemiah*, 58–60, 74–5; Harrington, *Ezra and Nehemiah*, 288–83, 293; Williamson, *Ezra, Nehemiah*, 182–84, 192.

[17] Cowley, *Aramaic Papyri*, 108–09. Another Sanballat, Sanballat II, existed in mid-fourth century BCE. He was the son of Hananiah son of Delaiah and governor of Samaria ca. 353 BCE. See Athas, *Bridging the Testaments*, 103; Knoppers, *Jews and Samaritans*, 111.

[18] Blenkinsopp considered Beth-Horon the most likely origin and Williamson suggested this is the majority view among others. See Blenkinsopp, *Ezra–Nehemiah*, 216; Williamson, *Ezra, Nehemiah*, 182.

[19] Blenkinsopp, *Ezra–Nehemiah*, 216; Fried, *Nehemiah*, 58–59; Williamson, *Ezra, Nehemiah*, 183.

example, Blenkinsopp suggested descent from the Assyrian diaspora in the north in the

eighth century.[20] Fried suggested Israelite descent from the Assyrian diaspora living in

Harran.[21] Knoppers construed the Ephramite origin implicit based on the Horonite epithet

and its association with the northern tribes,[22] and Williamson suggested an inconclusive

origin.[23] Based on the ancient documents, at least Sanballat's Samarian governorship and

Yahwistic belief may be established. He may possess Israelite lineage, but this cannot be

attested to firmly.

The identity of Tobiah is equally controversial. Tobiah was a common Yahwistic

name meaning, "Yahweh is good." Tobiah's name implies that he was a Yahwist.

Commentators traced the possible origin of Tobiah to the Tobiah among the returning

exiles with Zerubbabel, who could not prove his genealogical descent (Ezra 2:60//Neh

7:61).[24] Mark J. Boda observed that the question over Tobiah's ancestral origin might

indicate priestly background (Ezra 2:62–63//Neh 7:64–65) and that a Tobiad descendant

may oppose Nehemiah was not surprising if the Tobiad family had been excluded before

Nehemiah's time.[25] Fried and Boda's postulations suggest possible Judean or Israelite

descent of Tobiah. Besides, Tobiah was often linked to a later aristocratic Tobiad family

that was influential over Ammon and Moab throughout the Hellenistic period.[26] This

linkage leads to the speculation that Tobiah was the later Tobiad family's ancestor and

the Ammonite region's governor. The memoir has noted Tobiah's prominent social

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[20] Blenkinsopp, *Ezra–Nehemiah*, 216.
[21] Fried, *Nehemiah*, 59.
[22] Knoppers, "Nehemiah and Sanballat," 326.
[23] Williamson, *Ezra, Nehemiah*, 182–83.
[24] Fried, *Nehemiah*, 59. The name Tobiah appears in Zech 6:10–14 and the person was said to be from Babylon.
[25] Boda, *Zechariah*, 391–92.
[26] Blenkinsopp, *Ezra–Nehemiah*, 218–19; Clines, *Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther*, 145; Fried, *Nehemiah*, 59.

status, particularly his close relationship with the Judean prophets, nobility, and

priesthood (Neh 6:10–14, 17–19; 13:4–5). Blenkinsopp suggested that besides being a

Persian-appointed governor, "Tobiah belonged to a distinguished Jerusalemite family

with close ties to the high priesthood and the aristocracy."[27] Williamson held a different

proposal based on the interpretation of Tobiah's title הָעֶבֶד הָעַמֹּנִי *the Ammonite servant*. He

suggested that Tobiah was a junior colleague of Sanballat and had Ammonite ancestry.[28]

On the other hand, Fried deduced that the term could mean one of the highest officials to

the king in the Persian context.[29] The book of Jeremiah logs two accounts of Judean

migration to Ammon. The first was indicated by the return of the dispersed Judeans from

Ammon to Mizpah during Gedaliah's governorship (Jer 40:11–12). The second was the

fleeing of Ishmael and his followers to Ammon after the assassination of Gadaliah (Jer

41:15). These accounts are indicative of Judeans living in Ammon during the Babylonian

period. Nevertheless, like Sanballat, Tobiah's Judean or Israelite descent is inconclusive.

The non-Judean origin of Geshem or Gashmu (Neh 6:6) seems less disputable. His

ancestry was traced to the Qedarite Arabian kingdom south of Judah in the Persian

period.[30] Nevertheless, the memoir introduces Sanballat as *the Horonite* and Tobiah as

the Ammonite official (Neh 2:10, 19), and Geshem as *the Arabian* (Neh 2:19) in the early

stage of the conflict narrative and depicts these three figures as Nehemiah's opponents

(Neh 2:10, 19). These opening scenes employing non-Israelite ethnic labels accentuate an

image of an antagonistic circle outside of Nehemiah's group.[31]

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[27] Blenkinsopp, *Ezra–Nehemiah*, 219.

[28] Williamson, *Ezra, Nehemiah*, 183.

[29] Fried, *Nehemiah*, 59.

[30] Blenkinsopp, *Ezra–Nehemiah*, 225; Williamson, *Ezra, Nehemiah*, 192.

[31] Boda, "Nehemiah, 719." Boda observed a clear isolation of the three enemies as external forces who were not part of the province.

In his prayer in Neh 1:5–11a, Nehemiah made a confession on behalf of himself and his father's household (Neh 1:6b):[32]

וּמִתְוַדֶּה עַל־חַטֹּאות בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲשֶׁר חָטָאנוּ לָךְ וַאֲנִי וּבֵית־אָבִי חָטָאנוּ
and confessing on behalf of the sins of the sons of Israel that we have sinned against you, I and my father's household have sinned.

Noteworthy is Nehemiah's repeating the first common plural perfective verb חָטָאנוּ *we have sinned* to place himself (in an emphatic manner) and his father's household in the sphere of the *sons of Israel*. The sinning act is depicted as a commonality among Nehemiah's family and Israelite descendants. The articulation effectively includes Nehemiah as a member of the Judean community and legitimates Nehemiah's claim of common descent from the historical past of Israel.[33] The group label עֲבָדֶיךָ *your servants* repeats in Neh 1:6, 10, and 11. It is synonymous with *sons of Israel* (Neh 1:6) and עַמְּךָ *your people* (Neh 1:10). The third masculine plural pronoun וְהֵם *they* (Neh 1:10) further bridges the label with נִדַּחֲכֶם *your dispersed ones* whom God had promised to redeem (Neh 1:9) and the exilic community redeemed by God (Neh 1:10). The group label *your servants* effectively interconnects the postexilic Judean community to the Exodus community and exilic community, hence accentuating a self-perception of the common Israelite ancestry and unique covenantal identity.

The label *sons of Israel* also appears in the reported speech of Sanballat and Tobiah (Neh 2:10). By putting the label in the voices of Sanballat and Tobiah, the memoir depicts Sanballat and Tobiah's perception of Nehemiah and the Judeans as

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[32] The English translations are my translations unless stated otherwise.

[33] Observing the relationship between ethnicity and the land of residence, Knoppers commented that Nehemiah "exhibits a keen sense of solidarity with the people of Judah and Jerusalem, in spite of the great geographic distance that separates them (Neh 1:1–2) . . . Nehemiah considers himself to be a member of this [the Judean] society." He also noticed the ethnic sense stemming from various group labels in the memoir. See Knoppers, "Nehemiah and Sanballat," 309–11.

descendants of Israel. Noteworthy is the hostile tone associated with this label וַיֵּרַע לָהֶם

רָעָה גְדֹלָה *and it displeased them greatly*. The hostility suggests this label is exclusive and

the antagonists did not perceive themselves having the same genealogical connection as

the Judeans. Similarly, when Sanballat was depicted to use הַיְּהוּדִים *the Judean* to mock

and accuse the Judean wall builders, he did it before his Samarian entourage (3:33, 34

[4:1, 2 ET]) and in an adversary role (Neh 6:6; cf. 6:1). These depictions accentuate the

depiction of Sanballat's self-perception as an outsider of the Judean community.

Kinship

Kinship terms indicate family ties and individuals' relationships within a member group.

Among the three named antagonists, the name Geshem appears in Neh 2:19 and 6:1.

These texts provide no information about the kinship tie between Geshem and Judean

families. Neither is there any textual evidence on the biological ties of Sanballat and

Tobiah. Horowitz's kinship concept accommodates kinship relations established through

extended families.[34] Applying Horowitz's extended family concept, Sanballat and Tobiah

had certain kinship ties with members of the Judean community. The extended relations

were established through intermarriages with Judeans, evidenced by the kinship term חָתָן

son-in-law (Neh 6:18; 13:28). Nehemiah 6:18 informs that Tobiah had a close

relationship with prominent Judeans through his own marriage to Shecaniah's daughter

and his son's marriage to Meshullam's daughter. Moreover, Tobiah was closely related

with Eliashib the priest who even reserved a room in the temple for him (Neh 13:4).[35]

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[34] Horowitz, *Ethnic Groups*, 55, 57, 59.

[35] Some commentators interpreted the adjective קָרוֹב as *a relative* [*of Tobiah*]. See Blenkinsopp, *Ezra–Nehemiah*, 353; Harrington, *Ezra and Nehemiah*, 458; Williamson, *Ezra, Nehemiah*, 378.

Nehemiah 13:28 informs that one of the sons of Joiada son of Eliashib the high priest married the daughter of Sanballat. These extended kinship relations reflect different cognitive perceptions about insider and outsider between the tied families and Nehemiah.

Among the kinship terms used by Nehemiah, אֲבֹתַי *my ancestors* (Neh 2:3, 5), bore significant meaning. The word on its own may connote common descent or extended familial relationships. However, the term accentuates a presumed genealogical tie with Judeans when placed with the indication of where the graves of these ancestors were located.

2:3		הָעִיר בֵּית־קִבְרוֹת אֲבֹתַי
	the city, the place of my ancestors' graves	
2:5		אֶל־יְהוּדָה אֶל־עִיר קִבְרוֹת אֲבֹתַי
	to Judah, to the city of my ancestors' graves	

The implication is explicit. The city, Jerusalem, was the homeland of Nehemiah's ancestors. The connection legitimates a kinship tie by birth for Nehemiah, irrespective of where he lived.

Plural Personal Pronouns and Plural Verbs

Plural personal pronouns play a cognitive function in group identification. According to Tajfel and colleagues, "the norm of "groupness" may be expected to operate when the social world of an individual . . . is clearly dichotomized into "us" and 'them'."[36] Paraphrasing the same using group membership, "group membership is a matter of collective self-construal—'we'/'us' versus 'them'."[37] Hence, plural pronouns are identity markers of individual groups, even when the groups are not explicitly named. By pairing

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[36] Tajfel et al., "Intergroup Behaviour," 174.
[37] Hogg, "Social Identity Theory," 115.

plural pronouns with a group label, plural pronouns refer to groups as entities.[38] The concept may also be applied to the plural verbs describing the unified behavior of the ingroup and outgroup.

The first conflict account (Neh 2:11–20) evidences the identification of the *we-*group. The second masculine plural pronoun אַתֶּם *you* in Neh 2:17 is the referent of the Judean group (*the Judeans, the nobles, the officials, and the rest*) mentioned in Neh 2:16. By employing the first common plural pronoun אֲנַחְנוּ *we* in his speeches (Neh 2:17), Nehemiah identified himself with the wider Judean group. The next first common plural pronoun further identifies the *we-*group members as the participants of the rebuilding project (Neh 2:20). On the other hand, when Sanballat used the second masculine plural pronoun אַתֶּם *you* to mock the Judeans (Neh 2:19, in contrast to the prepositional first common plural suffice *us* in לָנוּ and עָלֵינוּ, he and his allies are depicted as the opposition of the *we-*group. Similar group categorization occurs in the subsequent encounter. This time, the opposition used the third masculine plural pronoun הֵם *they* to categorize the *we-*group (Neh 3:35 [4:3 ET]). The self-categorization of the Judean group is marked by the continuous use of the first common plural pronoun by the participating Judeans and the first-person narrator emphatically (Neh 4:4, 13, 15 [4:10, 19, 21 ET]).

The plural verbs representing the behavior of the Judean group are mostly first common plural verbs. They include וְנִבְנֶה *let us rebuild* (Neh 2:17b), נָקוּם וּבָנִינוּ *let us arise and rebuild* (Neh 2:18b), וַנִּבְנֶה *we rebuilt* (Neh 3:38 [4:6 ET]), וַנִּתְפַּלֵּל *we prayed* (Neh 4:3a [4:9a ET]), and [וַ]נָּשָׁב] *we returned* [to work] (Neh 4:9 [4:15 ET]). A third masculine plural verb is identified, which is וַיְחַזְּקוּ *they were strengthened* (Neh 2:18b).

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[38] Seal, "These Things," 94.

The plural verbs are all associated with the rebuilding work, thus demonstrating a sense of group coherence by members within the Judean community.

The plural verbs representing the opposition's behavior are more nuanced. The verb forms can be grouped into three stages. The first stage includes the third masculine plural verbs וַיַּלְעִגוּ *they mocked* and וַיִּבְזוּ *they ridiculed* (Neh 2:19a), and וַיִּקְשְׁרוּ *they plotted* (Neh 4:2 [4:8 ET]). The second stage includes the first common plural cohortative verbs נָבוֹא *we shall come*, וַהֲרַגְנוּ *kill*, and וְהִשְׁבַּתְנוּ *put an end* (Neh 4:5 [4:11 ET]). The final stage includes the remaining third masculine plural verbs שָׁמְעוּ *they had heard* (Neh 4:9 [4:15 ET]; 6:16), וַיִּשְׁלַח *they sent* (Neh 6:2), and וַיִּרְאוּ *they were afraid*, וַיִּפְּלוּ *they fell*, and וַיֵּדְעוּ *they realized* (6:16). The shift in third masculine plural verbs in the first stage to first common plural verbs in the second stage suggests possible speech dominance and *we*-group negotiation by the opposition. However, the shifting to progressively negative third plural verbs in the final stage indicates a departure from the *we*-group semantically. The final third masculine plural verb *they realized* suggests the opposition's acknowledgement of God's role in completing the wall rebuilding.[39] The verbal nuances evidence the depiction of a dissolving group image of the opposition.

Group Beliefs

Group beliefs are those shared by group members and reflect the characteristics of an ingroup. The acceptance of group beliefs is one of the critical indicators of ingroup

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[39] Williamson, *Ezra, Nehemiah*, 261. In Williamson's words: "they were awe-struck at this evident manifestation of God's power exerted on behalf of his people."

membership.[40] The fundamental group belief that *we are a group* prompts group

members to adhere to what they believe and how to respond as a group.

Group Norms

The narratives in Neh 2–4 and 6 link the intergroup conflicts with the rebuilding of the

wall, more precisely, the act of rebuilding. Normative behaviors are often expressed by

imperative statements. The first imperative statement is seen in Neh 2:17b:

לְכוּ וְנִבְנֶה אֶת־חוֹמַת יְרוּשָׁלַ͏ִם

Come, and let us rebuild the wall of Jerusalem

The imperative לְכוּ *come* calls for a collective action, and the cohortative וְנִבְנֶה *let us*

rebuild conveys a desire of invitation. This volitional verb pair together enacts a

prescribed behavior (the act of rebuilding) demanding a positive response from the

Judean group.[41] The group's reply נָקוּם וּבָנִינוּ *let us arise and rebuild* (2:18b) suffices a

literary effect of coherence to this newly enacted group norm. The repetition of the same

phrase by Nehemiah (Neh 2:20a) further reinforces the normative sense of the action.

Subsequent narrations evidence the continuous participation of the Judean group in the

building activities. Repetition of the verb בָּנָה *build* in various forms also attests to the

normative significance of the building actions.[42]

On the other hand, cohortative verbs are employed to depict the opposition's

group actions. After the Judeans finished building the wall to its half height (Neh 3:38

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[40] Bar-Tal, "Expression," 94.

[41] When an imperative is combined with a plural cohortative, "the effect of the plural cohortative is frequently heightened by a verb of motion in the imperative, which functions as an auxiliary or interjection." See Waltke and O'Connor, *Introduction*, 574.

[42] Besides 2:5, 17, the action verb בָּנָה *build* occurs fifteen times in the conflict accounts (2:18, 20; 3:1, 2, 3; 3:13, 14, 15; 3:33, 35, 38 [4:1, 3, 6 ET]; 4:4, 12 [4:10, 18 ET]; 6:1, 6), and additinally three times in the participial form הַבּוֹנִים *the builders* or *those who build* (3:37 [4:5 ET]; 4:11, 12 [4:17, 18 ET]).

[4:6 ET]), the cohortatives נָבוֹא *we shall come*, וַהֲרַגְנוּ *kill*, and וְהִשְׁבַּתְנוּ *put an end*, were voiced by the opposition (Neh 4:5 [4:11 ET]). The three cohortatives are suggestive of the opposition's intended group actions. Noteworthy is how the memoir invalidates the legitimacy of these actions with a remark that God had frustrated the opposition's plot (Neh 4:9 [4:15 ET]).

Group Values

Based on the literary content and context, three shared values are postulated. They are *communal cooperation*, *endurance as a group*, and *God's agency*.

Communal Cooperation

The first value shared by the Judean group is *communal cooperation*. Nehemiah 2:16–17 shows Nehemiah's intent of drawing the workforce from different strata of the Judean society to participate in the rebuilding work. Judeans from the priesthood, nobility, provincial officials, and the general populace were targeted participants. In other words, communal cooperation was anticipated before the Judean community was aware of it. Communal cooperation was an indispensable element in the wall restoration work, particularly under the social situation when the opposition constantly threatened and ill-plotted against the Judeans. The memoir depicts the Judeans' cooperative responses in various rebuilding stages:

2:17b	לְכוּ וְנִבְנֶה אֶת־חוֹמַת יְרוּשָׁלַם וְלֹא־נִהְיֶה עוֹד חֶרְפָּה
	Come and let us rebuild the wall of Jerusalem, and we will no longer be in disgrace.
2:18b	וַיֹּאמְרוּ נָקוּם וּבָנִינוּ וַיְחַזְּקוּ יְדֵיהֶם לַטּוֹבָה
	And they replied, "Let us arise and rebuild." And they strengthened their hands for the good.
3:1–32	(The building account—communal participation)

3:38 [4:6 ET]	וַנִּבְנֶה אֶת־הַחוֹמָה וַתִּקָּשֵׁר כָּל־הַחוֹמָה עַד־חֶצְיָהּ וַיְהִי לֵב לָעָם לַעֲשׂוֹת

So we rebuilt the wall and all the wall was joined together to its half height, for the heart of the people was to work.

4:9b [4:15b ET]	ונשוב [וַ][נָּשָׁב] כֻּלָּנוּ אֶל־הַחוֹמָה אִישׁ אֶל־מְלַאכְתּוֹ

and we all returned to the wall, each one to his work.

4:15a [4:21a ET]	וַאֲנַחְנוּ עֹשִׂים בַּמְּלָאכָה

So we worked on the work

6:15	וַתִּשְׁלַם הַחוֹמָה בְּעֶשְׂרִים וַחֲמִשָּׁה לֶאֱלוּל לַחֲמִשִּׁים וּשְׁנַיִם יוֹם

And the wall was completed on the twenty-fifth of Elul, in fifty-two days.

The literary structure of Neh 2:12 and 3:38 [4:6 ET] suggests a word play between לִבִּי

לַעֲשׂוֹת *my heart to work* and לֵב לָעָם לַעֲשׂוֹת *the people's heart to work*. The second textual

unit evidences the transition of Nehemiah's personal belief to communal initiative. It also

signifies a cognitive internalization of the group cooperation value by the Judean

community.

Endurance as a Group

This value of *endurance as a group* is closely related to *communal cooperation*. The

event flow of Neh 2–4, 6 marks the intensification of the opposition's threats and attacks

on those who participated in the rebuilding work (Neh 2:19; 3:33–35 [4:1–3 ET]; 4:1–2,

5 [7–8, 11 ET]; 6:1–15 personal attacks against Nehemiah). The endurance of the group

is evidenced by the use of the first common plural pronoun and verbs describing the

communal responses and actions after each hostile attack (Neh 2:18 נָקוּם וּבָנִינוּ *let us arise*

and rebuild; Neh 3:38 [4:6 ET] וַנִּבְנֶה *we rebuilt*; 4:10 [4:15 ET] [וַ][נָּשָׁב] *we returned*, 4:15

[4:21 ET] וַאֲנַחְנוּ עֹשִׂים *we continued*). Although group designation is not explicitly

mentioned in the wall completion stage (Neh 6:15), communal achievement cannot be

doubted (cf. Neh 4:15 [4:21 ET]; 6:1). The completion showcases group endurance

besides group cooperation in achieving the task in a hostile and life-threatening situation.

God's Agency and Trust in God

The third value is *God's agency*. The value is conceptualized either declaratively (Neh

2:20a, 4:14b [4:20b ET]) or descriptively (4:9a [4:15a ET]; 6:16b).

2:20a	אֱלֹהֵי הַשָּׁמַיִם הוּא יַצְלִיחַ לָנוּ
	the God of heaven he will make success for us
4:9a [4:15a ET]	וַיָּפֶר הָאֱלֹהִים אֶת־עֲצָתָם
	that God had frustrated their plan
4:14b [4:20b ET]	אֱלֹהֵינוּ יִלָּחֶם לָנוּ
	our God will fight for us
6:16b	וַיֵּדְעוּ כִּי מֵאֵת אֱלֹהֵינוּ נֶעֶשְׂתָה הַמְּלָאכָה הַזֹּאת
	because they had realized that this work had been accomplished by our God

In these declarations and descriptions, God is depicted as the actor to bring about the

actions. Two additional textual features affirm the depiction. First, the independent third

masculine singular pronoun הוא in the first declaration (Neh 2:20a) emphasizes that God

was the actor to bring success. Second, the word מֵאֵת in the last description (Neh 6:16b) is

indicative of God being the source of the work completion, and this is testified by the

opposition. Hence, these declarations and descriptions form a congruent concept about

God's agency in countering the opposition and restoring the wall. The value that goes

hand-in-hand is *total trust in God*, which is exemplified in the first three declarations and

description.

Group Goals

Goals may be short-term or sustainable. Nevertheless, they must be shared by group

members to be recognized as group goals.

The text of Neh 1:1—2:5 posits the restoration of the Jerusalem wall as

Nehemiah's personal goal. After Nehemiah heard of the devastating conditions of

Jerusalem, he prayed to God (Neh 1:4). In Williamson's outline, Neh 1:8–9 is an appeal

to God's covenant promises.[43] Another way to interpret vv. 8–9 is the result of

disobedience (v. 8) and result of repentance (v. 9). Nehemiah was appealing to God for

his covenant promise. Concurrently, Nehemiah also expressed his conviction that as a

fulfillment of the promise, God would gather and bring the penitent exilic people, the

Judeans, back to the place where God had chosen as a dwelling for his name (v. 9b).

אִם־יִהְיֶה נִדַּחֲכֶם בִּקְצֵה הַשָּׁמָיִם מִשָּׁם אֲקַבְּצֵם 1:9b
והבואתים [ו][הֲבִיאוֹתִים] אֶל־הַמָּקוֹם אֲשֶׁר בָּחַרְתִּי לְשַׁכֵּן אֶת־שְׁמִי שָׁם
even if your dispersed ones are at the end of the earth, from there I will
gather them, and bring them to the place where I have chosen as a dwelling
for my name there.

Nehemiah identified this *place* to the king as *the city, the place of my ancestors' graves*

(Neh 2:3) and *the city in Judah* (Neh 2:5). Hence, Nehemiah's request for the king's

commission (Neh 1:11; 2:5) may be interpreted as focusing on the relationship between

God's presence and the preservation of the Judeans in his chosen place, Jerusalem (Ps

132:13–16). This conviction may be traced back to the Zion traditions.[44] The place where

God chose as his dwelling is also the sole worship place for God (Deut 12:4–5, 11, 14,

21, 26). Hence, Nehemiah's goal was clear as attested to by the waw-cohortative וְאֶבְנֶנָּה *so*

that I may rebuild it (Neh 2:5b). The goal was to restore Jerusalem, God's dwelling place

and worship center, and to gather the exilic Judeans back to Jerusalem (Neh 1:9b; cf. Neh

7:5) by first restoring the Jerusalem wall.

The targeted participants list (Neh 2:16) suggests that the transition from

Nehemiah's personal goal to communal goal was intentional. Three textual features attest

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[43] Williamson, *Ezra, Nehemiah*, 167.

[44] Concerns the kingship of Yahweh through (1) the election of Zion/Jerusalem as Yahweh's dwelling place; (2) Yahweh's presence; (3) Zion's inviolability; and (4) the election of David's house. See Groves, "Zion Traditions"; Hayes, "Tradition." Related OT references: (1) Ps 132:13; Joel 3:17; (2) Is 12:6; (3) Zeph 3:15; (4) Ps 132:11–12.

to Nehemiah's strategy to form the communal goal. First, Nehemiah turned his personal experience of Jerusalem's conditions to the collective experience of the Judean community. By using the emphatic second masculine plural pronoun אַתֶּם (Neh 2:17a), Nehemiah related the objective conditions of the city to the subjective experience of the Judean community. Second, Nehemiah further conveyed his vision by inviting the community to *see* (רֹאִים) the present condition of Jerusalem (Neh 2:17a). Finally, Nehemiah mobilized the community with a command and encouragement: לְכוּ וְנִבְנֶה *Come, and let us rebuild* (Neh 2:17b). The goal became a shared goal when the Judean community responded positively נָקוּם וּבָנִינוּ *let us arise and rebuild* (2:18b).

Group Ideology

Bar-Tal suggested that shared ideologies "characterize the way in which a group posits, explains, and justifies the ends and means of its organized social actions."[45] In addition to Bar-Tal's definition, an ideology can be viewed as a set of ideas, beliefs, and attitudes reflecting or shaping one's understandings or misconceptions of the social and political world.[46] Shared ideologies thus influence both the social behavior and the worldview of the group who share them. These concepts may well fit into the context of Nehemiah's address in Neh 2:17. The sociopolitical reality behind 2:17 was that Judah was under foreign dominion; Judeans had lost their national identity; and Jerusalem, the once great and prosperous city, was in a ruinous condition. A closer look at Neh 2:17b suggests a semantic relationship between 2:17bα and 2:17bβ.

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[45] Bar-Tal, *Group Beliefs*, 56.
[46] Freeden, "Ideology," 438.

