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Facing Structural Disadvantage: The Role of Ingroup Connectedness

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IMPRIMATUR

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« Facing structural disadvantage: The role of ingroup connectedness »

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Abstract

This thesis focuses on the social-psychological factors that help coping with structural disadvantage, and specifically on the role of cohesive ingroups and the sense of connectedness and efficacy they entail in this process. It aims to complement existing group-based models of coping that are grounded in a categorization perspective to groups and consequently focus exclusively on the large-scale categories made salient in intergroup contexts of comparisons.

The dissertation accomplishes this aim through a reconsideration of between-persons relational interdependence as a sufficient and independent antecedent of a sense of groupness, and the benefits that a sense of group connectedness in one's direct environment, regardless of the categorical or relational basis of groupness, might have in the everyday struggles of disadvantaged group members. The three empirical papers aim to validate this approach, outlined in the first theoretical introduction, by testing derived hypotheses. They are based on data collected with youth populations (15-30) from three institutions in French-speaking Switzerland within the context of a larger project on youth transitions. Methods of data collection are paper-pencil questionnaires and in-depth interviews with a selected sub-sample of participants.

The key argument of the first paper is that members of socially disadvantaged categories face higher barriers to their life project and that a general sense of connectedness, either based on categorical identities or other proximal groups and relations, mitigates the feeling of powerlessness associated with this experience. The second paper develops and tests a model that defines individual needs satisfaction as antecedent of self-group bonds and the efficacy beliefs derived from these intragroup bonds as the mechanism underlining the role of ingroups in coping. The third paper highlights the complexities that might be associated with the construction of a sense of groupness directly from intergroup comparisons and categorization-based disadvantage, and points out a more subtle understanding of the processes underling the emergence of groupness out of the situation of structural disadvantage.

Overall, the findings confirm the central role of ingroups in coping with structural disadvantage and the importance of an understanding of groupness and its role that goes beyond the dominant focus on intergroup contexts and categorization processes.

Résumé

Cette thèse se focalise sur les facteurs sociaux-psychologiques qui aident à mieux faire face aux désavantages structuraux. Plus particulièrement, elle se focalise sur le rôle des groupes d'appartenance, et le sentiment de connectivité et d'efficacité qu'ils procurent, dans ce processus. Elle vise à compléter les modèles de coping basés sur les groupes existants qui, par ce qu'ils appréhendent la notion de groupe à partir d'une perspective de l'auto-catégorisation, se sont intéressés exclusivement aux catégories sociales étendues, rendues saillantes dans des contextes de comparaisons intergroupes.

Ce but est accompli grâce à une reconsidération de l'interdépendance relationnelle entre personnes comme condition suffisante pour générer un sens de groupalité, et les bénéfices qu'un sentiment de connectivité au sein d'un groupe, indépendamment des processus qui y ont conduit (auto-catégorisation ou interdépendance perçue) peut avoir dans les luttes quotidiennes des membres des groupes désavantagés. Les trois études empiriques visent à valider cette approche, développée dans le premier chapitre introductif, en testant des hypothèses dérivées. Elles sont basées sur des données collectées auprès de jeunes (15-30 ans) affiliés à trois institutions localisées en Suisse romande, dans le cadre d'un projet plus large sur les transitons des jeunes.

L'argument clé du premier papier est que les membres des catégories socialement défavorisées rencontrent des barrières plus élevées à la réalisation de leurs projets de vie, et qu'un sens général de connectivité, qu'il soit basé sur la saillance de l'appartenance à une large catégorie sociale ou sur d'autres groupes et relations proximaux, atténue le sentiment d'impuissance associé à cette expérience. Le deuxième papier développe et teste un modèle qui définit la satisfaction de besoins individuels comme la source de liens aux groups, et le sentiment d'efficacité dérivé de ces liens comme le mécanisme qui explique le rôle des groupes d'appartenance dans le processus de coping. Le troisième papier souligne les complexités pouvant être associées à la construction d'un sens de groupalité directement à partir des comparaisons intergroupes et de la saillance du désavantage catégoriel, et propose une compréhension plus subtile des processus sous-jacents à l'émergence de la groupalité comme réponse à la situation du désavantage structurel.

Globalement, les résultats confirment le rôle central des groupes d'appartenance pour faire face aux désavantages structuraux et l'importance d'une compréhension des sources de la groupalité et du rôle des groupes qui va au delà de l'accent dominant donné aux contextes intergroupes et au processus d'auto-catégorisation.

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Contents

1. Introduction

Coexistence of social groups of unequal status is a key feature of our societies. Each society has its own relevant differentiations on the basis of which social advantages and disadvantages are distributed (e.g., nationality, ethnicity, race, or socio-economic status). Yet, regardless of the basis of the stratification, it results in some categories (the disadvantaged) held in lower regard and/or having restricted access to opportunities and resources than others (the advantaged). At the personal level, membership in a socially disadvantaged category is associated with higher likelihood to face societal devaluation, material hardship and opportunity restrictions.

