

## **The Beneficial Effects of Social Identity Protection on the Performance Motivation of Members of Devalued Groups**

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*For members of socially devalued or stigmatized groups, work and educational settings can threaten social identity, inducing the use of coping strategies that lower their motivation (e.g., self-segregation, domain disengagement) rather than improving their position in the social hierarchy. We review a recent research program on women and ethnic minorities to show that members of these stigmatized groups can maintain their motivation in threatening work and educational contexts when they are offered ways to protect their social identity. For example, organizations that communicate value for the social identities of women and ethnic minorities allow members of these groups to focus on success and motivate them to improve their performance on dimensions that increase their social status. Furthermore, social identity protection has important benefits over more individualistic forms of identity protection because it maintains group members' concern for their group's plight, increasing opportunities for successful collective action. The practical implications of this work are discussed.*

Upon declaring her intention to leave a cushy job with a Fortune 500 company . . . a young black woman . . . was pulled aside by her vice president. Why, the executive wanted to know, was the company having such a difficult time retaining young minority professionals? The young woman's frustrations were numerous: . . . she was weary of racial insensitivity, of people who saw nothing about her except her color, or conversely of those who, in acknowledging her talents, in effect gave her credit for not really being black; she deemed it unlikely . . . that she would be allowed to make it to the top . . . Rather than to try to explain, the woman finally blurted out that there were no blacks, and certainly no black women. "What reason do I have to believe," she added, "that I can make it to the top?"

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When she related the incident to me several years later, she remained discouraged by what seemed a simple reality of her existence. "The bottom line is you're black. And that's still a negative in this society."

Cose (1993, p. 5–6)

This quote, taken from Ellis Cose's essay on continuing racism in American society, exemplifies how members of groups that are socially devalued (e.g., ethnic minorities, women, homosexuals, older people, people with lower socioeconomic backgrounds) can come to withdraw their investment from domains that determine status in society (e.g., career success, academic achievement). Being in a work or educational setting in which one is constantly under threat of being devalued on the basis of a social category such as ethnicity, gender, or social class is psychologically costly (Crocker, Major, & Steele, 1998; Inzlicht & Good, 2006; Tajfel & Turner, 1986). It can lead individuals to abandon their ambitions and to conclude that performing well in these contexts (e.g., high-status companies, schools, and universities) or on these performance dimensions (e.g., mathematics, academic achievement, leadership ability) is reserved exclusively for members of groups holding higher societal status (e.g., men, Whites, individuals of higher socioeconomic classes).

In this article, we attempt to answer the question asked by the vice president in the quote above: How can members of socially devalued or stigmatized groups who face chronic threats to their identity retain their motivation to overcome the social devaluation of their group and pursue high performance in contexts that are stereotypically associated with high-status groups? In our analysis of this issue we review research that we performed on two highly visible stigmatized groups in the Netherlands, namely women and ethnic minorities in Dutch educational and work settings. We demonstrate that women and ethnic minorities are most likely to retain their motivation and achieve high performance in work and educational environments when others in these settings acknowledge rather than deny the existence of gender and ethnic identities and communicate respect and value for these social identities.

## Overview

For women and ethnic minorities in the Netherlands, work and educational settings are often performance settings in which men and the native Dutch predominate (Dagevos, Gijsberts, & Van Praag, 2003; Portegijs, Boelens, & Olsthoorn, 2004). As a result, women and ethnic minorities can perceive their own gender or ethnic group as devalued or stigmatized. When women and ethnic minorities feel devalued and stigmatized at work or in school, this can reduce their performance by distracting them from their ambitions, encouraging them to seek other schools, organizations, or career paths in which they feel less threatened.

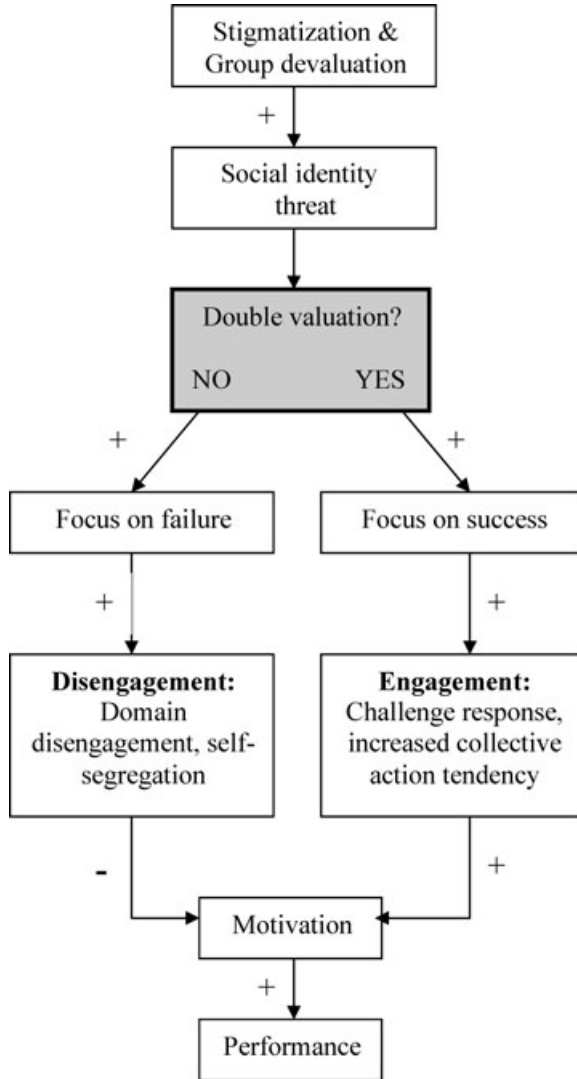


Fig. 1. The moderating effect of double valuation on the relationship between stigmatization/group devaluation and motivation and performance.

Figure 1 illustrates the relations we examined in our work to account for the lower motivation and performance among women and ethnic minorities who perceive their group to be devalued. First, because individuals base part of their self-concept on the groups to which they belong (“social identity”), perceiving

that one's group is stigmatized and devalued threatens one's identity. This threat to social identity leads members of stigmatized groups in performance settings to focus on the possibility that they will fail rather than to focus on possible success. In order to cope with social identity threat and the focus on failure this causes, women and ethnic minorities use several coping strategies to defend the value of their gender or ethnic group.

Although two of these coping strategies are aimed at actually improving one's personal or collective outcomes (i.e., individual mobility and collective action), we suggest that women and ethnic minorities will often perceive the opportunities to improve their identity through individual or collective status improvement as very limited. Consequently, as depicted in the pathway on the left in Figure 1, they are likely to protect their identity by disengaging and self-segregating from performance domains and performance settings in which their group is devalued (e.g., leadership positions, academic achievement). This, however, lowers their ambitions and motivation on these performance dimensions on which they are outperformed by men and the ethnic majority group.

As depicted in Figure 1, we propose that, through a moderating process we term "double valuation," the negative effects of stigmatization and devaluation on the motivated performance of women and ethnic minorities can be turned into a more positive outcome, namely an increased challenge response. That is, we argue that when work and educational settings not only emphasize the importance of performing well on status-defining dimensions, but simultaneously value and acknowledge group characteristics that are important for women and ethnic minorities, women and ethnic minorities will focus on possible success and interpret identity threats as a challenge, leading to higher motivation and performance. By not only emphasizing the value of high performance in domains that are currently dominated by high-status groups (e.g., academic achievement and leadership ability), but by also communicating value for group characteristics that are important for women and ethnic minorities ("ingroup domains," e.g., women's acclaimed social skills, ethnic minority's religious or cultural background), threats to social identity are reduced. This, in turn, allows women and ethnic minorities to focus on possibilities to increase their outcomes and remain engaged with achieving success in their work or their education.

We start our analysis with a theoretical overview in which we discuss insights from social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979, 1986), stereotype threat theory (Steele, 1997; Steele & Aronson, 1995; Steele, Spencer, & Aronson, 2002) and the stigma perspective (Crocker & Major, 1989; Crocker et al., 1998; Heatherton, Kleck, Hebl, & Hull, 2000; Levin & Van Laar, 2006; Swim & Stangor, 1998). Then, we review recent experimental and field research to show that women and ethnic minorities in Dutch school and work contexts that threaten their social identity can more easily retain their motivation when they are offered opportunities to deflect threats to their social identity. Moreover, we discuss research that compares the

effects of social identity protection to the effects of affirmations of one's personal identity. We conclude by discussing the practical implications of our research. We offer implementations that we expect to protect the motivation and performance of women and ethnic minorities in work and educational settings, and discuss how our findings generalize to other stigmatized groups, such as homosexuals, older people, and people with a lower socioeconomic background.

### **Theoretical Framework: Stigma and Social Identity**

For members of groups that hold low societal status, such as women and ethnic minorities, being confronted with the low evaluation and negative stereotypes about their group threatens the self-concept. The social identity perspective (Tajfel & Turner, 1979, 1986; Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher, & Wetherell, 1987) argues that this is because individuals not only derive a sense of self by assessing what makes them unique and different from other individuals (personal identity), but also base their self-worth on the social categories to which they belong (their social identities, e.g., gender, ethnicity, occupation). Therefore, it is important for individuals that not only their individual identity is valued and respected by others, but also that the groups and social categories on which they base their self-concept are acknowledged and valued.

