

## **Civic Solidarity: the negotiation of identity in modern societies**

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Contemporary societies are marked by a diversity of opinions that pertain to different cultural groups. Intercultural encounters have the potential for mutual enrichment but may also contain the seeds for conflict. This paper looks at the processes that bind people together in contemporary societies given their diversity. Durkheim's distinction between mechanical and organic forms of social solidarity is extended to a third variant: civic solidarity, that refers to the bonds that tie people together in shared interests based on group belonging and the negotiation of identity. This paper argues that social identity processes underlie contemporary forms of social solidarity in defining who one is for others, based on the social representations characteristic of different groups. Consequently, social identities come to define what resources are available to whom by way of social capital, and what intercultural relations are prescribed given specific types of group membership.

The flourishing of social psychology in the latter half of the twentieth century occurred as the discipline addressed the core concerns of societies regarding human nature, which at the time were dominated by the shadow of the Holocaust (Reicher, 2004). The great studies of social psychology have been inspired by questions of obedience, power, and social influence. Whilst these remain to date critical concerns, as Süssmuth (2006) questions, “[p]erhaps humankind kind has learned a great deal about subordination and power, but have we learned enough about co-operation, partnership, joint efforts in problem solving and building bridges rather than creating divisions?” (p. 31). Contemporary social psychology faces the task of understanding social relations between diverse cultural groups that co-exist in the same public sphere. As the new strategy for social cohesion adopted by the Council of Europe (European Committee for Social Cohesion, 2004) outlines, “the question is how to manage diversity so that it becomes a source of mutual enrichment rather than a factor of division and conflict” (p. 3).

The problems of social order and social solidarity are not fundamentally new problems. Social order is one of the central issues of the social sciences past and present, and was the central concept for Emile Durkheim (Jenson, 2002; see Kessi, this issue). Observing the transition from traditional societies to modern societies, Durkheim (1893) noted a change in the bonds of solidarity that tied people together, from mechanical solidarity in traditional societies to organic solidarity in modern societies. According to Durkheim, traditional societies were characterised by face to face, or *mechanical*, relations, with a common lifestyle known and practised by all. As societies modernised, similarity gave way to differentiation, homogeneity to heterogeneity, and mechanical solidarity gave way to *organic* solidarity, characterised by a complex division of labour.

The conditions that de-traditionalised societies remain today, and have been perpetuated by the pace of modernisation as a result of technological innovation and globalisation (Giddens, 1991; Benhabib, 2002; Moghaddam, 2008). And Durkheim’s concern that social solidarity will breakdown into anomie remains a key concern (see Benhabib, 2002; Woolcock, 1998) that keeps posing some tough questions today: How can we manage a world challenged by shrinking resources, population increases, income inequalities, and environmental collapse? Is globalization leading to a more peaceful world, or is it leading to greater economic and political instability?

Is it better for the world to become more or less diverse in terms of human cultures and languages? Is assimilation a better alternative than multiculturalism? (Moghaddam, 2010; Berry, this issue). Particularly in the twenty-first century, nation-states are confronted by the challenge of achieving social inclusion and social solidarity in societies characterized by diversity. As Moghaddam (2010) notes, each year millions of new immigrants and refugees from Africa and Asia move to Europe and North America, and add to the religious, ethnic and racial diversity of Western societies. The scope of this challenge keeps issues of social solidarity alive. If anything, these are becoming increasingly complex (Farrell & Oliveri, 2006).

The rise of globalisation and the associated conditions of late modernity have perpetuated problems of cultural encounters and heightened the potential for conflict. Our late modern condition requires not just the encounter, but also the cohabitation of potentially incommensurable worldviews and potentially discrepant social practices. It requires that that we live side by side with difference (Giddens, 1991; Benhabib, 2002; Moghaddam, 2008, Berry, this issue). And whilst discourse on cultural diversity seeks to articulate difference as enriching (see Salvatore, 2004; Farrell & Oliveri, 2006; Nesbitt-Larking, 2008a), the fears around cultural diversity are real fears (Süssmuth, 2006) that involve co-existing with others whose ways of life we may find objectionable (Benhabib, 2002; Reicher, 2004). The problems in European societies cited by Anwar (2006), associated with the social practices of polygamy and female genital mutilation, bear clear testimony to this.