The prediction that the particular experiences and stressors associated with membership in a disadvantaged group may have negative psychological implications is common to different socio-psychological theories including symbolic interactionism (Mead, 1934), social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979), relative deprivation theory (Runciman, 1966) and theories of efficacy-based self-esteem (Gecas & Schwalbe, 1983). Moreover, the hypothesis of a differential exposure to stress by social status has received much empirical support (Taylor & Turner, 2002; Turner & Avison, 2003; Turner, Wheaton, & Lloyd, 1995).

In line with socio-psychological studies that take the perspective of the disadvantaged themselves (e.g., Major, Kaiser, O'Brien, & McCoy, 2007; Postmes & Branscombe, 2002), this thesis aims to study the responses to structurally induced stressors through a coping approach. A premise of coping research is that exposure to potentially stressful situations does not necessarily lead to vulnerability, and that the processes and factors that moderate/mediate the effects of stressors on psychological outcomes should be identified. The aim of this thesis is to contribute to understanding the social psychological factors that help coping with structurally induced stressors, and specifically the role of group belongingness and connectedness in this process.

The idea that individuals' relationship to their groups is a key element that shapes their responses to stressors is not novel. Our focus on the role of groups for the disadvantaged follows from the growing number of studies based on different real-world disadvantaged groups showing that higher identification with the group is associated with positive outcomes in terms of coping and well-being despite the low status of these groups (e.g., Branscombe, Schmitt, & Harvey, 1999; Leach, Mosquera, & Hirt, 2010; McNamara, Stevenson, & Muldoon, 2013; Outten, Schmitt, Garcia, & Branscombe, 2009). Groups are thus not only the source of the disadvantage but can be at the same time the basis for psychological empowerment. This thesis aims to complement and extend existing social psychological literature on the role of ingroups in coping with structural disadvantage.

The prevailing models within this literature explain group-based empowerment and its role in coping from an intergroup framework contingent on categorization processes and comparative intergroup contexts (e.g., Schmitt, Spears, & Branscombe, 2003; Van Zomeren, Leach, & Spears, 2012). This intergroup framework influenced the nature of the experiences that have been examined, the groups that have been studied as the basis for psychological empowerment, the understanding of the link between experienced disadvantage and group identification, and the processes underlying the role of group membership. To complement this literature, we outline how each of these elements has been accounted for within the categorical framework, discuss the understanding of the role of group identification provided by existing models of coping based on this framework, and show how going beyond this framework extends existing literature and contributes to a better understanding of the role of ingroups in coping with structural disadvantage.

This dissertation is composed of a theoretical introduction, three empirical papers and a general discussion. The introductory chapter defines the theoretical foundations of a relational approach to understanding the role of ingroups in coping with structural disadvantage, and

discusses how this approach complements existing literature and helps to better understand the dynamics operating in the case of disadvantaged group members. The three empirical papers draw on data of youth populations to test hypotheses derived from the outlined approach and validate a relational understanding of the role of ingroups in coping with structural disadvantage.

The present theoretical chapter begins by introducing in more detail the notion of disadvantaged groups, structural disadvantage, coping, and how group-based coping with structural disadvantage has been approached previously. We then outline an integrated two-routes approach to understanding the role of groups in coping with structural disadvantage, and stress how recognizing the relational route to group formation is needed in order to complement existing group-based models of coping with structural disadvantage, which are based mainly on the categorical route.

1.1. Social structure and disadvantaged groups

> *"According to liberal individualism, categorizing people in groups by race, gender, religion, and sexuality and acting as though these ascriptions say something significant about the person, his or her experience, capacities and possibilities, is invidious and oppressive* […]
>
> *If we obey the injunction to think of people only as individuals, then the disadvantages and exclusions we call oppressions reduce to individuals in one of two ways. Either we blame the victims and say that disadvantaged people's choices and capacities render them less competitive, or we attribute their disadvantage to the attitudes of other individuals, who for whatever reason don't "like" the disadvantaged ones."*
>
> Young, 1994, p. 718

The notion of disadvantaged groups calls for a consideration of how societies in which we live are stratified, and how this *structural level* creates differential life conditions, offering privilege to members of some categories and putting others at relative disadvantage. The stratifications operating in our societies have various bases. Economic stratification, opposing the rich to the poor, the upper class to the working class, is the most common form of social stratification, but does not account for the whole phenomenon. We are increasingly witnessing the emergence of social movements in the name of particular social groups

(African Americans, women, ethnic and religious minorities, immigrants, elderly people, etc.) that share the claim that the stratifications operating in our societies can not be reduced to the economic dimension, but have different basis, each having its specific dynamics.