Depending on how important the group is for an individual's self-definition and how contextually salient that identity is, being in an educational or employment setting in which this group is devalued or stigmatized negatively affects one's social identity and self-concept (see Figure 1). Research has revealed that social identity threat not only impacts the affective responses, cognitions and behaviors of the stigmatized (Crocker & Major, 1989; Crocker et al., 1998; Crocker & Quinn, 2000; Heatherton et al., 2000; Levin & Van Laar, 2006; Major, Spencer, Schmader, Wolfe, & Crocker, 1998; Swim & Stangor, 1998), but also leads to physiological stress-responses such as increased cortisol levels and high blood pressure (Blascovich, Spencer, Quinn, & Steele, 2001; Matheson & Cole, 2004; Scheepers & Ellemers, 2005).

For ethnic minorities and women, work and educational settings are likely to induce threats to social identity because women and ethnic minorities in these settings often hold a lower-status position relative to men and ethnic majorities. One reason for this is that most of the performance domains that are important for success in these contexts (e.g., academic performance, leadership, negotiation skills) are domains in which, according to widely shared stereotypes, high-status groups are expected to perform better than low-status groups. For example, according to stereotypes men are better leaders and negotiators than women are, and ethnic minorities are less smart and competent than Whites are (Davies, Spencer, & Steele, 2005; Kray, Thompson, & Galinsky, 2001; Spencer, Steele, & Quinn, 1999; Stangor & Sechrist, 1998).

Being in an environment in which high-status groups are expected to excel threatens the lower-status group's value, thereby threatening the social self-concept. In addition, compared to members of nonstigmatized groups, members of stigmatized groups are more likely to think of themselves in terms of their group membership. Research has revealed that individuals are more likely to perceive themselves as members of a specific social category (e.g., women, ethnic minorities) when this category is underrepresented than when this category is overrepresented (McGuire, McGuire, Child, & Fujioka, 1978; McGuire, McGuire, & Winton, 1979; McGuire & Padawer Singer, 1976; Turner et al., 1987). For example, ethnic minority school children are more likely to spontaneously describe themselves by referring to their ethnicity to the extent that their group represents a minority in the classroom (McGuire et al., 1978). Thus, even though people are part of many different groups and can focus on different identities (Crisp & Hewstone, 2006), specific contexts will induce women and ethnic minorities to focus on their stigmatized identity. Because women and ethnic minorities are often underrepresented in high-status performance settings such as high-ranking companies and prestigious universities, their gender or ethnicity becomes more distinctive and important for self-definition. As a result, when this identity is devalued within that context, social identity concerns arise.

In addition to increasing the tendency of women and ethnic minorities to perceive themselves in terms of their group membership, when women or ethnic minorities make up the numerical minority at work or in a classroom, this also increases the salience of the negative stereotypes that exist about their group (Cohen & Swim, 1995; Inzlicht, Aronson, Good, & McKay, 2006; Inzlicht & Ben-Zeev, 2000; Stangor, Carr, & Kiang, 1998; Swan & Wyer, 1997). For example, a female employee in a computer company composed primarily of male employees will be more aware of the negative stereotypes about women's technical skills than a woman who works in a more gender-balanced work environment. Similarly, Moroccan school children in a school dominated by native Dutch will be more anxious that other school children have negative expectations about their cultural or religious background.

Finally, our own research shows that when women are in a performance context that is dominated by a male majority, they expect these males to exclusively value performance dimensions on which men outperform women and to devalue dimensions that are characteristic of women. This induces women to focus more on the possibility of personally failing on these dimensions (Derks, Van Laar, & Ellemers, 2006). Thus, a female employee working in a male-dominated organization not only ruminates more about the negative stereotypes that exist about her gender, but also perceives dimensions that are associated with men, such as technical abilities and leadership, as more important than dimensions that are associated with women, such as social skills and multitasking. This causes her to be more concerned about failing in leadership and technical tasks than she

would be in a more gender-balanced environment. Academic and employment settings in which women or ethnic minorities are confronted with men or ethnic majority members thus constitute threatening environments in which women and ethnic minorities focus on their devalued identity and the negative expectations that exist about their group (Inzlicht & Ben-Zeev, 2000; Inzlicht & Good, 2006).

### **How Does Social Identity Threat Lower Motivation and Performance?**

Experiencing social identity threat and being aware of the negative stereotypes concerning one's group affects the motivation and performance of ethnic minorities and women in two different ways. Identity threat can *directly* lower task performance through a process called stereotype threat, and can do so *indirectly* by eliciting coping responses that simultaneously reduce motivation and performance. Although the focus of this article is on the detrimental effects of social identity threat on performance through motivation (as depicted in Figure 1), we briefly review stereotype threat effects below. Subsequently, we discuss in more detail how the coping responses that women and ethnic minorities use affect their motivation and performance.

#### *Stereotype Threat*

The cognitive salience of negative stereotypes can *directly* impair the performance of women and ethnic minorities by increasing anxiety and cognitive load that interferes with performance. This process is termed "stereotype threat" (Steele, 1998; Steele & Aronson, 1995). When women or ethnic minorities are in a situation in which the negative stereotypes about their group are salient, they can become concerned that their own performance will confirm these negative stereotypes and anxiously expect to be viewed in stereotypical ways (Roberson & Kulik, 2007).

Stereotype threat has been shown to lower the intellectual performance of African Americans and students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds (Croizet & Claire, 1998; Steele & Aronson, 1995), the math performance of women (Spencer et al., 1999) and the reasoning ability of individuals with a mental illness (Quinn, Kahng, & Crocker, 2004) compared to controls for whom the negative stereotype was not made salient. For instance, Inzlicht and Ben-Zeev (2000) showed that women's math performance decreased as the number of male participants present while taking the test increased. As discussed above, being outnumbered by members of a nonstigmatized group increases the salience of negative stereotypes, lowering women's math performance. Schmader and Johns (2003, see also Johns, 2005) showed that stereotype threat causes performance decrements because it decreases working memory. In this way, ethnic minorities

and women in threatening educational and work settings have a more difficult time showing their abilities and regulating their anxiety.

### *Coping With Social Identity Threat*

In addition to *directly* lowering cognitive resources and causing performance decrements, social identity threat can lower performance *indirectly* by reducing women's and ethnic minorities' interest in performing well in domains and settings that are associated with men and the ethnic majority. That is, when women and ethnic minorities are confronted with devaluation of their group, this triggers the use of coping strategies, some of which are quite detrimental to performance motivation. When members of stigmatized groups perceive that others devalue their group, they do not undergo this threat passively. Instead, because their group is a fundamental part of their identity, members of stigmatized groups will actively seek ways to cope and protect their social identity (Branscombe & Ellemers, 1998; Crocker & Major, 1989; Crocker et al., 1998; Ellemers, 1993; Heatherton et al., 2000; Levin & Van Laar, 2006; Swim & Stangor, 1998).

Research that sprang from social identity theory and the stigma perspective has shown that members of devalued or stigmatized groups are quite creative and flexible in maintaining a positive self-concept even if actual status relations cannot be changed (Crocker et al., 1998; Ellemers, 1993; Ellemers & Barreto, 2001; Ellemers, Barreto, & Spears, 1999; Ellemers & Van Knippenberg, 1997; Heatherton et al., 2000; Levin & Van Laar, 2006; Levin, Van Laar, & Foote, 2006; Swim & Stangor, 1998; Van Laar & Derks, 2003; Van Laar & Sidanius, 2001). Thus, group members can use a range of coping strategies to cope with group-based identity threat. Women and ethnic minorities can try to actually change their individual outcomes or the outcomes of their group in order to achieve a more positive social identity. More positive individual identity outcomes can be attained by psychologically distancing the self from one's ethnic or gender group ("I am not like those other women/Moroccans") or by affiliating with men and the ethnic majority group (individual mobility; Ellemers, 2001; Ellemers & Van Laar, in press; Wright & Taylor, 1998). However, this strategy will only be available to women and ethnic minorities who are willing to give up that part of their identity, who can psychologically disengage the self from their gender or ethnic group (i.e., low identifiers, Ellemers, Spears, & Doosje, 1997) and who are able to perform equally to men and the dominant ethnic group (Boen & Vanbeselaere, 2002; Taylor & McKirnan, 1984).

Besides pursuing individual mobility, women and ethnic minorities can improve their social identity by collectively improving their group's status within an organization or society (social change; Simon, 1998). This can be pursued, for instance, by improving the group's performance on dimensions that lead to higher social status (Ouwerkerk, De Gilder, & De Vries, 2000; Ouwerkerk, Ellemers,



& De Gilder, 1999) or by instigating collective protest to strive for better group outcomes (Simon & Klandermans, 2001; Wright, Taylor, & Moghaddam, 1990). For example, through mentoring programs in which successful women and ethnic minorities coach other ingroup members to achieve success and by joining interest groups that strive for the advancement of their group, women and ethnic minorities can aim to improve the status of their social category.