These conditions unearth new challenges relating to migration (Süssmuth, 2006), and the resultant risk that the movement of people creates “a permanent flow of individuals without commitments” (Benhabib, 2002, p. 182). Ideal outcomes that preserve cultural diversity, reject assimilation and sectarianism, and pursue plurality founded on dialogue, have come to serve as implicit objectives (Anwar, 2006; Benhabib, 2002; Moghaddam, 2008). And yet, scholars have noted that dialogue in itself is no panacea for intercultural problems, and that solutions to harmonious intergroup relations may not be as straightforward as is sometimes suggested (see Nesbitt-Larking, 2008a, 2008b; Canefe, 2008; Chryssides, 2008; Condor, 2008; Hopkins, 2008). Social solidarity at times appears to be more easily purchased at the price of hostility (Fukuyama, 1999) or assimilation of minority cultures into the mainstream (Moghaddam, 2008), but these strategies are increasingly considered to

require a price that contemporary nation-states are trying to avoid paying. The catastrophic threat associated with contemporary warfare and weapons of mass destruction is enough of a deterrent to avoid violent confrontation (Moghaddam, 2008) and to adopt soft over hard power tactics (Nye, 1990, 2004). The ecological problems of culture contact and schismogenesis remains today critical concerns (Bateson, 1972/2000).

Segmentation and fragmentation have become the challenges that social theory needs to overcome (Süssmuth, 2006). Diversity is a reality that, if managed successfully, comes with the potential of a peaceful, open and diverse global village (Moghaddam, 2008). This requires integration, As Süssmuth argues: “[t]urning diversity into an added value for our societies is the main challenge of the 21st century” (2006, p. 25). In this state, intercultural relations are, as Moghaddam notes, “perhaps the most challenging domain of human behavior, particularly because of the continued danger of destructive inter-group conflict and war at local, regional, and global levels” (2008, p. 16).

Social psychology has developed a diverse literature that addresses solidarity and that aims to contribute towards the promotion of inclusion (Hogg, 1992; see Abrams, Hogg, & Marques, 2005 for a comprehensive review). Festinger, Schacter and Back (1950) first formalised a theory of group cohesiveness, defining the concept as the cement binding group members together. Subsequently, the contact hypothesis (Allport, 1954; see O’Sullivan-Lago, this issue) was proposed as a method for improving intergroup relations. The contact hypothesis proposes that bringing together individuals from opposing groups under optimal conditions, reduces prejudice and improves intergroup relations (Hewstone, et al., 2005). In recent years, the contact hypothesis has been furthered in terms of social identity. Brewer and Miller (1984, 1988) argue that decategorisation helps to personalise interaction with out-groups members and that in so doing, it fulfils the requisite conditions for positive contact. Gaertner and Dovidio (2000) argue that redrawing social categories in a way that includes out-group members in a new superordinate ‘common in-group identity’ (CIIM) is a more effective strategy. Brown and Hewstone (2005) provide an integrative model of intergroup contact that incorporates both interpersonal and intergroup dimensions, that is, it explains the possibility of the simultaneous salience

of subordinate as well superordinate social categories that is characteristic of 'dual identities'.

Other theories have proffered somewhat similar explanations of intercultural relations that are similarly based on the duality of intra- and inter-group contact. Berry's theories of acculturation (see Berry, this issue) as well as theories of social capital (Bourdieu, 1986; Coleman, 1988; Putnam, 1995) have provided an understanding into how individuals and communities relate with members of other cultural groups. These approaches are reviewed in more detail hereunder towards an understanding of contemporary forms of social solidarity, in conditions of late modernity. Beaujot & Ravanera (2001) suggest that what binds people together today is a sense of common identity that is no longer based on division of labour. And Moghaddam (2010) contends that the struggle between collective and localised identities underlies fractured globalisation. In this vein, the present article proposes a model of social solidarity based on the negotiation of identities. It explicates the processes by which individuals choose to belong with some and not with others, and to be identified as of a kind and not another. This expanded account of identity processes in intercultural relations provides an understanding of the ties that enable communities to co-exist in spite of difference, and to turn diversity into added value.

