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## Why Immigrants’ Multiple Identities Matter: Implications for Research, Policy, and Practice

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*Immigrants and their descendants typically identify with ethnic, national, religious, and/or regional groups, in various combinations and with varying degrees of compatibility or conflict. Research and theorizing on these patterns of identification, as represented in this issue, suggest guideposts for future research and domains for policy development. Here, we identify some of the issues that warrant additional research and we consider implications of existing research on dual (or multiple) identification for the development and implementation of policies related to immigrants. Examples of the former include the need for careful specification of concepts, the consideration of multiple dimensions of identity, deeper examination of identity meanings, methodological extensions in time and space, and greater theoretical integration. Policy development will require greater attention to various identity combinations, advocacy for national inclusivity, the promotion of sites*

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*for positive intergroup contact, and maximizing the potential for immigrants with multiple identities to help bridge intergroup gaps.*

## **Introduction**

Immigrants and their descendants who hold compatible dual identities have great potential to thrive in the countries in which they live. They are more likely than other immigrants to be happy and healthy (Nguyen & Benet-Martínez, 2013), to be strong students (Baysu & Phalet, 2019), and to engage in normative national politics (Simon & Ruhs, 2008). They are also in a position to bridge divides between the different groups to which they belong (Love & Levy, 2019). At the same time, immigrants and their descendants who hold dual identities face particular vulnerabilities. They are at greater risk of having their identities questioned or threatened by members of both their ethnic (or religious) and the national groups, with consequences for psychological well-being (Albuja, Sanchez, & Gaither, 2019; Balkaya, Cheah, & Tahseen, 2019), academic performance (Baysu & Phalet, 2019; Baysu, Phalet, & Brown, 2011), and political engagement (Cárdenas, 2019). The same categories of identification that can make them a bridge between groups may also increase their strain.

We are only beginning to understand dual and multiple identities in the context of immigration. The available evidence does not yet warrant strong claims, but it does provide guideposts for future research and marks important issues for policy debates. We therefore start our discussion of the current state-of-the-art as presented in this issue with suggestions for future research. We continue by proposing a number of recommendations that we believe would elevate policy discussions about immigration. Our goal is to motivate research that will be better able to inform policy and practice in the future, so that immigrants and their descendants with dual identities, as well as society as a whole, can capitalize on their strengths.

## **Implications for Future Research**

### *Implications for the Conceptualization and Measurement of Dual Identity*

The contributions in this issue identify many questions that researchers will need to address before they can inform policies that affect immigrants confidently and authoritatively, based on solid empirical evidence. An important first step is to clarify the distinction between, on the one hand, a subjective sense of “being both” and, on the other, an immigrant, bicultural, biracial, or otherwise mixed background. The latter indicates where one stands in sociodemographic terms, and the former indicates individuals’ own positioning vis-à-vis the multiple groups to which they belong. To be sure, there is substantial overlap in social

reality as individuals with an immigrant background are good candidates to be dual (or multiple) identifiers. Nevertheless, it is important to emphasize that not all immigrants are dual identifiers, or, more generally, and as stated by Love and Levy (2019), not all members of gateway groups perceive themselves as such. Immigrants and nonimmigrants alike debate the boundaries, relations, and meanings between social categories, and they incorporate these meanings into their sense of who they are. As a result, the study of dual identities has important consequences for our understanding of the immigrant experience and intergroup relations in increasingly diverse societies.

Consider, for instance, Jugert, Leszczensky, and Pink's (2018) finding that self-categorization as German *and* as a member of an ethnic minority group increased adolescents' friendship nominations by their German majority peers. This shows that youth who are similar in their generational status and ethnic background do not all consider themselves as part of the same in-group. Moreover, their nonimmigrant classmates perceive them differently as a function of their assertion of a dual identity and this recognition of dual identity facilitates friendships that cut across group boundaries. This finding corroborates the claim that the study of dual identities has much to gain from social network analysis (Repke & Benet-Martínez, 2019), but it also makes clear that the potential of dual identifiers as gateway groups rests on their motivation to adopt the relevant complex social identity (Love & Levy, 2019). Certainly, in hostile intergroup climates, it is questionable whether individuals would adopt a dual identity as this can raise tough questions about their (dis)loyalty from both groups (Kunst, Thomsen, & Dovidio, 2018).