As exemplified by the Black female professional in the opening quote, members of devalued groups often perceive their chances of successful individual mobility or social change to be limited. The perceived difficulty of actually changing their personal or their group's status within an organization or educational setting can motivate women and ethnic minorities to instead improve their own *perception* of their group's standing. This allows them to downplay the effect that their low status has on them. Collectively, these strategies have been termed "social creativity" (Tajfel & Turner, 1979, 1986). It is the use of these kinds of coping strategies that is expected to damage motivation and expected to lower ambitions among members of devalued groups (Crocker & Major, 1989; Eccles, 2005; Steele et al., 2002; Tajfel & Turner, 1986; Wright, 2001b; Wrosch, Scheier, Miller, Schulz, & Carver, 2003).

Women and ethnic minorities tend to restrict their social comparisons to individuals of the same gender and ethnicity rather than comparing their outcomes to members of higher-status outgroups (Blanton, Christie, & Dye, 2002; Ellemers, 2002; Ouwkerk et al., 1999). Similarly, members of stigmatized groups tend to self-segregate into contexts that are made up of ingroup members rather than outgroup members, lowering the likelihood that they will be confronted with the low status and low outcomes of their ingroup (Levin et al., 2006; Major, Crocker, & Sciacchitano, 1993; Major & Forcey, 1985). Women tend to choose career paths in which women are overrepresented such as healthcare and education rather than typically male career paths such as science and technology (Eccles, Barber, & Jozefowicz, 1999; Portegijs et al., 2004). Although restricting comparisons to those who are equally badly or even worse off, and self-segregation into safer "ingroup contexts" reduces the negative experience of deprivation (Crosby, 1982), a downside of this strategy is that it also leads to lowered feelings of entitlement and obscures the necessity of striving for equality (Major, 1989).

Another strategy that is used by women and ethnic minorities to reduce threats to their identity is to cognitively devalue and disengage from dimensions on which their group is stigmatized (e.g., leadership ability for women, academic performance for ethnic minorities; Eccles, Wong, & Peck, 2006; Major & Schmader, 1998; Osborne, 1995; Schmader & Major, 1999; Schmader, Major, & Gramzow, 2001; Van Laar & Derks, 2003; Verkuyten & Thijs, 2004). For example, Eccles and colleagues showed that as African American youths experience more discrimination, the importance they attach to school performance declines (Eccles et al., 2006, see Verkuyten & Thijs, 2004 for similar results among Turkish youths in the

Netherlands). This suggests that by disconnecting self-worth from these “status-defining” domains, women and ethnic minorities can lower the impact that low personal or ingroup performance on these dimensions has on their social identity. However, as represented in Figure 1, when women and ethnic minorities devalue and disengage from domains that are associated with men and the dominant ethnic group (i.e., career success, leadership skills, mathematics, academic achievement, intellectual performance) this also lowers their motivation to perform on these dimensions (Eccles et al., 2006) reducing their chances to achieve equal status to members of higher-status groups.

In this way social identity threat and stigmatization can indirectly lower the ambition and performance outcomes of women and ethnic minorities. The negative consequences of stigma and group-based devaluation are visible in the United States where Black youths are still twice as likely to drop out of school than Whites are (Laird, DeBell, & Chapman, 2006). Similarly, although recent years have seen an increase of the relative participation of women in paid work in the Netherlands, their functioning is not always optimal, as evidenced by lower career progress and higher attrition rates, burn-out and health problems (Portegijs et al., 2004; Vinke, Andriessen, & Van den Heuvel, 1999).

To conclude, group-based devaluation and stigmatization can induce women and ethnic minorities in educational and employment settings to disengage from performance dimensions that are important for success (status-defining domains), to give up their aspirations and instead self-segregate into environments that pose less of a threat to their social identity. At the same time, in order to achieve greater social equality it is important that women and ethnic minorities do strive for optimal performance on the dimensions that improve their position within an organization or within society instead of utilizing social creativity strategies that prevent their pursuit of better outcomes. As illustrated in Figure 1, the key argument that is made in this article is that the negative effects of social identity threat on motivation can be mitigated by offering members of devalued groups opportunities to protect their social identity in ways that are not necessarily detrimental to their motivation in status-defining domains. These opportunities to deflect social identity threat (which we term “double valuation,” see Figure 1) lowers the need to protect identity by devaluing status-defining domains or by withdrawing from threatening contexts, enabling women and ethnic minorities to remain invested in domains that lead to higher social status (e.g., leadership ability, academic achievements).

### **Improving Performance Motivation Through “Double Valuation”**

Given that threats to social identity can lead to lower investment and motivation among women and ethnic minorities in work and educational settings, we propose that members of stigmatized groups might maintain their motivation

and involvement provided that they find other ways of coping than through domain disengagement or self-segregation. If women and ethnic minorities could boost their social identity so that it is more protected against negative treatment of their group, their psychological need to withdraw from contexts in which their group may be devalued (mathematics courses, top-ranking companies, high-status universities) could be diminished.

We propose that women and ethnic minorities can reduce threats to their social identity, while simultaneously remaining motivated in status-defining domains, by drawing attention to positive characteristics of their group such as the ingroup's high performance or involvement in alternative performance domains (ingroup domains). For example, instead of devaluing the domain of leadership altogether, women in a company dominated by men could attach value to women's acclaimed social skills, thereby focusing on a positive aspect of their group. Similarly, ethnic minorities in a company dominated by ethnic majority group members could protect their social identity by seeing the richness of their religious or cultural background as valuable to the company, because it increases the company's ability to cater to ethnic minority clients and increase their market share in this way. This strategy of finding alternative dimensions or group characteristics that positively reflect on the ingroup has already been identified and studied by social identity researchers (Cadinu & Cerchioni, 2001; Ellemers & Van Rijswijk, 1997; Lemaine, Kasterztein, & Personnaz, 1978).

Previously, it was assumed that when women and ethnic minorities focus on alternative ingroup dimensions, this automatically reduces the value they attach to status-defining dimensions such as leadership and academic achievement (Lemaine et al., 1978, but see Hinkle, Taylor, Fox Cardamone, & Ely, 1998). However, experimental studies have shown that when members of low-status groups use new comparisons dimensions that shed positive light on their ingroup, they are at the same time also likely to acknowledge that the dimensions on which they are outperformed by higher-status groups are more important and valuable than these alternative dimensions (Ellemers, Van Rijswijk, Roefs, & Simons, 1997; Hinkle et al., 1998; Schmader, Major, Eccleston, & McCoy, 2001). We show that because emphasizing alternative ingroup dimensions enables devalued group members to feel good about their group, the *double valuation* of status-defining dimensions as well as ingroup dimensions will actually enable them to focus on performing well in a situation that would otherwise pose too much of a threat to their social identity (e.g., male-dominated companies, predominantly White universities).

### *Double Valuation Improves Performance Motivation in Threatening Environments*

We have argued that women and ethnic minorities can protect themselves against the social identity threat that they may experience in their work or

education by personally attaching value to dimensions that they feel positively defines their ingroup (e.g., women's acclaimed emotional intelligence, ethnic minorities' religious or cultural background). We demonstrate that when women and ethnic minorities are in performance contexts in which their social identity is threatened (e.g., majority environments), their performance motivation depends on the degree to which they protect their social identity by attaching value to an ingroup dimension. That is, the more value they personally attach to a dimension of importance to their group (e.g., a domain that is characteristic of this group or in which this group is successful), the better they are able to maintain their performance motivation at work or in school. Thus, double valuation can enable members of stigmatized groups to overcome identity threat and to remain motivated in threatening performance settings such as school or work environments.

A first study showing this positive link between double valuation and performance motivation is a correlational study we performed in the Netherlands among ethnic minority children in their final year of primary school (Lammers, Van Laar, Derks, & Ellemers, 2007). Most of the ethnic minority children who participated in the study had Turkish or Moroccan parents and had an Islamic background. In the Netherlands, the attack of the World Trade Center and the murder of the Dutch movie director Theo van Gogh by a Muslim fundamentalist led to increased intergroup tensions and increased the day-to-day social identity threats faced by Muslims in the Netherlands. In our study, we measured the children's self-esteem, their motivation to perform well in school, as well as the value they personally attached to school (the status-defining domain) and to their religious background (the ingroup domain). In addition, we recorded the number of ethnic minority and native Dutch children in their classroom. This allowed us to distinguish between predominantly White classrooms in which ethnic minorities made up less than 21% of the classroom, mixed classrooms in which ethnic minorities made up between 39% and 48% of the classroom, and predominantly minority classrooms in which less than 5% of the children in the classroom were White.

First of all, we found that the ethnic composition of the classroom predicted ethnic minority children's well-being: Ethnic minority children reported lower self-esteem in predominantly White classrooms than in mixed or predominantly minority classrooms. Interestingly, when examining how ethnic minority children's academic motivation was related to the value they attached to the school domain and to their religion, we found that whether double valuation was related to their academic motivation depended on the ethnic composition of the classroom. That is, whereas the academic motivation of ethnic minority children in mixed or predominantly minority classrooms was predicted only by the degree to which they personally valued school performance, the reported academic motivation of ethnic minority children in White classrooms depended on whether they also personally attached value to their religion. This suggests that for ethnic minority children in White classrooms social identity concerns arise, which they have to deal with in

order to reach optimal academic motivation. Therefore, the academic motivation of ethnic minority school children in predominantly White classrooms benefits from double valuation, when they value important characteristics of their ethnic group, as well as school performance.