Coexistence of social groups and inequality between them is characteristic of complex modern societies (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999). The bases of stratification however vary across societies and across contexts; each society has, at any given historical moment, the relevant differentiations, on the bases of which material and symbolic advantages and disadvantages are distributed. Moreover, within the same society, some differentiations are only relevant in a particular context and not in others. Yet, independently of their basis and the particular context or society in which they operate, stratification systems result in some groups (the disadvantaged groups) being held in lower regard in the mainstream society, and their members having restricted access to opportunities and resources than others (the advantaged groups). The notion of groups is not used here in the psychological sense of the term requiring a subjective identification and mutual acknowledgement of group members. Rather, like the term group is commonly used in the ordinary discourse, it refers to a classification of people according to a given criteria (e.g., young and old, southerners and northerners), the criterion here being the position of the group in the social structure.

Disadvantaged groups are however not the result of an *ordinary, trivial* classification. Disadvantaged groups are generated by salient social stratifications. As a consequence, they carry and reflect institutionalized relations of privilege and disadvantage, the particular reality and life conditions produced by these relations, and the way those categorized in the disadvantaged side react and actively resist and adapt to those conditions. Therefore, they are socially and emotionally salient categories. Additionally, structural disadvantage often overlaps with or builds on cultural, ethnic, racial and religious groups.

The degree to which members of disadvantaged groups have a sense of themselves as a group—either an inner sense of groupness (e.g., ethnic or cultural) or one developed out of the common treatment they face (e.g., as an oppressed minority)— varies substantially between the groups, and between members of the same group. In this thesis, we use the term *disadvantaged group* to refer to a structurally disadvantaged group, independently of the degree of their members' consciousness of being a (disadvantaged) group and the level of their identification with that group. That is, immigrants, the working class, will be called disadvantaged groups by virtue of their structural position as such, even though they may not represent a psychological reality for all those objectively belonging to them.

Even though this may result in thinking of people as group members when themselves they may not claim this membership or resist their categorization in groups, the concept of *disadvantaged groups* is important to account for the structural nature of experiences and stressors members of different social categories are likely to face as a result of the mere position of their groups. One's group position in the social structure predicts indeed the likelihood to face societal devaluation and stigmatization, material hardship, and opportunity restrictions, despite differences in one's consciousness of this membership, in one's subjective identification and in the particular dynamics specific to each stratification system. As stated in the citation at the beginning of this section, obeying the injunction not to think of people in terms of social categories obscures the structural and category-based nature of those experiences. We use the term *structural disadvantage* to refer to all forms of constraints and stressors based on membership in a disadvantaged group.

1.2. Societal devaluation and opportunity restriction: two facets of structural disadvantage

1.2.1. Societal devaluation: the symbolic aspect

Membership in a disadvantaged group entails the risk of societal devaluation and stigmatization. Many theoretical approaches have focused on this symbolic aspect, namely

labeling and stigma theories (Becker, 1963; Goffman, 1963), stereotype literature (Dovidio, Hewstone, Glick, & Esses, 2010; Fiske, 1998; Wright & Taylor, 2007), identity process theory (Breakwell, 1988) and the social identity tradition (Tajfel, 1978a; Tajfel & Turner, 1979).

Early sociologists' interest in the question of how classifying people in differentially valued categories influences social interactions and people's self-concept has led to the development of labeling theories (Becker, 1963; Goffman, 1963), one of the most comprehensive frameworks for understanding the dynamics associated with the symbolic facet of structural disadvantage. While tenets of this perspective have been generally concerned with the processes through which *a discredited* identity could be internalised, Goffman's work is particularly important for our purpose in that it provides deep analyses of the particular demands and options a labeled person is faced with. Goffman's perspective assumes that individuals desire to be the holders of particular identities and to see this claim validated by others. This can create a tension for members of disadvantaged groups who are exposed to the risk of being categorized despite their will and being reduced in daily interactions to their particular socially salient and devalued *differentness*. In his understanding of the psychological demands associated with membership in a stigmatized category, Goffman distinguishes between the discredited—the one who believes one's *differentness* is perceptible and known by one's interaction partners—and the discreditable who assumes it neither known, nor perceptible by them. This distinction is important because it is associated with different types of tensions and demands for the stigmatized; for the discredited, the demand consists of constantly proving that the known differentness/attribute is irrelevant and that one should not be reduced to it, while for the discreditable the demand consists of managing information about themselves (disclosure problem, i.e., what should and should not be revealed about themselves).