### **FRACTURED GLOBALIZATION AND SOCIAL SOLIDARITY**

Organic solidarity, according to Durkheim, differs from mechanical solidarity in that in the modern era, the ties that bind individuals to others are not ascribed by virtue of one's lineage, as in mechanical solidarity, but ensue from functional relations by virtue of specialisation and division of labour. In industrialised modern societies, compared to traditional ones, human relations are symbiotic in that no one produces a sufficient diversity of goods that ensures one's own survival. Rather, individuals produce a surplus of specialist goods that they then trade for other goods with other producers. In this way, industrialisation allows for the trading of human labour for other goods, like wages. Money is then traded for yet other goods, like food and shelter. Modern societies bind their constituent members in symbiotic ties much like bodily organs serve distinctive functions that holistically ensure the well-being of the entire system. Organic solidarity derives its name from this simile.

Since Durkheim's time, globalisation has been argued to have precipitated further developments in modern societies, that although not radically different from the preceding, have nevertheless occasioned a new era of post-modernity or late-modernity (Giddens, 1991; Jovchelovitch, 2007). Prosperity and depression have become worldwide phenomena as what happens in one country cascades into other countries with tremendous speed. This brings about a multiplier effect due to the interconnectedness of the various parts that make up the global village (Moghaddam, 2009, 2010). The global village precipitates in turn identity threats that characterise the human condition in this era. Individuals face the contradictory prospects of melting into one world on the one hand, and of being authentic and distinct on the other.

The intimate connection with the local contrasts with the unidirectional push of globalisation, which introduces in our daily affairs distant others whom we might never physically encounter (Arendt, 1958; Moghaddam, 2009, 2010). Collective identity threats have been identified as the main security threats in the twenty-first century (Moghaddam, 2010). Globalisation brings identity threats to the fore, as individuals strive to protect themselves from adopting external identities. According to Moghaddam (2010), this is not because identity needs are more important than material interests, but due to the fact that identity issues impact material interests. Interests, both material and psychosocial, bind people together in collective projects. They create a space for mutuality, where different people come together and share an existential space. According to Arendt (1958), interests literally constitute something which lies between people and which, therefore, can relate and bind them together in an *inter-est*, or a being together. Modernity's focus on production has shifted to a focus on consumption regulated by interests (Arendt, 1958). In this sense, identities are manifestly social. Due to the dilemmatic process of identification with the local and the global, the tensions inherent in globalisation make it particularly challenging for contemporary societies to manage diversity (Moghaddam, 2009).

In the transient conditions of late modernity, characterised by the ebb and flow of migration as individuals move from one job to another, from one family to another, from one nation to another, and so on, in an effort to maximise their life chances or meet the goals and interests that are salient to them at some particular point in their life, organic solidarity fails to provide a satisfactory account of

contemporary forms of social solidarity. Organic solidarity is based on function and production, rather than the choice and consumption that characterize the late modern era. Beaujot & Ravanera (2001) suggest that solidarity in the present era may have changed back to a mechanical form. This, however, fails to consider the plurality, dynamism, heterogeneity, and above all personal choice that characterise contemporary public spheres (Giddens, 1991; Jovchelovitch, 2007). Contemporary public spheres do not provide a collective consciousness for mechanical solidarity. The world order in traditional societies, which bound members together in a mechanical form, relied on collective representations, or in Moscovici's (1988) terms hegemonic representations, that provided little challenge to the established order. The reason for this, as outlined by Gillespie (2008), is that hegemonic representations do not contain within them any reference to an alternative worldview. This condition is largely unachievable in today's globalised world where, as Giddens (1991) notes, "[n]o one today can but be conscious that living according to the precepts of a determined faith is one choice among other possibilities" (Giddens, 1991, p. 181).