2:17bα	לְכוּ וְנִבְנֶה אֶת־חוֹמַת יְרוּשָׁלַ͏ִם
Come, and let us rebuild the wall of Jerusalem	
2:17bβ	וְלֹא־נִהְיֶה עוֹד חֶרְפָּה
so that we will no longer be an object of disgrace	

The word חֶרְפָּה in Neh 2:17bβ has a meaning of *reproach*, *taunting*, *shame*, or *disgrace*, or *the condition of* or *object of* these glosses.[47] In the Persian context, Judah was perceived as an insignificant province in the eyes of the political powers from the neighboring provinces. Semantically, the conjunctive *waw* denotes the purpose or result of the action in 2:17bα.[48] Hence, Nehemiah's address posits the rebuilding of the wall as a means to an end to counter the taunting of the antagonists, and ultimately to regain the group's self-esteem or honor.[49] Ideologically, the Judeans' self-esteem was equated with the restoration of the wall.[50]

The antagonists' reaction is traced back to Neh 2:10b where they reacted strongly *that someone had come to seek the welfare* (טוֹבָה) *of the sons of Israel*. The context suggests that the antagonists had associated the Judeans' welfare with Nehemiah's rebuilding project. This implies the antagonists unknowingly tied the wall restoration to the welfare of the Judeans ideologically. The same Hebrew word טוֹבָה is used in the closing remark describing the Judeans' commitment to the rebuilding work (Neh 2:18b *And they strengthened their hands for the good*). Though the interpretation of this *good* varies, e.g., relating to *good work* (NASB, NIV)[51] or *common good* (NRSV), the

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[47] Clines et al., *DCH*, 133; Blenkinsopp, *Ezra–Nehemiah*, 220; Williamson, *Ezra, Nehemiah*, 185.

[48] Waltke and O'Connor, *Introduction*, 650.

[49] Laniak, *Shame and Honor*, 23.

[50] Blenkinsopp commented on the need of the restoration to regain respect. Oeming summarized the wall's secular meanings: (1) as anti-Samarian defense; (2) increasing national idenity; and (3) having an economic funcion. Wright also perceived repairing the wall meant a reversal of the sociopolitical situation and a means to gain the neighbors' respect. See Blenkinsopp, *Ezra–Nehemiah*, 224; Oeming, "Real History," 135–37; Wright, *Rebuilding Identity*, 58–59, 61.

[51] Also Harrington, *Ezra and Nehemiah*, 291; Williamson, *Ezra, Nehemiah*, 185.

placement of the word in Neh 2:18b suggests a correspondence to the opposition's

reproach in Neh 2:10b. The Judeans likely tied their group welfare to the wall restoration

ideologically. In sum, examining Neh 2:17, 2:10, and 2:18 reveals the ideology arising

from the restoration of the wall. Cognitively, restoring the wall restores the Judean

group's self-esteem and welfare. The wall ideology is inseparable from the ideology of

honor–shame. Manfred Oeming proposed that one of the theological notions of the wall

is "as the means of preserving the honor of the forefathers and establishing a dwelling

place for the name of God."[52] The centrality of honor–shame will be further expounded

in the Emotional Component section.

Prayers

The memoir reveals Nehemiah's two strong beliefs. First, rebuilding the Jerusalem wall

is a priority task, and second, total reliance on God is the key to success. These beliefs

form the core of the prayer narratives. Reviewing the prayers in Neh 1–4, 6 suggests the

prayers' formative and preservative roles in group beliefs, and thus the ingroup identity

of the Judean community.[53]

1. Formative Role

The formative role is exhibited in the prayer in Neh 1:5–11a and Neh 2:4b. The first

prayer consolidates the rebuilding goal and the vision of communal participation. The

praying act and the emphasis on God's autonomy, his presence, honor, and covenant

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[52] Oeming, "Real History," 141.
[53] Boda, "Prayer as Rhetoric," 271–81. This work approaches the functions of the prayers in Neh
1–4, 6 from rhetorical and narratological perspectives.

promise form the first cause of the wall restoration.[54] The prayer also shapes the ideology

of wall restoration. The second prayer has a formative role in bringing the king's

attention (Neh 2:4a) to the actualization of Nehemiah's request of rebuilding the

Jerusalem wall (Neh 2:6).

2. Preservative Role

The remaining prayers are characteristic of their roles in preserving the values of group

endurance and trust in God. Group endurance is critical for the Judean community to face

the opposition's taunting and threatening gestures and in times of distress. The prayers in

Neh 3:36–37 [4:4–5 ET] and 4:3a [4:9a ET] were spoken in such context. The placement

of these prayers corresponds to the community's needs to preserve the group's endurance

and cohesiveness, and the spirit to achieve the building goal. The remaining two prayers

(Neh 6:9b, 14) are the personal prayers of the autobiographical narrator, presumably

Nehemiah. The social situations behind these prayers are similar, i.e., the antagonists

were scheming against Nehemiah. In both situations, the prayers are instrumental in

preserving Nehemiah's trust in God.

Boundaries

Ingroup boundaries in intergroup relations maximize the difference between the ingroup

and outgroup and enable a more positive ingroup identity. Boundaries between the two

groups are evidenced by ethnicity and group beliefs. The explicit use of ethnic labels by

both Nehemiah and the antagonists drew clear ethnic boundaries between the Judean

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[54] The Zion traditions may be traced in this prayer. See Group Goals.

group and the antagonists who did not perceive themselves as Judeans. Both groups'

attitude and behavior toward the rebuilding goal and wall ideologies constituted a

conceptual boundary between the two groups. The attitudinal and behavioral contrast

between the antagonists and the Judean group evidenced such boundary. A further

boundary was marked by the prayers, which characterized the unique relationship the

Judean group had with God. These boundaries define the exclusiveness of the outgroup.[55]

Summary: Ingroup Identification

The social group analysis has identified two concerned social groups in Neh 1–6: the

Judean group led by Nehemiah and the opposition represented by the antagonists

Sanballat, Tobiah, and Geshem. The memoir posits wall rebuilding as the core activity

and the normative goal to be accomplished. This prevailing goal placed the Judean

community as the ingroup in the intergroup relations. This delineation is further

supported by the identification of the Judean group as the dominant *we*-group.

Conversely, the ethnic and group beliefs boundaries define the exclusiveness of the

antagonists who were thus perceived as the outgroup.[56] Concerning ancestral descent, the

genealogical descent of Sanballat and Tobiah is arguable, but notably, the opposition is

depicted as *not* perceiving themselves as sharing common ethnicity, ancestry, welfare,

and group beliefs with the Judean group. The opposition's self-perception accentuated

their self-categorization of being the outgroup.

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[55] Barth, ed., *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries*, 56.

[56] Boda, *Severe Mercy*, 481. In discussing the theology of sin and its remedy in Neh 1–6, Boda observed a continuing emphasis on clear distinctions between the Judean community and the three antagonists.

A potential challenge to this conclusion likely arises from their intertwining kinship relationships with the Jerusalemite priesthood and aristocrats. In his work to redefine the concept of social group in intergroup relations, Turner defined a social group as "two or more individuals . . . perceive themselves to be members of the same category."[57] He further stressed that for group members to act as a group, members "share no more than a collective perception of their own social unity."[58] The textual data presented so far suggest the opposite for the antagonists, e.g., they did not take wall rebuilding as a prescriptive norm. Another challenge may arise from the use of the first common plural cohortative verbs נִוָּעֲדָה *let us meet* and וְנִוָּעֲצָה יַחְדָּו *let us take counsel together* in the messages and letter the antagonists sent to Nehemiah (Neh 6:2, 4 [implied], 7). The cohortatives were voiced by the antagonists and seemed to connote a sense of commonality, such as common ancestry or interest between the antagonists and Nehemiah. Some scholars have suggested that these phrases express the opposition's goodwill to reach an agreement with Nehemiah.[59] Yet, some have disagreed with the proposal of a genuine concern for reconciliation.[60] Either view may have an implication for the antagonists' perceived membership.

This study does not perceive a joint membership based on three observations. First, the name Geshem was included as one of the senders (Neh 6:2). The implication of common ethnicity is invalidated by Geshem, who, being the co-sender and one of the *us* in the first four messages, was an Arabian. Second, the memoir depicts Nehemiah's

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[57] Turner, "Cognitive Redefinition," 15.

[58] Turner, "Cognitive Redefinition," 15.

[59] Fried, *Nehemiah*, 170; Grabbe, *Ezra–Nehemiah*, 162. Fried conceived a likelihood that Sanballat and Geshem wanted to participate in Nehemiah's putative plot to rebel. Grabbe suggested the meeting was an invitation for reconciliation.

[60] Williamson, *Ezra, Nehemiah*, 253–54; Wright, *Rebuilding Identity*, 133–34.

perception of an ill intention from the antagonists (Neh 6:2). Finally, after Nehemiah

declined the meeting four times, the final invitation came as an open threat and with a

series of accusations targeting Nehemiah (Neh 6:5–7). Also noteworthy was the way the

memoir depicts how each party perceived the other in this encounter. First, Nehemiah

never compromised his group identity with the opposition. This is evidenced by the

personal pronouns in Nehemiah's responses. In responding to the first message,

Nehemiah detached himself from the antagonists by addressing the antagonists הֵמָּה *they*

(Neh 6:2). In his reply to the last message, Nehemiah articulated Sanballat's accusation

as a אַתָּה *you* business (Neh 6:8). Similarly, the opposition also drew a group boundary

between themselves and the Judeans when they addressed Nehemiah and the Judean

group as אַתָּה וְהַיְּהוּדִים *you and the Judeans* (Neh 6:6). Applying Turner's social group

definition, the antagonists would be perceived as a different group than the Judean

ingroup. In sum, the narrative in Neh 1–4, 6 depicts how the memoir shapes the Judean

group as the ingroup and the antagonists as the outgroup. In discussing the storytelling of

identity narratives and power relations, Cornell pointed out that "narrative construction is

often a contested process, shaped by power differentials."[61] With Nehemiah being the

first-person narrator of the intergroup conflict, the ingroup dominance of the Judean

group over the opposition is intensified.

Categorization—Evaluative Component

By definition, a group or its membership may be associated with a positive or negative

value connotation. The need for positive distinctiveness or social identity drives ingroup

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[61] Cornell, "The Story," 47.

members to differentiate themselves from the outgroup by maximizing the differences

between the two groups through social comparison. Ingroup members tend to assign

positive attributes to themselves and negative characteristics to outgroup members. These

traits may be seen in the positive and negative evaluatives corresponding to the ingroup

and outgroup respectively.

<div align="center">Differentiation</div>

Ingroup favoritism or outgroup discrimination "represents an attempt to achieve positive

distinctiveness for one's own group in the social situation."[62] Intergroup differentiation

functions to achieve and preserve the positive distinctiveness or social identity of the

ingroup.

Us and Them

The social situation depicted in Neh 2:20 explicates the direct conflict between Nehemiah

and the antagonists. Nehemiah's counteraction reflects the ingroup's dichotomous view

on the legitimacy of rebuilding the wall. The ones accountable for the rebuilding work,

the אֲנַחְנוּ *we*, is parallel to עֲבָדָיו *his servants* (Neh 2:20aβ). The third-person singular

possessive pronoun connotes the unique relationship God bestowed on the Judean

community. This relationship inaugurated the entitlement of חֵלֶק וּצְדָקָה וְזִכָּרֹון בִּירוּשָׁלָ ם

share, claim, and traditional right in Jerusalem for the Judean community (Neh 2:20b).

Both Blenkinsopp and Williamson identified these as legal terms.[63] In the prayer in Neh

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[62] Turner, "Social Identity," 529.
[63] The terms were interpreted as relating to political or civic, legal, and cultic rights. See
Blenkinsopp, *Ezra–Nehemiah*, 226–27; Williamson, *Ezra, Nehemiah*, 192–93.

1:5–11a, the category *your servants* (Neh 1:6, 10, 11) invokes a connection to the covenantal right as God's people (Neh 1:5), genealogical right as *sons of Israel* (Neh 1:6), and territorial right of the land of Judah, God's chosen place (Neh 1:8).[64] Hence, the label *his servants* legitimated the right of the Judean community to restore the Jerusalem wall. Conversely, the contrastive rhetoric in Neh 2:20b is starkly discriminatory. The negation of *share*, *right*, and *claim* by the negative particle אֵין denotes a denial of the antagonists' legitimate rights relating to the Judean heritage. Hannah Harrington added a temporal sense when interpreting the opposition's rights, "Nehemiah asserts that the local officials have no legitimate past, present, or future in Jerusalem."[65] This would mean a perpetual denial. By making the legal statement, Nehemiah drew a firm boundary between *us* and *them* over the legitimacy of the wall matter. Intergroup differentiation was operative and reflected by the accentuation of the ingroup's supremacy over the Jerusalem wall and discrimination against the outgroup concerning any of their legitimate claims.

Prototypicality

Ingroup prototypes describe group values and prescribe normative behavior for ingroup members. They accentuate similarities in the intragroup situations and differences between the ingroup and outgroup in the intergroup situations.[66] The prominence of Nehemiah in the formation of ingroup values and normative behavior is evident. The

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[64] Williamson did not support the association of *share* with land. He commented that *share* is used metaphorically. The use of the term "in some other passages for a division of land is inappropriate here." See Williamson, *Ezra, Nehemiah*, 192.

[65] Harrington, *Ezra and Nehemiah*, 293.

[66] Hogg, "Social Identity Theory," 118.

positive responses from the different social groups in the Judean community to the call

for action and their cooperation in the wall-rebuilding work exemplified the prototypical

effects of Nehemiah the prototype. Another example is Nehemiah's behavior in

practicing vigilance (Neh 4:16–17 [4:22–23 ET]). As Williamson commented, Nehemiah

and his followers "with a weapon to hand and dressed at all times for action, they could

not be accused of laying harder burdens on others than they themselves were willing to

shoulder."[67] Furthermore, the memoir also portrays Nehemiah as a leader counteracting

the opposition and contriving countermeasures against the opposition's hostile

movements (2:19–20; 4:1–3, 5–7, 9–17 [4:7–9, 11–13, 15–23 ET]). Nehemiah 4 details

Nehemiah's quick response to the safety concern of the Judeans. He established and

implemented the defense strategy to protect the Judeans and safeguard the progress of the

wall rebuilding (Neh 3:38 [4:1 ET]; 4:1–17 [4:7–23 ET]). Nehemiah's actions

demonstrated his leadership in the wake of external threats and a latent internal crisis

(Neh 4:4–6 [4:10–12 ET]). Boda observed the shift from the first common singular

וָאֶתְפַּלֵּל *I* [*Nehemiah*] *prayed* (Neh 2:4b) to the first common plural נוֹדַע לָנוּ *it is known to*

us (Neh 4:9a [4:15a ET]), which signifies Nehemiah's transition from acting alone to

assuming the leadership role of the community.[68] As leadership endorsement and

effectiveness are highly related to the prototypicality of the prototype,[69] the examples

suffice to demonstrate Nehemiah's prototypical influence and leadership effectiveness in

drawing cohesion and conformity of the wider Judean community. Comparatively, the

prototypical beliefs and normative behavior effect to widen the discord between the

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[67] Williamson, *Ezra, Nehemiah*, 229.
[68] Boda, "Prayer as Rhetoric," 278.
[69] Hogg, "Social Identity Theory," 125.

Judean group and the opposition. The plots against Nehemiah (Neh 6:1–14) are
suggestive of the opposition's perception of Nehemiah's leading role.

Ingroup Deviance

Social attraction theory postulates that a prototypical gradient exists among ingroup
members. This means ingroup members differentiate themselves within the group by the
degree of conformity to the prototypical characteristics, e.g., ingroup norms and values.[70]
Ingroup deviants in this chapter refers to the ingroup members who simultaneously
behave like the outgroup. They are negative deviants who deviate from the prototypical
behavior of the ingroup prototype. These deviants may threaten ingroup integrity relative
to outgroups.[71] Nehemiah 6:10–19 informs that certain Judeans and social groups acted
like negative deviants by colluding with the opposition in attacking the integrity of
Nehemiah. The named deviants include individuals like Shemaiah and Noadiah the
prophetess. Others are the group comprising the remaining prophets and the Judean noble
group (Neh 6:10, 14, 17). Their outgroup-like behaviors include: (1) Shemaiah lured
Nehemiah to take refuge in the temple (Neh 6:10) and prophesied against Nehemiah. (2)
Noadiah and the prophet group intimidated Nehemiah. (3) The nobles of Judah kept
exchanging the news about Nehemiah with Tobiah. The deviants in (1) and (2) clearly
associated themselves with at least Tobiah and Sanballat (Neh 6:12, 14). The deviants in
(3) spied on Nehemiah and kept close communications with Tobiah (Neh 6:17–19).
According to the *black sheep effect*, these deviants "are prototypically dislikable, and are
disliked," and they are differentiated and judged from the likable ingroup members

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[70] Hogg, "Social," 66.
[71] Hogg, "Social," 66–67.

negatively as the unlikable outgroup members.[72] The effect was evidenced by

Nehemiah's negative evaluations of the deviants (Shemaiah, Noadiah, and the prophets)

and the opposition simultaneously (Neh 6:14), and the grouping of the deviants (the

nobles) with Tobiah (Neh 6:17–19).

Stereotyping

Stereotypes "are generally more negative and more extreme" about outgroups than

ingroups in the intergroup setting, resulting in the perception of outgroup homogeneity.[73]

Outgroup stereotyping is seen in how the memoir names or labels the opposition and how

the opposition's reactions are expressed in Neh 2–4, 6.

Undifferentiable Them

In the first several encounters, the individual antagonists are treated as *differentiable*

them, as the memoir names them by their personal names (with or without the ethnic

labels). The personal naming is later shifted into a combination of personal names, ethnic

groups, an undifferentiable label (*our enemies*), and finally an undifferentiable label

indicating total inclusion (*all our enemies*). The following shows the naming and labeling

in the various rebuilding stages.

2:10; 2:19; 3:33, 35 [4:1, 3 ET]	Personal names, with or without the corresponding ethnic labels: 2:10 *Sanballat the Horonite and Tobiah the Ammonite official*; 2:19 *Sanballat the Horonite, Tobiah the Ammonite official and Geshem the Arabian*; 3:33 [4:1 ET] *Sanballat*; 3:35 [4:3 ET] *Tobiah the Ammonite*
4:1 [4:7 ET]	Combination of personal names and ethnic group labels: *Sanballat, Tobiah, the Arabians, the Ammonites, and the Ashdodites*

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[72] Marques et al., "Social Categorization," 406–08.
[73] Stangor, "Stereotyping," 630.

4:9 [4:15 ET]	Undifferentiable label: *our enemies*
6:1	Combination of personal names and undifferentiable label: *Sanballat, Tobiah, Geshem the Arabian, and the rest of our enemies*
6:16	Undifferentiable label, inclusive: *all our enemies*

The label *our enemies* emerges from Neh 4:9 [4:15 ET] onward. In the last *shema-*formula near the end of the conflict series, all the known and anonymous oppositions are depicted collectively as *all our enemies* (Neh 6:16). The shift in naming and labeling signifies the operation of the stereotyping process whereby the members of the opposition are depersonalized. Consequently, the named antagonists and all the anonymous enemies are depicted as *undifferentiable them*, implying the Judean group perceived their attitude and behavior as homogeneous.[74]

Hostile Them

The memoir often stereotypes the reactions of the antagonists as disapproval and hostility. The stereotypical behavior may be traced in the various rebuilding stages. Disapproval was primarily expressed by emotional words. These include וַיֵּרַע *displeased* (Neh 2:10), וַיִּחַר *angry* (3:33 [4:1 ET]; 4:1 [4:7 ET]), and וַיִּכְעַס *enraged* (3:33 [4:1 ET]). When intergroup tension became heightened, the disapproval was accompanied by hostile behaviors which were expressed by the action verbs לָעַג *mock* (Neh 2:19 וַיַּלְעִגוּ *they mocked*, 3:33 [4:1 ET] וַיַּלְעֵג *he mocked*), בָּזָה *ridicule* (Neh 2:19 וַיִּבְזוּ *they ridiculed*), הָרַג *kill* (Neh 4:5 [4:11 ET] וַהֲרַגְנוּם *we will kill them*), and חָשַׁב רָעָה *devise evil* (Neh 6:2 וְהֵמָּה חֹשְׁבִים לַעֲשׂוֹת לִי רָעָה *they were devising to do me evil*). The overall portrait of the

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[74] Tajfel, "Interindividual Behaviour," 45; Tajfel, "Social Psychology," 13, 21. Undifferentiaton is one intergroup behavioral characteristic of stereotyping whereby outgroup members are perceived as "undifferentiable items in a unified social category." See also Turner, "Cognitive Redefinition," 28. On outgroup homogeneity, see also Stangor, "Stereotyping," 630.

antagonists is in accordance with the *metacontrast principle* that being the *hostile them*, the opposition was perceived as having maximum difference from the Judean ingroup.[75]

<div align="center">Negative Evaluation of the Outgroup</div>

Outgroups are generally evaluated negatively in an intergroup situation to attenuate the outgroup distinctiveness. The denial of legitimacy over the wall restoration (Neh 2:20) and the stereotyping of the opposition are two examples. The literary form and rhetoric of the text suggest at least three more negative evaluatives. They are imprecatory prayer (Neh 3:36–37 [4:4–5 ET]), discrediting the opposition (Neh 6:8), and demoralizing the opposition (Neh 6:16).

Imprecatory Prayer

Nehemiah 3:36–37 [4:4–5 ET] is considered an imprecatory prayer of Nehemiah.[76] Four embedded imprecations are recognized and they carry negative connotations by nature. The first two are the appeals for retribution (Neh 3:36aβ, 36b [4:4aβ, 4b ET]). The word חֶרְפָּה *disgrace* in Neh 3:36aβ [4:4aβ ET] recollected the humiliation the Judeans had faced from the opposition (Neh 2:17bβ *an object of disgrace*), while the phrase וּתְנֵם לְבִזָּה בְּאֶרֶץ שִׁבְיָה *give them as plunder in a land of captivity* in Neh 3:36b [4:4b ET] links the curse to exilic situations (Jer 20:4–5; Ezra 9:7). These curses are perceived as negative distinctiveness. Asking God to do the same against the opposition implies a desire to devalue the opposition's self-esteem and national status. The remaining two imprecations

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[75] Turner et al., *Rediscovering*, 46–47. The *metacontrast principle* refers to the concept of maximum similarities within the ingroup and difference between the ingroup and outgroup.

[76] Blenkinsopp, *Ezra–Nehemiah*, 244; Williamson, *Ezra, Nehemiah*, 217.

include the words עָוֹן *iniquity* and חַטָּאת *sin* (Neh 3:37a [4:5a ET]), which in combination

with the verbs כָּסָה *to conceal* and תִּמָּחֶה *be blotted out* resemble atonement vocabulary in

the OT.[77] Examples can be found in the declaration in Ps 32:1 (כְּסוּי חֲטָאָה *those whose sin

is concealed*), the plea in Ps 51:11 [51:9 ET] (כָל־עֲוֹנֹתַי מְחֵה *blot out all my iniquities*), and

the description in Ps 85:3 [85:2 ET] (כִּסִּיתָ כָל־חַטָּאתָם *you had covered all their sin*). Yet,

Nehemiah's prayer deliberately negated the positive connotation by fronting both verbs

with the negative particle אַל.

Discrediting the Opposition

The narrative of Neh 6:1–9 is centered on the life-threatening conspiracy the opposition

plotted against Nehemiah. The antagonists sent the same meeting proposal to Nehemiah

four times but Nehemiah rejected them all. For the fifth time, the antagonists fabricated a

political crisis and accused Nehemiah of rebellion against the Persian king. The

accusation could have devalued the integrity of Nehemiah, but the circumstances

reversed when Nehemiah responded squarely to the accusation (Neh 6:8). Nehemiah's

response כִּי מִלִּבְּךָ אַתָּה בוֹדָאם *for you* [*Sanballat*] *are devising them from your heart* not only

defended his innocence, but also created a counter-accusation against the opposition. The

verb בָּדָא *devise* only occurs twice in the OT (Neh 6:8; 1 Kgs 12:33).[78] Both occurrences

are connected with evil thoughts and acts. As such, Nehemiah's denial of rebellion and

counter-accusation effected to attenuate the credit and social image of the opposition.

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[77] Williamson, *Ezra, Nehemiah*, 217.
[78] Harrington, *Ezra and Nehemiah*, 334.

Demoralizing the Opposition

The closing remark in Neh 6:16a concludes the reaction of the opposition and the overtone is highly demoralizing.

6:16a | וַיְהִי כַּאֲשֶׁר שָׁמְעוּ כָּל־אוֹיְבֵינוּ וַיִּרְאוּ כָּל־הַגּוֹיִם אֲשֶׁר סְבִיבֹתֵינוּ וַיִּפְּלוּ מְאֹד בְּעֵינֵיהֶם
When all our enemies heard [of the completion], all the nations which round about us were afraid, and they fell greatly in their esteem.

The outgroup that heard of the completion news now encompassed the antagonists and all the surrounding nations. The completion of the wall caused negative emotional and psychological reactions of the outgroup, as evidenced by the third masculine plural passive verb וַיִּרְאוּ *they were afraid* and the idiom וַיִּפְּלוּ מְאֹד בְּעֵינֵיהֶם *they fell greatly in their esteem*. Before the wall completion, the conflict narrative posits the Judean community and Nehemiah as the objects of intimidation (community: כֻלָּם מְיָרְאִים אוֹתָנוּ *all of them, they were trying to intimate us* [Neh 6:9a]; Nehemiah: לְמַעַן־אִירָא *for the purpose I might be afraid* [Neh 6:13], מְיָרְאִים אוֹתִי *to intimidate me* [Neh 6:14], לְיָרְאֵנִי *to intimidate me* [Neh 6:19]). Paradoxically, the opposition's reactions after the wall completion (Neh 6:16a) suggests that the outgroup is now depicted as the object of intimidation, and its social status became low.

Positive Evaluation of the Ingroup

Positive evaluation of the ingroup contributes to enhancing and preserving positive social identity and ingroup cohesion. Negotiating the positive valued distinctiveness from the outgroup is the only way to preserve membership within the ingroup. When the social

conditions are unfavorable, positive distinctiveness "must be created, acquired and perhaps fought for through various forms of relevant social action."[79]

Contrasting the devaluation of the outgroup, the memoir often emphasizes the positive distinctiveness of the ingroup. The ingroup–outgroup differentiation (*us and them*) has demonstrated the ingroup salience accentuation. The ingroup is also evaluated positively as evidenced by the repetition of the word, הַמְּלָאכָה *the work*. The word is another representation of the wall-rebuilding task. It forms an *inclusio* to bracket the building account (Neh 2:16; 6:16). In the negative sense, *the work* was the proximate cause of intergroup conflicts and it imparted external threats to the Judean community. The opposition threatened to kill the Judeans in order to stop *the work* (Neh 4:5 [4:11 ET]). They intimidated the Judeans by saying that *the work* would not be completed (Neh 6:9). Despite these negative nuances, the memoir creatively reinterprets *the work* as a positive evaluation.[80] First, it was a *great work* (מְלָאכָה גְדוֹלָה) and the rhetoric in Nehemiah's reply implied that the work deserved priority over meeting the opposition (Neh 6:3). Second, the completion of *the work* became the core vision of the Judean community, even under adversarial conditions imposed by the opposition (Neh 4:1–17 [4:7–23 ET]). Last, the completion of *the work* exalted the supremacy of אֱלֹהֵינוּ *our God* (Neh 6:16). Employing similar creativity, the opposition's intimidation (*Piel* form of ירא) is reinterpreted as a motivation for the Judean community to defend their own families and homes (אַל־תִּירְאוּ מִפְּנֵיהֶם *do not be afraid of them*, Neh 4:8 [4:14 ET], *Qal* form of ירא).