We also have demonstrated these beneficial effects of double valuation under more controlled circumstances in a set of studies with experimentally created low-status groups (Derks, Van Laar, & Ellemers, 2007a). Here, we showed that when low-status group members experience that their group is devalued they are more motivated to perform on a status-defining dimension on which their group is negatively stereotyped when they personally attach value to an ingroup dimension. By contrast, when low-status group members experience relatively little social identity threat, their motivation does not depend on the value they attach to positive characteristics of their group.

In these two studies we assigned participants to an experimentally created low-status group and presented them with a bogus status-defining dimension on which their group was outperformed by a higher-status group, and a bogus alternative dimension on which their group was more successful than the high-status group. Following this, in both studies we experimentally induced low or high social identity threat, for instance, by telling low-status group members that they would later be asked to show their performance in the presence of members of the low-status ingroup (low threat) or members of the high-status outgroup (high threat). In both studies we found a positive relation between social identity protection and performance motivation when social identity threat was high. That is, in the conditions in which we manipulated a high threat to social identity, the more low-status group members valued the dimension on which their group was successful, the more motivated they were on the status-defining dimension. This positive relation between social identity protection and motivation was not present in the conditions in which social identity threat was low. Thus, valuing an ingroup dimension only benefited performance motivation when it helped to reduce social identity concerns. Although participants had no further knowledge of or experience with the ingroup dimension, attaching value to this dimension in a context that threatened the value of their group enabled them to remain motivated on a dimension on which their ingroup was negatively stereotyped.

These experimental and field studies were the first to examine the direct positive link between this type of social identity protection (double valuation) and the motivated performance of low-status group members on a status-defining dimension. The results indicate that women and ethnic minorities in work and school environments become more motivated to improve their performance in status-defining domains such as leadership ability and academic achievement when they are able to protect their social identity by valuing domains that positively define their ingroup. Moreover, the results show that valuing ingroup dimensions is not necessarily a negative strategy that distracts women and ethnic minorities

from the dimensions that improve their status within an organization or university (as was previously assumed, Lemaine et al., 1978; Tajfel & Turner, 1986). Instead, it can actually prepare women and ethnic minorities for the behaviors necessary to improve their success in these settings.

These results elicited a further question, namely whether schools and organizations can also intervene to help women and ethnic minorities to protect their social identity and maintain their motivation. Although the research discussed above showed that women and ethnic minorities themselves can protect their identity in a way that also protects their performance motivation (double valuation), previous research revealed that stigmatized group members can also use ways to protect their social identity that damage their motivation and investment in threatening contexts (i.e., domain disengagement, self-segregation). Therefore, we set out to examine whether others could also provide women and ethnic minorities with double valuation, to improve their motivation and performance. We thus examined whether communicating contextual value for alternative performance dimensions that positively characterize women and ethnic minorities would also lower their identity threat, while simultaneously stimulating their performance motivation at work or in school.

#### *Contexts That Offer Double Valuation Elicit Higher Performance Motivation in Stigmatized Group Members*

Organizations and schools that communicate double valuation can enable women and ethnic minorities to maintain their motivation to strive for high performance. We explain that by communicating value for alternative dimensions that positively characterize women and ethnic minorities, or by acknowledging and respecting their social identity, work and educational organizations can enable members of devalued groups to overcome their stigma and maintain high motivation and performance.

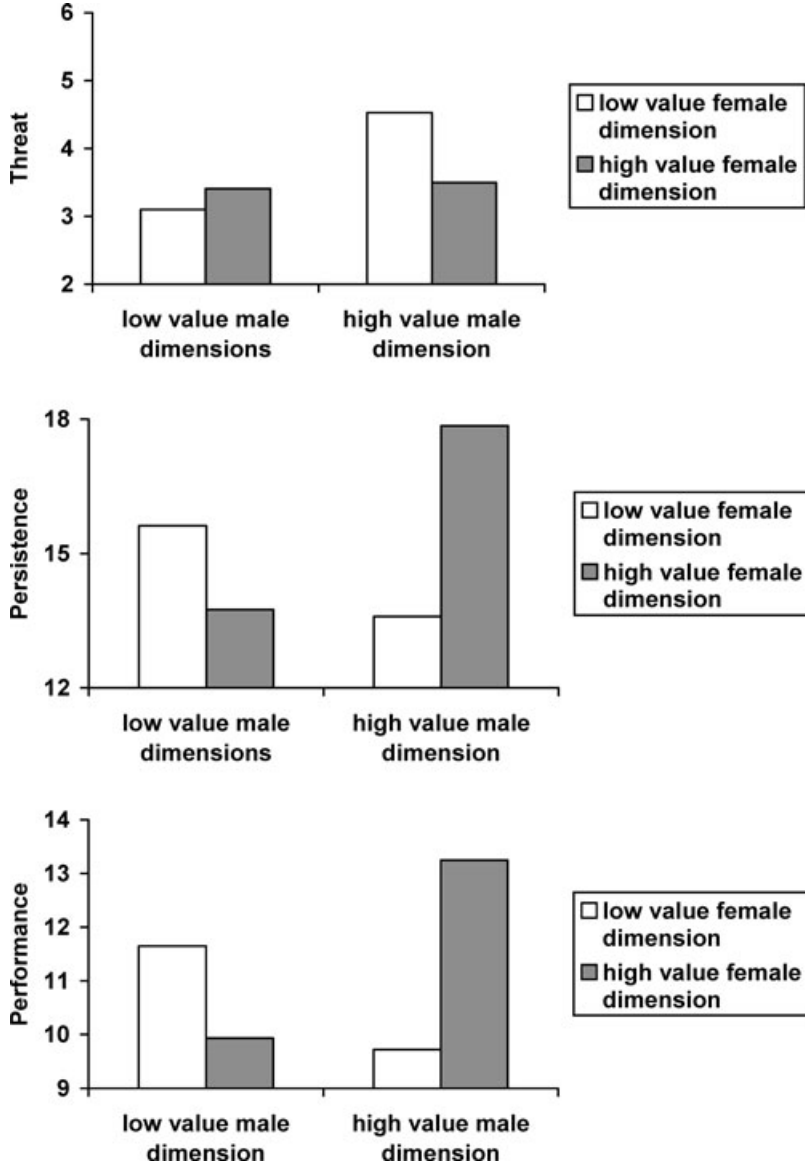
This positive relation between *contextual* double valuation and performance motivation was found in an experimental study in which female students were placed in an experimentally created job application context (Derks et al., 2007a). In the study, we manipulated a job application context, which placed our female participants in a low-status position, as women in the Netherlands often occupy low-status positions in the labor market (Portegijs et al., 2004). Furthermore, our female participants reported being aware of this status difference. Female participants were presented with two cognitive abilities (which we invented for the experiment) that were supposedly predictive of future job success: a typically male ability on which men outperformed women, and a typically female ability on which women were more successful than men. Subsequently, we manipulated social identity threat by informing participants that performance on the male dimension was either highly valued by future employers (high social identity threat) or not

at all valued by future employers (low social identity threat). Additionally, social identity protection was manipulated by either informing women that the female dimension was highly valued by employers (high social identity protection) or not valued at all (low social identity protection).

Consistent with the double valuation hypothesis, we found that informing women that future employers highly valued performance on a domain on which men outperformed women, increased their feelings of threat (see Figure 2). However, informing women that employers also valued the female domain (double valuation) reduced their feelings of threat. Importantly, double valuation also improved women's persistence and performance on the male dimension (see Figure 2). Although communicating value for a female domain did not affect women's persistence when social identity threat was low (i.e., when the male dimension was not valued), it did improve their persistence when their social identity was threatened. Thus, in a context in which future employers judged performance on the male dimension as very important, women were more persistent on this dimension when the high performance of their group on the other performance dimension was also explicitly valued. This greater persistence also resulted in improved performance on the male dimensions. Thus, by offering members of stigmatized groups social identity protection—in this case through double valuation—individuals feel less threatened and more motivated to achieve on a dimension that is associated with a higher-status group.

Double valuation was also shown to improve the aspirations and performance motivation of young working and studying Muslim women in the Netherlands (Van Laar, Derks, Ellemers, El Hannouche, & Paltansing, 2007). This research revealed that the more Muslim women in work and educational settings perceive native Dutch to acknowledge and respect their religious identity—thereby offering double valuation—the more motivated Muslim women feel and the more identified they are with Dutch society.

The first study in which we showed this was a correlational study in which we examined whether Muslim women perceived their group to be stigmatized in Dutch society and related this to their attitudes concerning the labor market. The results revealed that the pressures Muslim women perceive from native Dutch to suppress their religious identity (e.g., by not allowing them to wear a headscarf to work) were negatively associated with their emotional well-being and interest in pursuing success in their work and education. Furthermore, the results indicated that greater perceived stigmatization led Muslim women to identify even more with dimensions that define their ingroup such as Islam, suggesting the use of social identity protection. Importantly, attaching a high value to dimensions that positively defined their ingroup protected their motivation and aspirations. In fact, young Muslim women were even more likely to perceive possibilities to advance and to integrate into Dutch society to the degree that they personally attached value to their religion and cultural background. Additionally, double valuation



**Fig. 2.** Threat, persistence, and performance of women as a function of low and high value of the male and female performance domains. Figure adapted from "Social creativity strikes back: Improving motivated performance of low-status group members by valuing ingroup dimensions" by Derks, Van Laar & Ellemers, 2007a. Copyright John Wiley & Sons Limited. Reproduced with permission.



offered by the context also improved their interest and aspirations in the work and educational domain. The more Muslim women perceived native Dutch to respect and value their Muslim identity (e.g., by allowing them to take days off for religious holidays), the higher their aspirations were. Additionally, the more they perceived other Muslims in their surroundings to value school and work, the higher their emotional well-being and performance motivation. Double valuation, consisting of the respect of native Dutch for their religious background together with the importance that other Muslims attach to school and work, also improved their identification with Dutch society.

