Identity Integration, Psychological Coherence and Identity Threat:
Linking Identity Process Theory and Notions of Integration

Catherine E. Amiot
Université du Québec à Montréal
Rusi Jaspal
De Montfort University

We currently live in increasingly diversified and fluctuating societies. Organisation changes, climate changes, and immigration are prime examples. With respect to immigration specifically, approximately 175 million people living outside their country of birth in 2002 (United Nations, 2002). Individuals are also more likely than they were to change jobs and careers, with an estimated average of 11 changes in jobs in one career (Bureau of Labor Statistics, US Department of Labor, 2010). Changes in social networks and in family structure are also noticeable, with approximately 40% of individuals likely to divorce in Canada (Statistics Canada, 2006). Moreover, scholars have observed changes in patterns of social connectivity among US citizens; for instance, the percentage of survey respondents who reported having a friend, rather than a family member, as a close confidant has decreased from 73% to 51% over two decades (McPherson, Smith-Lovin & Brashears, 2006). Such changes in social networks and family structure typically have implications for self and identity, given the associated accentuation or attenuation of particular elements of the self-concept. At a more macroscopic level, many countries – such as Egypt and Libya – are also currently experiencing important changes in their political structure (BBC, 2011; Reuters, 2011), and recent campaigns worldwide (e.g., Occupy Wall Street Movement) suggest a deep questioning of – and even an upsurge against – the current economic system (see also de la Sablonnière & Usborne, this volume). In the present chapter, we raise the following questions: How do individuals make sense of these changes and come to develop a sense of identification with new social groups (e.g., organizational groups, political groups, friendship groups, family)? As these new identifications develop over time, what needs and principles will these new groups fulfill for individual group members? How do individuals negotiate their different and potentially conflicting group memberships?

We argue in this chapter that such life transitions and social changes – originally external to people – have repercussions for how people perceive their own sense of self. Although humans are active agents with a sense of free will who can actively block some of these external influences (Baumeister, 2008) and choose what dimensions to display and play up or down, these actions and choices are also constrained by powerful situational forces (Zimbardo, 2007). Individuals realise fully the extent of these external constraints when they experience situations over which they have little or not control, such as being a victim of discrimination or when feeling that some of the dimensions of themselves are socially devalued (Crocker & Major, 1989), and that their integrity is compromised.

The goal of the current chapter is threefold, namely: (i) to explain how individuals, in times of change, come to integrate new identities intra-individually in their sense of self and maintain a feeling of psychological coherence in this process; (ii) to highlight how the identity principles proposed by identity process theory (IPT) come into play throughout this change process and how the satisfaction of these principles may actually facilitate the integration of new and multiple social identities in the self; and (iii) to identify some factors that may actively block the integration of these identities, namely feelings of identity threat and the social devaluation of certain identities relative to others. We base ourselves on different strands of research to make these points, and more specifically, the cognitive-developmental model of social identity integration (CDMSII; Amiot, de la Sablonnière, Terry, & Smith, 2007), IPT (Breakwell, 1986), and the concept of psychological coherence (Jaspal & Cinnirella, 2010). Throughout the chapter, an implicit goal is to build bridges between these different social psychological theories as they are each relevant to addressing these issues, and also provide a broad and integrative framework to understand how diversity can be reconciled subjectively and intra-individually – within each individual.

Defining the Notions of Identity Integration and Psychological Coherence

Let us start first by defining what we mean by the terms identity integration and psychological coherence.

Identity integration. According to the CDMSII, when multiple identities become integrated in the self, they are organized within the global self-structure such that they can be simultaneously important to the overall self-concept. When this occurs, connections and links are established between these different self-components so that they do not feel fragmented (e.g., Donahue, Robins, Roberts, & John, 1993). As a consequence, the self feels coherent rather than conflicted (Amiot, de la Sablonnière, et al., 2007). Hence, identity integration should have positive consequences for psychological well-being. Because the integration of one's identities enables the individual to draw similarities between the different self-defining characteristics, identity integration allows for a more coherent vision of the self, where differences between one's different identities are considered complimentary rather than conflicting (e.g., Amiot, de la Sablonnière, et al., 2007; Benet-Martinez, Leu, Lee, & Morris, 2002; Downie, Koestner, ElGeledi, & Cree, 2004; Roccas & Brewer, 2002).