Given the potentially far-reaching consequences of adopting dual (or multiple) identities among those who are in a position to do so, future researchers are advised to include appropriate measures of immigrants' endorsement of multiple social identities, rather than inferring them from sociodemographic background characteristics. Ideally, such research designs include both measures that tap into self-categorization as a member of multiple groups (e.g., British and Muslim) and, if relevant in the context of study, combined or blended categories (e.g., British Muslim), as well as the strength of identification with these groups (cf. Fleischmann & Verkuyten, 2016).

Once the relevant subgroup of dual (or multiple) identifiers has been established in a specific immigrant sample and a societal context, it is important to investigate how dual identification is understood by the immigrant and their descendants. Qualitative approaches can enrich our knowledge of the everyday meanings of dual identity and they can help us understand how immigrants and their descendants negotiate membership in multiple social groups (e.g., Hopkins & Greenwood, 2013; Moffitt, Juang, & Syed, 2018). In quantitative research using standardized questionnaire items, follow-up questions that probe into immigrants' interpretations of their dual identity will also further improve our understanding

of what it means “to be both.” The answers to a question such as “I strongly feel Chinese-American” can mean very different things, as different immigrants represent the relations among their social groups in ways that are either simple or complex (e.g., social identity complexity, cf. Roccas & Brewer, 2002), conflicting or compatible (e.g., bicultural identity integration, cf. Benet-Martínez & Haritatos, 2005), and as referring to similar or distinct meanings (e.g., cultural background and citizenship status).

Careful attention to the meaning of dual identities is particularly important in contexts in which the demographics and the politics of diversity have not (yet) led to the frequent societal use and the adoption of hyphenated identities among immigrants (or the native-born). Typically, such complex identity representations (e.g., African American or Mexican American, French Canadian or Asian Canadian) are more common in the settler societies of North America and Oceania. They are less common in European immigrant destinations, where ethnic definitions of the nation prevail (Alba & Foner, 2015; Berry, Phinney, Sam, & Vedder, 2006). In light of demographic changes in all migrant-receiving societies and the changing policy landscape governing access to citizenship rights for immigrants (Koopmans, Michalowski, & Waibel, 2012), we might observe immigrants in Europe more frequently asserting dual identities as, for instance, Moroccan-Dutch or Polish-German. To the extent that such hyphenated identities become more established in a receiving society, they likely facilitate the adoption of more complex identity representations among new immigrant groups. On the other hand, where hyphenated identities are rarely adopted and do not figure in public discourse, it is unclear what we measure when we ask immigrants to indicate their strength of dual identification, and follow-up questions about cognitive representations and the perceptions of conflict and compatibility are needed to make sense of the answers they provide. Including such measures will not only enhance our understanding of the meanings of dual identity across multiple immigration contexts with varying histories of immigration and governing diversity, it will also allow us to better understand the consequences of dual identity for immigrants’ outcomes.

#### *Considering Multiple Dimensions of Multiple Social Identities*

A second avenue for future research concerns the inclusion of multiple dimensions of social identity in the investigation of the dual (or multiple) identities of immigrants (cf. Verkuyten, 2018a; Wiley & Deaux, 2010). Social identities include more than whether one categorizes oneself as belonging to a group, and if so, the strength of their attachment. Social identities also include how positively people feel about the group, how similar and connected one feels to other group members, how positively people think that others evaluate their group, and what it means to be a group member—to name a few social identity dimensions (cf. Ashmore, Deaux, & McLaughlin-Volpe, 2004). Existing research typically

includes single-item measures of identification (often reflecting centrality or importance, e.g., Fleischmann & Phalet, 2016) or a limited number of dimensions assessing what it means to be a member of one's coethnic and national groups. As multiple authors in this issue have argued and empirically shown, immigrants often have mixed social networks containing members of both their immigrant group and natives of the receiving society (Leszczensky, Jugert, & Pink, 2019; Repke & Benet-Martínez, 2019; Sixtus, Wesche, & Kerschreiter, 2019). This line of work suggests that 'being both' in terms of maintaining ties to multiple groups is a viable strategy for many immigrants and their offspring—though this may obviously not be the case when there are conflicts between the groups and maintaining ties with one can be interpreted as a lack of loyalty with the other (Kunst et al., 2018; Love & Levy, 2019). In addition to the attachment or relatedness dimension, it also seems plausible that a sense of high private regard can be achieved for multiple group memberships such that immigrants feel proud, glad, or satisfied to be a member of their immigrant group and of the receiving society (e.g., Fleischmann, Leszczensky, & Pink, 2019).