In late modernity, plurality and change permeate the public sphere (Jovchelovitch, 2007). Not only is the pace of change faster, so is its scope and profoundness (Giddens, 1991). Moreover, these are conditions from which no one, as Giddens (1991) further notes, can 'opt-out'. In societies where different allegiances are required to co-exist, dogmatic belief that imposes a single world order is regarded with suspicion and stereotyped as fundamentalist. At worst, social groups are required to develop alternative representations of others' worldviews in a way that preserves their own convictions unscathed. At best, social groups abolish communicative barriers between them and others, and engage in dialogic relations with them (Gillespie, 2008). These essential conditions of late modern public spheres describe three different types of communication identified by Moscovici (1976/2008), that is, propaganda, propagation, and diffusion. The significance of this typology lies precisely in its implications regarding the bonds that tie people together. These communication patterns were associated with different forms of affiliation in social groups by Duveen (2008). Duveen argues that propaganda binds members together in solidarity, whereas propagation fosters communion. Diffusion, on the other hand, fosters sympathy amongst group members. Different types of social representations thus serve to not only sustain different social constructions, but also,

to enable differential relations with other social groups. This understanding provides the realisation that the plurality inherent in the late modern public sphere engenders a distinctive form of social relations that involves relations with one's own kind alongside relations with different others. This dual focus in social relations has been developed further in theories concerning acculturation and intergroup relations within multicultural societies.

### **ACCULTURATION, CONTACT AND SOCIAL CAPITAL**

Berry (2001, this issue) has outlined an intercultural relations model that is based on relative relational preferences regarding one's own group and other groups. The first dimension in this model, what Berry et al. (2002) label as 'Issue 1', refers to the relative preference for maintaining one's culture. The second dimension, 'Issue 2', refers to one's relative preference for contact with the wider society. Based on these two dimensions, Berry (1984, 1998, 2001, this issue) has outlined four acculturation strategies by which individuals and cultural minorities can integrate (positive relations with both native and host cultures), assimilate (preference for the host culture), separate (preference for native culture), or marginalise (loss of native culture without adopting host culture), in their relations with the host culture. Bourhis, Moïse, Perreault, and Senécal (1997) identify a further strategy of individualism that demonstrates the same preferences as marginalisation. Individualism is a decategorisation strategy (Brewer & Miller, 1984, 1988) that shuns social categories. Berry's other acculturation strategies have also been mapped onto different identity strategies pursued in cases of contact with outgroups (Dovidio, Kawakami & Gaertner, 2000; Brown & Hewstone, 2005). Accordingly, separation involves achieving a high subgroup but low superordinate group salience, whereas assimilation adopts a low subgroup and high superordinate group salience (CIIM). The integration acculturation strategy corresponds to a dual-identity model that enables a simultaneous salience of subgroup as well as superordinate categories. These models put social identity strategies at the heart of social relations between different cultural groups (see Brown & Hewstone, 2005). Moghaddam (2009, 2010) advocates a similar dual model in his 'omniculturalism' policy framework (see O'Sullivan-Lago, this issue). Furthermore, as Brown & Hewstone (2005) note, these



contact strategies play an additional role in the development of communities' social capital.

The two preferences for relating with one's own culture and with another culture are also implicated in theories of social capital (see Kessi, this issue). Theories of social capital (see Baum, 1999; Morrow, 1999; Schuller, Baron, & Field, 2000) contend that interpersonal relations forged between members of a community as well as between members of different communities literally constitute a valued resource, i.e. capital. Social capital refers to the aggregate of actual or potential resources linked to one's durable network of institutionalised relationships. Through mutual acquaintance and recognition, these networks provide community members with resources that they may utilise in various circumstances. On the other hand, social capital may also have a downside, termed negative social capital or antisocial capital (Portes & Landolt, 1996), where the bonds that make up a civic community are stifling and exclusive rather than inclusive.

A distinction between intra-community ties and extra-community networks is made in theories of social capital (Woolcock, 1998) analogous to Berry's two dimensions. Gittel and Vidal (1998) have termed this 'bonding' and 'bridging' social capital. Bonding social capital refers to ties amongst like-minded people. It has the potential of building strong ties but it can also serve to erect higher walls excluding those who do not qualify for membership. Bridging social capital, in contrast, refers to connections between heterogeneous groups (Foley & Edwards, 1999). This is likely to be more fragile, but essentially is what enables or prevents social cohesion at the intergroup level.

The integration strategy of acculturation aspires to the maximization of both bonding and bridging social capital. In integration, immigrants are able to forge ties with their fellow countrymen. Such ties protect individuals' native identities and help build community but do not come at the price of relating with host communities. In integration, individuals from different communities are able to relate in functional ways. By contrast, a preference for one or another community results in building either bonding or bridging social capital, as individuals attend to ties with their favored community and neglect others. This leads to strategies of assimilation or separation. In instances where individuals shun both inter- and intra-community ties, community relations are characteristically of the marginalisation type.