We carried out an additional experimental study among young working and studying Muslim women to confirm the causal direction of these relations (Van Laar et al., 2007). In this study we presented respondents with one of two types of organizations—one organization supported and acknowledged their social identity, for instance, by allowing women to take time off work for religious holidays, whereas the other organization did not. Again, we showed that when the organization that Muslim women read about acknowledged and respected their Muslim identity, Muslim women reported higher motivation and identification with that organization than when the organization did not acknowledge their identity.

Together, the results of these studies illustrate that, in addition to the personal value ethnic minorities and women attach to dimension that positively define their ingroup, contextual cues that communicate that their group is valued can enable them to remain motivated on status-defining dimensions. It is beneficial for the motivation and aspirations of Muslim women in Dutch society to be allowed to express their religious identity within organizations and educational settings. By acknowledging and respecting their social identity, work and educational settings can enable ethnic minorities and women to maintain a positive image of their group, allowing them to focus on achievement within these contexts rather than worrying whether or not their group is valued.

### *Contexts That Offer Double Valuation Induce a Focus on Success*

When further examining the psychological mechanisms involved in this process, we found that the reason why women and ethnic minorities reduce their motivation and interest in performing well in threatening settings is because threatening contexts induce members of stigmatized groups to focus on avoiding failure rather than on approaching success (see Figure 1, Derks et al., 2006). Because threatening performance contexts induce women and ethnic minorities to reflect on negative stereotypes about their group, women and ethnic minorities in threatening education or employment settings are also more likely to aim to avoid these negative outcomes, for example, by withdrawing from the situation or devaluing the importance of success in these contexts, rather than to aim for improving possible positive outcomes. In this work we also showed the reverse

relation, namely that double valuation can prevent such withdrawal responses as it induces stigmatized group members to focus on success rather than on the possibility of failing. This in turn enabled them to maintain their motivation in threatening contexts and to overcome the negative expectations that exist about their group.

The difficulty that ethnic minorities and women face in settings in which their group membership is devalued is that the negative stereotypes about their group and the performance anxiety this can cause is likely to deter them from persisting on these dimensions (Seibt & Förster, 2004). A number of social psychological models point to the fact that individuals can perceive achievement situations in terms of a positive challenge in which success is a possible outcome, or as a negative threat in which failure has to be averted (Blascovich et al., 2001; Blascovich & Tomaka, 1996; Elliot & Church, 1997; Higgins, 1997).

Work by Blascovich and colleagues has shown that whether individuals appraise performance settings as challenging or as threatening affects cardiovascular reactions eliciting either a physiological fight response (challenge) or a flight response (threat) (Blascovich et al., 2001; Blascovich & Tomaka, 1996; Scheepers & Ellemers, 2005). Similarly, regulatory focus theory (Higgins, 1997) states that individuals can frame achievement goals in terms of losses or gains. Individuals who are “promotion focused” interpret achievement settings such as work or school in terms of success and nonsuccess and eagerly strive to perform well. Individuals with a “prevention focus” interpret achievement situations in terms of failure versus nonfailure, which elicits vigilant behavior to avoid failure. In the same vein, McGregor and Elliot (2002) have shown that whereas performance approach goals lead students to experience positive challenge, to have high performance aspirations and to spend more hours studying, performance avoidance goals lead students to experience threat, to have lower performance aspirations, to procrastinate and to spend fewer hours on their school work.

Whether ethnic minorities and women view their work place or educational institution as a setting in which to vigilantly avoid failure or as a setting in which to eagerly approach success thus has important consequences for their aspirations and performance motivation (McGregor & Elliot, 2002). When women and ethnic minorities focus on failure versus nonfailure and formulate achievement goals that involve avoiding failure in their work or education (rather than trying to succeed), they will avoid novel or difficult situations in which the risk of failing is salient. For example, whereas a focus on failure will lead a student with an ethnic minority background to avoid a prestigious class that is dominated by White students, an ethnic minority student focusing on success might give this challenging setting a try as this class allows her to improve her ability and gain status.

Work and educational settings in which group devaluation and negative stereotypes are salient are likely to induce a cognitive focus on avoiding failure.

A cognitive focus on failure is likely to negatively affect aspirations and performance motivation and lead individuals to ruminate on previous failures. By contrast, when women and ethnic minorities are able to focus on possible success and set achievement goals that involve trying to succeed, they are more likely to persist in domains that potentially threaten their social identity. Furthermore, we show that by offering members of stigmatized groups ways to value and protect their social identity, they are more likely to focus on success rather than being preoccupied with potential failure.

In one study (Derks et al., 2006), we found that women in a context dominated by men were indeed more likely to focus on failure rather than success. However, we also showed that offering women double valuation in this context increased their focus on success. In an experimental study, which examined an experimentally created job application context, female participants were informed about two cognitive abilities that were supposedly predictive of future career success. As in our previous studies, one domain was presented as associated with men, and a second domain was presented as associated with women. Social identity threat was induced by informing participants that later on in the experiment they would be tested on the male dimension either in the presence of three female participants (low social identity threat) or in the presence of three male participants (high social identity threat). Then, half of the participants were told that the other participants in the experiment either highly valued the female dimension (double valuation), whereas the other half were not.

As expected, the results revealed that, compared to women in a predominantly female context, women in a predominantly male context generally were more focused on failure: They reported lower performance self-esteem and felt more anxious, an emotion characteristic of a focus on failure (Higgins, Shah, & Friedman, 1997). Moreover, in terms of behavior, predominantly male contexts induced women to focus their performance on avoiding failure rather than on achieving success, as they spent more time on tasks with which they could avoid losing points than on tasks with which they could gain points. Thus, being in a context that threatens social identity, such as a context in which women are surrounded by men, causes low-status group members to focus on possible failure rather than on possible success on a status-defining dimension.

This experiment also clearly revealed the beneficial effects of double valuation. That is, women reported higher performance self-esteem and cheerfulness (an emotion that indicates a focus on success) when the other participants proclaimed valuing the female dimension. Interestingly, when the importance of the female performance dimension was emphasized participants gave more incorrect responses on the tasks with which they could improve their outcomes. This finding further confirms that they were less concerned with the avoidance of failure than with the possibility of success and were more likely to risk giving an incorrect answer, while pursuing an improved performance.

To summarize, this study sheds more light on why women and ethnic minorities become less motivated and invested in work and educational settings that threaten their social identity. When the devalued status of their group becomes salient, women and ethnic minorities are more likely to focus on the possibility of failing on status-defining dimensions. This in turn can induce them to direct their efforts toward the avoidance of failure. This can cause them to avoid challenging tasks such as speaking up in meetings or applying for higher positions. They can reduce the psychological significance they attach to their performance in typically male or ethnic majority domains such as leadership and high-status career paths. Finally, they can avoid comparing their outcomes with men and ethnic majority group members who may outperform them. However, by avoiding failure in these ways, stigma and group devaluation can become self-fulfilling prophecies that keep women and ethnic minorities at a disadvantage.

At the same time, this work provides an answer as to how this negative effect of social identity threat can be alleviated. By offering women and ethnic minorities ways to protect their social identity, for example, by communicating that the high performance of their group on alternative performance dimensions is also valued, or by acknowledging and valuing other group defining traits such as their religious background, women and ethnic minorities can come to focus more on the possibilities of succeeding. This leads them to accept the risks of failure associated with trying to accomplish new or challenging tasks and to show behavior that promotes success (i.e., increased involvement, persistence, and performance) rather than showing risk-avoidant behavior that prevents failure (e.g., self-segregation, domain disengagement, and restricting social comparisons).

#### *A Focus on Protecting Social Identity Rather Than Personal Identity Has Important Benefits for the Devalued Group*

Whereas women and ethnic minorities can guard themselves against stigmatization by protecting their social identity, they can also overcome their stigma by focusing on the fact that they are not only members of a stigmatized group but also individuals. Recent research shows that inducing stigmatized group members to focus on positive aspects of their personal identity (a process that has been termed self-affirmation, Steele, 1988), enables them to overcome stereotype threat performance decrements (Ambady, Paik, Steele, Owen Smith, & Mitchell, 2004; G. L. Cohen, Garcia, Apfel, & Master, 2006; Martens, Johns, Greenberg, & Schimel, 2006). For example, Cohen and colleagues (G. L. Cohen et al., 2006) showed in a field experiment among African American high school students that an in-class self-affirmation exercise (i.e., having students write about things they valued in themselves) reduced activation of the negative stereotypes about African Americans and prevented decreases in their performance over the academic year.