For other dimensions of social identity, however, maintaining a high level for two groups or experiencing both as integrated may be more challenging. Particularly for sociopolitical contexts in which hyphenated identities (e.g., Turkish-German) are not socially validated, it might be difficult to experience being Turkish *and* being German as central or equally important to the self. The hierarchical nature of intergroup relations between immigrants and nonimmigrants in many receiving societies further implies that public regard is often considerably lower for immigrants' ethnic (or religious) identity (Hagendoorn, 1995; Wiley, Perkins, & Deaux, 2008), such that "being both" in terms of high public regard for both component identities is hard to achieve. Finally, and importantly, the normative and behavioral implications of one group membership can be conflicting with the implications of the other group membership, leading to uncertainty and anxiety (Hirsh & Kang, 2016) and precluding the development of a consolidated dual identity in the behavioral domain. To what extent such conflicts occur will of course depend on the specific intergroup context and differ across immigrant groups and receiving societies. In extending the research on dual identification in immigrant-origin populations, paying attention to multiple dimensions of social identity can further inform our understanding of the ways in which immigrants come to establish and maintain a sense of "being both."

#### *Immigrants' Understandings and Constructions of the National and Coethnic In-Group*

One question that deserves particular attention in future research concerns the meaning of national identity for immigrants and their descendants. With respect to ethnic and religious group identity, there is some evidence about the variation

in identity profiles with more homogeneous profiles (i.e., uniformly high or low identification on multiple dimensions) versus more heterogeneous profiles of what it means, for instance, to be Muslim (Phalet, Fleischmann, & Stojcic, 2012). When it comes to national identity, however, we lack systematic evidence on the different understandings. For immigrants and their descendants, being a member of the national group may reflect where one was born or where one lives (Olmo, 2011). It may also reflect whether one participates in civic life or feels a sense of connection to or pride in the nation. These meanings are likely to differ across receiving societies, across immigrant groups (e.g., based on access to citizenship rights, Koopmans et al., 2012), and across individual immigrants based on experiences in the receiving society and in their country of origin. Not only do these differences have implication for the possibility of forming compatible dual identities, but also they are likely to influence how dual identities affect behavior. Research into the meaning of national identity for immigrants and their descendants should pay particular attention to the implications of specific meanings and experiences for the compatibility of national with ethnic, religious, and other group-specific identities that the immigrants have (e.g., Gharaei, Phalet, & Fleischmann, 2018). The study by Sixtus et al. (2019) is a step in this direction. It indicates that positive contact with majority members is associated with greater (but negative contact less) perceptions of permeability of the boundary between the German national group and both Hungarian Christian and Palestinian Muslim immigrant groups. Permeability in turn was related to a greater sense of compatibility between the heritage and German identity.

Research on the meaning of national identity for immigrants also sheds light on the importance of the majority group and its relation towards immigration in general, and specific immigrant groups in particular, for an immigrant's sense of "being both." Several contributions in this issue highlight how identity questioning by the majority, as well as discrimination and other identity threats at the individual and group level, can jeopardize immigrants' well-being and performance (Albuja et al., 2019; Balkaya et al., 2019; Baysu & Phalet, 2019). We should be careful, however, not to attribute contextual threats to dual identity one-sidedly to the majority population and neglect the role of the immigrant community in facilitating or hampering migrants' dual identities. Compared to the research attention given to the role of the receiving society, relatively less work has investigated the intragroup processes that govern immigrants' dual identification (but see Celeste, Meeussen, Verschueren, & Phalet, 2016). In this issue, the contribution by Cárdenas (2019) is a notable exception and highlights how pressure to conform to in-group norms and not stray too far from what it means to be a member of the coethnic community motivates Turkish Muslims to advocate for Muslim rights, probably in an attempt to assert their questioned belonging to the minority in-group. Just as there are multiple understandings of what it means to be a German, Dutch, or U.S. national (cf. Reijerse, Van Acker, Vanbeselaere, Phalet, & Duriez, 2013), there are different