This view of identity integration emphasises the cognitive nature of the self and in this sense, it is directly based on principles from the social cognition literature. In the social cognition literature, researchers view the self as a multifaceted cognitive structure (Markus, 1977; Markus & Wurf, 1987), that can be defined as ''a collection of at least semi-related and highly domain-specific knowledge structures'' (Fiske & Taylor, 1991, p. 182). While social identities deal specifically with group memberships as they derive from our memberships to social groups (Tajfel, 1981), they can also be conceived as one specific type of self-component composing the global self (Deaux, 1991). Because the same individual can belong to a wide variety of groups (Tajfel & Turner, 1979, 1986), the self-concept is hence composed of multiple social identities. But how is this multiplicity represented and organised cognitively?

Self-schemas are a useful concept to illustrate how the self is organized cognitively, and how one's multiple social identities, as specific self-components, are organized within the self. Self-schemas are hierarchical knowledge structures that organize and guide the processing of self-relevant information specifically (Markus, 1977). In terms of structure, self-schemas are organized hierarchically such that the more specific elements are subsumed under more inclusive ones (Kihlstrom & Cantor, 1994; Marsh & Shavelson, 1985). We argue that both self-schemas and social identities – because they are particular cognitive elements – are also capable of both short-term situational activation and long-term structural changes (Amiot, de la Sablonnière, et al., 2007;

Markus & Kunda, 1986; Smith, 1996). Concretely, this means that the social context may activate the reliance on one particular group membership – the one that the most cognitively salient and functional in a particular context (in line with self-categorisation principles: Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher, & Wetherell, 1987), and also that as these situational activations accumulate over time, some structural changes will take place in the self-concept such that a new social identity may become a recurrent part of the self (Markus & Wurf, 1987). To understand how individuals change when undergoing important life transitions and social changes, we focus on the process of intra-individual changes in social identities – that is, how the configuration and the structure of individuals' multiple social identities undergoes significant change over time (e.g., Cervone, 2005). Accounting for this intra-individual process is a main contribution of the CDMSII (Amiot, de la Sablonnière, et al., 2007).

      Psychological coherence. Like identity integration, the notion of psychological coherence captures how individuals feel subjectively about the different elements that define who they are as a person. At its most basis level, psychological coherence refers to the individual's need to perceive compatibility and coherence between *interconnected* self-aspects or elements of the identity structure (Jaspal & Cinnirella, 2010). Human beings have multiple identities; multiple identification is the norm, rather than the exception. Hence, the individual is typically presented with a vast amount of information, some of which may be contradictory and incompatible, and which becomes subject to the psychological process of assimilation-accommodation and evaluation (Breakwell, 2001). Two or more identity elements may be thought of as ''interconnected'' if dominant (i.e., mainstream) social representations construct them as having implications for one another.

      Drawing upon IPT, proponents of psychological coherence have hypothesised that individuals are psychologically motivated to enhance feelings of compatibility and coherence between these elements of themselves, especially in contexts of multiple identification with interconnected identity elements (i.e., either group-level elements such as social identities or individual-level traits; Jaspal & Cinnirella, 2010; Jaspal & Coyle, 2009; Jaspal & Siraj, 2011). If the need for psychological coherence is not fulfilled, identity becomes susceptible to threat, inducing the individual to engage in strategies to counteract the threat. In this sense, psychological coherence can be seen as an additional identity principle in the IPT framework.

      Importantly, the perceived coherence among one's identities is both fluid and context-dependent, and it is very much subjective: it resides ''in the eye of the perceiver and [is] not some objective quality of the identities under scrutiny'' (Jaspal & Cinnirella, 2010, p. 866). In a recent study on the management of national and religious identities among British South Asians (Jaspal, 2011), British Pakistanis subjectively perceived far greater connectedness and less coherence between their national and religious identities than British Indians.