The large body of research in stereotyping is also relevant to account for the symbolic costs associated with membership in a socially devalued category. The study of stereotypes concerning social groups has been one of the most vibrant subjects in the history of social psychology from its beginning (Allport, 1954; Dovidio et al., 2010; Fiske, 1998; Katz & Braly, 1933). The focus has been mainly directed at the processes implied in the formation and the diffusion of stereotypes that shape everyday interactions. This line of research points out a well-documented tendency to endow members of low status groups with characteristics congruent with the position of their groups and the roles they occupy, for example, as being less competent or less intelligent (Eagly & Diekman, 2005; Fiske, Cuddy, Glick, & Xu, 2002; Hoffman & Hurst, 1990; Jost & Banaji, 1994; Smedley & Bayton, 1978). This corroborates the idea that despite the differential dynamics particular to each stratification system, there are commonalities in the way members of different disadvantaged groups are treated, making the notion of structural disadvantage so important.

In line with the perspective we take in this thesis, much of the stereotyping literature has approached the subject from the perspective of the disadvantaged themselves, as potential targets of stereotypes. The focus has been specifically on their perceptions of the likelihood of being stereotyped and the psychological implications of these perceptions and of experimental and natural situations of societal devaluation and discrimination on their psychological well-being. This literature pointed out the commonalities and differences between various groups, but generally confirms the severe psychological implications for members of socially disadvantaged groups. A recent meta-analysis on the relation between perceived discrimination and well-being (Schmitt, Branscombe, Postmes, & Garcia, 2014) indicates a negative relationship (r = -.23), with larger effect sizes for disadvantaged groups (r = - .24) compared to advantaged groups (r = -.10), suggesting that experiences linked to

discrimination and societal devaluation are key determinants of disadvantaged group members' psychological well-being.

From the social identity perspective (incorporating social identity and self-categorization theories; Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Turner, 1985, and the derived large empirical research and theorizing), the cost of membership in a socially disadvantaged group has been mainly conceptualized in terms of a *social identity threat* (Branscombe, Ellemers, Spears, & Doosje, 1999; Tajfel & Turner, 1979). From this perspective, social categorization is conceived as a major source of identity, as individuals deduce who they are and what they are worth from the salient social groups to which they belong. Thus, individuals not only strive for positive personal identities but also for positive social identities, derived from membership in positively valued groups. A negative intergroup comparison (with the ingroup clearly in a low status position) constitutes then a threat to the value of one's social identity (negative or threatened social identity), an undesirable state with which members of disadvantaged groups need to cope.

Much of the social-psychological research on the potential costs associated with membership in a disadvantaged group is based on the social identity tradition and the intergroup framework of analyses it inspired. This framework—building on the notion that people seek positive identity and derive part of their identity from their salient groups—oriented researchers' focus to the psychological costs associated with salient unfavourable intergroup comparisons (e.g., Karasawa, Karasawa, & Hirose, 2004; Latrofa, Vaes, & Cadinu, 2012). As a consequence, threats to one's identity derived from the relatively low status of the ingroup have been the most studied form of stressors associated with membership in a disadvantaged group (Branscombe, Ellemers, et al., 1999; Ellemers, Spears, & Doosje, 2002).

However, even though structural disadvantage involves by definition asymmetric intergroup power relations, everyday experiences do not necessarily make a comparative

intergroup context and a responsible outgroup relevant. Moreover, with the complexity of modern societies, experiences of structural disadvantage increasingly take place in non-dichotomous, cross-categorization settings that may minimize the processes of self-categorization and intergroup comparisons (Deschamps & Doise, 1978; Doise, 1978). This urges the need to go beyond the mere identity consequences of unfavourable intergroup comparisons in dichotomous high vs. low status groups, and to focus on the various other social injustices linked to membership in socially disadvantaged categories that are not necessarily carried by self-categorization processes. These injustices include differential treatment by average people in everyday interactions, as a consequence of the shared representations and stereotypes spread in the public sphere (primarily by the media). This treatment entails, beyond the symbolic dimension, a concrete restriction of chances and opportunities (for example limiting one's chances for finding an accommodation or starting a relationship). Individuals' structure of opportunities can also be restricted because of the criteria for admissions in jobs and schools and many other forms of categorical treatment incorporated in the *normal functioning* of institutions. One way this thesis suggests to complement existing literature is to extend the way structural disadvantage has been examined by focusing on restricted structure of opportunities as another facet of structural disadvantage, also derived from category membership even if not linked to the threats it poses as source of identity.

1.2.2. Restricted structure of opportunities

Membership in a disadvantaged group does present a risk of symbolic devaluation, but can also concretely restrict individuals' opportunity structure. A life-course perspective (Elder, 1994; Elder, Johnson, & Crosnoe, 2003; Heinz & Marshall, 2003) is enlightening in relation to this matter in that it provides the conceptual tools to study how constraints due to social membership can interfere with individual chances and projects and have negative

psychological implications and lasting effect on life trajectories. For example, Mirowsky and Ross' (1989, 2003) life-course analyses pointed to powerlessness as a consequence of the stratification system and a mechanism of its reproduction.

> *Some people begin with fewer advantages, resources and opportunities; this makes them less able to achieve and more likely to fail. Failure in the face of effort increases cognitive and motivational deficits, which in turn produce more failure and distress* (Mirowsky and Ross, 1989; p. 94).