In our work we have demonstrated that, although focusing members of stigmatized groups on their personal identity enables them to maintain their motivation in threatening contexts, offering double valuation has benefits over and above the effect of personal self-affirmation. Because double valuation enables stigmatized group members to improve their social identity and remain focused on the group, it also induces them to remain concerned with their group's plight. By contrast, when stigmatized group members guard themselves against social identity threat by focusing on their personal rather than their social identity, they are less likely to focus on the disadvantaged status of their group. Instead, they will work to improve their individual outcomes, perhaps even at the expense of other group members (e.g., by emphasizing their superior ability or motivation compared to other group members) (Ellemers, 2002; Ellemers, Van Den Heuvel, De Gilder, Maass, & Bonvini, 2004). As such, whereas personal self-affirmation (focusing on positive aspects of one's individual identity) enables members of devalued groups to improve their individual outcomes, social identity protection (focusing on positive aspects of one's group) also benefits the outcomes of the whole group, because it induces group members to improve the status of their group rather than exclusively focusing on improving their own outcomes.

We first found that offering members of stigmatized groups social identity protection rather than personal self-affirmation makes them more cognitively focused on their group than on their personal identity. That is, in an experimental study (Derks, Van Laar, & Ellemers, 2007b) we found that female participants were more likely to mention group-related personal pronouns (i.e., "we," "us") in a bogus translation exercise when they received positive feedback about their group than when they received positive feedback individually. This result indicates that they were thinking of themselves in group (instead of individual) terms. Moreover, we showed a boundary condition of the beneficial effects of social identity protection: Whether women's self-esteem was buffered by the positive feedback they received about themselves or their gender group depended on the degree to which they based their self-concept on the group. That is, for high gender-identified women both personal self-affirmation and social identity protection led to high levels of self-esteem. For less gender-identified women, however, personal self-affirmation led to higher self-esteem, whereas this was less so for social identity protection, indicating that for low identifying group members hearing about positive aspects of their group did not protect their self-concept after failure on a typically male dimension.

Importantly, the same pattern of results was found for motivation on a typically male dimension: Whereas highly identified women were strongly motivated both after personal self-affirmation and social identity protection, less identified women only reported high performance motivation after they had been able to focus on their personal identity. Thus, double valuation will only benefit the identity and performance motivation of women who actually base their self-concept on their

gender. Women who do not feel identified with their gender will benefit more from affirmations of their personal identity than from affirmations of their social identity. Thus, the results of these studies imply that respecting and valuing the ethnic background of ethnic minority students or employees will only positively affect their motivation to the degree that this identity is important to them.

In addition, we found that social identity protection not only improves the performance motivation of highly identified women, but also their willingness to strive for higher group status. The results revealed that for highly identified women, being offered information that reflects positively on their social identity rather than their personal identity increased their concern for the devalued status of women and their willingness to work collectively toward the improvement of women's outcomes. Thus, it is beneficial to offer highly identified women social identity protection (e.g., by valuing positive characteristics of their group) rather than personal self-affirmation (e.g., by focusing them on their individual success). Because personal self-affirmation focuses women on their personal identity, it reduces their concern for the plight of other women. By contrast, focusing highly identified women on their gender identity and offering them ways to improve this identity makes them motivated to not just improve their personal outcomes, but also to help other women achieve the same. Similarly, we expect that ethnic minorities are more likely to remain concerned with the outcomes of other ethnic minorities within an organization when their immediate context communicates value for their group rather than emphasizing their individual successes only.

The reason why we think it is important that women remain concerned with the welfare of their group is that inequality between social groups is more likely to be reduced when group members collectively strive to improve the outcomes of their group. Women and ethnic minorities are often told that in order to achieve outcomes equal to men and Whites they should aim to achieve individual upward mobility. However, there is ample research to suggest that the effects of individual mobility on more general improvement of group status are limited, and can even be negative (the "illusion of meritocracy," Ellemers & Van Laar, *in press*; Barreto & Ellemers, *in press*).

Given that opportunities for upward individual mobility are often highly restricted ("tokenism," Wright, 2001a), individual mobility will only lead to status improvement for a limited number of highly talented women and ethnic minorities (tokens). However, even when some women and ethnic minorities do succeed in achieving positions of status or power, this does not necessarily reflect upon other members of their group, nor does it improve their outcomes. By contrast, individual mobility of some token individuals can seriously undermine efforts of other members of devalued groups to improve their outcomes.

Individual mobility can seriously undermine efforts of other group members to succeed because the process of individual status enhancement often

entails that individuals distance themselves from their negatively evaluated group. Therefore, successful upwardly mobile individuals are not necessarily willing to help other group members to achieve similarly high outcomes (Ellemers, 2001; Ellemers et al., 2004; Ellemers & Van Laar, in press; Wright & Taylor, 1999), nor are they necessarily available as mentors for other low-status group members, or even seen as attractive role models by them. For example, research has found that women who successfully achieve individual mobility present themselves in an extremely masculine way, and are sometimes even more likely to hold negative attitudes toward other women than men do (Ellemers et al., 2004 see also Wright & Taylor, 1999). Because successful tokens are seen as experts on the abilities of other members of their group, their expressions of negative attitudes about the low-status group are especially damaging to other group members as they are not recognized as discriminating statements (Ellemers & Van Laar, in press).

In addition, individual mobility is not necessarily the answer to social inequality because when only a small number of women or ethnic minority members achieve positions of higher status—as is the case in token settings—this serves to legitimize the unequal outcomes between social groups. This is because the success of some women and ethnic minorities signals that, in principle, achieving high-status is possible for members of all social categories. Successful tokens can affirm the notion that women and ethnic minorities themselves are responsible for their lower outcomes, for example, because of the life choices they make, or because of the lack of effort and ambition they display.

Finally, individual mobility not only undermines the success of status improvement attempts of other group members, it also undermines the group's potential to collectively strive for higher status. Previous research has found that low-status group members become less interested in collective action when they think other group members will opt for individual mobility (Van Zomeren, Spears, Fischer, & Leach, 2004). Furthermore, because collective action is often set in motion by talented leaders who stimulate group members to participate in collective protest (Watson, Chemers, & Preiser, 2001), individual mobility drains low-status groups of the very individuals who might successfully perform this important role.

In summary, although individual mobility can be an important first step toward achieving greater social equality, it seems that collective behavior aimed to more generally improve outcomes for the entire group is necessary to achieve real social change. Women are more likely to improve the outcomes of their entire group when they are given positive feedback about their social identity. In contrast, when highly identified women are induced to focus on their individual achievements, they also become less concerned with the welfare of other women, thereby reducing the probability that women will collectively improve their outcomes. Thus, social identity protection has beneficial effects over and above the effects of personal

self-affirmation that extend to all members of the stigmatized group. This is why public or organizational policies aimed at reducing inequality and trying to offer equal chances for everyone should address and value women and ethnic minorities in terms of their *group* identity.

### *Summary of the Research*

Overall, our research demonstrates that being in a work or educational setting that is dominated by Whites or men induces social identity threat in women and ethnic minorities, leading them to use coping strategies (e.g., self-segregation, domain disengagement) that lower their performance motivation in status-defining domains. Women and ethnic minorities are more able to preserve their motivation in work or education when they not only focus on the importance of performing well on status-defining domains, but also protect their social identity by focusing on positive aspects and achievements of their group (double valuation). Although women and ethnic minorities can do this themselves by personal valuing dimensions that positively define their group, this double valuation can also be induced by sources in the performance context, offering scope for policy measures and concrete interventions.

Furthermore, one important reason why social identity threat harms the performance motivation of stigmatized group members is because it induces them to focus on avoiding failure rather than approaching success. Importantly, offering ethnic minorities and women social identity protection by valuing positive characteristics or achievements of their group can transform this focus on failure into a focus on success. In addition, offering social identity protection through double valuation has important benefits over more individualistic forms of identity protection such as focusing on individual achievement in that social identity protection preserves their concern for the plight of their group while increasing their motivation to perform well on status-defining dimensions. Social identity protection thus increases the chances that women and ethnic minorities will try to achieve social change rather than just improving their personal outcomes, which may occur at the expense of their group.

### **Social Issues and Policy Implications**

Our program of research has important policy implication for social issues such as the underrepresentation of women in leadership positions and of ethnic minorities in high-status educational settings. Moreover, the outcomes of our research speak to the debate concerning the integration of ethnic minorities in multicultural societies. We now turn to each of these issues and offer policy implications that follow from our research.



*Maintaining the Motivation of Women and Ethnic Minorities in Work and Educational Settings*

This work has important implications for women and ethnic minorities in work and educational contexts. The results of our program of research reviewed here indicate that in order for women and ethnic minorities to remain motivated to perform well on dimensions that are important for social status—such as employment and education—they must perceive that their gender or ethnicity is valued and respected. When the organization or school in which they perform emphasizes only how important it is to perform well in domains on which the White majority and men excel—such as academic achievement and high-status jobs—this merely seems to increase social identity threat among women and ethnic minorities. In turn, this can lead members of stigmatized groups to protect the value of their group by looking for jobs or schools in which their group is less devalued and by lowering the importance they attach to their career and education. As a result, these individuals lower their ambitions and become less motivated to achieve a successful career.

What can organizations, school, and universities do to motivate members of stigmatized groups to strive for success and achieve their optimal potential? To return to the Black female professional in the opening quote, how could the management of the organization that she in the end decided to leave have created a more effective environment in which she would have remained motivated? For members of groups that are devalued within a performance context it is important to feel secure not only about their personal identity and achievements, but also about the position and evaluation of the group with which they identify (e.g., their gender or ethnicity).