Berry et al. (2002) argue that integration has been shown to lead to the most positive contact outcomes (Berry, 1997; Liebkind, 2001) and is thus the preferred acculturation strategy. Brown and Hewstone (2005) explicate the reasons for this. They argue that in intergroup contact, optimal conditions occur in situations that are high on both interpersonal and intergroup dimensions. Contact is less likely to be successful in other situations where either interpersonal or intergroup dimensions are not salient. This is due to the fact that a contact situation with high interpersonal intimacy but where group salience is absent is unlikely to lead to the generalisation of positive characteristics to the other group, which makes outgroup salience requisite. Conversely, high group salience with little possibility for developing interpersonal acquaintance might lead to intergroup anxiety. This makes ingroup salience also requisite, whereby intergroup relations are simultaneously perceived as interpersonal. Finally, according to Brown and Hewstone, situations devoid of both interpersonal and intergroup significance are unlikely to generate or inhibit affect that mediates positive contact (e.g., empathy, see Adams & Raisborough, this issue).

One can easily note why integration offers the best acculturation outcomes, given the win/win strategy of fostering both bonding and bridging social capital. However, this in itself is far from straightforward, as the inter-community context in which acculturation takes place may precipitate different acculturation preferences. To achieve integration, immigrants need to establish strong inter-community as well as intra-community ties. Either or both of these may not always be desirable, for various reasons. Migrants may, for instance, seek to disassociate from fellow countrymen in an effort to dodge stigmatisation associated with their own native community. Stigmatisation may not necessarily be rooted in the denigration of one's native cultural practices by the host community. Such a situation might promote a patriotic allegiance to one's native community. Stigmatisation, however, may also be rooted in the judgment of social practices that even fellow countrymen abhor. Dench's (1975) investigation of the Maltese community in London demonstrates such a preference. Dench documented how Maltese immigrants actively sacrificed intra-community ties at the altar of assimilation with the host society. When, on the other hand, stigmatisation is based on the denigration of native practices by the host community, immigrants may relinquish inter-community ties in the face of identity threat and in an attempt to preserve a positive social identity (Moghaddam, 2010).

Finally, individuals may decategorise by rejecting prevailing social categories that pigeonhole them as members of one or another group. Those adopting the individualism strategy seek to affiliate with others on the basis of who they are, rather than on the basis of the group they belong to. This situational complexity in intercultural contact is the reason why the various contact strategies of decategorisation (Brewer & Miller, 1984, 1998), group salience (Hewstone & Brown, 1986), common ingroup identity (Gaertner & Dovidio, 2000), and dual identity (Brown & Hewstone, 2005) have all provided ways for reducing intergroup anxiety and lessening prejudice. In any case, all of these contact models have demonstrated that identity strategies lie at the heart of intercultural relations.

Clearly, individual agency expressed in the negotiation of social identity has much to do with the nature of social relations that ensue contact. Individuals identify with those they like, and do not identify with those they do not. Their interests provide them with a social identity that identifies who they are for others. In choosing their interests, individuals come to *be* with some and not with others, and are identified as of one kind and not another. This identity constitutes their membership of social categories, which makes available to them resources (social capital) available within the boundaries of that group (Bourdieu, 1986). In participating in social life and forging ties with others, the characteristics of the contemporary public sphere determine the relational process individuals engage in. The contemporary public sphere, as described above, is characterised by a polyphony (Marková, 2003) and a polyphasia (Jovchelovitch, 2007) of different perspectives. It is not only characterised by a multitude of different opinions, these may also be rooted in different systems of knowledge that pertain to the various communities (Jovchelovitch, 2007). In this context, individuals need to negotiate who they are in view of who they are for others, given the prescribed meaning of social categories in certain communities (i.e. social representations). For instance, in a given society, individuals can or cannot thus be both Black and British, both British and Asian, both British and Muslim, and so on. None of these social categories is neutral, in any social group. Individuals negotiate who they are by negotiating their affiliation with particular groups, depending on who they choose to be for others. The negotiation of identities, the contestation of social categories, and the relative prescription of

different social representations, are the social-psychological dynamics that lie at the heart of contemporary social relations.