Pearlin's perspective is also one of the most influential in articulating social position, stress, and the life course (Pearlin, Schieman, Fazio, & Meersman, 2005; Pearlin & Skaff, 1996; Pearlin, 1989). Defining stress as a complex *process* that encompasses individuals' *continuous* exposure and response to stressors during the life course, he urged for the need to focus on the structural contexts of stressors (Pearlin, 1989). Importantly, he showed that among stressors, those that are repeated in the life course (e.g., economic strain and discrimination) are the most closely linked to social status, and that the differential exposure to these stressors can account for a part of health disparities among differently positioned groups (Pearlin et al., 2005). Pearlin's perspective has influenced many other health sociologists who provided strong empirical support for the differential exposure to stressors among social groups and the relevance of a life course perspective to stress research (Taylor & Turner, 2002; Turner & Avison, 2003; Turner et al., 1995).

Periods of transitions are particularly important for shedding light on structural constraints in life course (Heinz, 2009; Hitlin & Elder, 2006). During the transition to adulthood for example, the career and educational choices and opportunities of adolescents and young adults can be drastically restricted because of their group's status. The association between social position and adolescent educational choices is well illustrated in a recent study by Bailey and Dynarski (2011). Based on seventy years of data in the US context, their analyses confirm the existence and even the amplification of a gap in college entry between children from high vs. low-income families.

Efforts to account for both social structure and individual development during transitions are exemplified by the notion of "bounded agency", a socially situated agency (Evans, 2007; Heinz, 2009; Shanahan, 2000). Highlighting this notion, comparative transition studies have documented the unequal distribution of chances to exercise one's agency among youth from advantaged vs. disadvantaged backgrounds (Heinz, 2009; Schulenberg & Schoon, 2012). In a similar vein, the concept of perceived barriers has emerged from the literature on women's career development (Swanson, Daniels, & Tokar, 1996; Swanson & Woitke, 1997) in an attempt to account for the structural constraints on life-course development and how they can be subjectively felt. It has been also extended to the study of career development of men and racial-ethnic minority group members (McWhirter, 1997). Research conducted within this tradition confirmed group differences in barrier perception, with membership in a disadvantaged group associated with higher risk of experiencing barriers and constraints. For example, women and Mexican-Americans perceived higher barriers to their educational and career projects than men and Euro-Americans. Moreover, perceptions of educational barriers were associated negatively with their self-perceptions, in particular with their appraised coping-efficacy (Luzzo & McWhirter, 2001).

1.2.3. Psychological implications: From a looking-glass perspective to efficacy-based self-esteem

Despite their structural nature, disadvantages due to group membership are subjectively felt as personal problems, thus entailing the risk to harm the self-image and the belief in one's abilities. Drawing on Cooley's looking glass perspective (Cooley, 1902)—grounded on the notion that our self-evaluations are based on how we perceive our evaluations by others—previous research focused mainly on the risk for disadvantaged group members to internalize the negative view of them held by society (Crocker & Major, 1989, Major & O'Brien, 2005) and the threats that the relatively low status of their groups poses (Branscombe, Ellemers, & al., 1999). But beyond the looking glass perspective, an agentic perspective to human

development suggests another route by which membership in a disadvantaged group may harm self-esteem. From this perspective, self-esteem is constructed through the sense of control individuals experience in their environment (Gecas & Schwalbe, 1983; Gecas, 2003) and the conviction that they have the power to produce the desired effects is central to psychological well-being (Bandura, 1989, 2001).

The structural constraints to the exercise of their agency that disadvantaged group members may perceive and the risk of lower sense of efficacy and control they entail may then constitute a risk for lower self-esteem and well-being, no less severe than that which the symbolic aspects present. The risk for self-esteem and psychological well-being stems thus not only from the negative shared representation of the ingroup and the associated risk of devaluation by others or internalization of the negative views they hold, but also from the material conditions and concrete constraints of opportunities and choices that can be associated with this membership, and their consequences for one's sense of control and efficacy to achieve desired outcomes (Johnson & Krueger, 2005; Kraus, Piff, & Keltner, 2009; Lachman & Weaver, 1998).

Additionally, the symbolic and concrete aspects of structural disadvantage are often overlapping; the stereotype describing blacks as lazy is both a source of symbolic devaluation and concrete restriction of opportunities, as it can result in a lower chance to find a job for example. From this view, the implications of structural disadvantage on psychological well-being can not be understood without a consideration of the subjectively perceived structure of individuals' opportunities and the degree to which social membership constrains personal possibilities.