Often, organizations and schools focus on affirming the personal identity of women and ethnic minorities, for example, by emphasizing how the organization values their individual achievements and output, sometimes even emphasizing how well adjusted they are to the dominant culture of dominant groups. This implies that they are perceived to be different from and better than other members of their (stigmatized) group. These policies seem to assume that by distracting people from their devalued identities, the effects of stigmatization and devaluation of their group will be less of a problem. However, this denies the value of a part of their identity that can be important or even central to their self-definition. Because members of stigmatized groups often face or expect devaluation of their social identity, it is very important to not only affirm their personal identity, but also to acknowledge their social identity and to communicate explicitly that their group is valued. This will reduce or buffer them from identity concerns and install a focus on achieving success rather than becoming preoccupied with averting possible failure, thus setting in motion an upward spiral leading to higher motivation and performance.

Double valuation will also prevent successful women and ethnic minorities from disidentifying from their group, thus maintaining opportunities for women and ethnic minorities to find social support in the capacity of other group members (Branscombe, Schmitt, & Harvey, 1999; Schmitt, Spears, & Branscombe, 2003), to serve as role models for other members of their group (Gilbert, 1985; Marx & Roman, 2002), and to collectively strive for status improvement, a strategy that is more likely to lead to substantial improvement of group outcomes. Thus, although the management and administration of work and educational organizations may not be able to easily reduce the day-to-day threats to social identity that women and ethnic minorities face, they can present an effective context for dealing with these threats by valuing and respecting these alternative identities and domains. By enabling women and ethnic minorities to see their identity as positive, organizations and schools can serve the important function of empowering women and ethnic minorities to change current status differences.

There are a number of ways in which work and educational organizations can communicate that they value and respect the identities of members of traditionally underrepresented groups. The literature on diversity management within organizations and schools speaks of many different policies that aim to promote a more positive diversity climate in which women and minorities can perform well (Brief & Barsky, 2000; Chemers, Oskamp, & Costanzo, 1995; Cox, 1993). However, most of these programs focus on how organizations can minimize the negative effects of prejudice within the organization and limit the use of stereotypes in dealing with female and minority employees. That is, by addressing the attitudes of the majority they focus mostly on how majority group members in the organization can make it a better place for ethnic minorities and women to work.

We recommend that policymakers should not only target diversity management to majority group members, attempting to reduce their prejudice and increase their knowledge of other groups, but should also approach this issue from the perspective of the minorities within their organization. Our analysis suggests that organizations that offer double valuation enable women and ethnic minorities to deal with identity threats, to feel empowered and to show their value for the organization. By strengthening minority members' social identity, an upward spiral is set in motion that leads women and ethnic minorities to overcome their disadvantage, even in the presence of threats to their social identity. As such, we do not necessarily propose a change in the way companies and schools manage diversity but advocate that they change the perspective or goals they have in managing diversity. We propose that diversity management should define the social identities that are present in the organization not only as organizational resources (in terms of higher creativity and competitive advantage, Chemers et al., 1995; Cox, 1993; Cox & Blake, 1991), but also as employee resources that can help ethnic minorities and women to overcome the burden that their stigma poses and become more successful within the organization or school.

Thus, the policy implications we propose are different from existing insights in that they focus on how to improve women's and ethnic minorities' social identities in such a way that they feel empowered to achieve their optimal potential, rather than making majority members more aware of the threats minority group members are likely to face. What organizations, schools, and universities can do to this effect is explicitly communicating that they value diversity rather than to advocate color blindness. Compared to a colorblind approach that explicitly treats differences between people's ethnic or gender identities as inconsequential and irrelevant, the valuing diversity approach, in which differences between people are seen as important and valuable resources, has been shown to lead ethnic minority employees to trust a company more and to expect less group-based devaluation (Purdie Vaughns, 2004). For instance, by explicitly including women and ethnic minorities as targets in their recruitment campaigns rather than just focusing their recruitment on successful (majority) individuals, organizations can communicate to women and ethnic minorities the value that the organization attaches to their presence, which can improve their social identity.

Similarly, work and educational organizations can design specific programs to increase the number of women and ethnic minorities within an organization, or to advance women and ethnic minorities to higher levels of the organization. This, in turn, has important effects on women and ethnic minorities at lower ranks, because it helps to refute negative stereotypes and provides them with positive role models that improve their perception of their group and inspire them to achieve the same (Gilbert, 1985; Marx & Roman, 2002). Moreover, by stimulating female and ethnic minority employees to set up or join support networks with other members of their gender or ethnic group, supervisors can convey that they acknowledge this part of their employee's identity and value the expression of this identity. Previous research has already shown that female and ethnic minority employees who are part of a support network benefit from the social support and respect they receive there from other women and ethnic minorities, which improves their work satisfaction, their career and lowers turnover (Ellemers, Doosje, & Spears, 2004; Friedman & Holtom, 2002; Haslam, O'Brien, Jetten, Vormedal, & Penna, 2005; Haslam & Reicher, 2006).

However, we argue that these support networks have another important function, namely that they help to protect social identity. As support groups increase group members' chances of meeting successful group members, support networks can help women and ethnic minorities to maintain a positive perception of their ingroup. Moreover, support networks focus ethnic minorities and women on their group identity, increasing the chances that they will help each other to improve their status within the organization rather than feeling the necessity of distancing themselves from this group.

In addition, companies and schools can communicate value for women and ethnic minorities by facilitating and allowing for the expression of certain parts

of their identity, such as the parent identity for women and religious or cultural identities for ethnic minorities. By sponsoring policies that allow women (and men) to combine work and family, for example, by offering opportunities for maternity and parental leave for both parents and by offering daycare facilities, companies can convey that they are aware of the different roles that women often fulfill, and can communicate that they value the presence of women in their company. Supporting and facilitating the combination of work and family has been shown to improve long-term organizational commitment, health and work performance among female employees (Van Steenbergen, Ellemers, & Mooijaart, 2007).

In the same vein, work and educational organizations can communicate value for the ethnic identity and religion of their minority employees by examining current policies and facilities with regard to cultural and religious practice. Examples of ways in which work and educational organizations can show their respect for ethnic and religious identities is by allowing days off for cultural and religious holidays or celebrating these holidays in classrooms, by providing prayer facilities, and by allowing the display of religious and cultural symbols, such as the Islamic veil or the Jewish Kippah, to the degree that these do not interfere with work performance and the activities of the company or school. As we reported above, Dutch Muslim women felt more motivation to achieve high work and educational outcomes when they perceived that their religious identity was respected by native Dutch (Van Laar et al., 2007).

Work and educational settings can also initiate diversity training programs that inform and educate employees and students about the benefits of a diverse work force. By educating employees and students about the different cultures and religions that make up their school or organization and by raising awareness of the importance and benefits of diversity and intergroup respect, educational and work settings can become more geared toward handling the differences between people with different gender and ethnicities. Moreover, this also serves the important function of communicating value for their identity to women and ethnic minorities.

However, we think that in order for diversity policies to successfully increase women's and ethnic minorities' perception that their identity is valued, organizations and schools should present this policy as aimed at increasing the organization's creativity and outcomes, creating an advantage over other companies or schools, rather than implying that minorities are in need of extra help, or emphasizing that implementing diversity policies is their social obligation. Often, diversity programs are presented to serve the need of improving equality between social groups or fulfilling legal governmental requirements ("positive discrimination"), which we expect will only emphasize the devalued status of women and ethnic minorities.

When organizations and schools present diversity as a core value and make this value visible in multiple levels of their organization (in their selection and promotion practices, mentoring programs, diversity trainings, etc.) this more

effectively communicates to women and ethnic minorities that their social identity is valued (Cox, 1993; Gurin, Dey, Hurtado, & Gurin, 2002; Gurin, Nagda, & Lopez, 2004; Lindsley, 1998; Rynes & Rosen, 1995). By not only acknowledging but also valuing and taking advantage of the diversity in cultural and gender backgrounds, work and educational environments can become settings in which women and ethnic minorities feel positively challenged to counter the negative stereotypes that exist about their group. This will enable them to actually achieve higher performance on status-defining dimensions, show their commitment to the organization, and to refute negative stereotypes about their group.

### *Stimulating Successful Integration of Ethnic Minorities in Diverse Societies*

Another important social issue to which our research speaks is the debate about the integration of ethnic minorities into multicultural societies such as the United States, Canada, and European nations. Here, our research points to policy measures that are not self-evident from common-sense reasoning. For instance, in an effort to reduce differentiation by ethnicity and religion, various European governments are currently discussing and implementing policies that limit ethnic minorities in the expression of their identity. In 2004, the French government, for example, instigated a policy that prevents individuals in governmental or education settings from wearing symbols that indicate their religious identity, such as the Christian cross or the Islamic veil. The Dutch government is currently discussing new policies that require immigrants who apply for Dutch citizenship to give up citizenship of the country from which they originated. These policies are based on the assumption that the best way for ethnic minorities to integrate in a multicultural society is by focusing on the dimensions that define status in this society and by reducing focus on their ethnic background. These policies, however, neglect the centrality of ethnic and religious identities for people's sense of self as well as the psychological need of many immigrant minorities for a positive social identity.