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[79] Tajfel, "Social Categorization," 67.

[80] Tajfel, "Social Categorization," 64. Social categorization provides a conceptual exit for members who are unsatisfactory with the group's social identity under social comparison. One alternative is "to change one's interpretation of the attributes of the group so that its unwelcome features (e.g., low status) are either justified or made acceptable through a reinterpretation." Cf. the social creativity strategy, see Tajfel and Turner, "Intergroup Behavior," 20.

The reinterpretations suggest that social creativity strategy was operative when the conflict of interest between the Judean group and the opposition intensified. The ingroup reinterpreted the negative attributes as positive evaluatives, resulting in the elevation of the community's social status in the intergroup situations.

<div align="center">Summary: Toward Ingroup Formation and Identity Redefinition</div>

Social categorization has identified the ingroup as the wider Judean community consisting of the Judean groups from different social strata. Delineation of the ingroup prototypicality has established Nehemiah as the prototype and prototypical leader of the ingroup. Here, the attitude and unified behavior toward the wall restoration serve as an index to measure ingroup distinctiveness as a group. The more distinctive the ingroup, the more salient the group's social identity relative to the outgroup would become. This, in turn, would lead to a more cohesive and solidary ingroup. Three conclusions and one observation may be drawn from the evaluative dimension. First, the Judean community in general was positively differentiated from the opposition over the legitimacy matter, and by the prototyping process and reinterpretation of the seemingly negative social situations. Second, the opposition was negatively evaluated by the stereotyping process and subjective derogation in the form of imprecatory prayer and literary techniques. Third, intergroup differentiation suggests that social competition existed between the Judean group and the opposition. The wall restoration was given an instrumental function to ingroup cohesiveness negotiation and social identity salience. A pursuit of group superiority or prestigious status may explain the competition, because "when social identities are salient, self-enhancement is best achieved by adopting strategies and

attitudes that achieve or maintain a sense of ingroup superiority relative to the outgroup."[81]

The presence of a negative deviant group among the ingroup (Neh 6:10–19) implies that not the entire Judean society welcomed the prototypical values and norm initiated by Nehemiah the prototype. The memoir has provided an account of the deviants' outgroup-like behaviors, but the final consequence of deviance cannot be fully assessed based on the conflict narratives. The questions then become whether these deviants differentiated themselves from the ingroup and whether the ingroup perceived these deviants being depicted as such.

The postulated answer to the first question is *no* based on three textual indications. First, the memoir does not conceal Shemaiah's access to the temple, and he probably belonged to the prophet guild (Neh 6:10, 12). Second, Noadiah the prophetess and the other prophets were presumably from the local community.[82] Third, the nobles were from Judah (Neh 6:17). From the SIT perspective, the deviants' collusions with the antagonists are suggestive of outgroup favoritism as a result of social comparison.[83] Their behavior suggested that they perceived the outgroup represented by the governors of the neighboring provinces was more socially distinct than the Judean ingroup. Attaching themselves to the outgroup may be a means to acquire a more salient social status. When considering the social context and power structure of postexilic Judah, self-esteem, power, and status were among the positive evaluatives for people to consider their membership. For instance, status is considered an important value as it is "associated

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[81] Hornsey and Hogg, "Subgroup Relations," 242.
[82] The background of Noadiah and the other prophets is unknown. They may be temple prophetess and prophets. See Blenkinsopp, *Ezra–Nehemiah*, 271.
[83] Tajfel, "Social Categorization," 62–63.

with the prestige and self-esteem one may infer from one's group membership."[84] This might explain the deviants' behavior to attach themselves to a perceived higher status (the outgroup) while choosing to remain in the Judean ingroup.[85]

The second question needs more exploration. The memoir depicts the grouping of Shemaiah, Noadiah, and the other prophets as the *hostile them*. They were the ones who intimidated (ירא) Nehemiah as the antagonists did (Neh 6:12–13) and they were deemed to receive God's judgment (זָכְרָה *remember*-formula) as the antagonists (Neh 6:14). The colluding nobles were not assessed apparently. Stemming from the concept of prototypicality, conformity to the prototypical attitude and behavior determines ingroup membership. The deviants' ingroup membership may be validated if there is textual evidence to prove their participation in the rebuilding. The memoir has recorded the participation of the group *nobles* (Neh 2:16, 4:8, 13 [4:14, 19 ET]). Their inclusion as ingroup members is affirmed. The participation of the prophets remains uncertain. Nevertheless, the memoir does not report any expulsion of these deviants from Judean society, suggesting the membership of these deviants was tolerated.

In sum, the deviant group was a variable affecting the integrity of the dominant ingroup. They blurred the ingroup boundary. Textual evidence demonstrates that ingroup formation is subject to the prototypical effectiveness, which in turn influences the cohesiveness and solidarity and hence, the social identity of the ingroup. The present discussion provides insight into the membership issue of the ingroup. Although the deviant group behaved like the outgroup, the memoir shows no evidence of excluding the

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[84] Páez et al., "Constructing Social Identity," 220.

[85] Páez et al., "Constructing Social Identity," 219. Social comparison with a group of similar and pertinent attributes allows members to show outgroup favoritism and retain a partly positive image of the ingroup concurrently.

deviants from the ingroup. The present study suggests that the memoir defines the

ingroup as the wider Judean community encompassing the conforming Judeans and the

negative deviants. In the presence of the outgroup, allowing ingroup deviance may be a

contingent measure to minimize the negative impact on ingroup cohesiveness. Social

identity salience may be a decisive measure to justify the inclusion or exclusion of the

deviants. In the present social situations, the evaluative component suggests that the

Judean community exhibited a salient social identity relative to the opposition,

irrespective of the negative valuation imparted by the deviants.

Categorization—Emotional Component

For interpretive purposes, the emotional component may be expressed by group

members' awareness of being a group and the positive or negative emotions involved in

ingroup and outgroup evaluations. The latter dimension is elaborated as expressions in

social conflicts and feelings. The following examination adopts Jasper's sociological

typology of feelings[86] and Mirguet's suggestions of emotional expressions.[87]

Expression of Group Awareness and Social Cohesion

An essential element of group formation is the group members' perception of having a

shared fate or interdependence of fate, i.e., members perceive that their fate depends on

the fate of the entire group.[88] The ruinous condition of Jerusalem is depicted as בְּרָעָה גְדֹלָה

great trouble or הָרָעָה *the trouble* (Neh 1:3; 2:17a). With the shift of the second masculine

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[86] Jasper, "Emotions," 287.
[87] Mirguet, "Emotion," 443.
[88] Brown and Pehrson, *Group Processes*, 16. The concept was originated from Kurt Lewin, see Lewin, *Resolving*, 165–66.

plural אַתֶּם to first common plural אֲנַחְנוּ (Neh 2:17a), the *great trouble* that Nehemiah heard (Neh 1:3) was turned into a common plight of the Judean community. Wright observed a dialectic relationship between *the trouble* and *disgrace* in 2:17b.[89] Both were interlocked in the plight of the Judeans—the Judeans lived in shame. According to Kurt Lewin, members will be ready to share group responsibility when realizing their fate is interdependent.[90] The group's positive response to Nehemiah's address in Neh 2:18 may evidence the operation of the interdependence of fate.

In addition to the cognitive aspect of communal cooperation, the volitional verbs in Neh 2:17b and 2:18bα also attest to a sense of emotional attachment to the ingroup. The first pair verbs לְכוּ וְנִבְנֶה *come and let us rebuild* expresses a sense of the desirability of getting the Judean community to work together. Whereas, the reply נָקוּם וּבָנִינוּ *let us arise and rebuild* expresses a collective desire and communal will to cooperate. These expressions are indicative of ingroup awareness and cohesion.

Group awareness is also expressed by collective emotions in the short prayers and declaration of trust. The first is Neh 3:36–37 [4:4–5 ET]. The prayer was a petition to God after the community was mocked by the antagonists (Neh 3:33–35 [4:1–3 ET]. In the petition for divine mercy to hear (שְׁמַע אֱלֹהֵינוּ *Hear, our God*, Neh 3:36a [4:4a ET]) their affliction (כִּי־הָיִינוּ בוּזָה *for we have been* [*an object of*] *contempt*, the tone was heavy but it expressed the community's trust in God to intervene and remove the contempt from them. The prayer in Neh 4:3a [4:9a ET] was said amid a threat and it reflected a communal determination to seek God's protection. The declarative speech in Neh 4:8b

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[89] Wright observed that "for Nehemiah there is just one problem. Because the city is in ruins, the people are in disgrace." See Wright, *Rebuilding Identity*, 58.

[90] Lewin, *Resolving*, 166.

[4:14b ET] motivated the community to remember God's power and greatness, which in turn empowered the community to fight together for their families. The inclusion of the kinship term אֲחֵיכֶם *your brothers* expressed a strong affective attachment toward fellow Judeans in the ingroup. These narratives are among Nehemiah's testimonies of prayer (Neh 3:36–37; 4:3 [4:4–5, 9 ET]) and divine mercy (Neh 4:8 [4:14 ET]) that Boda referred to as "the same tone of faith" of the penitential prayer in Neh 1.[91]

3:36a [4:4a ET]	שְׁמַע אֱלֹהֵינוּ כִּי־הָיִינוּ בוּזָה
	Hear, our God, for we have become [*an object of*] *contempt.*
4:3a [4:9a ET]	וַנִּתְפַּלֵּל אֶל־אֱלֹהֵינוּ
	but we prayed to our God
4:8b [4:14b ET]	אֶת־אֲדֹנָי הַגָּדוֹל וְהַנּוֹרָא זְכֹרוּ וְהִלָּחֲמוּ עַל־אֲחֵיכֶם בְּנֵיכֶם וּבְנֹתֵיכֶם נְשֵׁיכֶם וּבָתֵּיכֶם
	Remember the great and awesome Lord. Fight for your brothers, your sons and your daughters, your wives and your homes.

Employing Walter Brueggemann's concept of classifying the Psalms,[92] Neh 3:36a [4:4a ET] may be categorized as a prayer of disorientation for two reasons. First, the שְׁמַע *hear*-formula and direct address to God express strong emotional needs. Second, the prayer lacks an emotional or rhetorical transition from the present unsatisfactory setting of life to a trusting mood. Boda categorized the prayer in Neh 4:3a [4:9a ET] as a prayer of disorientation (stage two).[93] This type is characterized by a shift from a sense of despair to confidence that God will save. Noteworthy was how the prayers and declaration of trust changed the emotions of the community. A shift from self-distress (Neh 3:36a [4:4a ET]) to hope for victory was observed, as reflected in Neh 4:3a [4:9a ET] and 4:8b [4:14b ET]. Instead of the community fighting for themselves and their families, the confidence in God to battle for them was affirmed. In sum, the prayers and declaration of trust

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[91] Boda, "Nehemiah," 722.
[92] Brueggemann, *Psalms*, 11–13; Brueggemann, "Typology," 7–9.
[93] Boda, "Prayer," 807.

upheld the Judeans as a group moved the community's attention away from their common plight and simultaneously drew the group's focus to confidence in God. Additionally, the ingroup awareness strengthened the Judean group's cohesion.

<div align="center">Expression of Social Conflict</div>

According to the Mediterranean ideology of honor and shame, restoring city walls poses a threat to the power, meaning honor, of the surrounding peoples.[94] The antagonists' reaction to the wall rebuilding news (Neh 2:10) foreshadows the forthcoming intergroup conflicts. Social conflict between the opposition and the Judean group is depicted in the forms of verbal insults (Neh 2:19aβ; 3:33b [4:1b ET]), hostile threats (4:5aβ, 6bβ [4:11aβ, 12bβ ET]), false accusation (6:12bα), and ill plots (4:2 [4:8 ET], 6:2b). Except Neh 6:12, the conflict constitutes part of the *shema*-narratives. The intergroup tension inherited in the behavioral expressions is directed against the Judean group in some situations (Neh 2:19aβ; 3:33b [4:1b ET]; 4:2, 6bβ [4:8, 4:12bβ ET]) and Nehemiah in the remaining situations (Neh 6:2b, 6:12bα).[95]

Verbal Insult		
2:19aβ		וַיַּלְעִגוּ לָנוּ וַיִּבְזוּ עָלֵינוּ
	they mocked us and ridiculed (against) us	
3:33b [4:1b ET]		וַיַּלְעֵג עַל־הַיְּהוּדִים
	and he mocked (against) the Judeans	
Hostile Threat		
4:5aβ [4:11aβ ET]		וַהֲרַגְנוּם
	we will kill them	
4:6bβ [4:12bβ ET]		מִכָּל־הַמְּקֹמוֹת אֲשֶׁר־תָּשׁוּבוּ עָלֵינוּ
	from all the places you return, [they will attack] against us	
False Accusation		
6:12bα		כִּי הַנְּבוּאָה דִּבֶּר עָלָי

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94 Esler, "Ezra–Nehemiah," 423.

95 Using prepositions to evaluate the emotional dimension is uncommon in social identity studies. One example is Bosman's adopting BHRG's suggestion in treating the preposition אֶל as "indicating the goal of an emotional process." See Bosman, *Social Identity in Nahum*, 147–48. Here the examples' movement is indicated by עַל.

that he had pronounced prophecy against me

Ill Plot	
4:2 [4:8 ET]	וַיִּקְשְׁרוּ כֻלָּם יַחְדָּו לָבוֹא לְהִלָּחֵם בִּירוּשָׁלָ͏ִם וְלַעֲשׂוֹת לוֹ תּוֹעָה
	and they all plotted together to come to fight against Jerusalem and to bring about confusion against it
6:2b	וְהֵמָּה חֹשְׁבִים לַעֲשׂוֹת לִי רָעָה
	but they were devising to do me evil

Expression of Feelings

Jasper's sociological typology of feelings is informative for identifying the feeling expressions of the Judean group and the opposition.[96] Nehemiah 2:10 marks the first instance that the memoir mentions the feeling of the opposition.

Outgroup

The outsiders' feelings are often linked with the *shema*-formula depicted in Neh 2, 4, 6. Some emotional components have been discussed when expounding the cognitive and evaluative components.[97] The aim here is to identify the feeling expressions and observe how the memoir interprets them. Three types of feelings are identified. They are reflex emotions, affective aversions, and moral emotions.

Reflex Emotions

The feelings of individual antagonists are constantly expressed as quick and intense, such as וַיֵּרַע רָעָה *greatly displeased* (Neh 2:10), וַיִּחַר וַיִּכְעַס הַרְבֵּה *angry and greatly enraged* (Neh 3:33 [4:1 ET]), יִּחַר מְאֹד *exceedingly angry* (Neh 4:1 [4:7 ET]), and וַיִּרְאוּ *were afraid* (Neh 6:16). The memoir depicts these reflex emotions negatively as each of them is

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[96] Jasper, "Emotions," 287.

[97] See sections under Stereotyping and Negative Evaluation of the Outgroup.

undermined or compared to a positive dimension of the ingroup. For example, the antagonists' displeasing (Neh 2:10a) is undermined by *the welfare of the Israelites* (Neh 2:10b). The temperament (Neh 3:33 [4:1 ET]) is negatively justified by Nehemiah's imprecatory prayer (Neh 3:36–37 [4:4–5]). Lastly, the opposition's fear and disheartening (Neh 6:16a) is positively attributed to God's intervention (Neh 6:16b). Interestingly, the antagonists are depicted as silent figures when divine intervention was operative (Neh 4:9 [4:15 ET]), before the subversive change of emotion depicted in Neh 6:16.

Affective-Aversions

The first two instances of affective-aversions are expressed by the antagonists' humiliating rhetoric (Neh 2:19, 3:33–35 [4:1–3 ET]). The third instance is identified in Neh 6:1–8. Following the *shema*-formula in Neh 6:1, the memoir details the back-and-forth communications between the antagonists and Nehemiah. The opposition's maneuvers, sending the same message five times and with an open letter fabricating Nehemiah's rebellion in the last time, are suggestive of their desperation to lure Nehemiah to meet with them. The antagonists' aversive feeling is also reflected by the first common plural cohortatives וְנִוָּעֲדָה *let us meet* and וְנִוָּעֲצָה יַחְדָּו *let us take counsel together* (Neh 6:2a, 7), which the memoir depicts as expressing an ill-plot (Neh 6:2b).[98] The feeling is further reinforced by adding the adverb יַחְדָּו *together*. The adverb connotes a sense of unitedness,[99] likely part of the maneuvers to keep Nehemiah off guard. Again, the antagonists' aversion is undermined by Nehemiah's refusal.

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[98] See Blenkinsopp and Williamson's comments on the ill-plot idea; Blenkinsopp, *Ezra–Nehemiah*, 268; Williamson, *Ezra, Nehemiah*, 253–54.
[99] Clines et al., *DCH*, 151.

Moral Emotions

Shame can be expressed by words like *humiliation*, *embarrassment*, and *ridicule,*

rejected, *empty*, *powerless*, *restless*, and *disgrace*.[100] A wide range of shame variants

appear in the memoir, which are indicative of intergroup conflicts. The memoir mentions

the use of shame-words by the outgroup on several occasions to target the Judean

community: וַיַּלְעִגוּ *they mocked*, וַיִּבְזוּ *they ridiculed* (Neh 2:19); וַיַּלְעֵג *he mocked*, הָאֲמֵלָלִים

the feeble [*Judeans*] (3:33–35 [4:1–2 ET]); תּוֹעָה [*to bring about*] *confusion* (Neh 4:2 [4:8

ET]); and מְיָרְאִים *they were trying to intimidate* [*us*], יִרְפּוּ יְדֵיהֶם *they* [*the Judeans*] *will*

drop out of hands (Neh 6:9a). In addition to the shame-words, the antagonists also used

highly humiliating rhetoric (Neh 3:34b [4:2b ET]) as a shaming strategy. The phrases

הָאֲבָנִים מֵעֲרֵמוֹת *heaps of rubbles* and וְהֵמָּה שְׂרוּפוֹת *they are burned* reminded the Judeans of

the shame incurred by the destruction of Jerusalem and exile, and the present ruinous

conditions of the Jerusalem wall and city gates (Neh 1:3). Exile was considered a state of

shame in ancient Near Eastern (ANE) treaties and covenants.[101] Deuteronomy 28

reiterates exile as a curse from divine punishment (Deut 28:15, 36–37) and people under

exile are called *a thing of horror, a byword and an object of ridicule* (Deut 28:37, NIV),

i.e., an object of shame in a collective sense. Under the rubric of metaphorical concepts,

destruction of Jerusalem and exile are considered shame for the Judeans.[102]

The memoir also depicts the antagonists' intent to shame the Judeans, particularly

Nehemiah: חֹשְׁבִים *they were devising* (Neh 6:2), מְיָרְאִים *they were trying to intimidate* [*me*]

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[100] See Bechtel, "Shame as Sanction," 54 for a collection of Hebrew expressions of emotions and shame as sanction behavior; Jumper, "Honor and Shame," 52–53 and Laniak, *Shame and Honor*, 23 for additional shame-words and variants; Scheff, "Toward Defining," 112 for English shame-word variants.

[101] Laniak, *Shame and Honor*, 173.

[102] Kuriyachan, "Metaphorical Language," 113–25. The concept is borrowed from Kuriyachan's work. In analysizing Jer 1–25, 30–33, Kuriyachan established the metaphorical concept that *exile* is a synecdoche of *destruction* and concluded that destruction of nation and cities shame the victim nation.

(Neh 6:14), and לְיָרְאֵנִי *to intimidate me* (Neh 6:19). Nehemiah 6:13 provides further evidence of the opposition's shaming sanction on Nehemiah. The memoir employs shame-words progressively: hiring Shemaiah *purposely* (לְמַעַן) to make Nehemiah feel *intimidated* (לְמַעַן־אִירָא), so that Nehemiah *might sin* (וְחָטָאתִי), and that the opposition *could discredit* (לְמַעַן יְחָרְפוּנִי) his *reputation* (לְשֵׁם רָע)[103] *purposely*. Reacting to the outgroup's shaming sanctions, the memoir concludes the series of shame impositions with two emotional expressions (Neh 6:16): וַיִּפֵּר [God] *had frustrated* and וַיִּפְּלוּ מְאֹד בְּעֵינֵיהֶם *they fell greatly in their esteem* (or *in their own eyes*). Notably, the latter is a self-shaming expression. The word *fall* נפל denotes a reverse state of honor[104] and the phrase *in their own eyes* underscores the opposition's self-perception of own shame.[105] This final remark rationalizes the opposition's behavior as a matter of honor–shame competition.

Ingroup

The feeling expressions of the ingroup are mainly embedded in the direct and dramatic narratives with one expression in the declarative narrative.[106] Adapting Jasper's emotion typology, most expressions belong to the affective-attachment category, and the remaining belong to the reflex and moral categories. The affective-attachment feelings are characterized by positively valued terms. The reflex emotions are found in the

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[103] Jumper, "Honor and Shame," 88, 90. The noun שֵׁם *name* signifies a person's fame, honor, or reputation. In Neh 6:13, Nehemiah's enemies were giving him a "'bad reputation' or 'worthless name,' causing him to suffer reproach (לְמַעַן יְחָרְפוּנִי)."

[104] Laniak, *Shame and Honor*, 168. Esther 6:13 and 7:8 employ the word to describe the downfall of Haman and his loss of honor.

[105] Matzal, "Preaching," 63.

[106] Boda, "Prayer as Rhetoric," 270. Five narrative types are introduced. The other two are descriptive narrative and documentary narrative.

prayers. The moral emotions are characterized by positively valued terms associated with honor and pride.

Affective Attachments

The prayers 3:36a [4:4a ET] and 4:3a [4.9a ET], and the description 4:8b [4:14b ET] have been shown to bear emotional attachments that express the interdependence of fate. A second group of emotional attachments is expressed as affective commitment and trust. The former is illustrated by Neh 2:12aβ and 4:8bβ [4:14 bβ ET] while the latter by Neh 2:20a and 4:14b [4:20b ET].

> 2:12aβ   וְלֹא־הִגַּדְתִּי לְאָדָם מָה אֱלֹהַי נֹתֵן אֶל־לִבִּי לַעֲשׂוֹת לִירוּשָׁלָ͏ִם
> *I had not told anyone what my God had put in my heart to do for Jerusalem*
>
> 4:8bβ [4:14 bβ ET]   וְהִלָּחֲמוּ עַל־אֲחֵיכֶם בְּנֵיכֶם וּבְנֹתֵיכֶם נְשֵׁיכֶם וּבָתֵּיכֶם
> *Fight for your kins, your sons and your daughters, your wives and your homes*

Nehemiah 2:12aβ informs that Nehemiah was prompted by God *to do for Jerusalem* (לִירוּשָׁלָ͏ִם).[107] On this occasion, God's prompting evoked the element of Nehemiah's affective commitment for Jerusalem. The prompting itself may also be understood as witnessing God's affective commitment since it was God putting the conviction in the heart of Nehemiah. Nehemiah 4:8bβ [4:14 bβ ET] informs that the Judeans were prompted for a commitment to protect their families and properties. This time, the prompting is depicted as Nehemiah's initiation.

Emotional attachments in the form of trust are found in Neh 2:20a and 4:14b [4:20b ET], which may be considered as Nehemiah's confession of faith.

> 2:20a   אֱלֹהֵי הַשָּׁמַיִם הוּא יַצְלִיחַ לָנוּ

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[107] This is adapted from Williamson's interpretation, See Williamson, *Ezra, Nehemiah*, 185. The literal sense is *what my God has put in my heart to do for Jerusalem*.

	The God of heaven, he will make success for us	
4:14b [4:20b ET]		אֱלֹהֵינוּ יִלָּחֶם לָנוּ
	our God will fight for us	

Nehemiah's declarations of trust in God's granting success to the Judeans (Neh 2:20a) and assuring the safety of the Judeans (Neh 4:14b [4:20b ET]) may be taken as "elaborated cognitive appraisal" of God.[108] Emotional attachments are also identified in the direct narratives Neh 2:8b and 2:18a. Both the expressions כְּיַד־אֱלֹהַי הַטּוֹבָה עָלָי *for the good hand of my God was on me* (Neh 2:8bβ) and אֶת־יַד אֱלֹהַי אֲשֶׁר־הִיא טוֹבָה עָלַי *the hand of my God, it was good on me* (2:18aα) are Nehemiah's statements corresponding to the king's provisions (Neh 2:8bα, 18aβ). *God's good hand* is a metaphorical expression of God's favor (cf. Ezra7:9; 8:18, 22).[109] Nehemiah's statements testify that God's favor was with him, which express a positive relational attachment in addition to materialistic provisions.

Reflex Emotions

Similar to the prayer in Neh 4:3a [4:9a ET], the prayers in Neh 6:9b and 6:14 are prayers of disorientation. They are prayed in times of distress. The dramatic prayer in Neh 6:9b וְעַתָּה חַזֵּק אֶת־יָדָי *But now, strengthen my hands* was Nehemiah's direct address to God in the face of the external opposition's humiliation of weakened hands (Neh 6:9b). The declarative prayer in Neh 6:14 drew on God's remembering (זָכְרָה אֱלֹהַי *remember, O my God*) when Nehemiah was facing intimidations from both external and internal oppositions. The language is highly emotional and is characteristic of lament psalms (e.g., Pss 74:18, 22; 137:7). Brevard S. Childs suggested that with the preposition לְ, "the

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[108] Jasper, "Emotions," 287.
[109] Harrington, *Ezra and Nehemiah*, 287–88, 292.

emphasis falls on remembrance as an action directed toward someone" and "the preposition has strong forensic overtones which appear in both positive and negative sense."[110] With the preposition לְ preceding Tobiah and Sanballat, Noadiah the prophetess and the rest of the prophets (לְנוֹעַדְיָה הַנְּבִיאָה וּלְיֶתֶר הַנְּבִיאִים, לְטוֹבִיָּה וּלְסַנְבַלַּט), Neh 6:14 depicts Nehemiah's call on God's action against his opponents. Thus, the *remember*-formula conveyed a strong sense of distress but also a powerful sense of comfort for Nehemiah.

Moral Emotions

The moral emotions of the Judean ingroup are positively framed by the conflict narrative. Contrary to the shame-driven emotions of the opposition, the moral emotions of the Judean ingroup are depicted as driven by positive self-esteem or honor.