Life span scholars keep pointing out the need of theoretical and empirical approaches that allow considering how outcomes of life course transitions can be affected by opportunities of structural constraints and how individuals from disadvantaged groups

manage to cope with such constraints (Dietrich, Parker, & Salmela-Aro, 2012). One aim of this thesis is to expand the way structural disadvantage has been examined in the social-psychological literature, by looking through a life course perspective to another facet of structurally induced stressors, namely the restriction of individuals' opportunity structures. We argue that this is a common stressor associated with membership in a disadvantaged group and that the study of how structural disadvantage affects people's lives should not neglect the serious psychological implications of such life-course stressor, and the factors that help buffering them. We argue that social psychological analyses of identification and coping processes combined with a life course perspective can contribute to this goal, and the studies that constitute this dissertation were designed with this aim in mind.

1.3. Coping with structural disadvantage: the role of ingroups

1.3.1. What is coping and how can coping with structural disadvantage be studied?

Coping is the "person's constantly changing cognitive and behavioural efforts to manage specific external and/or internal demands that are appraised as taxing or exceeding the person's resources" (Folkman, Lazarus, Dunkel-Schetter, DeLongis, & Gruen, 1986, p. 993). When we speak specifically about coping with structural disadvantage, we focus on the particular demands and stressors members of disadvantaged groups are confronted with, including both the symbolic and the concrete aspects we discussed in the previous section. The study of coping with structural disadvantage can either focus on the factors that make people less harmed by the negative psychological implications of those demands, or that enhance their commitment to actions aiming to attenuate the demands themselves (social change commitment).

That is, when looked at through a personal-level lens, the question of coping with structural disadvantage can be approached in terms of factors that protect the psychological well-being of members of disadvantaged groups and make them less vulnerable to the

potential negative psychological impact of structurally induced stressors. The previous section pointed out that the two facets of structural disadvantage — symbolic devaluation and restriction of opportunities — both involve, though through different routes, a risk of harming one's sense of self-esteem, which can have drastic consequences. Indeed, self-esteem is a strong predictor of different positive outcomes like life satisfaction (Diener, Emmons, Larsen, & Griffin, 1985; Myers & Diener, 1995) and positive affect (Pelham & Swann, 1989), which make it a key component of different composite measures of psychological well-being (Schmitt, Branscombe, Postmes, & Garcia, 2014). Moreover, individuals with low self-esteem tend to be more susceptible to influence attempts (Brockner, 1983), to have lower self-concept clarity (Campbell & Trapnell, 1996; Campbell, 1990) and to be at higher risk of depression (Crandall, 1973). Given the centrality of self-esteem and the high risk that it can be harmed by both the symbolic and the concrete aspects of structural disadvantage, the studies which make up this dissertation focus on factors protecting individuals' self-esteem and/or moderating the damage particular structurally induced experiences can have on it.

Shifting the focus from personal to societal-level, coping with structural disadvantage can be conceived of in terms of collective efforts aimed at changing the structures and the social inequalities that are the source of the taxing demands (rather than in terms of factors that attenuate their psychological damage). The study of coping from this angle entails understanding factors that predict commitment to social change and collective action. The question of coping with structural disadvantage turns to be a question about the factors that predict people's commitment to social change (this societal-level will be addressed in paper 2).

1.3.2. Importance of ingroups for the disadvantaged and existing group-based models of coping

Our focus on ingroups and their role in coping with structural disadvantage follows from two key findings from the disadvantaged group members' literature. The first one shows

a greater tendency for members of disadvantaged groups to emphasize collective aspects of their self-concept compared to advantaged group members (Lorenzi-Cioldi, 1998, 2006), to have models of self as interdependent with others (Grossmann & Varnum, 2011; Stephens, Fryberg, & Markus, 2011; Stephens, Markus, & Fryberg, 2012; lower vs. higher class differences) and to score higher in collectivism and racial/ethnic identity (Gaines et al., 1997; ethnic minority/majoririty differences).

How have these differential tendencies to emphasize collective and interdependent versus more personal aspects of the self been explained? Lorenzi-Cioldi (2006) argues that stressing one's individuality is a privilege that members of disadvantaged group cannot afford, not only because they may be inclined to actively emphasize collective forms of self-identification as a means to cope with the salience of their (relative) low status, but also because of (normative) reasons beyond their control. For example, not being the cultural default makes the salience of their group membership highly accessible both for self and for external perceivers. Drawing on a social class perspective, differences in the self-concept between disadvantaged and advantaged have been explained by the idea that the material and social conditions common to advantaged groups promote an independent model of the self while material and social context of disadvantaged groups, characterized by environmental constraints and lack of opportunities, promote the interdependent model of the self (Grossmann & Varnum, 2011; Stephens et al., 2011, 2012). Studies among members of historically disadvantaged groups (e.g., African American studies) and ethnic minorities have linked the development and the role of racial/ethnic identity to the experiences associated with minority status, and examined these identities as key determinants of members' psychological well-being and mental health. From this perspective, the centrality of racial/ethnic identities has been studied both as a risk factor and a potential buffer against social discrimination (e.g., Phinney, Horenczyk, Liebkind, & Vedder, 2001; Sellers, Caldwell,

Schmeelk-Cone, & Zimmerman, 2003). These independent research lines suggest that groups and relations are psychologically more salient and meaningful for disadvantaged group members and that this may be related, at least in part, to their role in coping with their everyday struggles.