approaches to being Turkish, Moroccan, or Mexican. Immigrant communities negotiate these definitions continuously, and the prevailing definitions in a given time or place can have important repercussions for the perceived compatibility of migrants' multiple identities. For instance, in the study by Sixtus et al. (2019), those who perceived a stronger sense of overlap between their Islamic religious identity and their Palestinian ethnic identity experienced lower compatibility of Palestinian and German identity. And while the same relation was absent among Hungarian Christians, there was substantial variation in both immigrant groups regarding how much religious identity was seen to overlap with ethnic identity, indicating no clear consensus within these immigrant groups regarding the role of religion for ethnic identity.

Beyond intragroup dynamics within the receiving society, future research on immigrants' dual identities would also benefit from considering intergroup relations between immigrant groups who share specific group identities. What it means to be a Dutch Muslim, for instance, also depends on how different groups of Muslims with distinct ethnic backgrounds negotiate what it means to be Muslim, for example, with regard to the language of religious services or the interpretation of rules for modest dress (Hoekstra & Verkuyten, 2015). Similarly, among Latino Jews in the United States, what it means to be Jewish may depend on national origin (e.g., Argentina, Venezuela, Mexico, Cuba) as well as racial phenotype (Limonic, 2019). The outcomes of these negotiations can make religious identities intertwined with, or more decoupled from, distinct ethnic identities within the broader religious community. Finally, coethnic and coreligious group members outside the receiving society can also affect the definitions of group membership and the extent to which it is perceived as compatible with national identification of the receiving society. There is first evidence showing that embracing a dual identity might lead to rejection by ethnic in-group members in the country of origin (Badea, Jetten, Iyer, & Er-rafiy, 2011; Wiley, 2013), but we need more research that considers the role of this transnational field for immigrants' dual identity.

#### *Extending the Comparative Scope*

Beyond offering recommendations for *what* future research should study, we want to plead for an extension of *where* and among *whom* such research should be conducted. The majority of research on dual identity in the context of immigration, including the contributions in this issue, is concentrated in a few immigrant-receiving countries (e.g., Germany, the Netherlands, the United States) among a relatively small number of immigrant-origin groups (e.g., Turks, Moroccans, Mexicans). This concentration is understandable given the demographic realities of these societies where upwards of 20% of the population are immigrants or children of immigrants, and the fact that even in these societies immigrants constitute hard-to-reach populations. We fully appreciate the complexity

and the many challenges, both practical and ethical, of conducting research among immigrant groups. Yet migration truly is a global phenomenon and the questions surrounding immigrants' dual or multiple identification may play out quite differently in contexts where large-scale immigration is more recent (e.g., Southern and Eastern Europe) and where policies toward immigration and integration vary. Research on these questions outside the WEIRD world in immigrant destinations in Asia, Africa, or Latin America is very scarce, yet would greatly contribute to our understanding of the psychological experience of "being both" by introducing more diverse historical experiences with dealing with diversity and different understandings of national identities.

In addition to broadening the scope of receiving societies under study, more systematic comparisons between immigrants who differ in, for example, generation, gender, social class, legal status, or migration motive (e.g., economic vs. asylum) will enhance our understanding of the specific features of the immigrant experience that make for a greater compatibility of their multiple social identities. These more extensive and systematic comparisons can help us identify the factors at the macro- and meso-level, in addition to the more frequently studied micro-level, that facilitate a sense of "being both."

#### *Longitudinal Research to Trace Developments and Probe Causality*

The final recommendation for future research is a methodological one: a call for more longitudinal research that has expanded in research on ethnic and racial identity development (see Meeus, 2011; Schwartz et al., 2014) but that is scarce in research on immigrant's dual identity. Many studies on the topic are cross-sectional, making it impossible to draw strong inferences about directions of influences from their results. As more longitudinal data among immigrants and their descendants becomes available, researchers will be better able to study which processes trigger a stronger identification with versus dis-identification from the heritage culture and the receiving society, and which psychological processes make these identities more or less compatible over the immigrant's life course. Among adult immigrants, that is, the first generation, identification with groups that represent the heritage culture are presumably very salient at the start of their integration trajectory as these identities are formed in the country of origin and mark the difference between the newly arrived and the established population. Identification with the receiving society, in contrast, is more likely to develop with increasing length of stay (De Vroome, Verkuyten, & Martinovic, 2014). It has therefore been proposed that dual identity will develop primarily when a sense of belonging to the receiving society is added to a pre-existing and maintained strong sense of belonging to the immigrant community (Fleischmann & Verkuyten, 2016; Wiley, 2013; Wiley, Deaux, & Hagelskamp, 2012). However, there is very little empirical evidence based on research that follows immigrants