This study has suggested that an ideological tie exists between the Judeans' welfare and wall restoration (Neh 2:10b; see Group Ideology). Employing Jer 30:18 and 33:7, Sherley Kuriyachan argued that the rebuilding of cities is one constituent connoting the value of honor in the metaphorical concept of restoration.[111] Adopting Kuriyachan's elucidation, the word טוֹבָה *welfare* can be considered an honor-word. This word is pitched at the beginning of the conflict series (Neh 2:10b) and setting the tone of approving the ingroup's actions in the subsequent conflict episodes. Paradoxically, the sense of approval is depicted as coming from the antagonists. The feeling of approval is reiterated as טוֹבָה *goodness* (Neh 2:18bβ). This time, the memoir depicts the Judean community as the source of approval. Another honor-word, or more precisely honor-phrase, stems from the negation of the shame-word חֶרְפָּה *disgrace* (Neh 2:17b לֹא־נִהְיֶה עוֹד חֶרְפָּה *we will no*

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[110] Childs, *Memory and Tradtion*, 31–32. One of the given examples is the *remember*-formula in Ps 137:7 כֹר יְהוָה לִבְנֵי אֱדוֹם *Remeber, O Lord, against the Edomites* (NRSV, NJPS).

[111] Kuriyachan, "Metaphorical Language," 63, 126, 141.

longer be an object of disgrace). The combination of the negative particle and the

temporal adverb לֹא עוֹד *no longer* suggests not only a reversal of the shameful status, but

also implies a continuance of the positive feeling of honor.[112] Employing Williamson's

insight on the word *disgrace* (his "reproach"),[113] the reversal implies not only the

reinstatement of the Judean group's reputation but also God's honor. The last word

having the overtone of honor is יַצְלִיחַ *make success* (Neh 2:20, *Hiphil*). The word in its

Hiphil form is often associated with God as the source of success, e.g., Gen 39:2–3, 23 of

Joseph; Ps 1:3 of the Torah-seekers; or Neh 1:11 the one honoring God's name. Hence, it

generates a powerful feeling of God's approval and bestowal of honor. Finally, the

realization of God's work by the entire neighboring provinces resulted in their awe for

God, as expressed by וַיִּרְאוּ *they were intimidated* (Neh 6:16).[114] Ultimately, God's honor

was restored.

<div align="center">Summary: Toward Ingroup Solidarity</div>

The exploration of the emotional component reveals the centrality of the emotional

dimension in shaping the solidarity of the Judean ingroup in meeting the opposition's

constant taunts and threats. The ingroup and outgroup emotions are seen intertwining

with the intergroup behavior throughout the conflict accounts. Drawing from the textual

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[112] Bechtel, "Shame as Sanction," 18–19. Honor as *status* is considered as one semantic concepts of *honor*. Verbal or behavioral shaming are ways to ignore one's status. Here the negation of shame reverses the Judeans' status. Kang, "Positive Role," 261. Kang also suggested that shame (חֶרְפָּה as national disgrace) played a positive role in driving the postexilic community to participate in the rebuilding work under the adversarial situations. Another word having similar functon is בּוּזָה *contempt* (Neh 3:36a [4:4a ET]).

[113] Williamson, *Ezra, Nehemiah*, 191. The word "is heavy with overtones of the punishment of the exile, behind which lies the disrepute brought upon God's name among the nations by those who should have been his servants."

[114] The root of *fear* ירא includes nuances of respectful awe or reverence, besides terror. See Arnold, "Love–Fear," 263.

analysis, honor–shame is identified as the leading emotional operator that aroused the mix of negative feelings of the outgroup and directed the outgroup's course of action. On the other hand, affective attachment was the driving emotion that sustained the ingroup's positive feelings and solidified the ingroup's confidence in God and commitment to the rebuilding task. The significance of honor–shame and the function of the prayers and declarations of trust are revisited below to expound the influence of these two elements.

Honor Negotiation in Group Identity Formation

Stemming from the concept that shame and honor are binary opposites, shaming the counterpart brings honor to the own group.[115] Thomas J. Scheff also argued that "unacknowledged shame/anger spirals may be the causal agents in conflict between groups, even nations."[116] The present emotion analysis of the outgroup suggests that the moral emotion of shame was the first cause of the emotional reactions of the opposition and the direct cause of the intergroup conflicts. The Assyrian palace reliefs and inscriptions from the ninth–seventh century BCE may provide a contextual understanding of the opposition's shaming behavior, which was intended to "undermine and erase the dignity of people," with "people" virtually meaning the inferior counterparts and opponents, the enemies.[117] In the conflict depicted in Neh 3:33–35 [4:1–3 ET], one of the antagonists, Tobiah, employed a fox simile in his shaming strategy. Tobiah undermined the quality of the wall by alluding to the fox simile that even a small and light-footed animal like the fox could break the wall the Judeans built (Neh 3:35 [4:3ET]).[118]

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[115] Bechtel, "Shame as Sanction," 54; Jumper, "Honor and Shame," 22, 119, 158.
[116] Scheff, "Socialization of Emotions," 295.
[117] Nadali, "Shaming the Enemy," 614.
[118] Ryken et al., eds., *Bibblical Imagery*, 30.

Williamson commented that the rhetoric reflects Tobiah's sarcasm about the incapability of the Judeans and the inadequacy of the building materials.[119]

Noteworthy was that on the same occasion, Sanballat verbalized the shame-word *feeble* in the presence of his associates and the army of Samaria. In the Assyrian context, publicly shaming the enemies may have propagandistic implications for political messages.[120] It may impose a psychological impact on the enemies for the purpose of controlling their undesirable behavior and manipulating their group status.[121] Political shaming is also attested to in the biblical narratives. One example is the shaming of the last Judean king, Zedekiah, by the Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar (2 Kgs 25:1–7, Jer 52:4–11). Hence, the taunts and threats of the opposition may be an attempt to manifest the outgroup's superiority over the Judean group regarding political power and status. In sum, the outgroup's shaming sanctions played an instrumental function. In psycho-sociological terms, shaming the Judean group enabled the opposition to monopolize the moral emotion of honor. From the SIT perspective, the opposition may acquire a more positive social identity. Together with the verbal and physical gestures, the conflict series was a war of honor for the opposition.

Formative Role of Prayers and Declarations of **Trust**

The central belief uniting the Judean community is striving for *the goodness* (or welfare) of Jerusalem by removing *the disgrace*. Shame and honor are articulated again as binary opposites. Contrasting the opposition, the moral emotions of the Judean group are always

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[119] Williamson, *Ezra, Nehemiah*, 216.
[120] Nadali, "Shaming the Enemy," 623.
[121] Bechtel, "Shame as Sanction," 64.

positively portrayed. More prominently, God is always depicted as the actor invalidating the opposition's actions and intimidating the opposition. By pleading and imploring God, and declaring God's mercy, the Judean group and Nehemiah displayed strong affective attachments toward God.

The formative role of the communal prayers and declarations of trust of the Judean group was prominent, as evidenced in several aspects. First, the prayers and declarations shifted the group's emotional state from distress and despair to confidence, countering the external threat and achieving the rebuilding task. In this sense, the prayers and declarations signified the formative stages of the group's emotional reorientation in the intergroup settings. Second, they attested to the reciprocal operation of the affective attachment between God and the Judean group, as the attachment was grounded on God's mercy. They offered formative experiences of divine connectedness and mobilization. Third, they provided a sense of group solidarity in front of external opposition, manifested by the first common plural verbs. Hence, they are formative in solidifying the collective identity of the Judean group.

Categorization—Temporal Component

The temporal dimension of ingroup membership is characterized by its generational continuity and the maintenance of a coherent social identity over time. The perceived identity continuity of the ingroup is substantiated by recounting and recollecting the group's life history from the past. By reinterpreting the past in light of the present social identities, a future-oriented social identity may be constructed.

Continuity

Condor's concept suggests that the temporal sense of identity continuity is expressed in the interconnectedness of group members over time.[122] Genealogical descent is direct evidence of generational continuity. The use of *sons of Israel* (Neh 1:6) and *your servants* (Neh 1:6, 10, 11) as representations of the Judean community attests to the ancestral lineage pertaining to the membership continuity over time. The serial connectedness made possible the sharing of the past social identity by the present Judean community.

The Jerusalem wall is a distinct mnemonic of the Judean community's historical past. It is first mentioned in 1 Kgs 3:1. The biblical text witnesses the building work by King Solomon at the time of United Monarchy (1 Kgs 9:15). Jan Assmann proposed that cultural memory is "a form of collective memory" conveying a cultural identity to the people group sharing it and is "exteriorized, objectified, and stored away in symbolic forms."[123] As such, the wall is an external symbol and a cultural memory.[124] Rebuilding the wall connected the Judeans' memory and identity to the collective experience crystallized in Solomon's time.[125] The interconnectedness thus created a sense of belonging of the present Judean community to the Israelite community in the historical past.

The זכר *remember*-formula in the declaration in 4:8b [4:14b ET] recollects a collective experience from the past. The adjectival phrase הַגָּדוֹל וְהַנּוֹרָא *the great and*

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[122] Condor, "Social Identity and Time," 306.
[123] Assmann, "Communicative," 110.
[124] Assmann, "Communicative," 111.
[125] Assmann, "Collective Memory," 129.

awesome reminded the Judeans of God's powerful and faithful characters (cf. Neh 1:5;

9:32; Deut 7:21; 10:17, 21; 2 Sam 7:23; Jer 32:18; Dan 9:4).[126]

Neh 4:8aβ–bα [4:14 aβ–bα ET]	*Do not be afraid of them. Remember the **great and awesome** Lord.*
Neh 1:5	*LORD, the God of heaven, the **great and awesome** God, who keeps his covenant of love with those who love him and keep his commandments,* (NIV)
Neh 9:32	*Now therefore, our God, the **great** God, **mighty and awesome**, who keeps his covenant of love,* (NIV)
Dan 9:4	*Lord, the **great and awesome** God, who keeps his covenant of love with those who love him and keep his commandments,* (NIV)
Jer 32:18	***Great and mighty** God, whose name is the LORD Almighty,* (NIV)
Deut 7:21	*Do not be terrified by them, for the LORD your God, who is among you, is a **great and awesome** God.* (NIV)
Deut 10:17	*For the LORD your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the **great** God, **mighty and awesome**,* (NIV)
Deut 10:21	*he is your God, who performed for you those **great and awesome** wonders you saw with your own eyes.* (NIV)
2 Sam 7:23	*And who is like your people Israel—the one nation on earth that God went out to redeem as a people for himself, and to make a name for himself, and to perform **great and awesome** wonders* (NIV)

These declarations, confessions, and praises recount God's covenantal love, as well,

God's promise to redeem and preserve those who revere him from generation to

generation.

The *remember*-formula in Nehemiah's prayer in Neh 1:8–9 recollects another

exodus experience in Deut 30:1–5.

Neh 1:8–9 (NIV)	Deut 30:1–5 (NIV)
8 Remember the instruction you gave your servant Moses, saying, 'If you are unfaithful, I will **scatter [פּוּץ]** you among the nations,	1 When all these blessings and curses I have set before you come on you and you take them to heart wherever the LORD your God **disperses [נדח]** you among the nations
9 but if you return to me and obey my commands, then even if your exiled people are at the farthest horizon, I will **gather [קבץ]** them from there	2 and when you and your children return to the LORD your God and obey him with all your heart and with all your soul according to everything I command you today, 3 then the LORD your God will restore your fortunes and have compassion on you and

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[126] Boda, *Heartbeat*, 47–48.

| | gather [קבץ] you again from all the nations where he **scattered [פוּץ]** you. 4 Even if you have been banished to the most distant land under the heavens, from there the LORD your God will **gather [קבץ]** you and bring you back. |
| **and bring [בּוֹא]** them to the place I have chosen as a dwelling for my Name.' | 5 He will **bring [בּוֹא]** you to the land that belonged to your ancestors, and you will take possession of it. He will make you more prosperous and numerous than your ancestors. |

Particularly, God's acts are recounted as the commonality between the present recollection and past experience: to scatter/disperse—to gather—to bring (to). Moses' speech foretold the dispersion of Israelites among all nations (Deut 30:1b). Yet, the core of the Deuteronomic message lies with God's promise of gathering the scattered descendants and bringing them back to their ancestral land under the condition of Torah obedience. Hence, the recollection connected the Judean community to God's promise of restoring their prosperity in their ancestral home.

Both *remember*-formulas function to evoke the Judean community's memories of God's power, covenantal love, and covenant promise. The recollection enabled the Judeans to share the experiences, particularly the communal experience of the Exodus community. Theologically, the recollection enabled the Judean community to engage the covenantal relationship God had preserved for them. The recounting also testified to God's perpetual faithfulness as of old in the present social situation.

Maintenance

From the perspective of memory studies, the Jerusalem wall was a collective memory of the Judean community and allowed Judeans to reconstruct its meaning based on the

present social group context.[127] The preexilic wall symbolized a solidary identity among its international counterparts. How did the Judeans perceive themselves after the Babylonian army destroyed the wall during the downfall of the kingdom of Judah (2 Kgs 25:10; Jer 39:8, 52:14)? Nehemiah's speech (Neh 2:17) and his kins' report (Neh 1:2–3) suffice to testify to the self-perception of the present Judean community. Nehemiah 2:17 depicts the present plight of the Judeans as *an object of disgrace*. The response of the Judean audience suggests their acceptance of this shame image. In the dialogue between Nehemiah and his brother Hanani and the people from Judah (Neh 1:2–3), Nehemiah addressed the Judeans as הַיְּהוּדִים הַפְּלֵיטָה אֲשֶׁר־נִשְׁאֲרוּ מִן־הַשֶּׁבִי *the Judeans, the survivors who had escaped from the captivity*.[128] The group from Judah also used a similar epithet with a demonstrative שָׁם *there* to indicate that those were Judeans living in the province of Judah. The dialogue labelled the present Judean community as *survivors from the captivity*. The notion of common plight and the overtone of the exilic experience are noticeably intense. As such, the recollection of the past honor invoked a deprived image of the present social identity. On the other hand, the same wall ideology and the restoration work sufficed to actualize a change of the present image as the work progressed (Neh 2:17–18 communal work; 3:38 [4:6 ET] communal commitment; 4:9 [4:15 ET] communal perseverance) and to orient the community to rebuild a solidary

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[127] Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*, 40.

[128] Scholars have interpreted *the Judeans* differently. Three main arguments are: (1) *The Judeans* refer to the survivors who escaped the Babylonian captivity and stayed behind in Judah, e.g., see Blenkinsopp, *Ezra–Nehemiah*, 207. (2) They were the returnees who survived the captivity, e.g., see Rom-Shiloni, *Exclusive Inclusivity*, 35; Steinmann, *Ezra and Nehemiah*, 389. (3) They were the stayed-behind ones and the returnees living in Judah inclusively, e.g., see Williamson, *Ezra, Nehemiah*, 171. Nevertheless, the origin of the survivors is not the central argument in this section, whereas, the experience of captivity is.

group identity for the future (Neh 6:16 surrounding nations were intimidated; 12:43 communal celebration).

The retelling of the exodus experience (Deut 7:21; 10:17, 21; 30:1–5) was crucial for the Judean community to reconstruct a future-oriented social identity. The social situation of the Judean community may not be identical to the exodus situation. However, the experience of external enemies and the hope for a fulfilling settlement may be commonalities between the present and the old. Reinterpreting the experience of the exodus community enabled the Judean community to reconstruct the covenantal identity anew and anticipate a promised life in the homeland. Comparing the *remember*-prayer of Nehemiah (Neh 1:8–9) and the Deuteronomic address (Deut 30:1–5), the centrality of returning to God and keeping the Torah were highlighted from the outset. Another key message was the place where God would bring the returnees to. The Deuteronomic address refers to the place as הָאָרֶץ *the land* the past generations inhabited (Deut 30:5). However, Nehemiah's prayer refers to the place as הַמָּקוֹם *the place* where God chose as a dwelling of his name (לְשַׁכֵּן אֶת־שְׁמִי שָׁם, cf. Deut 12:5, 11). At least three interpretations exist for the phrase לְשַׁכֵּן אֶת־שְׁמִי שָׁם in Neh 1:9. Williamson translated the phrase as "as a dwelling for my Name"[129] and understood the implication as "Divine Presence dwelling with the restored community."[130] Sandra L. Richter concluded that Nehemiah was quoting the phrase from Deuteronomy and "to speak of YHWH's ownership of the *place*."[131] Harrington interpreted the place as where God "has chosen to set" his "name." [132] Setting his name on the place implies God's ownership over the place and provision of

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[129] Williamson, *Ezra, Nehemiah*, 165.
[130] Williamson, *Ezra, Nehemiah*, 173.
[131] Richter, *Deuteronomistic History*, 215 (Italic original).
[132] Harrington, *Ezra and Nehemiah*, 282.

access to his worshippers. Whichever meaning the phrase implies, Neh 1:9 has transcended the meaning of God's restoration promise beyond ancestral continuity and physical settlement depicted in Deut 30:5. Additionally, the focus is shifted to restoring God's honor instead of the Judean community's honor. Nehemiah's prayer saw future possibilities of a solidary people living under God's sovereignty and power, out of the present sociopolitical situations.

Summary: Toward a Solidary People

The temporal component offers a categorization of the Judean community by identity negotiation and renegotiation through memory recollection and scripture reinterpretation. The wall and the retelling of the exodus experience enabled the Judean community to share the life experiences of past generations. The wall reminded the community of their solidary past and reoriented the community to reclaim the honor out of the present plight. The retelling of the exodus stories placed a theological emphasis on the restoration of God's name and covenantal identity among the postexilic community. The restoration would be perpetual among all generations. Employing the wall ideology and the implications of the *remember*-formulas, the Judean community experienced an identity shift from a strong national people to a dispersed minority, and into a possible solidary people. In this sense, the memoir interprets the past identity, shapes the present identity, and redefines the possible identity that the Judean community may attain in the future.

Conclusions

The conflict narrative in Neh 1–4, 6 has oriented the urgency of rebuilding the wall on the need of removing the *disgrace* of the Judean community from the outset (Neh 1:3; 2:17). Two concerned social groups have been identified in the narrative. They are the Judean community led by Nehemiah and the foreign opposition represented by Sanballat, Tobiah, and Geshem. The *shema*-formulas suggest that social tensions are often catalyzed by the actions of Nehemiah and/or the community and escalated by the opposition's reactions. The SIT approach has been shown to be an adequate approach to answer the membership question in this intergroup context. Textual analysis of the cognitive component affirms the existence of the dichotomous pair of *us* and *them*, with the Judean community led by Nehemiah being the ingroup and the opposition as the outgroup. Both group identities are largely shaped by the groups' self-perception as depicted by the memoir. The antithetical use of *sons of Israel* (Neh 1:6; 2:10), positive use of *your servants* (Neh 1:6, 10, 11), and negative use of *the Judeans* (Neh 3:33, 34 [4:1, 2 ET]; 6:6) are all indicators of group boundaries. The postulated group beliefs play a determining role in membership categorization and differentiation and are posited as emotional resources to uphold the Judean community.

The prayers have demonstrated their formative and preservative roles in shaping the Judean community's group values, goals, and ideology. Besides, the communal prayers and declarations of trust exhibit a threefold function in setting the emotional orientation, divine connectedness, and ingroup solidarity. In addition, the memoir draws on God's agency and bestowal notably in critical junctions of the rebuilding work. Divine

reverence depicted in Neh 1:5, 11 and 6:16 forms a coherent theological theme of the intergroup narrative.

The evaluative and emotional components further demonstrate the attenuation of the outgroup's social identity. The presence of negative deviants presents one facet of the sociopolitical reality of the Judean society in the Persian period. These ingroup members likely posed challenges to ingroup cohesiveness and identity. Textual data show that the emotional dimension is intertwined with the other two dimensions. The use of binary opposites of honor and shame is prominent in the conflict accounts. Ronald A. Simkins's perspective on individual honor–shame may be borrowed for interpreting the role of honor–shame in this particular intergroup context.

> In the world of the Bible and in traditional Mediterranean societies, however, honor and shame are social values determinative of a person's identity and social status. Honor is a person's claim to self-worth and the social acknowledgment of that claim . . . because honor is a limited good, honor is acquired at the expense of someone else's honor, usually through the normal social interaction of challenge and response.[133]

Simkins's insight may explain the intergroup dynamics between the Judean group and the opposition. Noteworthy is the collective connotation of honor–shame that underscores the behavior of the Judean community. The memoir depicts it as a collective disgrace and ultimately a collective honor to restore.

To conclude, this part of the memoir presents a social situation which cannot be detached from its political and religious context. Internationally, the intergroup conflict represents a challenge to the existing power and status predominance of the outgroup, which is depicted as a competition of collective honor between the opposition and the Judean community. Domestically, the wall restoration showcases the Judeans'

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[133] Simkins, "Honor, Shame," 603.

negotiation of honor through the reversal of shame and redefinition of their communal identity as a solidary people. Nehemiah's prototypical leadership and the communal participation in the wall restoration are ascertained. More profoundly is the memoir's depiction of Nehemiah's prayers and his confidence of trust in God. Finally, through revitalizing the Deuteronomic traditions, the memoir depicts a revitalization of the covenantal identity of the Judean community. In the next chapter, the group relations within the Judean community as depicted in Neh 5 will be examined.

CHAPTER 4: INTRAGROUP RELATIONS IN NEHEMIAH 5

The final shape of Neh 5 belongs to part of the Nehemiah memoir. It comprises two

pericopes: Neh 5:1–13 and 5:14–19. The first pericope depicts the social situation of the

Judean community and the second pericope is Nehemiah's self-testimony as the governor

of Judah. Scholars and commentators held different opinions about the nature of the

social issue depicted in Neh 5:1–5. Some scholars, such as Blenkinsopp and Williamson,

perceived the situation as a socio-economic problem.[1] Bob Becking suggested that it was

a social justice issue.[2] Philippe Guillaume argued that the situation was not a structural

crisis.[3] A preliminary understanding of the social and economic situations of Judah in the

Persian period will enhance the comprehension of the social issue.

The basic economic and social structure of the Persian Empire is considered a

continuation of the Assyrian and Neo-Babylonian systems.[4] Judah continued to exist as a

rural society with an agricultural-based economy and administration and as a source of

agricultural tax to the Persian Empire.[5] Village families were basic economic units which

engaged in subsistence farming. They either farmed their own land or worked as tenants

for the king or aristocrats. The Persian fiscal policy mandated farmers to pay the king's

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[1] Blenkinsopp, *Ezra–Nehemiah*, 255; Williamson, *Ezra, Nehemiah*, 234. Also see Grabbe, *History*, 303; Laird, *Negotiating Power*, 229.

[2] Becking, *Ezra, Nehemiah*, 78–84. Becking identified the complaints in Neh 5:1–5 as hunger, poverty, and desperateness.

[3] Guillaume, "Nehemiah 5," 3. Guillaume argued about the historicity of the crisis depicted in Neh 5:1–5. He argued that it was episodic rather than structural.

[4] Grabbe, *History*, 195.

[5] Lipschits, "Achaemenid Imperial Policy," 30; Lipschits, "Rural Economy," 239, 256.

tribute and satrapal taxes.[6] Under the taxation burden and other socioeconomic factors, such as famine, a landowner or a tenant might procure a loan from wealthy aristocrats. Akkadian legal documents have documented an interest rate of 33.3 percent for grain loans and 20 percent for money loans.[7] Loaning at interest among Judeans was prohibited by the Covenant Code and the Deuteronomic and Levitical laws (Exod 22:24 [22:25 ET] loaning money; Deut 23:20–21 [23:19–20 ET] loaning money, food, or anything; Lev 25:35–37 loaning money or food). However, two loan contracts among the Elephantine papyri dated 456 and 455 BCE have documented loaning money at interest among Judeans.[8] Such documents evidence that exacting interest on loans was an economic practice during Nehemiah's time. By surveying the ancient and biblical use of the words מַשָּׁא and מְאָה and the loan contracts, Edward Neufeld concluded that Neh 5:11 refers to an annual interest rate of 12 percent for both money and grain loans, and a respective monthly rate of 1 percent and 1-1/2 percent.[9]

Other socioeconomic factors are the institution of debt-slavery and land loss. The OT informs that debt-slavery existed in the preexilic monarchic period (2 Kgs 4:1; Isa 5:8; Amos 2:6; 8:6). Nehemiah 5 also attests to the practice in the postexilic community. Besides, some prophetic books mention land and property seizures from the poor (Isa 5:8; Mic 2:1–2) and violation of the Sabbath law of releasing bound slaves (Jer 34:8–16). Westbrook suggested that the seizure of family land, as criticized by the prophet Micah, involves an abuse of authority by an official or a creditor.[10] Gregory Chirichigno

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[6] Grabbe, *History*, 191–95. Tithes on agricultural produce and tax on land were two satrapal taxes relevant to farmers.
[7] Chirichigno, *Debt-Slavery*, 62.
[8] Neufeld, "Prohibitions," 411.
[9] Neufeld, "Rate of Interest," 199–204. Grain loans had a different monthly rate due to the effective period of lending was eight instead of twelve months.
[10] Westbrook, *Property and Family*, 13.

attributed debt-slavery in the preexilic monarchy to the burden of taxation, the growing monopoly of resources by wealthy landowners, and the high interest rate on loans.[11] The socioeconomic environment in the Persian period may be more difficult as Judah was relatively small and poor in this period according to settlement and demographic data.[12] Charles E. Carter linked the people's poverty in Neh 5 to heavy taxation and administrative abuses, with the latter meaning "the institution of debt-slavery, breakdown of family structure, and general economic malaise."[13]

The analysis of Neh 1–4 and 6 (Chapter 3) has identified the different social groups within the Judean community in Persian Judah. The narrative in Neh 5 depicts a social situation involving social groups in the upper and lower social strata of the Judean society. Turner's remark on group memberships highlights the prescriptive functions of a social group. He remarked that "group memberships are basic determinants of our social relations with others (whether positive or negative), our attitudes and values, and the social norms and roles that guide our conduct."[14] This chapter aims to exemplify how the memoir depicts group membership within the socially stratified Judean society and how group awareness changed the group relations and the community's values and norms. Textual data pertaining to this chapter can be found in Appendix 3.

Identification—Concerned Social Groups

Social groups in Neh 5 are mainly represented by group names and role labels. Unlike the intergroup narrative, ethnic label is not a prevailing group marker in this intragroup

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[11] Chirichigno, *Debt-Slavery*, 140.
[12] Carter, "Province of Yehud," 108.
[13] Carter, "Province of Yehud," 139.
[14] Turner, "Social Identity," 518.

narrative. The only ethnic label is הַיְּהוּדִים *the Judeans* (Neh 5:1, 8, 17). When combined

with the word אַחִים *brothers* (Neh 5:1, 8), the phrase bears a notion of kinship.