      Social psychologists have also employed the concept of psychological coherence in order to understand how individuals subjectively personalise and manage multiple (and potentially incompatible) social representations. Social representations can be defined in terms of systems of meaning, which can provide explanations and orientations for the surrounding social world (Moscovici, 1988). Social representations are often associated with particular social group memberships. A given social group has its own ''system of meaning'' and provide its members with access to these systems. The construct of psychological coherence readily acknowledges the influence of prevailing social representations concerning identities, their qualitative nature and their compatibility. For instance, British Muslim gay men may fear ''coming out'', that is, publicly disclosing membership in the categories ''Muslim'' and ''gay'', due to their awareness of negative social representations of homosexuality within religious circles (Jaspal & Siraj, 2011).

Although psychological coherence has been considered an identity principle (Jaspal & Cinnirella, 2010), some IPT researchers have questioned the distinction between the psychological coherence and continuity principles of identity (e.g. Vignoles, 2011; Breakwell, this volume). While the continuity principle is concerned with maintaining a temporal connection between past, present and future and is, thus, diachronic (Breakwell, 1986), the psychological coherence principle is largely synchronic as it requires feelings of identity compatibility and coherence at a particular point in time (Jaspal & Cinnirella, 2012). Thus, it seems that psychological coherence may be particularly relevant to the present discussion of identity compatibility and identity integration, although – and as we elaborate below – it is fully acknowledged that other identity principles are likely, over time, to become active during the process of identity integration.

Supporting the utility of accounting specifically for the principle of psychological coherence and for its synchronic nature, Jaspal and Cinnirella (2010) found that British Muslim gay men perceived their religious and sexual identities as ''pre-existing identities'', which were simultaneously primordial in the self-concept at a point in time. Consequently, the threat to identity entailed by the combination of these identities was due to *synchronic* incompatibility. In another study, Jaspal and Cinnirella (2012) discuss threats to identity which result from British Muslim gay men's incipient experiences in gay affirmative social contexts. From a diachronic perspective, starting to be involved in gay space is likely to threaten identity continuity. Yet, even if the individual is successful in overcoming this threat to continuity, the synchronic threat may remain, since the individual is still required to reconcile the two conflicting identities at a particular point in time. In short, we need to account for both the principles of continuity and of psychological coherence, two phenomenologically distinct principles, in order to fully capture the rich and complex identity implications of threats to both of these principles.

Contrasting the notions of identity integration and psychological coherence. The identity integration and psychological coherence concepts share a number of similarities but also some conceptual differences. In terms of similarities, these concepts both focus on the subjective representation of one's multiple self-elements – such as the identities and characteristics that apply to oneself. Both the notions of identity integration and psychological coherence also focus on the notion of cognitive links and the importance of finding ways to ''tie'' and to cognitively bind one's different identities and self-components (Amiot, de la Sablonnière et al., 2007). In this sense, both concepts share the assumption that individuals are motivated to reach a state of psychological comfort that is devoid of tensions and intra-individual conflict (see also Festinger, 1957). Finally, both concepts share – at least implicitly – the idea that the social context (e.g., social representations) may influence the individuals' identity configuration, or at the very least, prompt them to position themselves with regards to this environment and decide – if choice is indeed an option – which identity to play up or play down.

In terms of the differences between these concepts, social identity integration focuses on the integration of social identities specifically, whereas psychological coherence applies to a broader range of self-components, including personal and social identities as well as individual traits. Identity integration is mainly cognitive, based on social cognition principles, and assumes a hierarchical structure to the self-concept. In contrast, psychological coherence is a subjective notion that applies to different components of the self, and which puts less emphasis on the cognitive organisation and the structure of these elements per se. Finally, while the psychological coherence principle emphasises the recurrent and chronic role of identity threat in the process of binding and linking one's different self-elements (Jaspal & Cinnirella, 2010, 2012), the cognitive-developmental model of social identity integration – as we will be discussing below – recognises the role that threat

plays in the identity integration process (e.g., Amiot, Terry, & McKimmie, 2012; Amiot, Terry, & Callan, 2007) while also accounting for other antecedents that can facilitate social identity integration – such as coping and social support (e.g., Amiot, Terry, Callan, & Jimmieson, 2006; Amiot, Terry, Wirawan, & Grice, 2010). In the current chapter, our goal is to bring together the identity integration, psychological coherence, and identity principles concepts together. Within this theoretical integration, we seek to discuss: (i) when the different identity principles of self-esteem, continuity, self-efficacy, distinctiveness, meaning, belonging and coherence will become activated as a new social identity is acquired over time; and (ii) how social representations and subjective perceptions associated with relevant social groups (e.g., identity threat) may impinge upon identity integration.