over time and repeatedly assesses their identification with the heritage culture and the receiving society that would allow firm conclusions about the processes that lead to a sense of dual (or multiple) identification among immigrants. Moreover, it is unknown how the process plays out among second- or later generation members of immigrant groups, who have a fundamentally different starting position as they can potentially develop a sense of belonging to the receiving society from early childhood onwards (but see Feliciano & Rumbaut, 2019). Do identifications with the ethnic and religious community develop in parallel with identifications that are shared with majority members (e.g., national, local, regional, or supranational), and when is an increase in one accompanied by an increase in others?

Fleischmann et al. (2019) recently examined these questions among a diverse sample of ethnic minority youth in German lower secondary schools, following early adolescents during three measurement occasions and for a total period of 18 months. Their study of ethnic, religious, and national identification, in conjunction with perceived discrimination, identified few cross-lagged effects of the three identities under study; however, national identification was related to weaker subsequent ethnic and religious identification as a consequence of perceived discrimination. In line with cross-sectional studies that compared different age groups, national identification was positively associated with ethnic and religious identification among these early adolescents, whereas more negative associations have been found in later adolescence and (early) adulthood (Fleischmann & Phalet, 2016; Spiegler, Güngör, & Leyendecker, 2016). Following the development of immigrant children and adolescents over a longer time period will allow researchers to establish when and why these, and other, important identities become more conflicting, and under what conditions a stable and committed sense of dual identification can be achieved.

In addition to being able to shed light on the development of dual or multiple identification, longitudinal (or, if possible, experimental) research would also contribute to shedding more light on the directions of influence behind the associations of dual identification with psychological adjustment, and sociocultural and political outcomes (cf. Verkuyten, Wiley, Deaux, & Fleischmann, 2019). For instance, contributions in this issue suggest that dual identifiers, compared to those who are low on one of the component identifications, are better adjusted (Balkaya et al., 2019), perform better on tests (Baysu & Phalet, 2019) and embrace minority rights more strongly (Cárdenas, 2019). However, the cross-sectional character of these studies does not rule out the possibility that third variables influence both dual identification and the outcomes under study. One of the few studies that used a longitudinal design to link adjustment outcomes to identity profiles, contrasting minorities with an ethnic or national identity only to those with high dual and equal-medium dual identity, found high dual identifiers to have the highest levels of life satisfaction and lowest levels of depressive symptoms and loneliness (Zhang, Verkuyten, & Weesie, 2018). This study strengthens our confidence

in the influence of dual identification on well-being, but the potential parallel effects of well-being on the development and maintenance of dual identification among immigrants cannot be assessed. For other outcomes, such as academic performance and politicization, longitudinal research that would allow us to make strong inferences about (mutual) influences is lacking altogether.

### *Theoretical Integration*

The research presented in this issue draws on a wide variety of theoretical perspectives. Predictions and explanations are derived from social identity theory (Balkaya et al., 2019; Baysu & Phalet, 2019; Cárdenas, 2019; Love & Levy, 2019; Sixtus et al., 2019) and social network approaches (Leszczensky et al., 2019; Repke & Benet-Martínez, 2019); from theories of attributional ambiguity (Albuja et al., 2019; Balkaya et al., 2019) and stereotype threat (Baysu & Phalet, 2019); as well as from acculturation theory and the dynamic constructivist approach to cultural cognition (Baysu & Phalet, 2019; Repke & Benet-Martínez, 2019). In many ways, this theoretical diversity is a strength of the field. It presents opportunities for cross-fertilization among different areas of psychology and related social sciences (as presented in this issue), introduces a wide range of methodological and analytic approaches, and generates novel hypotheses and a large number of research findings. At the same time, it carries the danger of impeding rather than promoting progress in the research on immigrants' dual identity. The accumulation of research findings does not improve understanding on its own and theoretical frameworks can help to reduce the very large space of possible factors, conditions, and explanations (Ellemers, 2013; Muthukrishna & Henrich, 2019). These frameworks allow for (1) clearer and more consensual conceptualizations of important constructs, (2) specification of the direct and indirect mechanisms involved in the formation, maintenance and enactment of dual identities, (3) the importance of making a distinction in (interacting) levels of explanation, and (4) a better understanding of how findings concerning the consequences of dual identity across different outcomes (e.g., psychological well-being, academic achievement, and collective action) relate to one another.