The narrative of Neh 5 begins with the complaints against the complainants'

kinsfolk, אֲחֵיהֶם הַיְּהוּדִים *their Judean brothers* (Neh 5:1). The complainants constituted a

prominent social group. The memoir names this group הָעָם וּנְשֵׁיהֶם *the people and their*

wives. Who were הָעָם *the people*? In the rebuilding account, הָעָם *the people* may represent

the participating Judeans collectively (Neh 3:38 [4:6 ET]; 4:7, 13, 16 [4:13, 19, 22 ET]),

the common Judean populace distinct from the priests, the nobles and officials (Neh 4:8

[4:14 ET]) or from the nobles and officials (Neh 4:13 [4:19 ET]). Nehemiah 5:2, 3, and 4

begin with the identical introductory unit וְיֵשׁ אֲשֶׁר אֹמְרִים *there were those who were*

saying. The literary structure and the complainants' self-testimonies suggest that *the*

people depicted in these opening verses comprises three sub-categories.[15] The first group

apparently owned no land and had to borrow grain to sustain their families (Neh 5:2).[16]

The second group was landowners but had to pledge their land and property to get grain

during the famine (Neh 5:3). The third group was also landowners but had to borrow

money to pay the imperial tax on land. Subordinated to this prominent group was the

group עֲבָדִים *slaves* (Neh 5:5). These were the children the complainants pledged as debt-

slaves for the money or grain loans. Considering the first common plural pronoun in Neh

5:5, the appeal came from the collective voice of the poor Judeans and their wives.

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[15] This was the view of commentators like Clines, Fried, and Williamson. Blenkinsopp commented vv. 2–4 were three progressive stages of complaints. Laird treated v. 5 as the fourth complaint. See Blenkinsopp, *Ezra–Nehemiah*, 256; Clines, *Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther*, 166–67; Fried, *Nehemiah*, 135; Laird, *Negotiating Power*, 235; Williamson, *Ezra, Nehemiah*, 237.

[16] Verse 2 reads *our sons and our daughters, we are many*. Some commentators accepted the emendation of רַבִּים *many* to עֹרְבִים *mortgaging*, rendering the interpretation of *we are mortgaging our sons and our daughters*. See Blenkinsopp, *Ezra–Nehemiah*, 253; Clines, *Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther*, 165. Other commentators preferred the MT meaning. See Fried, *Nehemiah*, 135; Williamson, *Ezra, Nehemiah*, 232.

Hence, Neh 5:1–5 depicts a social stratum in Judean society within which members were impoverished, under severe financial burden, and at the edge of the dissolution of their own families. The debtors, together with their families, formed a social group which was socially and economically disadvantaged among other Judeans in the Judean community.

On the other end of the social hierarchy was the group comprising אֶת־הַחֹרִים וְאֶת־הַסְּגָנִים *the nobles and the officials*. This group is depicted as the creditors of the appealing Judeans (Neh 5:7). These two categories also appear in the intergroup account (Neh 2:16; 4:8, 13 [4:14, 19 ET]). The social group identification in the intergroup analysis has identified these two categories as part of the Judean group participating in the rebuilding work. Although the category הַסְּגָנִים *the officials* appearing in Neh 5:17 may be disputable,[17] this chapter argues that the nobles and officials depicted in Neh 5:7 belonged to the wealthy class of the Judean community. First, their Judean ethnicity is evidenced by the kinship relations with the poor Judean members of the community. Considering the context of Neh 5:1–7, this group was the same as אֲחֵיהֶם הַיְּהוּדִים *their Judean brothers* (Neh 5:1) and אַחֵינוּ *our brothers* (Neh 5:5) of the poor Judean group. Second, this group's wealth was manifested by their ability to lend money. Nehemiah's confrontation against this group's exacting interest (Neh 5:7) evidences their wealthy status. Third, noteworthy is the reciprocal use of the kinship term, אִישׁ־בְּאָחִיו *your own brothers*, in Nehemiah's confrontation to describe this group's relationship with the poor Judean group. Although the memoir does not explicate their role in the society, Neh 5:1–7 suggests that this group of nobles and officials belong to the aristocratic class of the

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[17] The argument lies with the ethnicity of וְהַיְּהוּדִים וְהַסְּגָנִים *the Judeans and the officials*. Blenkinsopp, Clines, and Fried were pro Persian origin. Whereas, Williamson suggested Judean origin. See Blenkinsopp, *Ezra–Nehemiah*, 265; Clines, *Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther*, 171; Fried, "150 Men," 827; Williamson, *Ezra, Nehemiah*, 234, 245.

Judean community, who occupied the upper stratum of the Judean society and owned economic resources such as money and land. The group label הָעָם *the people* re-emerges in Neh 5:13. The memoir describes the activity of this group as: וַיַּעַשׂ הָעָם כַּדָּבָר הַזֶּה *the people did according to this promise* (Neh 5:13). Prior to this, Nehemiah summoned the nobles and officials *to do according to this promise* (Neh 5:12 וָאֶקְרָא אֶת־הַכֹּהֲנִים וָאַשְׁבִּיעֵם לַעֲשׂוֹת כַּדָּבָר הַזֶּה). Hence, *the nobles and officials* were the group referent of *the people* in Neh 5:13. The Nehemiah memoir also posits Nehemiah and his entourage at this end of the hierarchy regarding the moneylending activities (Neh 5:10).

The memoir also depicts social groups with collective labels or functions. The community is represented by the collective term קְהִלָּה *assembly* (Neh 5:7), while foreigners are labeled as הַגּוֹיִם *the nations* (Neh 5:8, 9, 17). The congregation in Neh 5:13 is described as כָל־הַקָּהָל *the entire assembly*. The distributive noun כֹּל connotes a sense of totality. It possibly denotes the entire Judean community encompassing different social strata, i.e., including the poor Judeans and the aristocrats in this *entire assembly*. Groups by role include הַכֹּהֲנִים *the priests* (Neh 5:12), נְעָרִים *servants* (Neh 5:10, 15, 16), and פֶּחָה *governor* (Neh 5:14, 18 [singular]; 5:15 [plural]). The context suggests that *governor* has multiple nuances. The first singular *governor* refers to the title of Nehemiah as the governor of Judah (Neh 5:14a). The remaining singular forms denote the title of the functionary in general (Neh 5:14b, 18) and the plural form refers to the governors preceding Nehemiah (Neh 5:15). Lastly, the group label הָעָם *the people* reappears in Nehemiah's self-testimony (Neh 5:15, two occurrences). Another depiction, הָעָם הַזֶּה *this people*, also appears at the closing of the testimony (Neh 5:18, 19). The context suggests that *the people* in Neh 5:15 were the general populace under the governorship of the

former governors, whereas *this people* was the present populace governed by Nehemiah and hence the same as *the people* in Neh 5:1. In terms of intragroup relations, the complainants, the aristocrats, and Nehemiah are depicted as the key participants in the conflict account. They are considered as the concerned social groups in the intragroup study.

Categorization—Cognitive Component

This chapter employs the SCT framework to delineate the intragroup behaviors depicted in Neh 5. This section focuses on the self-conception of the social identity of the three categories: the poor Judeans (the complainants), the aristocrats, and Nehemiah.

Common Ancestry

This section focuses on textual evidences showing descent from common ancestor and kinship relations among the concerned social groups.

Genealogical Descent

The ancestral relationship between the poor Judeans and the aristocrats is evident in the complainants' appeal in Neh 5:5.

כִּבְשַׂר אַחֵינוּ בְּשָׂרֵנוּ כִּבְנֵיהֶם בָּנֵינוּ
our flesh is the same as our brothers, ours sons as their sons

The word בָּשָׂר *flesh* often connotes a blood relation in the OT. Similar connotations of familial relations are seen in Gen 2:23 and Gen 37:27. In Gen 2:23, the man exclaimed that the woman *is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh* (וּבָשָׂר מִבְּשָׂרִי). In Gen 37:27, Judah referred to Joseph as *our brother, our flesh* (אָחִינוּ בְשָׂרֵנוּ). The word also indicates

kinship relations (Gen 29:14; Judg 9:2; 2 Sam 5:1). Blenkinsopp's interpretation and Williamson's translation of Neh 5:5 also reflected this sense.[18] The complainants may use this word intentionally to emphasize the inseparable relations they had with the aristocrats. The articulation implies this relation was irrespective of social role, social status, or wealth disparity. The genealogical linkage between Nehemiah and the Judeans in Judah was attested to by Nehemiah's placing himself in the category of בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל *sons of Israel* (Neh 1:6).

Kinship

Manning Nash underscores the biological relation and exclusiveness of the term *kinship*.[19] Group members often call each other using kinship terms like *brothers*.[20] In Neh 5, the word אָח *brother* occurs seven times (Neh 5:1, 5, 7, 8 [2 occurrences], 10, 14), and except Neh 5:7, all are in plural form. The two occurrences in 5:10 and 5:14 likely refer to Nehemiah's siblings. The rest imply Judeans of common descent. The innate relationship between the poor Judeans and the aristocrats is accentuated by the strong ethnic and kinship term *Judean brothers*. The term *Judean brothers* was first used by the poor Judeans to address the creditors in their complaints as depicted in Neh 5:1 אֲחֵיהֶם הַיְּהוּדִים *their Judean brothers*. These *Judean brothers* were later called אָחִינוּ *our brothers* by the complainants (Neh 5:5). In another occasion, Nehemiah used the term to address the Judeans sold by the creditors and bought back by Nehemiah's group (Neh 5:8 אָחִינוּ

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[18] Blenkinsopp's interpretation: "we are the same flesh and blood, we are one people." Williamson's translation: "we are of the same flesh and blood as our brothers and our children are as their children." See Blenkinsopp, *Ezra–Nehemiah*, 258; Williamson, *Ezra, Nehemiah*, 231.

[19] Nash, "Core Elements," 25.

[20] Horowitz, *Ethnic Groups*, 57.

הַיְּהוּדִים *our Judean brothers*). The kinship relation between the two groups was accentuated by Nehemiah when he confronted the aristocrats. Nehemiah named the Judeans whom the aristocrats exacted interest as אִישׁ־בְּאָחִיו *your own brothers*[21] (Neh 5:7) and those the aristocrats sold to foreigners as אֲחֵיכֶם *your brothers* (Neh 5:8). Hence, the terms *brothers* and *Judean brothers* in these occasions are interchangeable representations of the group members, with the accentuation of the groups' kinship relations.

<center>Plural Personal Pronouns and Plural Verbs</center>

Plural personal pronouns like *us–them* and plural verbs that indicate group behavior provide textual evidence of self-categorization of the concerned groups. The first common plural pronoun אֲנַחְנוּ *we* appears in several places of the intragroup account (Neh 5:2, 3, 5, 8). Noteworthy is the referent shift of the first common plural pronoun and verb as the narrative develops. The first *we*-group emerges from the self-perception of the complainants, textually substantiated by the first common plural אֲנַחְנוּ *we* (Neh 5:2, 3, 5) and the first common plural verb לָוִינוּ *we have borrowed* (Neh 5:4). The second *we*-group, represented by Nehemiah, is attested to by the first common plural אֲנַחְנוּ *we* in the first-person speech (Neh 5:8). This group bought enslaved Judeans back from foreigners (Neh 5:8 קָנִינוּ *we are buying back*). The text does not explicate the *we*-group members besides Nehemiah. Harrington suggested that it was the personal act of Nehemiah.[22] Williamson commented that it was not only Nehemiah's personal action but also a

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[21] Common translations are NASB: *each to his brother*; NJPS: *your brothers*; NIV and NRSV: *your own people*. Williamson translated it as *his own brother*, see Williamson, *Ezra, Nehemiah*, 231. Blenkinsopp interpreted it as *your own kinsfolk*, see Blenkinsopp, *Ezra–Nehemiah*, 253.

[22] Harrington, *Ezra and Nehemiah*, 321.

particular Judean custom practiced by the Judean community stretching back over some considerable period.[23] Blenkinsopp commented that it was Nehemiah and his entourage who bought back the Judeans enslaved in the diaspora.[24] Based on the plural first common pronoun and exclusion of the aristocrats, this study postulates that the *we*-group comprises Nehemiah and his entourage who bought back those in debt servitude. Contrary to the *we*-group, a אַתֶּם *you*-group comprising the creditors—the nobles and officials, is identified (Neh 5:7, 8, 9, 11). This *you*-group is depicted as exacting interest from the poor Judeans (indicated by the plural participle נֹשִׁאים in Neh 5:7) and selling their Judean kinsfolk (marked by the second plural verb תִּמְכְּרוּ *you are selling* in Nehemiah's accusation in Neh 5:8). Here the second *we*-group and the *you*-group are depicted as a variant of *us–them*. Interestingly, the remaining first common plural verbs (Neh 5:10, 12) play a role to blur the identity boundary of *we–you*. The first common plural cohortative נַעַזְבָה *let us forfeit* (Neh 5:10) gives an impression of generalizing the behavior of Nehemiah's group and the *you*-group on the matter of exacting interest. The last three first common plural verbs נָשִׁיב *we will give back*, לֹא נְבַקֵּשׁ *we will not demand*, and נַעֲשֶׂה *we will do* (Neh 5:12) evidence a literary shift of the *you*-group to approaching the behavior of the second *we*-group, i.e., the *we*-group represented by Nehemiah. The literary shift effectively portrays the second *we*-group as the dominant category in this intragroup situation.

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[23] Williamson, *Ezra, Nehemiah*, 239–40.
[24] Blenkinsopp, *Ezra–Nehemiah*, 259, "his party" possibly meant Nehemiah's kinsfolk and servants.

Group Beliefs

The poor Judeans' complaints revealed their practical expectation as members of the Judean community. Their appeal and Nehemiah's charge on the aristocrats evidence the absence of shared beliefs in the community.

Group Norms

Group norms concern what group members should, should not, or are expected to do in social situations. Prescriptive statements and directive verbs are common textual indicators of normative behavior. Nehemiah's confrontation against the aristocrats outlines two deviant behaviors: exacting interest (מַשָּׁא) on loans from the poor Judeans (Neh 5:7) and selling Judean kinsfolk to foreigners (Neh 5:8).

5:7	וָאֹמְרָה לָהֶם מַשָּׁא אִישׁ־בְּאָחִיו אַתֶּם נֹשִׁאים
	and I said to them, "You are exacting interest from your own brothers
5:8	וְגַם־אַתֶּם תִּמְכְּרוּ אֶת־אֲחֵיכֶם
	but you however are selling your brothers

Surveying Torah, loans at interest by a Judean to kinsfolk is prohibited (Deut 23:20–21 [23:19–20 ET], Lev 25:35–38, Exod 22:24). The Levitical law and the Covenant Code prohibit lending money or goods to impoverished Judean kinsfolk at interest (Lev 25:35, Exod 22:24 [22:25 ET]). The Deuteronomic law even places an absolute prohibition on loans at interest to any Judeans (Deut 23:20 [23:19 ET], אָחִיךָ *your brother*). Neufeld defined the word מַשָּׁא as "'loan of money (or grain)' given for a pledge of persons or things."[25] Exacting material and human pledges were likely practiced when a Judean

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[25] Neufeld, "Rate of Interest," 200. Williamson also commented that "Heb[rew] has other words for 'to lend' and 'to exact interest'; it looks, therefore, as though נשא may mean to loan on pledge." See Williamson, *Ezra, Nehemiah*, 233. Interpretation from the Talmud and some other scholarly interpretations can be found in Neufeld, "Prohibitions," 356–57.

could not repay the interest on the loan. Although the Levitical laws prohibit enslavement

and selling Judean kinsfolk (Lev 25:39–43), in researching the social phenomenon of

debt-slavery in preexilic Israel, Chirichigno concluded that:

> Israelite small farmers, like those in Mesopotamia, were therefore often hard
> pressed to pay back their loans. Many of these small landowners, who were
> forced to engage in subsistence farming, were forced to sell or surrender
> dependents into debt-slavery. Furthermore, they were eventually forced to sell
> themselves and their land (means of production).[26]

The complaint made by the poor Judeans (Neh 5:5) verified similar practice in the Judean

society. What the aristocrats did to their kinsfolk violated these norms.

The memoir depicts two prescriptive behaviors for the aristocrats. The first was

denoted by the cohortative נַעֲזְבָה *let us forfeit* (Neh 5:10). Nullifying the practice of

exacting interest is depicted as a prescribed social norm for the aristocrats, and

Nehemiah's group as well. The second normative behavior is prescribed by the

imperative הָשִׁיבוּ נָא *give back now* (Neh 5:11). The norm required the creditors to return

the land, property, and loan interest to the debtors. These two norms did not deal with the

enslavement problem directly, but they exerted an immediate impact on nullifying the

pledge of family members as debt-slaves.[27] Consequently, the bound laborers may be

released to work on their families' subsistence farming.

Group Values

Two group values are postulated based on textual expressions and the socioeconomic

situations of Judah in the Persian period. The lexical meaning of צְעָקָה *outcry*, in

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[26] Chirichigno, *Debt-Slavery*, 141.
[27] Chirichigno, *Debt-Slavery*, 97–98. Material and human pledge existed legally in the ancient
Near East.

situations of oppression, is "a cry for justice" by "those whose rights are curtailed."[28] The social conflict narrated in Neh 5 involved social groups at the two ends of the social hierarchy. The word *outcry* (Neh 5:1) presupposed the existence of social injustice in the Judean society. Becking attributed the causes of poverty in Persian Judah to land-related factors.[29] Donna Laird described the social conflict in Neh 5 as fueled by taxes, debt, and economic disparity.[30] Richard N. Frye remarked on the institution of land tax by Darius I.[31] Pierre Briant and Lester L. Grabbe ascribed it to annual tribute and satrapal tax instituted by Darius I and administered by the twenty satrapies.[32] David Pleins, however, perceived the problem from the dimension of communal injustice and commented that "in this phase of the book of Nehemiah, the question of social justice is raised rather directly and extensively (chap. 5)."[33] The present discussion of group norms further suggests the aristocrats' role in worsening the poverty of the poor Judeans and accentuating social stratification within the community. Hence, restoring the value of *social justice* was what the group needed to resolve the communal conflict and supply a safety net to the poor stratum.

The rhetorical question in Neh 5:9bα amplifies the aristocrats' departure from the Torah instruction of being a God-fearing people.

הֲלוֹא בְּיִרְאַת אֱלֹהֵינוּ תֵּלֵכוּ

Shall you not walk in the fear of our God?

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[28] e.g. see "צְעָקָה," *HALOT* 3:1043.
[29] Becking, *Ezra, Nehemiah*, 78. The factors include land rights was no longer inherited, land lost its kindship values, and droughts caused crop failures.
[30] Laird, *Negotiating Power*, 229.
[31] Frye, *Heritage*, 113.
[32] Briant, *From Cyrus to Alexander*, 390; Grabbe, *History*, 195.
[33] Pleins, *Social Visions*, 183.

The motif of *the fear of our God* was the central theme in the Levitical laws concerning the prohibition of exacting interest from and slavery of the poor Judeans.

<div dir="rtl">

Lev 25:36a   אַל־תִּקַּח מֵאִתּוֹ נֶשֶׁךְ וְתַרְבִּית וְיָרֵאתָ מֵאֱלֹהֶיךָ
</div>
you shall not take interest or profit from him but you shall fear your God

<div dir="rtl">

Lev 25:43   לֹא־תִרְדֶּה בוֹ בְּפָרֶךְ וְיָרֵאתָ מֵאֱלֹהֶיךָ
</div>
you shall not rule over him with harshness but you shall fear your God

The literary structure of these commands and the contrastive *waw* suggest that fearing God is the cause of obeying the prohibitions. Contextually, in the situations of the impoverished Judeans depicted in Neh 5, *the fear of God* was the dominant value that constrained the loaning behavior of the aristocrats. Pleins perceived a clear parallel between Neh 5 and the Covenant Code. He concluded that the memoir imported the *fear of God* narrative as motivation for the legal system.[34] In sum, the memoir ties moral conduct, or more precisely the practice of social justice, unambiguously to the reverence of God, which was depicted as the community's fundamental value to uphold social justice. The Torah teachings of sustaining the living of one's poor kinsfolk was no longer an ancient ideology but was made alive as a communal value to cope with the present social situation of the Judean community.

Group Goals

The impoverishment of the poor Judeans appeared to be an unavoidable outcome under the social and economic systems of the time, as depicted in Neh 5:1–5. Without external intervention, the plight of the poor Judeans would remain solely as this social group's plight. As the governor, Nehemiah was responsible for maintaining the social order of

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[34] Pleins, *Social Visions*, 133. Similarly, Blenkinsopp, *Ezra–Nehemiah*, 259.

Judah before group polarization became uncontrollable. The immediate goal would be alleviating the financial burden of the poor Judeans. The goal was evidenced in the call for compliance to the normative behavior. By involving a public assembly (Neh 5:7) and religious leaders (Neh 5:12 *the priests*) as formal witnesses, Nehemiah accentuated the nature of the goal from a personal to a common goal and from within the poor stratum to the communal level. The covenant making (Neh 5:12 וָאַשְׁבִּיעֵם *I made them swear*) may be viewed as a step to formalize the aristocrats' promise of achieving the immediate goal (Neh 5:12 לַעֲשׂוֹת כַּדָּבָר הַזֶּה *to do according to this promise*). Similar covenant making can be found in Ezra 10:3–5 and Neh 10:1 (9:38 ET). In reviewing scholars' views on the covenant ceremonies in Ezra 10, Neh 5, and Neh 10, Boda recapitulated an important feature that the ceremonies reveal a strong emphasis on individual commitment.[35] The aristocrats' responses (Neh 5:12, 13) evidence their commitment to the group goal advocated by Nehemiah.

Becking suggested that Nehemiah "proposes a set of measures that economically can be labeled as redistribution."[36] He further explained, "the pivotal point in redistribution is that by it possession, income, wealth, and risks are distributed over the different members of a society."[37] Grabbe, on the contrary, held a negative view about Nehemiah's resolution of the fiscal issue.[38] He questioned the assumption that debt-cancelling had no financial consequences on the aristocrats. He also argued that Nehemiah did not resolve the long-term plight of the poor. Interrupting the loaning business would leave the poor vulnerable when they needed financial aid in the future.

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[35] Boda, *Praying the Tradition*, 35.
[36] Becking, *Ezra, Nehemiah*, 80.
[37] Becking, *Ezra, Nehemiah*, 81.
[38] Grabbe, *History*, 304.

Nonetheless, Neh 5:1–5 depicts the life of the poor Judeans in dire poverty which required an immediate intervention. Setting an immediate goal to release poor Judeans' burden may set out the foundation for a visionary goal of making living sustainable for the economically disadvantaged Judeans in the future.

The memoir first addresses the public sphere as קְהִלָּה גְדוֹלָה *a large assembly* (Neh 5:7) and later כָל־הַקָּהָל *the entire assembly* (Neh 5:13). The entirety may indicate the inclusion of the existing creditors and anyone who possessed the social and economic resources. The whole sector was made aware of the prescribed social standards for loans and debt-slaves. The visionary goal is solidified in Neh 10:32b [10:31b ET] and expressed by a covenantal term וְנִטֹּשׁ . . . וּמַשָּׁא כָל־יָד *and forgo . . . the exaction of all debts*. Both the immediate and long-term visionary goals were apparently reminiscent of the Sabbath laws of debt remission and releasing debt-slaves (debts: Deut 15:1–3; slaves: Exod 21:2–6, Deut 15:12–18) and the Jubilee laws on manumission (Lev 25:39–43). Blenkinsopp suggested that Nehemiah was proclaiming an emergency jubilee as a strategy to counter the economic crisis.[39] Considering his use of the *fear of God* motif (Neh 5:9; cf. Lev 25:17, 36, 43) and the debt remission proposal, Nehemiah's intent of restoring the Sabbath laws and Jubilee laws cannot be excluded.

Group Ideology

Nehemiah 5 repeatedly used the word אָח *brother* to underscore the kinship relations among Judeans having differential social status—the poor Judeans, the aristocrats, and Nehemiah's group. Noteworthy is the emphasis on personal attachment by the personal

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[39] Blenkinsopp suggested that Nehemiah was proclaiming an emergency jubilee. See Blenkinsopp, *Ezra–Nehemiah*, 259.

suffix attached to the word *brother* (see the Kinship section). The aristocrats were *our brothers* to the poor Judeans (Neh 5:5). The redeemed Judeans were *our brothers* to Nehemiah's group (Neh 5:8 *our Judean brothers*). Finally, the Judeans whom the aristocrats exacted interest and sold were *your brothers* (meaning *our brothers of*) to the aristocrats (Neh 5:7, 8). By accentuating the *brotherhood* of the concerned groups, the memoir effectively removes the social differentials between the poor Judeans and the other groups ideologically.

Furthermore, the poor Judeans' complaints stemmed from economic hardships originally, yet the memoir has transcended the economic crisis, shifting the issue to the ideology of *preserving God's sovereignty and honor*. Nehemiah 5:9bβ employs a shame-word חֶרְפַּת *taunt* (cf. Jer 20:8; Ezek 5:14; Lam 3:61).[40]

מֵחֶרְפַּת הַגּוֹיִם אוֹיְבֵינוּ

in order to avoid the taunt of the nations, our enemies

The poor Judeans' plight was essentially tied to the land they owned or rented. However, the allusion to the prohibition laws also invoked the principles of land rights and human possession in the Judean society. Leviticus 25:23 and 25:38 state that God held absolute rights on the land, and Lev 25:42 states that Israelites were God's servants. These principles undergirded the economic activities concerning the land, loans, and debt-slaves in the Judean society. Making interest out of the Judean kinsfolk's land and selling them to foreign nations violated God's sovereignty and diminished God's honor. The label אוֹיְבֵינוּ *our enemies* accentuates the aristocrats' unethical behavior and their trespassing on God's honor (Neh 5:9). Selling their own kinsfolk was already a shaming behavior.

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[40] Bechtel, "Shame as Sanction," 54, 72. The noun form denotes "reproach/verbal shaming" while *taunting* was one of the common shaming techniques practiced in the OT period.

Selling God's people to these hostile nations would hardly maintain God's honor before

these nations.[41]

Boundaries

Within-group boundaries are undesirable since they may strengthen personal identity and

weaken the group's social identity. The debtor-creditor relationship between the poor

Judeans and the aristocrats laid a concrete social boundary between the two groups. The

cry of the poor וְאֵין לְאֵל יָדֵנוּ *but we are powerless* (Neh 5:5) again depicted an

impermeable boundary between the two strata. The boundary was reflected by the social

status differentials and in the form of power and wealth. It was a rigid structural boundary

hindering the operation of social mobility of the lower-status stratum.