Stages and Mechanisms through which Identities Become Integrated over Time

How do one's multiple identities become integrated in people's sense of self exactly, such that the self feels coherent rather than in conflict? In the CDMSII, we propose four stages of change by which one's different social identities become integrated over time (Amiot, de la Sablonnière, et al., 2007). At each stage, we also outline how the six basic principles of distinctiveness, continuity, self-esteem, self-efficacy, meaning, belonging and coherence may come into play and become particularly salient (Breakwell, 1986; Vignoles et al., 2002). We propose that, if satisfied, these principles will facilitate the integration of one's different identities and will allow the person to move forward in the identity integration process. By doing so, we also wish to highlight how each principle may become particularly relevant to satisfy at a point in time, and to bring a temporal and dynamic perspective to the process of need satisfaction in group settings.

The role of needs and principles. In prior research, we found that the satisfaction of the needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness – needs that are fundamental according to self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 2000) – predicted more active forms of coping and increased identification with new social groups over time (Amiot et al., 2010). Herein, we argue that other types of principles – those proposed by Breakwell (1986), Jaspal and Cinnirella (2010) and by Vignoles et al. (2002) – may also fuel the development of new social identities. More broadly, we propose that the extent to which one's needs and principles are satisfied in a particular group context will not only facilitate the recognition, acceptance, and endorsement of one's new identity, but it will provide the psychological impetus, the social resources, and the energy that are necessary to make the necessary adjustment to one's sense of self and to derive well-being in this process.

Stages of change. Based on developmental principles (e.g., Harter, 1999), the first stage proposed by the CDMSII and involved in the identity integration process takes place as individuals are planning to join a new social group in the future. During this *anticipatory categorisation stage*, we propose that a process of self-anchoring operates, where the individual about to join a new social group will project his or her own personal characteristics onto this novel social ingroup (e.g., Otten & Wentura, 2001). For example, a British Muslim gay man planning on frequenting ''gay space'' such as gay nightclubs could anticipate that some of his personal characteristics also apply to other non-Muslim British gay men who habitually frequent this social space (Jaspal & Siraj, 2011). Seeing gayness as a trait of his own personal identity, the British Muslim gay men may anticipate this commonality in self-definition between himself and other people in ''gay space''. This projection and self-anchoring process allows one to find similarities between one's personal identity and the new social identity to be integrated. As another example, we could think of an Australian immigrant preparing to arrive in Canada. At the anticipatory categorisation stage – just before arriving in her new country – she may anticipate that some of her own characteristics will also apply to Canadians

in general. Being herself an extraverted and sociable person, she could foresee that Canadians will also be extraverted.

It is likely that the self-anchoring process – which is central to anticipatory categorisation – will enhance the *continuity* principle of identity (Sani, 2008), given that the psychological projection of existing traits and characteristics onto the novel identity can form a psychological bridge between past, present and future. The establishment of cognitive links between a pre-existing social identity and a novel social group in which the individual aspires to acquire membership establishes a temporal bridge. Moreover, it is easy to see how the *belonging* principle may acquire psychological salience at this stage, since the individual is able to foresee acceptance and inclusion in the social group, in which they anticipate membership. These feelings of belonging are facilitated by the process of self-anchoring, given that the individual perceives a ''fit'' between existing traits and those regarded as being prevalent in the novel social group, which will provide entry in the social group. Clearly, this requires engagement with social representations of the ''necessary'' self-aspects for membership, acceptance and inclusion in the group (Simon, 2004).