The importance of developing and examining broader theories is increasingly acknowledged and there are, for example, an increasing number of multilevel approaches in the study of immigrants' identity development (Schwartz, Meca, Cano, Lorenzo-Blanco, & Unger, 2018) and approaches focusing on person-context congruency (e.g., Byrd & Chavous, 2011). In addition, there are attempts to integrate psychological approaches that focus more on the gradual development of an inner sense of a bicultural self (e.g., Benet-Martínez & Haritatos, 2005; Syed & McLean, 2016) and social psychological approaches that tend to focus on contextual processes of dual group identifications (e.g., Hopkins, 2011). Whereas the main focus of the former approaches is on the ways in which ethnic and national identities

become an integral and coherent part of the self-concept, the latter ones emphasize the reverse process whereby the self is considered “an interchangeable exemplar” (Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher, & Wetherell, 1987, p. 50) of the ethnic or national group. Both processes are likely to be important and might influence each other. For example, immigrants involved in an inner process of identity exploration and change might have more difficulties to be committed and engaged in significant activities implementing their dual identity. Thus it may be useful to try to combine different theoretical approaches, similar to proposals that have been made for an integrative approach for studying personal identity processes and social identity processes (see Crocetti, Pratti, & Rubini, 2018; Reid & Deaux, 1996; Vignoles, Schwartz, & Luyckx, 2011).

### Implications for Policy

#### *Consider the Immigrant Experience*

Debates about immigration policy often start and stop at the border. Who should enter the country? Who should stay? Alternatively, debates focus on direct consequences for society and the native-born. How do immigrants contribute to society, how do they affect wages and budgets, crime and communities? Missing from these debates are immigrants themselves. The research presented in this JSI issue demonstrates that emphasizing *immigrants'* experiences is important—not only because improving outcomes for immigrants is a valuable end in its own right, but also because the beliefs and actions of immigrants mediate the relationship between immigration policies and outcomes for receiving societies.

Studying immigrants and their descendants is not easy. Recruitment is challenging and immigrants may (understandably) experience some common methodological techniques (e.g., responding to standard survey questions) as dehumanizing. Those who are conducting the research are likely to belong to nonimmigrant or highly skilled immigrant groups and may find it difficult to establish rapport with the intended participants. Despite the challenges of the research, we are convinced that a better understanding of the immigrant experience has benefits for social psychology and psychological theorizing (see Verkuyten, 2018b, for a review). It also has the potential to speak to fundamental disagreements about who the state belongs to and whom it is for.

#### *Attend to the Diversity in “Both”*

Educators, counselors, and psychologists should be aware of the strengths and risks of identifying with multiple groups, as described above. On one hand, having multiple group identities can be psychologically beneficial, so long as they do not conflict (Jetten, Haslam, Haslam, Dingle, & Jones, 2014). Both American

and Muslim identities, as an example, are associated with fewer externalizing symptoms among Muslim American adolescents (Balkaya et al., 2019). On the other hand, immigrants with dual identities are particularly vulnerable to identity questioning from both of their respective communities, and to the implication that they cannot be “both.” The implication that dual identities are necessarily associated with psychological costs and/or the lack of recognition of the benefits of dual identities may in itself represent an identity threat.

What should also be clear from the research presented in this issue is that immigrants identify with their multiple groups to different degrees and represent the relationship between those groups in different ways. Their ethnic, religious, and national identities also carry different meanings for different individual immigrants and may be expressed differently in different societal contexts. What it means to be Muslim-German differs from what it means to be Muslim-American (Foner & Alba, 2018), for example, and what it means to be Sunni Muslim differs from what it means to be Alevi Muslim (Cárdenas, 2019).