The work presented in this article suggests that ethnic minorities can perceive such measures as devaluing their ethnic identity. Moreover, the social identity threat that results from these measures can then actually reduce involvement of minorities in domains that are important for gaining societal status. Instead, it can induce minorities to protect their social identity, for instance, by emphasizing their social identity, by showing how they are different from other groups, and by withdrawing from integrated performance settings.

As suggested in Berry's acculturation model (Berry, 1997, 2001), true integration involves valuing characteristics of both majority and minority groups. Moreover, Bourhis' interactive acculturation model stresses that successful acculturation of immigrants in a host society is determined by whether their acculturation preferences (which is often a preference for integration rather than assimilation) converge with the host society's immigration policies (Barrette, Bourhis,

Personnaz, & Personnaz, 2004; Bourhis, Moise, Perreault, & Senecal, 1997). Societies that communicate low regard for the identities of minorities, that ask them to assimilate into the host society and to abandon their cultural background, induce minorities to segregate, resulting in suboptimal outcomes for both society in general (e.g., intergroup conflict, high unemployment) and minority group members in particular (e.g., negative health outcomes, low well-being, low motivation and performance, Kurman, Eshel, & Sbeit, 2005; Phinney, Horenczyk, Liebkind, & Vedder, 2001). The emphasis on dimensions that are typical of the higher-status groups in society that is expressed by such measures could then actually result in more rather than less differentiation between groups (see also Barreto & Ellemers, in press). By contrast, governmental policies that convey respect for minority subgroups and that advocate pluralism will lead ethnic minorities to evaluate their host society more positively (Huo & Molina, 2006) and to become more integrated in this society (Kurman et al., 2005; Van Laar et al., 2007).

Another important drawback of policies aimed at reducing the expression of ethnic diversity is that this signals to members of the dominant ethnic group that they do not need to be respectful of the characteristics of ethnic minority groups. Given that our results show that outgroup members can be very important sources of both social identity threat—even through their mere presence—and of social identity protection—through the value that outgroup members can express for dimensions of importance to the low-status group—these policies further limit the chances that ethnic minority groups will feel valued and hence that they will successfully integrate in society. By contrast, our results suggest that members of ethnic minority groups will be more likely to integrate into a diverse society, strive for high-status within this society, and help other group members to achieve the same, when governmental and organizational policies not only emphasize the importance of dimensions that define societal status (education and work), but simultaneously communicate respect for ethnic backgrounds.

### **Generalizability and Limitations of Double Valuation**

In the remainder of this article, we discuss the generalizability of our results to members of stigmatized groups other than women and ethnic minorities. Additionally, we discuss possible limitations of our findings, such as the reactions of members of dominant groups to double valuation and the likelihood that double valuation will serve to further affirm existing stereotypes about low-status groups.

#### *Applicability to Other Stigmatized Groups*

Although our work has focused on women and ethnic minorities in work and educational settings, we think that the results of this analysis can also be applied to

other social identities that may be stigmatized in work and educational settings. For example, in addition to gender and ethnic identities, other stigmatized groups, such as older people (Baum, 1983; Depla, de Graaf, van Weeghel, & Heeren, 2005), people with lower socioeconomic status (Croizet & Claire, 1998), overweight people (Myers & Rothblum, 2005; Quinn & Crocker, 1998), homosexuals (Herek, 2003) and people with disabilities (Fine & Asch, 1995) can also suffer motivation deficits due to experienced stigma and social devaluation. However, our analysis of the beneficial effects of double valuation is only applicable to other stigmatized groups to the degree that these stigmatized conditions concern a social group rather than a personal condition, which is part of the stigmatized individual's social rather than personal identity. For example, although being overweight can be stigmatizing and as such threaten performance motivation, most people do not experience this as a threat to their social identity but as a threat to their personal identity.

Similarly, our research showed that double valuation is effective to the degree that people actually identify with their group and are unwilling to distance themselves from this group (Derks et al., 2007b). For some group memberships, such as individuals with low socioeconomic status, individuals may prefer to leave this group than receive positive feedback about this group. In this case, an approach focused on emphasizing individual ability and individual upward mobility might be more appropriate to reduce social identity threat and increase motivation. Thus, we propose double valuation to also be an effective tool in the case of other groups, but only to the extent that it helps to reduce experienced social identity threat for groups that conform to these preconditions.

### *Majority Group Responses*

An important issue to consider is how the double valuation strategy affects members of majority groups (e.g., male employees, White students). Would they not perceive this positive valuation of characteristics of other groups as a threat to their social identity? Would they be willing to cooperate in working toward educational and work settings that communicate more respect and value for minority group characteristics? In the diversity literature, negative reactions of White male employees toward the development of power by female and ethnic minority employees are referred to as "backlash" (Chemers et al., 1995; Riccucci, 1997). When organizations and schools take actions to improve the position of women and ethnic minorities, men and Whites can view these policies as damaging to their own position, lowering their willingness to participate in diversity initiatives, and sometimes claiming "reverse discrimination". Given that work and educational settings are often dominated by members of higher-status majority groups, majority group members can be important sources of social identity threat as well as of double valuation.

Research has found that members of majority groups are more likely to accept policies that are designed to improve the position of traditionally devalued groups when these policies are presented as serving the need of creating a competitive business advantage rather than as policies to correct unequal opportunities (Kidder et al., 2004). As alluded to above, initiatives to implement double valuation policies are more likely to work for both minority and majority groups when they are presented as policies that will benefit the company as a whole (e.g., higher profits, improved creativity) rather than only the members of devalued groups.

In the same vein, opposition to double valuation policies by the White male majority can be diminished by reducing zero-sum beliefs about the outcomes of minority and majority employees in organizations (Esses, Dovidio, Jackson, & Armstrong, 2001; Kelman, 2001; Knight, 2004). By directly communicating to majority group members that valuing diversity does not harm the value and outcomes of the majority group, but that instead it is beneficial for the outcomes of both groups to acknowledge and respect the differences between them (e.g., to help cater to a diverse group of clients or to be able to remain innovative through the introduction of novel perspectives), members of majority groups may come to see the needs of different groups as compatible rather than mutually exclusive. Rink and Ellemers (2007) showed that valuing diversity does not necessarily undermine cohesion or the focus on common goals. Instead, diversity can come to be seen as a defining team or organizational characteristic provided that it is relevant to successful task completion.

Importantly, we think that, although women and ethnic minorities will more easily perceive their group as valued within an organization when all parties within that organization are respectful of their identity, we predict that endorsing an organizational climate that strongly promotes and values diversity may already set in motion the upward spiral of improved motivation and performance resulting from a positive social identity. In fact, it is very likely that women and ethnic minorities will continue to be confronted with men and members of the dominant ethnic minority that stigmatize and devalue them. However, because offering double valuation will strengthen their social identity, they will be more able to deal with these threats and show superior performance to defy the negative stereotypes of members of majority groups. The effectiveness of double valuation policies are thus not entirely dependent on the cooperation of majority groups, but can have beneficial effects even when majority employees and students are not yet convinced about their benefits.

### *The Content of Double Valuation*

A final question concerning double valuation entails how managers and teachers in companies and schools can effectively communicate value for the social



identity of ethnic minorities, women, and other stigmatized groups. There are numerous examples of well-meant positive feedback toward women and ethnic minorities that actually reinforce stereotypes about these groups and, as such, are not experienced as positively valuing their identity. Many of the positive stereotypes that exist about ethnic minority groups and women (e.g., African Americans are good dancers, women are good house cleaners) are seen as unrelated or even negatively related to high performance in work and educational settings. In addition, African American students have been found not to benefit from positive outcomes or feedback coming from White evaluators when they think this feedback is motivated by sympathy (Blaine, Crocker, & Major, 1995; Crocker, Voelkl, Testa, & Major, 1991).

We argue that double valuation works through an improved social identity. Therefore double valuation will only hit its mark to the degree that it actually improves stigmatized group members' esteem for their group within that context. We recommend that, in order to develop effective strategies to successfully offer double valuation to specific minority groups in organization, diversity managers should perform a thorough examination of the dimensions that minority group members themselves see as important parts of their identity and are relevant to their functioning at work. Our research offers two examples of successful double valuation, namely being respectful of Muslim women's religious identity and emphasizing women's high performance on typically feminine performance dimensions that are relevant to organizational performance (e.g., social skills or multitasking talent). We suggest that the promising results presented in this analysis warrant further investigation into the practicalities of implementing double valuation.

## Conclusion

The work we reviewed here consistently shows that social identity is an important factor in the performance motivation of ethnic minorities and women. For members of these negatively stereotyped groups, performance settings in which they are in the numerical minority—such as male-dominated companies or White schools—can threaten their social identity, leading to impaired performance motivation. By communicating value for the social identities of women and ethnic minorities, members of these groups become focused on success and become challenged to improve their performance on status-defining dimensions such as work and education. Moreover, women and ethnic minorities who are able to protect their social identity from the threats that social devaluation poses will not only strive for improvement of their individual status but are also more likely to challenge current social inequality to optimize their group's potential. Thus, rather than focusing exclusively on individual achievements and personal identities, companies, schools, and universities are more likely to motivate women and

ethnic minorities by acknowledging and explicitly valuing their ethnic and gender groups.

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