The second stage of social identity integration refers to *categorisation*. At this point, group members are in the process of actually joining their new social group. The contact with this new group also leads the newcomer to realise how different and potentially divergent their new and original group memberships may be. Intergroup dynamics are likely to emerge at this stage. Distinct identities are recognised and differences (in terms of values and norms) among social identities become highly salient. This phenomenon is analogous to the culture clash in the acculturation literature, where immigrants feel conflicted between the cultures as they confront incongruous sets of cultural demands (e.g., Leong & Ward, 2000). Because at this stage, the differences between the identities are particularly salient, the individual undergoing the change cannot yet perceive any similarities or form cognitive links between these groups, nor does he or she yet consider the possibility of being part of these different groups. Going back to the Australian immigrant to Canada, she may realise upon arrival that her pre-conceived ideas about how Canadians would be similar to her are not as accurate as she would have hoped – with certain Canadians being much less extraverted and sociable then what she had expected, and some being even annoyed at not being able to understand her accent, creating an additional and unforeseen linguistic barrier.

In terms of identity processes (Breakwell, 1986), the actual experience of change has the potential to threaten the *continuity* principle, because the individual makes their transition from anticipatory categorisation (which focuses on similarities) to actual categorisation (which conversely highlights differences). The unifying psychological thread between past, present and future – which is initially constructed by anticipatory categorisation – is potentially jeopardised by the actual experience of change. Conversely, the salience of the differences between the existing group membership and the novel social group renders the *distinctiveness* principle highly relevant and provides scope for the enhancement of this principle. The outcomes for the *self-esteem* principle at that stage are more complex; social representations and social comparison processes dictate the social ''status'' of one's existing group membership and hence determine whether this distinctiveness between the identities will be positive or negative (Vignoles et al., 2000). Moreover, the perceived differences between one's existing and anticipated group memberships can jeopardise feelings of *belonging* in the novel group. More specifically, not feeling that Canadians are sociable and that some are even closed-minded with respect to foreigners who have a different accent may compromise the Australian immigrant's sense of belonging.

At the *compartmentalisation stage,* the new identity stops to be considered as external and foreign to the person's self-concept and instead, increasingly becomes part of the self. As new group

members gather experiences in their new social group over time, they will come to develop a sense of identification with his or her new social group. At this point, the individual will also realise that this identity is becoming increasingly part of him or herself. However, cognitively, the different identities are kept in distinct ''compartments'' within the self at this stage. Concretely, this means that the similarities and the linkages between these identities are not yet completely established; the identities are still perceived as being quite distinct elements. At the compartmentalisation stage, the identities are also context-dependent, meaning that they become salient depending on the social context and the situational cues. This context-dependent nature of the social identification process at this stage is analogous to Roccas and Brewer's (2002) compartmentalized representation of multiple social identities – in which one particular social identity becomes primary in a particular social context relative to the other identities, and also with self-categorisation theory's idea that one particular social identity can become activated if it is the most relevant one to endorse in a specific context (i.e., meta-contrast ratio; Turner et al., 1987). For example, the Australian-Canadian may feel Australian when meeting up with other Australians in Canada for BBQs yet feel Canadian when practicing typically Canadian winter sports. Her identities are therefore highly contextualised and distinct and are likely to be associated with different thoughts, attitudes, and behaviours.

IPT theorists regard compartmentalisation as a strategy for protecting identity from threat, that is, for maintaining appropriate levels of the identity principles (Breakwell, 1986). Indeed, potential inconsistencies between particular social group memberships do not enter the psychological forefront, which essentially protects the psychological coherence principle from threat. Furthermore, the salience of social group membership in ''appropriate'' social contexts (e.g., feeling more Muslim in the mosque and more gay in gay nightclubs in the case of British Muslim gay men) can safeguard the *belonging* principle of identity. The individual is able to derive feelings of acceptance and inclusion from relevant others in social contexts, given that the ''problematic'' identity is not allowed, at a psychological level, to inhibit a sense of belonging. The compartmentalisation of one's social identities clearly elucidates the agency that human beings have in constructing and managing identity. This agency can provide the individual with feelings of control and competence over their life and future. Thus, it can be hypothesised that the *self-efficacy* principle of identity acquires salience during the compartmentalisation stage.