Policy makers and service providers need to realize that what it means to be both depends on individual dispositions, collective meanings, and societal contexts. For government officials, this means that one-size-fits-all programs for immigrant integration are unlikely to be effective and may lead to unanticipated consequences for some immigrant groups, but not others. For example, partnering with religious organizations might be a way to increase civic integration in the United States, where religious and national identities are seen as compatible, but less so in the Netherlands or Germany, where national and religious identities tend to be negatively correlated (e.g., Foner & Alba, 2008). On the other hand, collaborating with religious organizations in countries where religious and national identities are negatively correlated may be a way to increase perceptions of compatibility. Counselors working with immigrants must also understand that encouraging clients to draw on community resources such as churches or mosques may help immigrants with compatible dual identities thrive, but may make other immigrants more vulnerable to identity questioning. Further, educators should be aware that when anti-immigrant policies are prevalent in a given context, identity questioning is more likely to be interpreted as discriminatory identity denial than as well-intentioned curiosity (Albuja et al., 2019). In short, understanding the diverse risks and resilience that immigrants with dual identities experience might enable policy makers and counselors to help dual-identity immigrants to make the most of their strengths while limiting their vulnerabilities.

#### *Advocate for Inclusive Policies and Rhetoric*

Elite rhetoric may be one factor that influences whether dual identity becomes a blessing or a curse. If politicians promote policies that would marginalize immigrants or exclude them from the national community, then negative outcomes are

likely to prevail. Local or state policies that suggest an inclusive and welcoming versus a hostile environment for immigrants can positively affect public opinion of migrants (Gaucher, Friesen, Neufeld, & Esses, 2018; Kunst, Thomsen, Sam, & Berry, 2015) and the immigrant's sense of belonging to the new nation (Huo, Dovidio, Jiménez, & Schildkraut, 2018). In school contexts, multicultural policies can also ameliorate – and assimilations policies reproduce—achievement gaps among ethnic groups (Celeste, Baysu, Phalet, Meeussen, & Kende, 2019). The very categories that governments use in official documents, such as the census, can also affect identity processes, such as whether immigrants can select multiple group memberships or whether they can choose pan-ethnic categories and/or specific countries of origin (see Alba & Prewitt, 2018). Similarly, if leaders of immigrant communities or political leaders in the country of origin believe that the adoption of a national identity is incompatible with maintaining an ethnic or religious identity, people with dual identities may be less likely to tap into their strengths (Cárdenas, 2019).

It is not enough to avoid threatening those with dual identities, national majority groups could also affirm them. Government policies that encourage multiculturalism, as is the case in Canada, enable immigrants with strong dual identities to participate politically in the host country as members of their ethnic group (Verkuyten, 2017), whereas exclusionary policies can diminish an immigrant's willingness to participate (Wiley, Figueroa, & Lauricella, 2014). Even more consequentially, a migrant's sense of the incompatibility of multiple identities can trigger radicalization (Simon, Reichert, & Grabow, 2013).

Policy makers might also think about highlighting the indispensable role that some immigrant groups have played in the national story and others in the functioning of society (e.g., Verkuyten, Martinovic, & Smeekes, 2014). For example, in the context of Portugal, immigrant groups with a common colonial past and long historical relationship (from Brazil, African countries) were regarded as relatively indispensable for the definition of the national identity, whereas other immigrants (Ukrainians) were regarded as making an indispensable contribution to the economy (Guerra, Gaertner, António, & Deegan, 2015). Also, in settler societies like the United States, there is no shortage of examples of historical relationships and of immigrants making important contributions to the nation, across science and medicine, politics, military service, and the arts. And there is some evidence that Whites attribute greater national identity indispensability to African-Americans and more functional indispensability to Asian-Americans (Guerra, Rodrigues, Gaertner, Deegan, & António, 2016). The cognitive availability of these examples may be low, however, because immigrants and their descendants are not always called out as such. One recent exception in United States popular culture is the musical *Hamilton*, which emphasizes the immigrant status of the titular figure, along with several other founding members of the American nation. Similarly, in Europe ex-French president Nicolas Sarkozy is the child of Hungarian

immigrants; all members of the Dutch royal family fall under the definition of “immigrants” of the Dutch National Statistical Office; members of national soccer teams across the continent often have dual identities. Furthermore, teachers and administrators could make similar exceptions in school curricula, calling attention to immigrants’ roles in the national story and their important contribution to the functioning of society. Such representations make immigrants—including those with dual identities—an indispensable part of the nation from the start.