The second finding comes specifically from social-identity based research, and shows that group identification, that is, an individual member's relationship to the group, plays a key role in the process of coping with structural disadvantage, particularly, with perceived devaluation and discrimination. This literature can be organized into two research lines according to the individual- vs. collective-level outcomes on which it focuses. First, The literature focusing on individual-level outcomes (e.g., Branscombe, Schmitt, & Harvey, 1999; Crabtree, Haslam, Postmes, & Haslam, 2010; Outten, Schmitt, Garcia, & Branscombe, 2009; Schmitt, Spears, & Branscombe, 2003) looks at direct or moderator impact of group identification (and its mediators) on self-esteem and other psychological outcomes with different real world disadvantaged groups (e.g, stigmatized minorities; Latrofa, Vaes, Pastore, & Cadinu, 2009; McNamara, Stevenson, & Muldoon, 2013, black Britons; Leach, Mosquera, & Hirt, 2010 and black Americans; Outten et al., 2009). Results have shown that higher group identification can be associated with positive outcomes in terms of coping and well-being, despite the low status of the group. Much of these studies have been inspired by the rejection-identification model (Branscombe et al., 1999), stating that the psychological costs associated with a group that is socially devalued are reduced by higher identification with the group. Group identification is thus interpreted as an emotional strategy aimed to protect the self from discrimination and rejection. The model suggests more precisely that perceiving pervasive discrimination "should motivate target of discrimination to become increasingly reliant on the minority group as a means of building a meaningful and positive self-concept" (p. 144). Thus,

recognizing rejection from the dominant group leads to more identification with those who are in a position to afford a sense of belonging and acceptance and restore one's self-esteem.

The second research line focuses on societal-level outcomes (i.e., collective action in the name of the group, e.g., Drury & Reicher, 1999; Drury & Reicher, 2009; Van Zomeren, Postmes, & Spears, 2008; Van Zomeren, Spears, Fischer, & Leach, 2004). At this level, research has focused on group-based emotions and instrumental beliefs (i.e., collective efficacy) resulting from self-categorization in a disadvantaged category, and their impact on collective action. For instance, the dynamic dual pathway model (Van Zomeren et al., 2012; Van Zomeren, Spears, & Leach, 2008) suggests that experiencing collective disadvantage makes group identity salient and specifies two routes that explain the role of the relevance of group identity in coping with the experienced disadvantage; one emotional through group-based anger and one instrumental through group-based efficacy. Overall, this literature suggests that while the group is to some extent the source of the disadvantage (i.e., societal devaluation and discrimination), it can also be the base of a psychological empowerment that counterbalances the potential negative implications of this disadvantage.

Different social-psychological models have been developed to account for this group-based empowerment (e.g., Rejection–identification model; Branscombe, Schmitt, et al., 1999; and the dynamic dual pathway model of coping with collective disadvantage; Van Zomeren, Spears, & Leach, 2008). These models have in common—even if they focus on different-level outcomes—that experiences of group-based disadvantage take place in dichotomous intergroup contexts, make a particular identity relevant and foster identification with it. This identification in turn changes the experience and outcomes of the disadvantages associated with this membership.

Individuals' relationships with their groups (i.e., group identification) and the role of groups in coping have been studied within this literature from a framework that relates them

to intergroup perceptions and categorization processes. As a result, the groups that have been examined as a potential basis of psychological empowerment are the large-scale social categories (e.g., racial categories) assumed a priori to be of low status and to be self-relevant as such for participants. These categories are assumed to be made psychologically salient by the relative disadvantage experienced, and to operate through an ideological consciousness of its illegitimacy. This is especially the case for models predicting societal-level outcomes. The approach we develop in this thesis suggests a different understanding of the role of ingroups in coping and of the mechanisms underlying the development of a sense of groupness (i.e., perception of self and others as forming a social unit) out of experiences of disadvantage.

1.3.3. Common group membership and intragroup solidarity as sources of connectedness and efficacy

Beyond the content and the ideological aspects of group identities, we argue that the mere capacity for individuals facing structural disadvantages to bind with each other in meaningful psychological units is *in itself* a key ingredient of coping. This sense of unity can have different bases and does not need to be contingent on intergroup comparisons and awareness of illegitimate categorical disadvantage.