The fourth stage is *integration*. At this last stage, the individual will fully realise that conflicts between identities exist and that, if these conflicts are to be resolved, resources must be put forward (e.g., Phinney, 2003). This would take place as the individual realises that the behaviours he or she displays are somewhat different to those displayed in another social context. Such contradictions and conflicts could be reconciled by finding similarities and by drawing broader links between one's different social identities. For example, the Australian-Canadian could bridge her Canadian and Australian identities by focusing on the founding values that are shared by people of both countries, such as democracy, freedom of speech, and liberalism. Engaging in these conflict-resolution strategies will not only allow these two individuals to establish cognitive linkage between their different identities, but it will also maximise the feeling that, even though their behaviours change and adjust across social contexts, they can still experience an overall sense of personal coherence and consistency across these situations, and they are still the same person (Amiot & de la Sablonnière, 2010). This integration phase should hence result in the recognition that one's different social identities are no longer (completely) context-dependent, and that each identity contributes to the overall self-concept in a unique manner (e.g., Harter, 1999; Harter & Monsour, 1992).

As a specific identity principle (Jaspal, 2011), psychological *coherence* could induce individuals to move towards this integration stage. Although this final stage of identity integration

should have positive outcomes for this principle, the impact for the other motivational principles of identity seems to be less straightforward and can vary in accordance with situational context. Like compartmentalisation, the integration stage may render salient the *self-efficacy* principle of identity because the *ability* to deploy socio-psychological resources for the minimisation of identity conflict and for the reconciliation of social group members can provide the individual with feelings of control and competence. Moreover, the individual can derive a greater sense of *meaning* from belonging in both groups and from their occupancy of their particular identity configuration. This may come to provide a sense of purpose which is beneficial for the meaning principle (Baumeister, 1991).

Furthermore, the perception of belonging to distinct social groups and of possessing self-aspects associated with either group may benefit the *distinctiveness* principle, given that possessing this unique identity configuration can itself highlight one's uniqueness, specificities, and strengths. However, as in the case of categorisation, the perception of distinctiveness which can result from the integration of distinct social identities may be positive or negative. Being a member of the group ''Canadian'' may be regarded favourably at a social level, while the individual's Muslim identity may be stigmatised by society - a point we elaborate upon later. Although the individual may establish linkage between these identities at a psychological level, the social stigma of their devalued identity may cause threats to self-esteem at the integration stage (Amiot, de la Sablonnière, et al., 2007; Berry, 2006). Given that this process is dependent upon the immediate surrounding social context and upon which specific combination of identities are being integrated, the outcomes of this process for the self-esteem principle are highly context-dependent. In terms of the self-esteem principle, there is also a cost associated with identity integration. Because links are forged between these identities at the integration stage, each of the person's identities become part of the self-concept and are recognised as components of the person's self, which may in fact perpetuate any threats to the self-esteem principle caused by membership in any one social group.

The *belonging* principle can also become salient at the integration stage, because the individual recognises that he or she belongs to the different groups and hence may feel comfortable interacting with individuals from these social groups that are integrated within the self-concept. Although the individual reconciles these social group memberships at the psychological level, they have little control over how members of either social group will concretely interact with them as a result of their attachment to different social groups. For instance, although some British Muslim men who come out as gay do manage to reconcile their gay and Muslim identities, many still report ostracisation and a lack of belonging in both Muslim *and* gay circles (Jaspal & Cinnirella, 2012; Jaspal & Siraj, 2011). This can be attributed to the stigma attached by other group members to the particular gay-Muslim identity configuration.