Summary: Toward Common Membership

The antecedent condition of social group formation is that "[the] awareness of common

category membership is the necessary and sufficient condition for individuals to feel

themselves to be, and act as, a group."[42] The awareness or self-perception can be

evaluated by factors like similarity and shared fate. The Judean society depicted in Neh

5:1–5 was divided and stratified as attested to by the analysis of the concerned social

groups. The plight of the poor Judeans was not shared by the upper stratum nor the

wealth of the aristocrats by the lower stratum. The internal conflict revealed that common

group membership did not exist across the social groups prior to Nehemiah's

intervention. Nehemiah 5:6–13 depicts Nehemiah's intent to resolve the social conflict by

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[41] Williamson, *Ezra, Nehemiah*, 240.
[42] Turner, "Cognitive Redefinition," 27.

breaking the social boundary between the poor Judeans and the aristocrats. Shared beliefs, especially group values and ideology, played decisive roles in orienting the concerned groups to the social order and communal relations enacted to Judeans. Textual analysis suggests that the memoir depicts three literary strategies—wordplay of the word *brother*, allusion to Torah teachings, and wordplay of *we–you*. First, the extensive use of the word *brother* (Neh 5:7, 8, 10) triggered the communal awareness that all the concerned social groups belonged to one common group of people and shared a common kinship identity. The ideology of brotherhood demanded the fulfillment of kinship responsibility. Second, the Torah teachings played a vital role in forming group cohesion. The core value of *the fear of your God* (Neh 5:9) effectively re-oriented the entire community's attention to the group identity as God's people who were demanded to fulfil the Sabbath laws and Jubilee laws. Third, the aristocrats were initially labeled as the *you*-group (Neh 5:7, 8, 9, 11) and depicted as outsiders. The use of the first common plural verbs in the aristocrats' reply (Neh 5:12) signified their willingness to align their self-perceived identity with the common group. In sum, the cognitive categories attest to the Judeans' awareness of their common kinship and religious identity over their stratified group identities. This was achieved by diminishing the social boundary and accentuating the intragroup cohesion among the concerned social groups. The memoir depicts Nehemiah as a leading figure in establishing the group beliefs and mobilizing the Judean community to restore the brotherhood obligations. By doing so, the memoir plays a role to promote the dominance of Nehemiah over the other concerned social groups in steering the intragroup relations.

Categorization—Evaluative Component

In intragroup situations, self-categorization is based on intragroup comparisons, i.e., between self and other group members, by means of differentiating the positive and negative evaluatives of the self and others. The evaluative determinants in Neh 5 are informative since they allow the delineation of the behavioral traits that contribute to the positive or negative evaluations of the concerned groups.

Differentiation

Members tend to differentiate their behavior from those perceived to be more positive and attractive in terms of group distinctiveness. The consequence will be the assimilation of individual members' attitudes and behaviors with the group prototype.

Us and Them

The dichotomy of *us* and *them* often connotes a sense of antithesis. The intragroup conflict led to the question of *who the legitimate members of the Judean community were in terms of behavioral traits*. The memoir mentions two non-conforming behaviors— exacting interest and selling Judeans to foreigners (Neh 5:7, 8). The former may end up with enslavement in the form of debt-slavery by the creditors, whereas the latter involved immediate enslavement by foreign buyers. These behaviors jeopardized the solidarity of the Judean community. The group norms expressed by the cohortative נַעֲזְבָה *let us forfeit* (Neh 5:10) and imperative הָשִׁיבוּ נָא *give back now* (Neh 5:11) were effective means to stop domestic and foreign enslavement, thereby accentuating the self-esteem of the community. In other words, self-favoritism was operative. In this sense, membership

legitimacy was differentiated based on conformity to the group norms. Anyone who conformed to the norms was perceived as a legitimated ingroup member and those who did not would be regarded as outsiders. This differentiation was attested to by the symbolic act of Nehemiah (Neh 5:13). Asking God to shake out a person from his house and property implied excluding the person from the Judean community.[43]

Prototypicality

To resolve the internal conflict, Nehemiah called for remedial actions from the aristocrats and his own group to rectify the deviant behavior. The aristocrats' positive attitudinal and behavioral changes exemplified the operation of the prototype-based depersonalization process.[44] Nehemiah's influence was essential in directing the course of group uniformity.

The biblical figure Nehemiah has received dissenting evaluations from scholars and commentators. Considering Neh 5, the character of Nehemiah was generally commented on,[45] criticized,[46] and positively evaluated.[47] Pleins described the biblical Nehemiah as a composite figure depicted by the final form of the book of Nehemiah.[48] The Nehemiah in Neh 5 (Pleins's initial phase) was a reformer who "censured the local

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[43] The symbolic act "is functionally parallel to the threat of banning or excommunication in Ezra's assembly to deal with foreign marriages (Ezra 10:8)." See Blenkinsopp, *Ezra–Nehemiah*, 260.

[44] Hogg, "Social," 61.

[45] Blenkinsopp, *Ezra–Nehemiah*, 259–65.

[46] Eskenazi, *Age of Prose*, 145, 148–49; examples of criticism: centered at own vested interest (Neh 5:19), self-righteous (Neh 5:7, 10), and amassing power (Neh 5:14). Grabbe, *History*, 303–4; examples of criticism: could not handle and resolve the fiscal crisis as a good adminstrator, no long-term good for the poor. Also see pp. 308–10 on further criticism.

[47] Harrington, *Ezra and Nehemiah*, 325–27; Nehemiah's deeds were appraised positively. Laird, *Negotiating Power*, 244; Nehemiah utilized his economic resources to work for the common good of the community. Williamson, *Ezra, Nehemiah*, 245; Nehemiah's leadership was positively evaluated.

[48] Pleins, *Social Visions*, 182–86.

Judean nobles and prefects—*internal* opponents—for communal injustices."[49] This study

proposes an evaluation of Nehemiah as a prototypical leader under the intragroup concept

of the SCT. Self-categorization postulates that an intragroup prototypicality gradient

exists and group members are internally differentiated based on prototypicality.[50]

Prototypical leaders are members perceived to be more prototypical than others and act as

a focus for attitudinal and behavioral depersonalization.[51] The prototypicality of

Nehemiah was exemplified in the group values and norms he advocated for his kinsfolk.

He was also portrayed as exemplary in conforming to the norms (Neh 5:7–12). Hence,

Nehemiah was like an ideal self who exerted a prototypical influence in assimilating the

attitude and behavior of other aristocrats in the community. His prototypical leadership

was not only substantiated by the aristocrats' unequivocal conformity (Neh 5:12–13), but

also affirmed by the entire Judean community (Neh 5:13). One of the criticisms against

Nehemiah is his being self-righteous when he himself was guilty of practicing usury (Neh

5:10).[52] However, Nehemiah's readiness to admit his wrong and to comply with the

group norms was also prototypical.[53] Nehemiah's exemplary behavior may be further

demonstrated by his goodwill and behavior depicted in Neh 5:14–19. The memoir

informs that Nehemiah forfeited the governor's rights of food allowance (Neh 5:14) and

daily tax paid by the populace (Neh 5:15). He had a disciplined team who did not oppress

the populace (Neh 5:15). He and his entourage did not involve themselves in land sales

and they only focused on the wall-rebuilding work (Neh 5:16). Besides, he generously

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[49] Pleins, *Social Visions*, 183.
[50] Hogg, "Social," 66.
[51] Hogg, "Social," 69.
[52] Eskenazi, *Age of Prose*, 148.
[53] Harrington, *Ezra and Nehemiah*, 322. Harrington commented Nehemiah as "leading by example" by cancelling the entire debt.

treated his guests without burdening the populace with the expenses (Neh 5:17–18). What the memoir depicts is a Nehemiah who founded his governance and leadership on the fear of God (Neh 5:15) and out of the goodwill of the community (Neh 5:19). Williamson commented that Nehemiah "led the way by example toward a greater sense of social responsibility among the more wealthy residents of Judah."[54] Nehemiah ascribed his altruism to the fear of God (יִרְאַת אֱלֹהִים). His testimony exemplified living out of the value of *reverence of God*. In sum, Nehemiah was depicted as an ingroup prototype who accentuated altruism and group beliefs, while effectively influencing and mobilizing the community to follow the group norms and pursue the collective goals.

Intragroup Stereotyping

When intragroup prototypicality is salient, the prototypical characteristics will be perceived as group attributes. These characteristics are perceived to produce more positive self-evaluation that will motivate intragroup stereotyping.[55] Group members tend to depersonalize the self and assimilate themselves to be more like the ingroup prototype. The aristocrats are initially depicted as outsiders, as inferred by the label *others* (Neh 5:5), with their unjust behavior and selling act (Neh 5:8). Under the salience of ingroup prototypicality, their attitude and behavior became more like Nehemiah, the ingroup prototype. Their promise נַעֲשֶׂה כַּאֲשֶׁר אַתָּה אוֹמֵר *we will do as you say* (Neh 5:12) attested to full behavioral assimilation. The stereotyping process was also out of the need to categorize themselves as the same members of the dominant group represented by Nehemiah. Otherwise, their behavior would categorize them as ingroup deviants.

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[54] Williamson, *Ezra, Nehemiah*, 242.
[55] Turner, "Cognitive Redefinition," 30.

Consequently, the self-stereotyping process led to the aristocrats' internalization of the group values and norms, resulting in more salient group uniformity and cohesion.

Negative Evaluation of the Aristocratic Group

The need for positive self-esteem drives intragroup members to differentiate themselves from other group members based on shared group characteristics. Members tend to assign positive distinctiveness to themselves and negative characteristics to other group members.[56] Nehemiah 5:6–13 attests to the negative evaluation of the aristocrats through literary devices and prophetic symbolic acts, leading to the demoralization and disapproval of the aristocrats and curse enactment on the noncompliant members.

Demoralizing the Aristocrats

Nehemiah 5:6–8 depicts the initial encounter of Nehemiah and the aristocrats, which began with *the complaints* (הַדְּבָרִים) of the poor Judeans (Neh 5:6). After hearing the complaints from the poor Judeans, Nehemiah contended with the aristocrats (Neh 5:7–8). The Hebrew word אָרִיבָה *contend* (Neh 5:7) has a legal connotation which underscores the seriousness of Nehemiah's confrontation.[57] The aristocrats were initially confronted with the behavior of exacting loan interest. The confrontation was eventually centered on their behavior of selling kinsfolk into slavery. The antithetical pair אֲנַחְנוּ קָנִינוּ אֶת־אַחֵינוּ הַיְּהוּדִים *we have bought back our Judean brothers* and וְגַם־אַתֶּם תִּמְכְּרוּ אֶת־אֲחֵיכֶם *you however are selling your brothers* (Neh 5:8a) creates a stark contrast between the ethical behavior of Nehemiah and the unethical behavior of the aristocrats. The memoir depicts that

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[56] Turner, "Cognitive Redefinition," 35.

[57] Williamson, *Ezra, Nehemiah*, 239. Williamson used the term *quasi-legal dispute*.

Nehemiah's confrontation was received with a silent response from the aristocrats (Neh 5:8),

וַיַּחֲרִישׁוּ וְלֹא מָצְאוּ דָּבָר

they kept silent for they found no word to say

which reflected a full admission of the charge Nehemiah brought against them. Nehemiah's confrontation and the aristocrats' dead silence further create a stark contrast of the speech dominance, accentuating the devaluation of the aristocrats' behavior. The encounter ended with the Hebrew word דָּבָר (singular form of הַדְּבָרִים *the complaints*). Both *the complaints* and (*no*) *word* form an inclusio which magnifies the defenselessness of the aristocrats.

Disapproving of the Aristocrats

The aristocrats' attitudinal and behavioral deviations have been expounded under the Group Norm and Group Values sections. The memoir continues to underscore the disapproval with a factual statement (Neh 5:9a) followed by a rhetorical question (Neh 5:9bα):

5:9a	וַיֹּאמֶר [וָ][אֹמַר] לֹא־טוֹב הַדָּבָר אֲשֶׁר־אַתֶּם עֹשִׂים
	So I said, "the thing that you were doing was not right.
5:9bα	הֲלוֹא בְּיִרְאַת אֱלֹהֵינוּ תֵּלֵכוּ
	Shall you not walk in the fear of our God?

In the present context, the word טוֹב *right* implies a morally justified behavior (cf. Mic 6:8). The negative particle לֹא effects to negate the existence of such behavior and hence attests to clear disapproval of the aristocrats' behavior. The rhetorical question, together with the negative particle לוֹא, presumes an assertive reply. Hence, the rhetorical question inaugurates a dramatic effect in the disapproval of the aristocrats' religious piety. Bill T. Arnold reminded that the word fear "has a cognitive nuance lending itself to a behavioral

reverence" and it is indicative of one's affective relationship with God.[58] Nehemiah's rhetoric question devaluated the aristocrats in their lack of reverent response and behavioral obedience.

Cursing the Noncompliant

Nehemiah 5:13 substantiates an unequivocal devaluation of the aristocratic group. The devaluation is expressed in the form of symbolic act and curse. Nehemiah performed the symbolic act by shaking out (נָעַרְתִּי *I shook out*) the fold of his garment. The act is reminiscent of the symbolic acts of prophets and had a symbolic meaning of emptying one's possessions.[59] By calling God to enact the curse (יְנַעֵר הָאֱלֹהִים *may God shake out*), Nehemiah was invoking a divine judgment on those who failed to fulfill the promise of returning the possession and interest to the Judean debtors. The word *shake out* is repeated three times in the pronouncement of the curse,

נָעַרְתִּי *I shook out*; יְנַעֵר הָאֱלֹהִים *may God shake out*; הָיֶה נָעוּר *may he be shaken out*

The repetition imparts a dramatic effect emphasizing the unfortunate consequences of those who failed to fulfill the promise.

Positive Evaluation of the Prototypical Members

The SCT hypothesizes that individuals are evaluated positively to the degree that they are perceived as prototypical of the group in which they are being compared.[60] In the context of the internal conflict account, the Judeans are compared and evaluated based on how

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[58] Arnold, "Love–Fear," 565–66.

[59] Clines, *Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther*, 170; Williamson, *Ezra, Nehemiah*, 241. Examples of prophetic sign-act are depicted in Jer 13:1–11 and Zech 11:4–16.

[60] Turner et al., *Rediscovering*, 57.

they followed the norms. Textual evidence substantiates the positive evaluation of

Nehemiah's group and the aristocrats.

We Have Done Our Best

The first positive evaluation is Nehemiah's evaluation of their own group. The expression

כְּדֵי בָנוּ *as far as we were able*[61] (Neh 5:8) connotes a sense of trying to do something with

the greatest effort.[62] Considering the context of Nehemiah's direct confrontation, the

expression implies a behavioral disparity between Nehemiah's group and the aristocrats.

Hence, the expression may be perceived as Nehemiah's self-evaluation of his group's

redeeming action, which effected in accentuating the positive esteem of his group as the

prototypical members of the Judean community.

Amen, Praise, and Cooperation

Nehemiah 5:12–13 evidences the positive changes of the aristocrats' attitudes and

behaviors. Particularly, the way the participants responded to Nehemiah's symbolic act

signified a dramatic shift in the aristocrats' perception of their group identity (Neh

5:13b).

> וַיֹּאמְרוּ כָל־הַקָּהָל אָמֵן וַיְהַלְלוּ אֶת־יְהוָה וַיַּעַשׂ הָעָם כַּדָּבָר הַזֶּה
> *And the entire assembly answered, "Amen." And they praised the Lord, and the people*
> *did according to this promise.*

The first two responses are liturgical. The first response is saying *Amen*. The word אָמֵן

Amen in Neh 5:13b is defined as "solemn formula . . . by which the hearer accepts the

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[61] e.g. see "*דְּי,*" *HALOT* 1:219. This phrase only appears in Neh 5:8.
[62] For example, the NJPS translates the phrase as *we have done our best*, while NIV takes the
meaning of *as far as possible* and NRSV's is the same as *HALOT*.

validity of a curse or declaration"[63] (cf. the curse pronouncements in Deut 27:15–26 and

Jer 11:1–5). By saying *Amen*, the aristocrats bound themselves to Nehemiah's curse in

the oath. From the viewpoint of ingroup identity, their submission signified a higher

degree of sharing the social identity of the more positive prototypical members. In

addition, affirming Nehemiah's symbolic act demonstrated that the aristocrats were

willing to align themselves with the normative expectations. Such an attitude shift in the

aristocrats maximized the similarity between the aristocrats and the prototypical members

and contributed to the mutual liking of group members. The second response is praising

God. The word הלל *praise*, when used in praising God, connotes a sense of reverence and

joy (Pss 112:1; 117:1; 146–150).[64] In the ceremony of bringing the Ark of the Covenant

to the city of David (1 Chr 16:8–36), the congregation responded to the thanksgiving

psalm of David[65] with *Amen* and *praise the Lord* (1 Chr 16:36 וַיֹּאמְרוּ כָל־הָעָם אָמֵן וְהַלֵּל

לַיהוָה). Their response in a way expressed a confession of faith and obedience. In

elucidating the dialectical relations between Pss 1 and 150, Brueggemann posited that

"only the obedient can praise God."[66] Noteworthy is the memoir's use of *the entire*

assembly in describing those saying *Amen* and giving praise (as third person plural). The

entirety implied the participation of the aristocrats, as well as the poor Judeans and other

social categories, as a unified self. The third response was putting words into action. The

people who swore to cancel the debts וַיַּעַשׂ הָעָם כַּדָּבָר הַזֶּה *did according to this promise*.

The actors were named הָעָם *the people*. These were the aristocrats based on the context of

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[63] e.g. see "אָמֵן," *HALOT* 1:64.

[64] Praising is one of the activities associating with *joy* or *rejoice*. See Anderson, *A Time*, 37–38.

[65] This study refers to the final form of 1 Chr 16:8–36 in the Hebrew Bible. See Braun, *1 Chronicles*, 186 for the proposal of a composite psalm from Pss 105, 96, and 106.

[66] Brueggemann, "Bounded," 69.

Neh 5:7–12. Hence, the internal conflict was concluded with the aristocrats' self-rectifying action that made the aristocrats more like the prototypical members. In other words, the aristocrats were able to acquire a more positive social identity with their cooperation.

Summary: Toward Ingroup Formation and Identity Redefinition

In intragroup relations, cohesiveness is a form of mutual attraction or shared mutual liking between ingroup members as a result of prototype-based depersonalization and self-stereotyping.[67] Group cohesion also reflects shared prototypicality.[68] In the present social situation, these two processes were the main SCT processes influencing the social behavior of the concerned groups in the Judean community. These processes caused the aristocrats to consent to the prototypical attitude and adopt the group prototype's normative behavior. Consequently, intragroup conformity, group cohesiveness resulting from mutual liking, and cooperation were inaugurated. Evidently, Neh 5 portrays Nehemiah as a God-fearing leader and a reformer who acted for the common good of the society. His prototypical influence as a prototypical leader effectively reduced the evaluative differences between the aristocrats and the prototypical members. The memoir renders Nehemiah the prototype a vital role in shaping the group beliefs and social identity of the Judean community.

Group formation is actualized when individuals internalize the social norms and reflect the norms in their attitude and behavior.[69] The delineation of the evaluative

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[67] Hogg, "Group Cohesiveness," 102.
[68] Turner, "Self-Categorization," 60.
[69] Tajfel, "Introduction," 4.

component has demonstrated such group formation. The transition of the aristocrats from categorical members to prototypical members resulted in the formation of a "perceptual identity"[70] that redefined the various social groups as one ingroup (*the entire assembly*). Through the shaping of the communal identity, a new social boundary of inclusivity was inaugurated, which was no longer decided by economic power and wealth but was characterized by the restoration of the reverence of God and adhesion to the Torah teachings of brotherhood.

Categorization—Emotional Component

Similar to the intergroup concepts, the cognitive and evaluative components in an intragroup context may be accompanied by positive or negative emotions directed toward the prototypical members or the other members. Mirguet's concept of emotional expressions[71] provides a methodological basis for identifying the emotional component associated with the membership categorization of the concerned social groups.

Expression of Awareness of Being a Group

Ingroup awareness has been demonstrated by the unequivocal liturgical response of the Judean community (Neh 5:13). Common fate and common enemy are also evident of ingroup formation and group cohesion.[72] Emotional expressions entailed in these elements signify the awareness of the ingroup membership. Nehemiah 5:1–5 narrates the plight shared by the poor Judeans. This plight was not shared by the aristocrats initially,

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[70] Turner et al., *Rediscovering*, 52.
[71] Mirguet, "Emotion," 443.
[72] Turner et al., *Rediscovering*, 52.

yet, it was transformed into a common fate through Nehemiah's intervention. Nehemiah 5:6–9 suggests that exacting interest was the primary cause of the poor Judeans' enslavement. Nehemiah condemned the practice explicitly and made the aristocrats responsible by framing the poor Judeans' plight as a religious and ethical issue of the aristocrats. Using the shame word חֶרְפַּת *taunts* (Neh 5:9bβ),[73] the memoir reframes the enslavement as an honor–shame crisis such that the taunts of the nations became the disgrace of the Judean community. The notion of common fate is further reinforced by identifying the foreign slave buyers, הַגּוֹיִם *the nations* (Neh 5:8aα), as common enemies, אוֹיְבֵינוּ *our enemies* (Neh 5:9bβ), of the ingroup. The descriptor *our enemies* is the label given to the antagonists of the surrounding provinces (Neh 4:9 [4:15 ET]; 6:1; 6:16). Labelling the buyers as *our enemies* underscores the group boundary between the aristocrats and the foreign buyers who are virtually depicted as the outgroup. Besides common fate and common enemies, ingroup cohesion is further expressed by the cohortative נַעֲזָבָה *let us forfeit* (Neh 5:10) and the reply נַעֲשֶׂה *we will do as you said* (Neh 5:12). The cohortatives express Nehemiah's desire to have the aristocrats joining him in canceling the debts. The aristocrats' reply affirmed their willingness to do it together. In sum, the emotional expressions evidence the accentuation of the awareness of common membership within the Judean community.

Expression of Social Conflict

The intragroup account depicts two major social conflicts. The first was between the poor Judeans and the aristocrats, which was characterized by its stratified nature. The second

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[73] See n40 in this chapter.

was between Nehemiah and the aristocrats, which represented the dissenting values within the same social stratum.

Between Social Strata

The poor Judeans' complaints exemplify the tension between the poor Judeans and the wealthy aristocrats. The word צְעָקָה *outcry* is a strong emotional word expressing distress resulting from social injustice. An example is found in Exod 3:7, 9 where the word is employed to express the Israelites' sufferings under the oppression of Egyptians. Two other examples are found in Ps 9:13 [9:12 ET] and Job 34:28, where the word expresses the desperate cry for help from the poor and needy. The memoir employs the same word to express the cry of the poor Judeans (Neh 5:1). The relational tension between the two social categories is observed with the preposition אֶל. The word functions adversatively[74] in the context of the poor Judeans' outcry, i.e., the poor group was directing their outcry *against* the aristocrats. As such, the aristocrats are portrayed as the oppressors, while the poor Judeans are the oppressed. The memoir describes the outcry as גְּדוֹלָה *great*. The adjectival modifier functions to elevate the degree of distressful feelings of the poor Judeans as well as the degree of indictment against the aristocrats.

Within Social Stratum

Two textual features in Neh 5:7 express the social tension between Nehemiah and the aristocrats. The first feature is the verbal expression וָאָרִיבָה אֶת־ *I contended with*. The verb refers to a verbal rebuke connoting a judgmental notion in the context of Neh 5:7. The

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[74] Waltke and O'Connor, *Introduction*, 193–94.

preposition אֶת *with* plainly identifies the object of the denunciation as the nobles and the

officials (אֶת־הַחֹרִים וְאֶת־הַסְּגָנִים [*I contended*] *with the nobles and with the officials*) of

whom Nehemiah was also a member.[75] Nehemiah's action created tension between

himself and the aristocrats, in which he was perceived as the accuser while the aristocrats

were the accused. The second feature is mobilizing the community (קְהִלָּה גְדוֹלָה) to deal

with (preposition of disadvantage, עֲלֵיהֶם *against them*) the aristocrats. In this way, the

memoir escalates the social tension to the communal level. The setting mimics a public

hearing with the aristocrats depicted as the accused in this hearing. These textual features

create an overall impression that accentuates the conflict between Nehemiah and the

aristocrats. Collectively, the textual expressions promote a positive evaluation of

Nehemiah and a negative evaluation of the aristocrats.

<div align="center">Expression of Feelings</div>

The concerned groups' feeling expressions are categorized according to Jasper's typology

of feelings.[76] These expressions suggest a combination of reflex, affective, and moral

emotions.

Reflex Emotions

Reflex emotions are characterized by quick and automatic responses to events and

information.[77] The obvious reflex emotion is Nehemiah's spontaneous anger (וַיִּחַר לִי מְאֹד

it angered me extremely) when he heard the outcry and complaints of the poor Judeans

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[75] Williamson, *Ezra, Nehemiah*, 240.
[76] Jasper, "Emotions," 287.
[77] Jasper, "Emotions," 287.

(Neh 5:6). The auxiliary word מְאֹד remarks the intensity of Nehemiah's angry feeling. Interestingly, the narrative depicts no reflex emotion of the poor Judeans or the aristocrats. The absence of the others' reflex emotions in Neh 5 may imply the dominance of Nehemiah's emotional response, which led to Nehemiah's subsequent actions against the aristocrats. In this sense, Neh 5:6 may be viewed as a transition point of the conflict narrative in moving the crisis drama (Neh 5:1–5) to the resolution of the crisis (Neh 5:7–13).[78]

Affective-Attachments

Affective emotions may be related to negative (aversions) or positive (attachments) feelings. The affective emotions entailed in the intragroup relations are affective attachments expressed chiefly in terms of commitment.

Aristocrats

The aristocrats expressed their affective attachment by committing to restoring the possessions and forfeiting the debts of their kinsfolk. The commitment is expressed in the form of a first common plural verbal promise נָשִׁיב וּמֵהֶם לֹא נְבַקֵּשׁ *we will give back and we will demand nothing* (Neh 5:12a). Although the memoir mentions a formal oath-taking imposed by Nehemiah after the aristocrats made the promise, the imposition did not rule out a genuine commitment of the aristocrats. Commitment affirmation is expressed in the form of liturgical response of saying *Amen* (Neh 5:13b). Noteworthy was the labeling of

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[78] Boda suggested that Neh 5:7a is the transition point based on its rhetorical function. See Boda, "Prayer as Rhetoric," 278.

the participants as *the entire assembly*, which suggests a collective declaration of the commitment.

Nehemiah

Nehemiah's positive affection toward the Judeans is expressed in his commitment to free the enslaved Judeans. The expression כְּדֵי בָנוּ *as far as we were able* (Neh 5:8) depicts the willingness and effort Nehemiah and his entourage committed to this matter. Nehemiah's further commitment is testified in his prayer (Neh 5:19). The declaration that his work was עַל־הָעָם הַזֶּה *for this people* reiterated his conviction to ease the burden of the Judeans under his governorship. A less noticeable positive attachment is embedded in Nehemiah's speech and personal testimony, which is expressed as יִרְאַת אֱלֹהֵינוּ *the fear of our God* (Neh 5:9) and יִרְאַת אֱלֹהִים *the fear of God* (Neh 5:15). The nuance of *fear* is multifaceted. The experience of fear may be categorized as attitudes, actions, and physical sensations.[79] The context of the internal account suggests that the word carries dual nuances. As a perceived group value of the Judean community, the word expresses a moral emotion demanding attitudinal and behavioral conformation to the Torah teachings concerning benevolence toward the poor and needy, such as depicted in the demand for the aristocrats in Neh 5:9. With the relational nuance, the word also denotes an affective relationship God desires in a positive sense.[80] When Nehemiah stressed that he himself acted differently than his predecessors, he ascribed his good will to *the fear of God* (Neh 5:15). Noteworthy that in Neh 1:11, Nehemiah asked God to listen to the prayer of *your*

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[79] Mirguet, "Emotion," 450.