### **SOCIAL REPRESENTATIONS AND SOCIAL IDENTITIES**

Different groups hold different representations about the various aspects of social life that, for their members, constitute social reality (Moscovici, 2000). These representations serve in the construction of different social identities. Duveen (2001) claims that identities are as much systems of inclusion as of exclusion. Noting that children are born into a world structured by social representations, Duveen argues that social representations confer positions in the social system that individuals take up in their identity projects (Duveen & Lloyd, 1986). According to Duveen (2001) social representations do this in two ways: (i) they can impose an imperative obligation for some particular identity. Imperative obligations constrain individuals to construct prescribed social identities, (ii) conversely, social representations can also impose a contractual obligation, that is, individuals contract to adopt a particular social identity upon joining some social group.

In contracting belonging with one group, individuals may automatically exclude themselves from relations with some other groups. On the other hand, individuals may relate to more than one group, but their identity may be hierarchical, overvaluing one group and undervaluing another. In other instances, individuals negotiate belonging to different groups on equal terms, adopting integrative, or dual, identities (Berry, this issue). Finally, individuals may also contract individualistic identities that decategorise themselves and others and overlook or ignore group affiliations. These four variations in social identity have been identified in studies that have investigated the link between social representations and social identity and have conceptualised this in terms of a variable propensity to relate with the perspective of the other (Sammut, 2010; see also Tsirogianni & Andreouli, this issue). These have demonstrated that social identities are more than an expression of individuality. Social identities are constructed externally, affording individuals certain positions within a certain culture. Individuals negotiate their social identities in ways that secure the positions that are desirable to them. The four identity variations map onto the various contact preferences and the acculturation strategies

outcomes in cultural encounters (see Figure 1). Along with different strategies for social capital associated with each quadrant, this formulation serves to articulate an integrative model of social relations based on group membership.

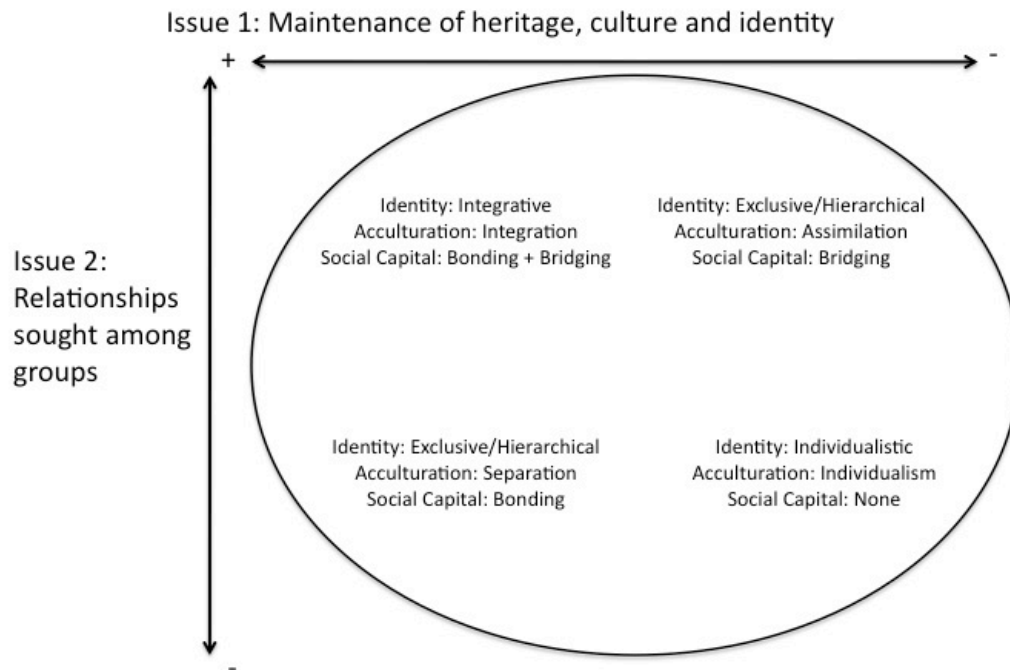


Fig. 1: Inter-relational model of civic solidarity (adapted from Berry, 2001)