Bringing together identity integration from the view of the CDMSII and IPT allows us to specify how the motivational principles of identity operate and have a potent effect at each stage of social identity integration, providing a more detailed insight into the psychological dynamics underlying the process of identity change. More specifically, this theoretical integration shows how the principles may be benefited or undermined during these stages, potentially inducing some individuals to dwell on one particular stage due to its psychological benefits and others to entirely sidestep other stages due to their potential psychological disadvantages. For instance, Coyle and Rafalin (2000) have indicated that gay Jews may remain at the compartmentalisation stage, without proceeding to the integration stage, due to the more favourable outcomes for identity they derive at that stage. Testing the hypotheses presented above may elucidate how individuals in particular social contexts may engage with the stages of identity integration. Moreover, by integrating IPT and the

CDMSII, we can directly test the important role of social representations in determining how individuals might respond socio-psychologically to the various stages leading to identity integration (Breakwell, this volume). For instance, in order to predict levels of belonging within the social groups which one seeks to reconcile in the self-concept, it is necessary to explore the social representations prevalent in either group.

Inhibitors of the Identity Integration Process: Stigma and Devalued Identities

We can now wonder what happens when the different groups the person belongs to differ widely in terms of how socially valued or devalued they are. In fact, more often than not, social groups differ in terms of the status or prestige they hold in a society (Sachdev & Bourhis, 1991). For instance, not all groups of immigrants are evaluated with the same valence within a society (e.g. Canada); with some groups (e.g. Australians) being more positively evaluated than others (e.g. Haitians). Going back to our example, if the Australian Canadian feels that both of her identities are socially valued, she may attribute high importance to both of these identities and report higher identity integration and psychological coherence. If she came from a country that possesses less social prestige, however, her identities may have clashed much more, and one of her identities – possibly the one that has the highest social status – may have eclipsed the lower status identity in her overall sense of self.

In line with these examples, and building on an important body of work in acculturation psychology (Berry, 1997, 2006), we suggest that these differential perceptions of the social status of various groups – although they are originally external to the individual – may become internalised in the person's sense of self. In fact, intergroup contexts that are highly stratified – such that the groups differ widely in terms of the status and power they hold in society – should encourage the dominance of one social identity (possibly the one with the highest status or power) over others, thus impeding the identity development process (Phinney, 1993, 2003). Concretely, this means that the person him or herself may come to reproduce this social consensus about what constitutes ''valued'' vs. ''devalued'' groups. In this process, the person may come to value the social groups he or she belongs to that are of highest social status such that these more prestigious identities may predominate their sense of self, and to downplay or even deny the social identities that are associated with socially devalued groups (de la Sablonnière, Amiot, Cardenas, Sadykova, & Gorborukova, 2012). It is as if the macroscopic intergroup social structure was reproduced intra-individually and microscopically, within the person's own sense of self.

While this process might not be too difficult to deal with if the person belongs to social groups that each have relatively equal levels of social status (e.g., belonging to a good family, working in a respectable organisation, being from the mainstream cultural group), we can easily see how these status differentials may become problematic for individuals who belong to multiple groups, some of which are highly socially devalued while some others are devalued. The experiences of many British Muslim gay men seem to exemplify this point. Although at the integration stage British Muslim gay men may reconcile their identities at the psychological level, it is entirely possible that social stigma encountered due to social status differentials between the groups could negatively impact identity integration and psychological coherence. More specifically, individuals' engagement with stigmatising social representations (from their Muslim ingroup) regarding their gay identity may gradually induce the perception that their Muslim and gay ingroups are in fact *incompatible.* This can potentially disrupt the integration stage. In other words, negative social representations concerning an identity configuration may eventually ''un-do'' the positive steps taken towards identity integration during the integration stage at the psychological level. Identity integration is a desirable goal, but it is also a highly effortful process which involves engagement

with the identities at a psychological level, as well as engagement with dominant social representations concerning the identities at the social level. In order to facilitate the process of identity integration, it is necessary to create a societal context that will encourage this integration (e.g., Roccas & Brewer, 2002), rather than place this (sometimes very heavy) burden on individuals alone.