[80] Arnold, "Love–Fear," 565–67. Arnoold used Deut 5–11 to argue that the nuance of *fear* is more than "mere obedience." The lexeme also embeds a relational nuance.

servant (עַבְדְּךָ) and *your servants* (עֲבָדֶיךָ) *who delight in revering your name* (הַחֲפֵצִים לְיִרְאָה אֶת־שְׁמֶךָ). Considering both Neh 5:15 and 1:11, Nehemiah's reverence toward God underscores a relational attachment in addition to his reverential obedience.

Moral Emotions

Moral emotions typically involve "feelings of approval and disapproval based on moral intuitions and principles, as well as the satisfaction we feel when we do the right (or wrong) thing, but also when we feel the right (or wrong) thing, such as compassion for the unfortunate or indignation over injustice."[81] Most of the emotions delineated so far also carry a moral connotation. For example, the poor group's *outcry* (Neh 5:1) is originated from social injustice and *the taunts of the nations* (Neh 5:9bβ) refers to shaming sanctions from foreign nations.[82] These examples demonstrate that the moral emotions exhibited by the concerned groups were multifaceted.

Poor Judeans

The poor group's immense distress and desperation are evidenced by the verbal clause formed by the cohortatives וְנִקְחָה דָגָן וְנֹאכְלָה וְנִחְיֶה *we must get grain so that we may eat and live* (Neh 5:2b). The cohortatives illustrate a life-threatening situation where grain was needed to sustain the lives of family members. The cohortative וְנִקְחָה דָגָן *we must get grain* is repeated by members of the poor group (Neh 5:3b). The literary repetition suggests that lacking grain or food was a general social situation of the poor Judeans. In

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[81] Jasper, "Emotions," 287.
[82] Bechtel, "Shame as Sanction," 72. Taunting was probably the most common shaming technique in ancient Israel.

this sense, the emotions expressed by the cohortatives are beyond reflexive. Rather, they are more of moral emotions that express this social group's immediate need. The moral emotions of the poor Judeans were heightened in their final appeal (Neh 5:5b):

> וְהִנֵּה אֲנַחְנוּ כֹבְשִׁים אֶת־בָּנֵינוּ וְאֶת־בְּנֹתֵינוּ לַעֲבָדִים וְיֵשׁ מִבְּנֹתֵינוּ נִכְבָּשׁוֹת וְאֵין לְאֵל יָדֵנוּ וּשְׂדֹתֵינוּ וּכְרָמֵינוּ לַאֲחֵרִים
> *But behold, we are forcing our sons and our daughters into slavery, and some of our daughters have been violated. We are powerless, our fields and our vineyards belong to the others.*

The memoir employs the shame-word כבש twice in this final appeal. In the first occasion, the poor Judeans were forcing (אֲנַחְנוּ כֹבְשִׁים *we are forcing*) their sons and daughters into slavery (לַעֲבָדִים), meaning "into humiliation of slavery."[83] Similar usage is found in the book of Jeremiah to describe the re-enslavement of the freed male and female slaves (Jer 34:11, 16). In the second occasion, unlike the application to both male and female genders, the lexeme in its passive form (נִכְבָּשׁוֹת *they have been violated*) is associated with the Judeans' daughters only. A similar association occurs in the book of Esther when the king reacted to the scene of Haman's begging Esther (Esth 7:8). What the king saw was Haman's assaulting (לִכְבּוֹשׁ) Esther in his presence.[84] Drawing from the similarity, the semantics of the lexeme in Neh 5:5b may connote an overtone of sexual assault. Although the word *grief* is absent in the appeal, the utterance of *we are powerless* (וְאֵין לְאֵל יָדֵנוּ) expressed the innermost grief of the poor Judeans.[85] Land was the sole source of food and income for the Judeans practicing subsistence farming. When they lost their land, as depicted here, they were reduced to a group of powerless people. Not only they themselves were shamed, they also passed the shame to their next generation. The

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[83] e.g. see "כבש," *HALOT* 2:460.

[84] Laniak, *Shame and Honor*, 110.

[85] Mirguet, "Emotion," 455. Mirguet reminded that "in a narrative about loss or abuse, we would expect some mention of grief of an individually and internally felt emotion, designated by a particular lexeme. This is not the case in Biblical Hebrew," meaning grief expriences can be configured in different ways. Here, grief was expressed in verbal form.

non-existence of power is emphasized by the negative adverb אֵין. Without power, these

Judeans and their children could only face the shame imposed by those having their land.

Aristocrats

The dramatic narrative in Neh 5:7–9 depicts Nehemiah's shaming sanction on the

aristocrats.[86] The shaming is evidenced by four textual evidence: (1) Public social

shaming. This is an act of social shaming involving the community (Neh 5:7 *the*

assembly). Public shaming effectively made the aristocrats sensitive to others' opinions

and their own pride in the social and religious ideals of the community.[87] (2) Shaming by

contrast (Neh 5:8). The contrast stemmed from the behavioral disparity between

Nehemiah and the aristocrats. The expression כְּדֵי בָנוּ וְגַם־אַתֶּם *as far as we were able, but*

you however expresses a disparity of moral conscience between the aristocrats and

Nehemiah. Ironically, Nehemiah's ongoing work of freeing Judean kinsfolk from

bondage was undone by the aristocrats. (3) Shaming by self-shaming (Neh 5:9). The

aristocrats' behavior is depicted as לֹא־טוֹב *not right*. As discussed in the Evaluative

section, the descriptor implies a morally justified behavior. The semantics of the

following rhetorical question also suggest that unjust (*not right*) behavior would lead to

shaming sanction (מֶחְרְפַּת *taunts*)[88] from hostile foreign neighbors. This posits the word

טוֹב as an honor–shame qualifier. The prophet Micah elaborates on the meaning of טוֹב—*to*

do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God (Micah 6:8). The

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[86] Bechtel, "Shame as Sanction," 55–56. Bechtel has introduced various type of shaming sanctions: formal judicial shaming; formal political shaming within warfare and diplomacy; and public, informal social shaming. public social shaming and political shaming are most relevant to this study.

[87] Bechtel, "Shame as Sanction," 55.

[88] See n40 in this chapter.

wisdom books pronounce that justice-doers shall be rewarded with personal honor (Ps 112:9, Prov 21:21).[89] Hence, negating טוֹב shifts the semantics to a notion of shame. With the use of an emphatic second plural pronoun, the memoir emphasizes the aristocrats' role as the actors of the *not right* behavior and thus frames the aristocrats' behavior as a self-shaming act. (4) Political shaming (Neh 5:9b). Nehemiah 5:9b depicts a more severe honor–shame concern. The rhetorical question has accentuated a negative correlation between יִרְאַת אֱלֹהֵינוּ *the fear of our God* and חֶרְפַּת הַגּוֹיִם אוֹיְבֵינוּ *the taunts from the nations our enemies*. The opposition's shaming not only led to the personal dishonor of those who engaged in the slave trade, the act also jeopardized God's honor in the sight of the nations.[90]

Nehemiah's symbolic act (Neh 5:13) constituted a further shaming act. The act of *shaking out* expresses a relational aversion with a moral nuance. The consequence of *shaking out* or *being shaken out* is the same. The verb in the jussive form יְנַעֵר הָאלֹהִים *may God shake out* expresses a wish of subjective distancing by God from those who failed to fulfill the promise. Whereas the passive participial phrase הָיֶה נָעוּר *may he be shaken out* connotes a separation of the shaken-out person from his possessions. The overall implication is a separation from God (and thereby from the religious community) and the land the person owned. The gesture also symbolizes a deprivation of the social status of the shaken-out person.

The semantics of Neh 5:8b suggests that the prevailing moral emotion of the aristocrats was *guilt*. Anthropological and biblical studies of emotional expressions

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[89] "They have freely scattered their gifts to the poor, their righteousness endures forever; their horn will be lifted high in honor" (Ps 112:9 NIV). "Whoever pursues righteousness and love finds life, prosperity, and honor" (Prov 21:21 NIV).

[90] Williamson, *Ezra, Nehemiah*, 240.

define guilt as the tension arising from the transgression of prohibition or boundary, and it focuses on the wrongdoings of the self.[91] When the aristocrats faced Nehemiah's rebuke, the memoir informs that they were silent and found no word to say (Neh 5:8b). The aristocrats' silence suggested the admission of their unethical behavior and the internalization of the charges brought against them. In this context, their silence witnessed their feeling of guilt.

Nehemiah

Several expressions of moral emotions are observed. Previous discussions have suggested that Nehemiah's spontaneous anger (Neh 5:6) was an expression of reflex emotion. In the context of the poor Judeans' outcry, Nehemiah's anger also connotes a moral nuance as the feeling was indignation over the oppression of the poor Judeans. Another dual-feeling expression is *the fear of our God/God* (Neh 5:9, 15). Nehemiah's reverence toward God has been shown as an affective attachment. As a moral emotion, his reverence was linked to the realm of honor-as-reputation and social prestige.[92] As Prov 22:4 suggests, honor is a result of fearing the Lord in humility.[93] The remaining moral emotions were attested to by Nehemiah's personal testimony. First, Nehemiah made a comparison between him and his predecessors in terms of collecting the governor's food allowance from the common people of the province. The former governors are depicted as exploiters as *they laid heavy burdens on the people* (Neh 5:15 הִכְבִּידוּ עַל־הָעָם). Contrarily, Nehemiah is depicted

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[91] Bechtel, "Shame as Sanction," 53; Kruger, "On Emotions," 219.

[92] See Laniak, *Shame and Honor*, 20 for the former and Jumper, "Honor and Shame," 57 for the latter.

[93] Murphy, *Proverbs*, 163. Murphy's translation: "The result of humility—the fear of the Lord: riches, honor, and life."

as a merciful governor as he forfeited his food allowance *because the service weighed heavily on this people* (Neh 5:18 כִּי־כָבְדָה הָעֲבֹדָה עַל־הָעָם הַזֶּה). The contrast between causing the heavy burden (כבד, *Hiphil*) and understanding that the burden weighed heavily (כבד, *Qal*) on the people denotes a moral emotion entailing social conscience.

Summary: Toward Ingroup Restoration and Cohesiveness

The identification of the emotions and relational evidence in Neh 5 shows that the emotions of the concerned groups are multifaceted and intertwined. Negative emotions are associated with group tensions, distress, indignation, grief, shame, and guilt. On the other hand, positive emotions are associated with personal and group commitment, fear of God, and honor. In their diverse contexts, the emotional categories evidence a transposition of the negative emotions of the individual concerned groups to the shared emotions of the others. For instance, the shame of the poor Judeans became the shame of the aristocrats, and the indignation of Nehemiah became the guilt of the aristocrats. On the other hand, some apparently negative emotions exhibit a formative function in transforming the individual group's negative emotions into positive emotions of the entire group. For instance, the negative emotions connoted in Nehemiah's indignation and symbolic act prompted the aristocrats to do the right thing, and the memoir depicts a congregational concord of *Amen* and *praise*. Three observations are noteworthy. The first is the influence of Nehemiah's emotions on the others. His emotions bridged the emotions of all concerned groups, reshaped the negative emotions, and catalyzed the formation and sharing of positive emotions in the entire group. The second was the positive influence of *the fear of God*. Its affective-attachment nature and moral nuances

drove the community to restore social conscience and the proper reverence of God. The third is the role of shame and shaming acts in group identity. Mirguet's insight provides a basic understanding of the operation of shame in ancient Israel, "in the group-oriented social structure, the main source of people's identity came from belonging to the group, and shame threatened people with being abandoned and cut off by the group."[94] Nehemiah 5 provides an illustration of Mirguet's concept. The distress call of the poor Judeans may be interpreted as a longing to resume a rightful social status by shame removal. The compromise of the aristocrats may be seen as a desire not to be marginalized, by counteracting shaming from the public and self. As a result, the group identity or social identity of the concerned groups was re-shaped by the negotiation of shame and honor. In sum, the memoir has demonstrated the social dimensions of emotions[95] in this internal conflict account. The renewed emotions reduce the inter-strata disparity and maximize communal concordance. In terms of social identity, the transformation of emotions signifies a transition of interpersonal identity to a positively perceived communal identity, hence a more salient ingroup social identity.

Categorization—Temporal Component

The temporal component concerns the continuity of life stories from the past and the maintenance of future perceived identity. These dimensions are exemplified by tracking textual evidence of shared life stories of the past and identifying traits that substantiate the future orientation of the unified community.

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[94] Mirguet, "Emotion," 76.
[95] Mirguet, "Emotion," 444.

Continuity

Nehemiah's confrontation and symbolic act function to evoke two particular life settings

of the Judeans in the past. The rhetorical question *should you not walk in the fear of our*

God (Neh 5:9), together with the antecedent charges of interest exaction and debt-slavery,

evoked the memory of the pronouncement of the laws related to the year of Jubilee,

particularly the laws concerning loans and debt-slaves involving Judean kinsfolk (Lev

25:35–43). Confronting the aristocrats with the motif *fear your God* recollected the

proper kinship relations God commanded the past generations to inaugurate. First,

stemming from the prohibition of loan interest was the good will to preserve a sustainable

living for all impoverished kinsfolk.

> Lev 25:36b   וְחֵי אָחִיךָ עִמָּךְ
>
> *so that your brother may* [*continue to*] *live among you*

Second, the prohibition of debt-slavery demanded a proper creditor-debtor relationship

with those who sold themselves as debt-slaves to the wealthy kinsfolk.

> Lev 25:43a   לֹא־תִרְדֶּה בוֹ בְּפָרֶךְ
>
> *you shall not rule over him with ruthlessness*

The word פָּרֶךְ *ruthlessness* can be traced to the book of Exodus where it is employed to

describe the ruthless administration the Egyptians imposed on the Israelites (Exod 1:13,

14).[96] It was a history of enslavement marking the shame and hardships caused by a

foreign oppressor. These recollections reminded the Judeans of the ideal social

accountability and communal relationship God had ordained for the Judean community.

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[96] The word פָּרֶךְ occurs six times in the Hebrew Bible in the form of בְּפָרֶךְ. The other occurrences are in Leviticus (25:43, 46, 53) and Ezekiel (34:4). The former concerns ruthless treatment of kinsfolk while the latter concerns ruthless leadership in the Israelite society.

Similarly, the symbolic act served to connect the present community to the memory of crossing the Red Sea in the exodus story. The word נָעַר *shake* occurs eleven times in the Hebrew Bible.[97] Besides Neh 5:13, Exod 14:27 and its echo Ps 136:15 are the only places where the verb denotes God's action.

Exod 14:27b	וַיְנַעֵר יְהוָה אֶת־מִצְרַיִם בְּתוֹךְ הַיָּם
	and the Lord shook off the Egyptians into the sea
Ps 136:15	וְנִעֵר פַּרְעֹה וְחֵילוֹ בְיַם־סוּף
	but he shook off Pharaoh and his army in the Sea of Reeds

The verb recollects the scene of how God crushed the Egyptian troops in the Red Sea when the Israelites fled from Egypt. Nehemiah's symbolic act conveyed a theological nuance of God's indignation against those who oppress others. Paradoxically, Nehemiah appropriated the divine judgment to the aristocrats whose ancestors were victims of oppression.

<div align="center">Maintenance</div>

Maintenance in the context of Neh 1–13 requires the aristocrats' acknowledgment and behavioral correction prior to identity renewal. Nehemiah 5:11–12 depicts the remedial actions. The things to be returned may be classified into three categories: the land (fields, vineyards, and olive orchards), the houses, and the interest (of the money loans, as grain, wine, and oil). Two observations can be drawn from this list: (1) The aristocrats returned not only the loan principal but also the loan pledge, which implied the entire loan was canceled immediately. Debt remission also meant manumission of the debt-salves who were taken as loan pledge. These acts were a mimicking of the Sabbath laws and the

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[97] Exod 14:27; Judg 12:20; Isa 33:9, 15; Isa 52:2; Ps 109:23; Ps 136:15; Job 38:13; Neh 5:13 (3 occurrences).

Jubilee laws (Sabbath: Exod 21:2; Deut 15:1–3, 12; Jubilee: Lev 25:39–41). (2)

Returning the land and house to a Judean debtor unconditionally mimicked the

observance of the Jubilee laws (Lev 25:23–28, 31).[98] Hence, the resolution of the internal

conflict inaugurated a reinterpretation of the Sabbath and Jubilee laws in the present

social setting. Through the aristocrats' positive response, the essence of the Sabbath and

Jubilee laws was reiterated as an immediate measure for the impoverished kinsfolk in the

community and a sustainable goal for the future.

Summary: Toward a Compassionate and Equal Community

The recollection of the Sabbath and Jubilee laws was in essence the retelling of the

Exodus story—the ancestors' enslavement, the redemptive act of God, and God's

demand for social justice and kinship preservation. By interconnecting the present Judean

community to the Exodus generation in the past and by reinterpreting the laws

concerning kinship relations, Neh 5 portrays a transformation of an economically and

socially stratified society to a more compassionate and equal community. The change

strengthened the ingroup cohesiveness within the Judean community and inaugurated an

expectation of the future perceived identity of the community.

Conclusions

Nehemiah 5 narrates a social conflict between groups at the two ends of the social

hierarchy. These groups differentiated themselves by their social status and wealth, and

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[98] The Levitical law differentiated the handling of walled houses and village houses (Lev 25:29–31) in the year of the Jubilee. Walled houses were not released if they were not redeemed before a full year had elapsed, whereas, village houses were not to be released. Based on the final shape of Ezra–Nehemiah, the internal conflict presumably occurred before the completion of the Jerusalem wall.

implicitly power. Textual evidence suggests that the poor Judeans, the aristocrats, and

Nehemiah were representations of the stakeholders of the internal conflict. Textual

analysis also suggests the operation of the SCT process. First, the cognitive component

and its nuances evidence the reorientation of the concerned groups toward a common

membership. The formative processes of ingroup identity can be discerned from the shift

in the contextual meaning of the group label הָעָם *the people*. Recalled from Neh 5:1, *the*

people refers to the poor Judeans who belonged to the group being oppressed. When it

comes to the closing of this conflict account in Neh 5:13, *the people* becomes the

aristocrats who once were the oppressors but now responded positively and

cooperatively. According to the social identity theories, both the poor Judeans and the

aristocrats exhibited the process of social mobility. *The people* of the lower stratum were

undergoing upward social mobility while *the people* of the upper stratum were

undergoing downward mobility. These two social processes minimized the economic

differences and maximized the similarities of the two strata's social status. Second, the

evaluative component and its nuances function in accentuating the formation of a

perceptual identity as the ingroup representation. Textual analysis has identified

depersonalization, self-stereotyping, and prototyping as the primary SCT processes that

influenced the aristocrats' behavior and ingroup membership unification. The memoir

depicts Nehemiah as the prototypical leader who directed the modeling of group

behavior, and the formation of group beliefs and communal identity. Third, the emotional

categories transform the complex emotional responses of the concerned groups into

concordance effectively. Textual analysis also demonstrates that the transformation was

rooted in observing *the reverence of God*, which also legitimated the shaping of the

Judean community's social conscience. Noteworthy is the order of Neh 5 in Neh 1–6.

Nehemiah 5 is placed within the external conflict account, following the opposition's

political shaming (Neh 4:1–3). Nehemiah's emphasis on upholding God's honor in the

sight of foreign nations was contextually significant in preventing further political

shaming from the antagonists. Fourth, the temporal component suffices to rekindle the

communal reflection on the authentic meaning of *brotherhood.* In sum, the intragroup

conflict signifies an identity adaptation process. Through the reshaping of communal

membership and redefinition of kinship relations, the Judean community was able to

acquire a positive social identity distinct by its common social conscience stemming from

the reverence of God as mandated in the Torah to God's convenantal people. As such, the

memoir depicts the restoration of the covenantal relationship between God and the

Judean community, rendering the members a self-perceived covenantal identity.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS

The literature review in the introduction to this thesis showed that scholars have examined Judean identity in Ezra–Nehemiah from ethnic, political or national, religious, and geographic perspectives, as well as roles and functions. Their focus is more on the identity negotiation between the Diaspora and the homeland community or identity legitimacy centered on the group of returnees. This study has employed a different approach by focusing on how the final text of Neh 1–6 depicts the Judean community's self-perceived identity through the lens of SIT/SCT. This study has argued that the final text of Neh 1–6 depicts the formation of the Judean community's self-perceived group identity in the wake of external and internal challenges, considering the contextual implications of the sociopolitical and socioeconomic polemics of Judah in the Persian period. This study has also identified ethnicity and group beliefs (norms, values, goals, ideology, and prayers) as the key identity markers that draw the group boundary between the Judean community and the opposition, and members within the Judean community. This study has accomplished the goal of identifying the Judean community led by Nehemiah as the depicted ingroup and the opposition led by the governors of the surrounding provinces as the depicted outgroup in the intergroup situation, and three social groups (Nehemiah as the prototypical representative, the poor Judeans, and the aristocrats) as the depicted concerned social groups within Judean community in the intragroup situation. Furthermore, this study concludes that the Nehemiah memoir in Neh

1–6 depicts the self-perceived communal identity of Judeans as the covenantal people of God in both intergroup and intragroup situations.

Social identity is fluid in the sense that it is dependent on the result of social comparison of the cognitive, evaluative, and emotional components and is highly contextual. A group's social identity may be challenged by the other groups or its members, who may threaten the group's social identity. Group members need to maintain and preserve the group's social identity to the extent that the perceived group identity is comparatively more salient or attractive than the other groups. In intergroup situations, the ingroup needs to be more favored by its members. In intragroup situations, normative members need to be more prototypical. The intergroup and intragroup analyses in this study have demonstrated this social comparison process. Chapter 3 has demonstrated that the Judean community sought ingroup salience by restoring the Jerusalem wall under the threats of external opposition, which led to the enhancement of the community's solidarity and restoration of their covenantal identity. Chapter 4 has exemplified a conceptual status movement of the social classes in the community's upper and lower hierarchies under the influence of Nehemiah, the prototypical leader. The resolution of the economic crisis signified the communal acknowledgment of the kinship relations and responsibilities set out by the Torah. Overall, this study has showcased the applicability of social identity theories in the OT biblical studies.

The Role of Honor and Shame in Neh 1–6

The intergroup and intragroup delineations have showcased that the cognitive and evaluative components are inextricably intertwined with the emotional component.

Among the emotional categories, moral emotions are influential in both group relations.

The significance of moral emotions lies in their implications of honor and shame

negotiation between the Judean group and the external opposition, and between the

concerned groups in different social strata. The shaming sanctions in both situations play

a similar role, i.e., negotiating the collective honor, either between the ingroup and

outgroup in the intergroup situation or within the Judean community in the intragroup

situation. Ultimately, it is a negotiation of group identity amid the complex sociopolitical

and socioeconomic situations in Persian Judah. Nehemiah 1–6 demonstrates that the

honor–shame reversal can only be inaugurated under the rubric of God's awe and might.

In this sense, the memoir not only narrates a story about restoring the honor of the

postexilic community in Persian Judah. Ultimately, it is the community's testimony of

restoring God's honor as a people in the land of God.

Living in Solidarity amid Liminality

To conclude this study, Victor Turner's liminality concept may provide a perspective of

the social situations depicted in Neh 1–6 from the lens of sociological liminality. Turner's

"liminal *personae*" are "threshold people" exhibiting ambiguous and indeterminate

attributes, and they are "neither here nor there; they are betwixt and between the positions

assigned and arrayed by law, custom, convention, and ceremonial."[1] These liminal people

have no status, property, rank, or role within a social hierarchy. The term *liminal people*

reminds us of the poor Judean group depicted in Neh 5. This group lived in a liminal

space and struggled to change their fate. The reconciliation among different social classes

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[1] Turner, *Ritual Process*, 95.

in the Judean society enabled a social transition for the poor Judean group to escape the liminal space and renew their status in the society.

In certain sense, the whole Judean community also lived in a liminal space before the communal identity was reconstructed and solidified. The preexilic identity of the Judeans was dissolved during the Babylonian deportations. The exilic identity was underscored by the people's landless and powerless status, and living as a minority. The returning of the exiles in the Persian period marked the milestone of group reunion. However, Ezra–Nehemiah underscores the power competitions internationally and internally, as well, the interference from the Persian dominion. Stemming from the historical trajectory, the various rebuilding works witnessed by Ezra–Nehemiah found their legitimated places in the liminal space of the Judean community. The rebuilding of the temple altar and the temple in the early Persian period signified the path toward rebuilding the society and communal identity of the Judeans. The Nehemiah memoir in Neh 1–6 takes the step further. The implication does not park at the wall restoration nor the resolution of inter-province conflict and internal crisis. The memoir witnesses the formation of a solidary identity of the Judean community within its liminal space, under the toleration of the political regime in the mid-Persian period.

Future Studies

The membership issue of Sanballat and Tobiah may be further explored. Textual evidence in the intergroup narrative has shown that Nehemiah 1–6 frames the antagonists as outsiders. For example, the memoir underscores these antagonists' non-Judean ethnicity and lacking the legitimated rights in the wall affair. The memoir also highlights

the antagonists' enmity throughout the narrative. Chapter 3 has also concluded that the antagonists did not share a common ingroup membership with the Judean community. Nevertheless, the memoir has left some room for further research on the exclusion of Sanballat and Tobiah from the Judean community. First, the memoir does not deny the kinship relations Sanballat and Tobiah's families had through the extended families (Neh 6:18). Second, the memoir does not demand a breaking of the extended kinship relations. Further research on Neh 13 may benefit the research.

Nehemiah 1–4, 6 and Neh 5 depict two groups of ingroup deviants. The negative deviants in the intergroup narrative entailed the prophetic circle. The non-conforming members in the intragroup narrative occupied the aristocratic hierarchy of the society. The nobility is also mentioned in the closing of the intergroup narrative. Noteworthy is the depiction of the dynamics between Nehemiah and the deviants. In the intergroup situation, Nehemiah's only reaction was asking God to *remember* the prophets in his personal prayer. Besides this, the memoir does not mention any prescriptive action concerning the deviants' behavior or membership, not even the colluding nobles. Contrarily, the intragroup account informs that Nehemiah dealt with the aristocrats publicly and the deviants responded positively to Nehemiah's rebuke and consented to Nehemiah's resolution. In both situations, the behavior of the social groups posed threats on the maintenance of the Judean community's solidarity and cohesiveness, but the counter-actions were different. This study has suggested that tolerating the colluding party was a contingent measure to minimize the impact on ingroup cohesiveness. Whereas the aristocrats' remedial action was the necessary immediate measure. Nevertheless, the toleration of the ingroup deviants may offer a diverse interpretation of

membership inclusion or exclusion. Taking Neh 1–6 as a single unit suggests that the communal identity of the Judeans was still in the formative phase. Future studies may consider the role of liturgical renewal and social reforms in shaping and maintaining the ingroup identity of the Judean community.