For individuals who negotiate exclusive identities, membership in one social group precludes membership in another group. Such individuals invest in either bonding or bridging social capital exclusively, and manifest the acculturation strategies of separation in the case of bonding and assimilation in the case of bridging social capital. These social capital and acculturation patterns are similar for individuals who negotiate hierarchical identities. The latter over-invest in one form of social capital and under-invest in another. Manifest acculturation patterns remain predominantly assimilative or separatist, as relations with the least preferred group are confined to a lesser sphere. In contrast, individuals who negotiate integrative identities collectively manifest an acculturation strategy of integration, reaping the benefits of investment in both bonding and bridging social capital. Whilst this may

seem desirable at face value, this strategy may not be ideal for individuals at risk of antisocial capital. This latter case may lead to a preference, possibly an exclusive one, for one particular group. Finally, individuals may choose to do away with social categories and develop individualistic, decategorised identities. Such individuals, through a high salience of interpersonal relations and a low salience of intergroup relations (Brown & Hewstone, 2005) do not invest in any community membership, be it bonding or bridging. Insofar as community relations are concerned, this equates with the marginalization acculturation strategy due to the fact that community membership is not marked.

### **CIVIC SOLIDARITY: THE NEGOTIATION OF IDENTITIES AND BELONGING**

The relational processes of social capital and acculturation transpire as societal manifestations of localised identity practices, that in contemporary societies are negotiated in the context of permeable group boundaries in pluralistic societies. Kessi (this issue) has demonstrated how identity is a central criterion in the establishment of community, the consumption and challenging of development discourse, and the fostering of social solidarity. According to Kessi, “identity impacts of representations are therefore central to understanding the complicity of development thinking and practice in shaping the attitudes and behaviours of individuals in communities and the activities around which they form networks of social solidarity” (p. 7.6). For instance, if one is to benefit from ‘Commonwealth’ social capital, one must be able to negotiate a social identity that comprises ‘Britishness’ to some degree. Similarly, if one is to benefit from the social or psychological resources that are nurtured by some militant fundamentalist groups, one may be imperatively obliged to adopt an exclusive social identity. Social representations afford different social identities that individuals are able to contract. In contracting their own identities, individuals take up positions in a polyphonic and polyphasic public sphere. In choosing one position, they renounce others; in choosing their position, they are identified as belonging with some and not with others. This negotiation of belonging provides them with social capital and positions them in mutual relations with others who share their interests.

On this basis they relate differentially, yet simultaneously, with others who are similar to them as well as with others who are different from them.

At this point, we are in a position to articulate an integrative model of social solidarity that describes the ties that bind people together in contemporary societies given the polyphasia of worldviews. Traditional societies provided a collective consciousness through hegemonic representations that bound community members together in ties of solidarity (Jovchelovitch, 2007; Duveen, 2008). The societal changes precipitated by industrialisation radically altered human relations and brought about an organic form of social solidarity that bound community members together in mutually functional relations. A further societal change was precipitated by globalisation that ushered in late modernity and that brought individuals the world over in relations no longer bound by distance or time. Communities that espouse different, and potentially incommensurable worldviews, face each other in the global village and in multicultural public spheres where they co-exist side by side.

In these conditions, public spheres demonstrate sympathy (Duveen, 2008) for alternative worldviews that, whilst these may be different and at odds with some community's perspective, are nevertheless accorded public respect. In multicultural public spheres, individuals negotiate this plurality in coming to terms with difference. In conditions of polyphony and polyphasia that characterise multicultural public spheres, any central authority exists only as an authority "among others, part of an indefinite pluralism of expertise" (Giddens, 1991, p. 195). Different opinions are contested and the authority of arguments replaces arguments of authority (Jovchelovitch, 2007). In such conditions, individuals negotiate belonging on the basis of interests they choose to pursue. Their very community membership is contracted, on the basis of which social identity they choose to negotiate. Individuals are able to contract localised identities by choosing to belong with some and not with others. Even if certain communities strive for a central authority and sustain representations that put barriers on engagement with other groups (Gillespie, 2008), members retain the freedom to defect and negotiate some alternative belonging on the basis of a superordinate citizenry, which Moghaddam (2009, 2010) identifies as the foundational element for omniculturalism. Harmonious intergroup relations are achievable insofar as localised identities are developed in lieu of a primary identity that provides a common platform of global identities based on universalistic

elements. This is similar to Berry's psychological components of integration (see Berry, this issue). These conditions also make plausible the possibility for multiple group memberships and the negotiation of plural and non-hierarchical identities (e.g., dual identities).