Future Research Directions

The present chapter points to some directions that future research could take to investigate the motivational principles of identity – as described in IPT – that surface throughout the identity integration process. First, future research ought to explore empirically the relationships between different configurations of multiple identities within the self with different identity principles by testing the hypotheses tentatively outlined in the chapter (see also Table 1 for an overview). This may in turn shed light upon the likelihood of an individual reaching a particular stage of identity integration and of making the transition to further stages. Indeed, this hypothesis is consistent with research that shows that individuals more readily internalise and prioritise elements of the self which provide appropriate levels of the identity principles (Breakwell, 1986; Vignoles et al., 2002). Furthermore, given IPT's concerns with psychological well-being, it is reasonable to examine how different well-being outcomes (i.e., subjective and psychological well-being; hedonic and eudemonic well-being) may be associated with the stages of social identity integration, as well as each identity principles in the context of social identity integration and each configuration of one's multiple identities.

Ideally, these hypotheses could be tested longitudinally, among individuals who are in the process of joining a new social group or developing a new facet of their sense of self. Adolescents or young adults would represent a particularly interesting population to study as their identities and self-structure are in flux (Harter, 1999). Such a study could either focus on individuals' idiosyncratic identities and how they combine and are coherent with one another, or target one particular identity (e.g., sexual orientation) that may also be socially devalued or threatened, and test the process of integration of these particular identities among the person's other identities over time. Using statistical analyses such as hierarchical linear modeling – which allow us to test if the associations among particular identity principles, threat, and well-being are stronger at some time points relative to some other time points – will allow to test these research questions. As well, identity integration vs. imbalance could be assessed using newly established statistical procedures that capture the amount of discrepancy among one's different identities (de la Sablonnière et al., 2012; Smith et al., 2012).

Solutions to a Lack of Identity Integration and Psychological Coherence

More concretely, what is the solution to the lack of identity integration and psychological coherence that are often experienced as individuals' identities are threatened? How can we ensure that one's multiple social identities will be equally valued and will each contribute to defining the person? The solutions we put forward emphasize the agency that individuals have with respect to these social representations and in determining what constitutes a ''valuable'' social group or not. First, intra-individually, individuals who belong to groups that differ widely in their statuses could actively realize what are these groups' particularities, strengths, specificities, and how these sets of characteristics can complement one another and bring a different facet to their sense of self. As another strategy, individuals may focus on the self-elements they wish to promote and present to others, such as some of their particular personality traits (Breakwell, 2001). For instance, individuals with a high degree of autonomy from their groups and whose groups encourage them to express their own individuality may be more able to put forward their personal strengths and idiosyncratic

characteristics. This could protect them from stigmatising social representations disseminated regarding the compatibility of identities, shielding their psychological coherence from threat (Jaspal, 2011). Although individuals are influenced by a combination of social and psychological factors, they may also ultimately arrive at their own conclusion about the compatibility of interconnected self-elements.

Other solutions are located at the societal level. Such solutions could aim at directly questioning the superiority and value of some social groups over others and questioning what constitutes right and wrong. For example, by socially challenging the *authority* of Muslim religious scholars, some British Muslim gay men may actively contest the social representation associated with their ethno-religious ingroup that homosexuality is a ''sin'' in favour of the competing representation associated with their gay ingroup that homosexuality constitutes a ''normal'' sexual orientation (Jaspal & Cinnirella, 2010).

Conclusion

In this chapter, we brought together different theoretical perspectives on identity integration and psychological coherence and IPT. These perspectives converge by stressing how important it is that individuals feel a sense of intra-individual comfort with their social identities and the different facets of themselves, and in their need to regulate proactively these identities and facets, especially in times of threat. To truly bring these theories together, we proposed specific hypotheses about when each identity principle would become more salient throughout the identity integration process. We then proposed future research to test these hypotheses and suggested concrete solutions for how to reconcile one's various and potentially conflicting identities. As reconciling diversity is a major social issue, we are hopeful that these research ideas and solutions will lead to constructive social changes.

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Table 1

STAGES OF IDENTITY INTEGRATION	IDENTITY PRINCIPLES ENHANCED	IDENTITY PRINCIPLES THREATENED
1. Anticipatory categorisation	Continuity Belonging	
2. Categorisation	Distinctiveness Self-esteem	Continuity Belonging Self-esteem
3. Compartmentalisation	Psychological Coherence Belonging Self-efficacy	
4. Integration	Psychological Coherence Self-efficacy Self-esteem Meaning Distinctiveness	Self-esteem