APPENDIX 1: שמע SHEMA-FORMULA AND GROUP DYNAMICS IN NEHEMIAH 2–4, 6

2:1–10		
2:5	וָאֹמַר לַמֶּלֶךְ אִם־עַל־הַמֶּלֶךְ טוֹב וְאִם־יִיטַב עַבְדְּךָ לְפָנֶיךָ אֲשֶׁר תִּשְׁלָחֵנִי אֶל־יְהוּדָה אֶל־עִיר קִבְרוֹת אֲבֹתַי וְאֶבְנֶנָּה *Then I answered the king, "If it pleases the king, and if your servant has found favor before you, may you send me to Judah, to the city of my ancestors' graves, so that I may rebuild it."*	Nehemiah's request of rebuilding the walls and gates
2:10aα	וַיִּשְׁמַע סַנְבַלַּט הַחֹרֹנִי וְטוֹבִיָּה הָעֶבֶד הָעַמֹּנִי *When Sanballat the Horonite and Tobiah the Ammonite official heard*	שמע-formula
2:10aβ	וַיֵּרַע לָהֶם רָעָה גְדֹלָה *it displeased them very greatly*	Opposition's reaction
2:11–20		
2:17b	לְכוּ וְנִבְנֶה אֶת־חוֹמַת יְרוּשָׁלַם וְלֹא־נִהְיֶה עוֹד חֶרְפָּה *Come and let us rebuild the wall of Jerusalem*	Nehemiah's call for action and communal response
2:18b	וַיֹּאמְרוּ נָקוּם *And they replied, "Let us arise and rebuild."*	
2:19aα	וַיִּשְׁמַע סַנְבַלַּט הַחֹרֹנִי וְטֹבִיָּה הָעֶבֶד הָעַמּוֹנִי וְגֶשֶׁם הָעַרְבִי *But when Sanballat the Horonite, Tobiah the Ammonite official and Geshem the Arabian heard*	שמע-formula
2:19aβ	וַיַּלְעִגוּ לָנוּ וַיִּבְזוּ עָלֵינוּ *they mocked us and ridiculed us*	Opposition's reaction
3:1–37 [3:1–32; 4:1–5 ET]		
3:1–32 3:33aα" [4:1aα" ET]	The rebuilding account; כִּי־אֲנַחְנוּ בוֹנִים אֶת־הַחוֹמָה *that we were rebuilding the wall*	Communal action[1]
3:33aα' [4:1aα' ET]	וַיְהִי כַּאֲשֶׁר שָׁמַע סַנְבַלַּט *When Sanballat heard*	שמע-formula
3:33aβ–b [4:1aβ–b ET]	וַיִּחַר לוֹ וַיִּכְעַס הַרְבֵּה וַיַּלְעֵג עַל־הַיְּהוּדִים *he was angry and became greatly enraged, and he mocked the Judeans*	Opposition's reaction
3:38—4:8 [4:6–14 ET]		
3:38a [4:6a ET]	וַנִּבְנֶה אֶת־הַחוֹמָה וַתִּקָּשֵׁר כָּל־הַחוֹמָה עַד־חֶצְיָהּ *So we rebuilt the wall and all the wall was joined together to its half height*	Communal action

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[1] Neh 3:5 mentions one exception, i.e., the Tekoite nobles resented to work under *their lords*. Nevertheless, the text does not mention any work interruption.

4:1aα [4:7aα ET]	וַיְהִי כַאֲשֶׁר שָׁמַע סַנְבַלַּט וְטוֹבִיָּה וְהָעַרְבִים וְהָעַמֹּנִים וְהָאַשְׁדּוֹדִים *When Sanballat and Tobiah and the Arabians and the Ammonites and the Ashdodites heard*	שׁמע-formula
4:1b–2 [4:7b–8 ET]	וַיִּחַר לָהֶם מְאֹד וַיִּקְשְׁרוּ כֻלָּם יַחְדָּו לָבוֹא לְהִלָּחֵם בִּירוּשָׁלִָם וְלַעֲשׂוֹת לוֹ תּוֹעָה *they were exceedingly angry, and they all plotted together to come to fight against Jerusalem and to bring about confusion against it*	Opposition's reaction
4:9–17 [4:15–23 ET]		
4:9aβ [4:15aβ ET]	כִּי־נוֹדַע לָנוּ וַיָּפֶר הָאֱלֹהִים אֶת־עֲצָתָם *that it had been known to us that God had frustrated their plan*	God's action for the community
4:9aα [4:15aα ET]	וַיְהִי כַאֲשֶׁר־שָׁמְעוּ אוֹיְבֵינוּ *When our enemies heard*	שׁמע-formula
4:9b [4:15b ET]	ונשוב [וַ][נָּשָׁב] כֻּלָּנוּ אֶל־הַחוֹמָה אִישׁ אֶל־מְלַאכְתּוֹ *and we all returned to the wall, each one to his work*	Communal action
6:1–9		
6:1aβ	כִּי בָנִיתִי אֶת־הַחוֹמָה וְלֹא־נוֹתַר בָּהּ פָּרֶץ *that I had rebuilt the wall and not a gap was left in it*	Communal action
6:1aα	וַיְהִי כַאֲשֶׁר נִשְׁמַע לְסַנְבַלַּט וְטוֹבִיָּה וּלְגֶשֶׁם הָעַרְבִי וּלְיֶתֶר אֹיְבֵינוּ *When it was heard by Sanballat and Tobiah, and by Geshem the Arabian and the rest of our enemies*	שׁמע-formula
6:2	וַיִּשְׁלַח סַנְבַלַּט וְגֶשֶׁם אֵלַי לֵאמֹר לְכָה וְנִוָּעֲדָה יַחְדָּו בַּכְּפִירִים בְּבִקְעַת אוֹנוֹ וְהֵמָּה חֹשְׁבִים לַעֲשׂוֹת לִי רָעָה *Sanballat and Geshem sent to me, saying, "Come, and let us meet together in Hakkephirim in the valley of Ono." But they were devising to do me evil.*	Opposition's reaction
6:15–19		
6:15	וַתִּשְׁלַם הַחוֹמָה בְּעֶשְׂרִים וַחֲמִשָּׁה לֶאֱלוּל לַחֲמִשִּׁים וּשְׁנַיִם יוֹם *And the wall was completed on the twenty-fifth of Elul, in fifty-two days.*	Rebuilding of the wall was completed
6:16aα	וַיְהִי כַאֲשֶׁר שָׁמְעוּ *When all our enemies heard*	שׁמע-formula
6:16aβ–b	וַיִּרְאוּ כָּל־הַגּוֹיִם אֲשֶׁר סְבִיבֹתֵינוּ וַיִּפְּלוּ מְאֹד בְּעֵינֵיהֶם וַיֵּדְעוּ כִּי מֵאֵת אֱלֹהֵינוּ נֶעֶשְׂתָה הַמְּלָאכָה הַזֹּאת *all the nations which round about us were afraid, and they fell greatly in their esteem for they had realized that this work had been accomplished by our God.*	Opposition's reaction

Group Categorization	
1. **Concerned Social Groups** (ethnic labels, proper names, group names, role labels)	(1) Ethnic labels/proper names (in the voice of Nehemiah the first-person narrator): עַמִּים *the peoples* (1:8); הַחֹרֹנִי *the Horonite* (2:10, 19); הָעַמֹּנִים/הָעַמֹּנִי *the Ammonite(s)* (2:10, 19; 3:35 [4:3 ET]; 4:1 [4:7 ET]); הָעַרְבִים/הָעַרְבִי *the Arabian(s)* (2:19; 4:1 [4:7 ET]; 6:1); הָאַשְׁדּוֹדִים *the Ashdodites* (4:1 [4:7 ET]); צָרֵינוּ *our adversaries* (4:5 [4:11 ET]); אוֹיְבֵינוּ *our enemies* (4:9 [4:15 ET]; 6:1, 16); גּוֹיִם *nations* (6:16) (2) Ethnic labels/proper names (in the voice of Sanballat and Tobiah, explicit or implied) בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל *sons of Israel* (2:10); הַיְּהוּדִים *the Judeans* (3:33, 34 [4:1, 2 ET]; 6:6); גּוֹיִם *nations* (6:6) (3) Judean group labels (some of them are also ethnic or role labels): בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל *sons of Israel* (1:6); עֲבָדֶיךָ *your servants* (1:6, 10, 11); נִדַּחֲכֶם *those you dispersed* (1:9); עַמֶּךָ *your people* (1:10); הַיְּהוּדִים *the Judeans* (2:16; 4:6 [4:12 ET]); כֹּהֲנִים *the priests* (2:16); חֹרִים *the nobles* (2:16; 4:8, 13 [4:14, 19 ET]); הַסְּגָנִים *the officials* (2:16, 2 occurrences; 4:8, 13 [4:14, 19 ET]); יֶתֶר עֹשֵׂה הַמְּלָאכָה *the rest who were to do the work* (2:16); הַבּוֹנִים *the builders* (3:37 [4:5 ET]; 4:11, 12 [4:17, 18 ET]); עָם *the people* (3:38 [4:6 ET]); יְהוּדָה *Judah* (4:4 [4:10 ET]); יֶתֶר הָעָם *the rest of the people* (4:8, 13 [4:14, 19 ET]); כָּל־בֵּית יְהוּדָה *the whole house of Judah* (4:10 [4:16 ET]); הַנְּבִיאָה וּלְיֶתֶר הַנְּבִיאִים *the prophetess and the rest of the prophets* (6:14); חֹרֵי יְהוּדָה *the nobles of Judah* (6:17)

	(4) Role labels (Judean or opposition): פַּחֲווֹת עֵבֶר הַנָּהָר *the governors of* [*the province*] *Beyond-the-River* (2:9); שָׂרֵי חַיִל וּפָרָשִׁים *army officers and cavalry* (2:9); הָעֶבֶד *the official* (2:10); חֵיל שֹׁמְרוֹן *the army of Samaria* (3:34 [4:2 ET]); הַשָּׂרִים *the officers* (4:10 [4:16 ET])
2.1 Cognitive Component	
2.1.1 Common Ancestry 2.1.1.1 Genealogical descent (bloodline relationship) 2.1.1.2 Kinship (kinship terms)	2.1.1.1 non-Israelite ethnic labels (2:10, 19); בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל *sons of Israel* (1:6; 2:10); עֲבָדֶיךָ *your servants* (1:6, 10, 11); נִדַּחֲכֶם *your dispersed ones* (1:9) 2.1.1.2 אַחַי *my brothers* (1:1; 4:17 [4:23 ET]); אֲבֹתַי *my ancestors* (2:3, 5); אֶחָיו *his* [*Sanballat's*] *fellows* (3:34 [4:2 ET]); עַל־אֲחֵיכֶם בְּנֵיכֶם וּבְנֹתֵיכֶם נְשֵׁיכֶם וּבָתֵּיכֶם *your kins, your sons, your daughters, your wives, your household* (4:8 [4:14 ET]); מִשְׁפָּחוֹת *clans* (4:7 [4:13 ET]); חָתָן *son-in-law* (6:18)
2.1.2 Plural Personal Pronouns and Plural Verbs	Pronouns: אַתֶּם *you* (2:17, 19, pl.), אֲנַחְנוּ *we* (2:17, 20); אֲנַחְנוּ *we* (3:33 [4:1 ET]), הֵם/הֵמָּה *they* (3:34, 35 [4:2, 3 ET]); אֲנַחְנוּ *we* (4:4, 13, 15 [4:10, 19, 21 ET]) Verbs (Judean community): וְנִבְנֶה *let us rebuild* (2:17b); נָקוּם וּבָנִינוּ *let us arise and rebuild* (2:18b); וַנִּבְנֶה *we rebuilt* (3:28 [4:6 ET]); וַנִּתְפַּלֵּל *we prayed* (4:3a [4:9a ET]); [וַ][נָּשָׁב] *we returned* [*to work*] (4:9 [4:15 ET]); וַיְחַזְּקוּ *they were strengthened* (2:18b) Verbs (Opposition): וַיַּלְעִגוּ *they mocked*, וַיִּבְזוּ *they ridiculed* (2:19a); וַיִּקְשְׁרוּ *they plotted* (4:2 [4:8 ET]); נָבוֹא *we shall come*, וַהֲרַגְנוּ *kill*, וְהִשְׁבַּתְנוּ *put an end* (4:5 [4:11 ET]); שָׁמְעוּ *they had heard* (4:9 [4:15 ET], 6:16); וַיִּשְׁלַח *they sent* (6:2); וַיִּרְאוּ *they were afraid*, וַיִּפְּלוּ *they fell*, וַיֵּדְעוּ *they realized* (6:16)

2.1.3 Group Beliefs
2.1.3.1 Group norms (prescribed standards, imperative statement)
2.1.3.2 Group values (formal or informal)
 	
2.1.3.3 Group goals (immediate or future attainment)
	2.1.3.1 rebuild the wall of Jerusalem
	
	2.1.3.2 communal cooperation
	          endurance as a group
	          God's agency and Trust in God
	2.1.3.3 restoring Jerusalem and gathering the exilic Judeans by first restoring the wall

2.1.3.4 Group ideology (commonality shared by ingroup members)	2.1.3.4 restoring the wall restored the self-esteem and welfare of Judeans
2.1.3.5 Prayers	2.1.3.5 formative role (1:5–11a; 2:4b) preservative role (3:36–37 [4:4–5 ET]; 4:3a [4:9a]; 6:9b, 14)
2.1.4 Boundaries	ethnicity, group beliefs
2.2 Evaluative Component	
2.2.1 Differentiation 2.2.1.1 *Us* and *Them* (ingroup favoritism, outgroup discrimination)	2.2.1.1 וְלָכֶם . . . אֲנַחְנוּ עֲבָדָיו *we, his servants . . . but for you* (2:20aβ–b)
2.2.1.2 Prototypicality (ingroup normative representation)	2.2.1.2 Nehemiah as the ingroup prototype ingroup deviance (6:10–19)
2.2.1.3 Stereotyping (outgroup attitude, feeling, and behavior homogeneity)	2.2.1.3 undifferentiable them (2:10,19; 3:33, 35 [4:1, 3 ET]; 4:1, 9 [4:7, 15 ET]; 6:1, 16) hostile them – emotional: רעע *displease* (2:10), חרה *angry* (3:33 [4:1 ET]); 4:1 [4:7 ET]), כָּעַס *be enraged* (3:33 [4:1 ET]) – behavioral: לָעַג *mock* (2:19, 3:33 [4:1 ET]), בָּזָה *ridicule* (2:19), הָרַג *kill* (4:5 [4:11 ET]), חָשַׁב רָעָה *devise evil* (6:2)
2.2.2 Negative Evaluation (e.g., rhetoric, curse language)	imprecatory prayer (3:36–37 [4:4–5 ET]) discrediting the opposition (6:8) demoralizing the opposition (6:16a)
2.2.3 Positive Evaluation (ingroup assertion)	exclusive claim of legitimate rights (Neh 2:20) הַמְּלָאכָה *the work* (2:16; 4:5, 10, 11, 13, 15, 16 [4:11, 6, 17, 19, 21, 22 ET]; 6:3, 9, 16) opposition's intimidation ירא (4:8 [4:14 ET])
2.3 Emotional Component	
2.3.1 Expression of Group Awareness and Social Cohesion	common fate: בְּרָעָה גְדֹלָה *great trouble* (1:3); הָרָעָה *the trouble*, חֶרְפָּה *disgrace* (2:17a, b) volitional verbs: לְכוּ וְנִבְנֶה *come and let us rebuild* (2:17b); נָקוּם וּבָנִינוּ *let us arise and rebuild* (2:18bα) short prayers and declarations of trust (3:36a [4:4a ET]; 4:3a, 8b, 9a, 14b [4:9a, 14b, 15a, 20b ET])
2.3.2 Expression of Social Conflict	verbal insults (2:19aβ; 3:33b [4:1b ET]); hostile threats (4:5aβ, 6bβ [4:11aβ, 12bβ ET]); false accusation (6:12bα); ill plots (4:2 [4:8 ET], 6:2b)
2.3.3 Expression of Feelings 2.3.3.1 Outgroup a. Reflex emotions	2.3.3.1 a. וַיֵּרַע רָעָה *greatly displeased* (2:10); וַיִּחַר וַיִּכְעַס הַרְבֵּה *angry and greatly enraged* (3:33 [4:1 ET]); וַיִּחַר לָהֶם מְאֹד *exceedingly angry* (4:1 [4:7 ET]); וַיִּרְאוּ *were afraid* (6:16)
b. Affective-aversions	b. humiliating rhetoric (2:19, 3:33–35 [4:1–3 ET])

	first common plural cohortatives וְנִוָּעֲדָה *let us meet*, וְנִוָּעֲצָה יַחְדָּו *let us take counsel together* (6:2, 7)
c. Moral emotions	c. shame-words and shaming rhetoric
	– וַיַּלְעִגוּ *they mocked*, וַיִּבְזוּ *they ridiculed* (2:19);
	– וַיַּלְעֵג *he mocked*, הָאֲמֵלָלִים *the feeble* [*Judeans*] (3:33–35 [4:1–2 ET]);
	– וְהֵמָּה שְׂרוּפוֹת הָאֲבָנִים מֵעֲרֵמוֹת *heaps of rubbles*, *they are burned*;
	– תּוֹעָה [*to bring about*] *confusion* (4:2 [4:8 ET]);
	– מְיָרְאִים *to intimidate*, יִרְפּוּ יְדֵיהֶם *they will drop out of hands* (Neh 6:9a);
	– intimidating Nehemiah (6:2, 13, 14, 19)
2.3.3.2 Ingroup	2.3.3.2
a. Affective-attachments	a. prayers (3:36a [4:4a ET], 4:3a [4.9a ET]); descriptive (4:8 [4:14 ET])
	commitment (2:12aβ; 4:8bβ [4:14 bβ ET])
	declaration of trust (2:20a; 4:14b [4:20b ET])
b. Reflex emotions	b. distress: prayers in 6:9b, 14
c. Moral emotions	c. honor-words and phrase
	– טוֹבָה *welfare* (2:10b);
	– לֹא־נִהְיֶה עוֹד חֶרְפָּה *no longer be an object of disgrace* (2:17b);
	– טוֹבָה *goodness* (2:18bβ);
	– יַצְלִיחַ *make success* (2:20, *Hiphil*)
2.4 Temporal Component	
2.4.1 Continuity	retelling of the first wall (1 Kgs 3:1, 9:15)
	retelling of the exodus stories/זכר *remember*-formula (4:8b [4:14b ET] *great and awesome*; 1:8–9 and Deut 30:1–5)
2.4.2 Maintenance	reinterpretation of Judean group identity

Group Categorization	
1. Concerned Social Groups (group names, role labels)	הַיְּהוּדִים *the Judeans* (Neh 5:1, 8, 17); הָעָם וּנְשֵׁיהֶם *the people and their wives* (5:1), בָּנֵינוּ וּבְנֹתֵינוּ *our sons and our daughters* (5:2, 5), בָּנֵינוּ *our sons* (5:5), מִבְּנֹתֵינוּ *some of our daughters* (5:5), עֲבָדִים *slaves* (5:5); אֲחֵיהֶם הַיְּהוּדִים *their Judean brothers* (5:1), אַחֵינוּ *our brothers* (5:5), בְּנֵיהֶם *their sons* (5:5); אֲחֵרִים *others* (5:5); הַחֹרִים *the nobles* (5:7), הַסְּגָנִים *the officials* (5:7), הָעָם *the people* (5:13); קְהִלָּה גְדוֹלָה *a large assembly* (5:7), כָּל־הַקָּהָל *the entire assembly* (5:13); בְּאָחִיו *his brothers* (5:7), אַחֵינוּ הַיְּהוּדִים *our Judean brothers* (5:8), אֲחֵיכֶם *your brothers* (5:8); הַגּוֹיִם *the nations* (5:8, 17), הַגּוֹיִם אוֹיְבֵינוּ *the nations, our enemies* (5:9); אַחַי *my brothers* (5:10, 14), נְעָרַי *my servants* (5:10, 16); הַכֹּהֲנִים *the priests* (5:12); הָעָם *the people* (5:15, 2 occurrences); פֶּחָם *their governor* (5:14); הַפֶּחָה *the governor* (5:14, 18); הַפַּחוֹת הָרִאשֹׁנִים *former governors* (5:15); נַעֲרֵיהֶם *their servants* (5:15); וְהַיְּהוּדִים וְהַסְּגָנִים *the Judeans and the officials* (5:17); הָעָם הַזֶּה *this people* (5:18, 19)
2.1 Cognitive Component	
2.1.1 Common Ancestry 2.1.1.1 Genealogical descent (bloodline relationship) 2.1.1.2 Kinship (kinship terms)	2.1.1.1 כִּבְשַׂר אַחֵינוּ בְּשָׂרֵנוּ כִּבְנֵיהֶם בָּנֵינוּ *our flesh is same as our brothers, our sons as their sons* (5:5) 2.1.1.2 אֲחֵיהֶם הַיְּהוּדִים *their Judean brothers,our brothers* אַחֵינוּ (5:1, 5); אִישׁ־בְּאָחִיו *your own brothers* (5:7 lit. *each of his brother*); אַחֵינוּ הַיְּהוּדִים *our Judean brothers* (5:8); אֲחֵיכֶם *your brothers* (5:8)
2.1.2 Plural Personal Pronouns and Plural Verbs	Pronouns אֲנַחְנוּ *we* (5:2, 3, 5, 8); אַתֶּם *you* (5:7, 8, 9, 11) Verbs לָוִינוּ *we have borrowed* (5:4); קָנִינוּ *we are buying back* (5:8); נֹשִׁאים *exacting interest* (5:7), תִּמְכְּרוּ *you are selling* (5:8);

	נַעַזְבָה־נָא *let us forfeit* (5:10); נָשִׁיב *we will give back*, לֹא נְבַקֵּשׁ *we will not demand*, נַעֲשֶׂה *we will do* (5:12)
2.1.3 Group Beliefs 2.1.3.1 Group norms (prescribed standards, imperative statement) 2.1.3.2 Group values (formal or informal) 2.1.3.3 Group goals (immediate or future attainment) 2.1.3.4 Group ideology (commonality shared by group members)	2.1.3.1 נַעֲזָבָה *let us forfeit* (5:10); הָשִׁיבוּ נָא *Give back now* (5:11) 2.1.3.2 social justice (5:1 *outcry*); יִרְאַת אֱלֹהֵינוּ *the fear of our God* (5:9 bα) 2.1.3.3 immediate: alleviating the financial burden of the poor Judeans future: making living sustainable for the economically disadvantaged Judeans 2.1.3.4 brotherhood; preserving God's honor
2.1.4 Boundaries (e.g., social, ethnic)	social status differentials
2.2 Evaluative Component	
2.2.1 Differentiation 2.2.1.1 *Us* and *Them* (self-favoritism) 2.2.1.2 Prototypicality (normative representation) 2.2.1.3 Intragroup stereotyping (attitudinal and behavioral conformity)	2.2.1.1 membership legitimacy 2.2.1.2 Nehemiah as the prototypical leader 2.2.1.3 נַעֲשֶׂה כַּאֲשֶׁר אַתָּה *we will do as you say* (5:12)
2.2.2 Negative Evaluation (e.g., rhetoric)	demoralizing the aristocrats (5:6–8) disapproving of the aristocrats (5:9) cursing the noncompliant (5:13)
2.2.3 Positive Evaluation (assertion, attitudinal and behavioral cooperation)	we have done our best (5:8) Amen, praise, and cooperation (5:13b)
2.3 Emotional Component	
2.3.1 Awareness of Being a Group	liturgical response (5:13) common fate: חֶרְפַּת *taunts* (5:9bβ) common enemies: אוֹיְבֵינוּ *our enemies* (5:9bβ) cohortatives: נַעֲזָבָה *let us forfeit* (5:10), נַעֲשֶׂה *we will do as you say* (5:12)
2.3.2 Expression of Social Conflict 2.3.2.1 Between social strata 2.3.2.2 Within social stratum	2.3.2.1 צְעָקָה גְדוֹלָה אֶל־אֲחֵיהֶם הַיְּהוּדִים *great outcry against their Judean brothers* (5:1) 2.3.2.2 וָאָרִיבָה אֶת־אֶת־הַחֹרִים וְאֶת־הַסְּגָנִים *I contended with the nobles and officials* (5:7)
2.3.2 Expression of Feelings 2.3.2.1 Reflex emotions 2.3.2.2 Affective-attachments	2.3.2.1 וַיִּחַר לִי מְאֹד *it angered me extremely* (5:6) 2.3.2.2 Aristocrats — נָשִׁיב וּמֵהֶם לֹא נְבַקֵּשׁ *we will give back and we will demand nothing* (5:12a);

	– וַיֹּאמְרוּ כָל־הַקָּהָל אָמֵן *the entire assembly answered, "Amen."* (5:13b)
	Nehemiah
	– כְּדֵי בָנוּ *as far as we were able* (5:8);
	– עַל־הָעָם הַזֶּה *for this people* (5:19);
	– יִרְאַת אֱלֹהֵינוּ *the fear of our God* (5:9); יִרְאַת אֱלֹהִים *the fear of God* (5:15)
2.3.2.3 Moral emotions a. Poor Judeans	2.3.2.3 a. וְנִקְחָה דָגָן וְנֹאכְלָה וְנִחְיֶה *we must get grain so that we may eat and live* (5:2b); אֲנַחְנוּ כֹבְשִׁים *we are forcing,* נִכְבָּשׁוֹת *they have been violated* (5:5b); וְאֵין לְאֵל יָדֵנוּ *we are powerless* (5:5b)
b. Aristocrats	b. Public social shaming (5:7); Shaming by contrast (5:8); Shaming by self-shaming (5:9); Political shaming (5:9b); Shaming by symbolic act (5:13); Feeling of guilt (5:8b)
c. Nehemiah	c. spontaneous anger (5:6); בְּיִרְאַת אֱלֹהֵינוּ *the fear of our God* (5:9); יִרְאַת אֱלֹהִים *the fear of God* (5:15); הִכְבִּידוּ עַל־הָעָם *they laid heavy burdens on the people* (5:15) vs. כִּי־כָבְדָה הָעֲבֹדָה עַל־הָעָם הַזֶּה *because the service weighed heavily on this people* (5:18)
2.4 Temporal Component	
2.4.1 Continuity	recollecting the Jubilee laws concerning loans and debt-slaves (Lev 25:35–43) recollecting the exodus story on crossing the Red Sea (Exod 14:27; Ps 136:15)
2.4.2 Maintenance	reinterpreting the Sabbath and Jubilee laws (Exod 21:2; Deut 15:1–3, 12; Lev 25:23–28, 31, 39–41)

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