One challenge to affirming the dual identities of immigrants, however, is that in many contexts the national majorities see an emphasis on multiculturalism as a threat that challenges their dominant position and/or marginalizes them from the national discourse (see Deaux & Verkuyten, 2014; Whitley & Webster, 2019, for reviews). As a result, those who see themselves as “just one” may react to an emphasis on “being both” with prejudice and discrimination. Overcoming this resistance may require reconceptualizing multiculturalism as beneficial and a learning opportunity for the majority group (Brannon, Carter, Murdock-Perriera, & Higginbotham, 2018; Rios & Wynn, 2016).

#### *Promote Sites of Positive Contact*

Positive contact between immigrants (and their descendants) and members of the national majority can influence how immigrants see the relationship between different groups and their orientation toward the host society (Sixtus et al., 2019). In order to promote immigrant integration, therefore, it is important to identify sites in which immigrants can engage in structured, positive contact with members of majority groups. At the institutional level, schools can be an important site for the influence of interpersonal and intergroup factors on the development of identity in young immigrants. While Leszczensky et al. (2019) show that pre-existing ethnic and national identities are more likely to influence adolescent immigrants’ friendship selection than their friends are to influence their dual identities, their research is situated rather late in immigrants’ identity development. Immigrants who live in contexts where they are able to form dual identities earlier in life may indeed select more integrated friendship networks. Schools’ position on issues of multiculturalism can facilitate or inhibit combinations of ethnic and national identity, as well as academic performance among immigrant youth (Brown & Chu, 2012; Lash, 2018; Verkuyten & Thijs, 2013). Thus, it may be that fostering dual identities early in life will make positive contact more likely in integrated environments.

#### *Empower Immigrants with Dual Identities to Bridge Intergroup Divides*

As Love and Levy (2019) argue, bicultural and biracial individuals may be especially well positioned to improve intergroup relations. This may be especially

true for immigrants who identify strongly with both their ethnic (or religious) community, as well as the nation in which they live. By virtue of their knowledge of and affiliation with both groups, they may be particularly strong advocates and interlocutors in the political arena, building solidarity across immigrant-native divides. Although the appeal of multiple group members to improve intergroup relations is strong, the role has the potential to be quite challenging. In walking among and between their multiple groups and in trying to facilitate dialogue between them, immigrants with dual identities are likely to be targets of identity threat and denial, which have negative psychological implications. Policy makers should consider how to support members of multiple groups who adopt or volunteer to fill this role and should be careful not to press people into such positions involuntarily.

### Conclusion

The steady increase in immigration flows throughout much of the world has stimulated the growth of research on the social and psychological processes experienced by immigrants themselves. Our particular interest in this issue has been on the processes and ramifications of having multiple identities, especially those involving ethnicity and nationality, for both the immigrants and for the societies they enter.

The theoretical and empirical contributions of this issue have covered a wide range of issues, including perceived discrimination and in-group rejection (Albuja et al., 2019; Balkaya et al., 2019; Cárdenas, 2019), stereotype threat (Baysu & Phalet, 2019), social networks (Leszczensky et al., 2019; Repke & Benet-Martínez, 2019), and intergroup contact and attitudes (Love & Levy, 2019; Sixtus et al., 2019). Yet the material in this volume is by no means the final word. Rather, we see the articles in this volume as critical points along a road that still has much distance to be traveled. The empirical studies provide both information and additional questions for future researchers. The theoretical accounts offer frameworks for building more detailed and integrated understanding of the processes involved in developing and expressing and changing patterns of ethnic and national identification. From what we already know about the multiple identifications of immigrants, we are able to suggest directions and agenda for policy development and enactment. But here, too, we will learn more as we go forward, feeding back to the research as we discover more of the realities of immigrant identity development and expression. The stakes are relatively high for both immigrants and receiving societies and therefore it is important to let the journey continue.

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