Clearly, neither mechanical nor organic solidarity provide a satisfactory account of these types of social relations. Mechanical solidarity requires a hegemony that has long since disappeared. Organic solidarity requires a structural functionality that is eroded with choice and permeable group boundaries. What binds people together in contemporary public spheres is, as Arendt (1958) postulated, their shared interests. Interests constitute the projects (Bauer & Gaskell, 1999) that are represented by a community's *raison d'être*, a being-together that binds subjects with each other. A superordinate global citizenry provides individuals with the option to choose their localised projects of interest and achieve a being-with-others accordingly. Solidarity, in such conditions, can be termed 'civic', etymologically meaning 'of the citizen', based as it is on a superordinate, globalised citizenry that exists on the basis of universalistic commonalities prior to localised belonging.

Civic solidarity provides an answer to Duveen's (2008) question of what makes collectives hold together in the present era, and is based on the fact that social systems vary in their propensity to relate to other systems (Krech, 1949; see Sammut & Gaskell, 2010). Different social representations provide different descriptions or explanations of social facts, each of which is subject to a sceptical treatment by other social groups. In this situation, individuals have an opportunity to shop around. In this era of consumption (Arendt, 1958), individuals shop around not just for goods but also for interests, and in making their choices they contract identities that position them with some, and potentially not with others. In this way, civic solidarity sustains collaborative relations within and between different social groups, inasmuch as it represents individuals' *inter-ests*.



<b>System</b>	<b>Public Sphere</b>	<b>Communication</b>	<b>Affiliation</b>	<b>Social Solidarity</b>
Closed	Traditional	Propaganda	Solidarity	Mechanical
Bounded	Modern	Propagation	Communion	Organic
Open	Late-modern	Diffusion	Sympathy	Civic

Table 1: Forms of solidarity in various social systems

## CONCLUSION

The negotiation of belonging makes headline news in our era of identity politics (Benhabib, 2002). For instance, the British National Party's (BNP) acceptance of coloured members and the English Defence League's (EDL) acceptance of an Asian member were both widely publicised in Britain. In looking at the breakdown of social solidarity in our times, such as the 'extremist' violent confrontations that have swept Britain over the past two years, the question of social solidarity provides its very answer. The criterion for social solidarity emerges in the demarcation of group boundaries: who belongs and who does not; on what basis do individuals belong, or not belong; and what are the implications of belonging. Identity, as Tajfel (1981) noted, is fundamentally social. It serves civic functions for individuals who choose to be identified as belonging with some and not with others. It is the negotiation of belongingness that lies at the heart of contemporary social solidarity.

This argument then begs the question as to what extent individuals can truly negotiate integrative identities, considering that these draw on semiotic codes given in social representations that in themselves may prove a barrier to intergroup relations (Gillespie, 2008)? For instance, to what extent can individuals truly be both Black and British, both Asian and British, or both Muslim and British, in a given society? Insofar as identities are negotiated, then for individuals to be able to contract integrative identities, they need to be able to draw on semiotic codes that enable them to do so without barriers. In other words, they need their community relations to be dialogical. This requires a diversified representational field that legitimates different positions, even if these may be at odds. For this to happen, the public expression of

diversity and dissent, however polemical, is prerequisite. Freedom of expression ensures that pluralistic representational systems that co-exist in a public sphere enable multiple positioning options that may be legitimated by different systems of knowledge. Whilst not everyone is bound to take on multiple positions, everyone needs to be equally bound to respect the positions taken by others. As Duveen (2008) has aptly argued, every position needs to be treated with scepticism, but dogmatic belief, that puts barriers on dialogical relations (Gillespie, 2008), attracts suspicion. The Habermasian public sphere may be idealistic (Jovchelovitch, 2007), but insofar as social solidarity remains a worthy goal, its principles continue to define political and institutional ideals. These provide the promise of fostering social-psychological conditions that promulgate solidarity amongst and between different cultural groups.

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