Members of socially disadvantaged categories are faced with pervasive stressors and disadvantages that often exceed individual resources. They however don't respond to these stressors in isolation but in contexts that involve others with whom they may share different group memberships (for example being members of the same family, the same work team or the same cultural community). These others are also likely to face similar stressors in view of the fact that social interactions are shaped by structural dimensions, leading individuals to interact more with others who occupy similar, in comparison to dissimilar, social positions (Blau, 1977; McPherson, Smith-Lovin, & Cook, 2001). A sense of social unity with these others can foster mutual responsiveness and understanding, making individuals more resilient when coping with their disadvantages, regardless of the particular group membership on

which this unity is based and the interpersonal or categorical nature of this membership. Thus, we understand the role of ingroups principally based on the cohesive and solidary relations they afford, and the resulting sense of connectedness and efficacy these relations provide. We argue that these are *per se* important coping resources, and they are particularly needed to effectively cope with the specific risks associated with membership in a disadvantaged group. Indeed, boosting one' sense of connectedness and one's efficacy beliefs may be particularly important for the disadvantaged given that they are likely to face societal devaluation and rejection (which interferes with the need for connectedness) and opportunity restriction (which interferes with the need for efficacy).

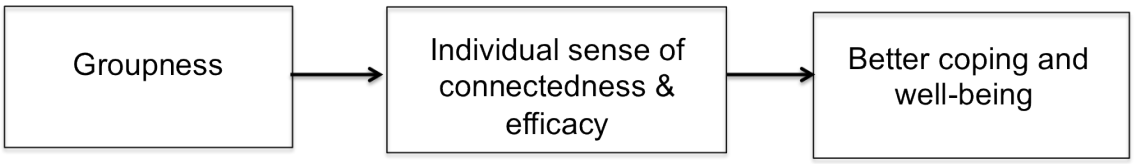

Figure 1. Groupness as an antecedent of individual sense of connectedness and efficacy, resulting in turn in better coping and well-being

The idea of the centrality of groupness by virtue of its mere connecting and mutual responding function is derived from the large and growing amount of literature on the social bases of coping and well-being generated by independent research traditions. Indeed, research conducted within the social capital and social networks tradition (e.g., Helliwell & Putnam, 2004), attachment theory and close relationships literature (e.g., Mikulincer & Florian, 1998) , and social identity approach to health and well-being (e.g., Jetten, Haslam, & Haslam, 2012), all converge in showing that groups and social bonds are key determinants of coping and well-being, and that they may play an even more important role given the specific stressors and processes operating in the case of the most disadvantaged. The literature on the role of groups and social relationships in coping in general, and their importance for disadvantaged group members in particular, is reviewed in more detail in the first and second papers.

These perspectives, even if different in many ways, point out a common mechanism, that is, the relational shift toward helping, mutual responding and solidarity that derive from perceiving self and others as forming a social unit (which can take place within the context of varying scale groups), and how this changes one's sense of connectedness and efficacy and consequently the experience and outcomes of stressful situations. The important role of a sense of groupness for an individual's sense of connectedness and efficacy, and the particular value of these psychological resources for the disadvantaged specifically, give rise to the question: What makes people develop a sense of themselves as being a group and respond as one to each other' needs and to their common preoccupations?

The social identity approach on which prevailing group-based models of coping are built has the merit to show that the cognitive processes associated with category membership salience can lead to a relational shift toward psychological closeness and to help categorically similar others even in the absence of any previous interpersonal interactions. When their categorical membership becomes salient, people interacting for the first time can perceive themselves and others as an interchangeable member of a common, socially meaningful unit, and act as group members rather than as individuals. However, common category salience is not a necessary pre-condition, nor always a sufficient one, for the psychological sense of groupness needed for coping with structural disadvantage, as we will argue in the next section. Work outside the categorization perspective, for example the work by Hornstein and colleagues (Flippen, Hornstein, Siegal, & Weitzman, 1996; Hornstein, 1972; Hornstein, 1982), suggests that a sense of groupness can emerge and trigger solidarity and helping toward unknown targets, without this being contingent on categorization processes.

1.4. Toward a more relational approach to groupness

In this section, we review literature on antecedents of groupness drawing on two models of psychological group formation: the social identification model on which existing group-

based models of coping are based, and the social cohesion model. While the social identification model has been proposed as an alternative to its "reductionist" predecessor, the social cohesion model, we will argue that it has become itself reductionist by neglecting the central role of between-persons interdependence as antecedent of groupness. We will then argue that these models are complementary rather than competing, and propose an integrated two-route approach to groupness.

1.4.1. Categorical perspective to groupness

> *"A social group can be defined as two or more individuals who share a common social identification of themselves, or, which is nearly the same thing, perceive themselves to be members of the same social category"* (Turner, 1982, p. 15)

The link between categorization processes on the one hand and psychological groupness and identification processes on the other has probably never been as strong as postulated by Turner in this quote. In what follows we will first discuss the key theoretical foundations of this categorical perspective to groupness and then discuss its merits and implications.

Derived from the human cognitive tendency to sort stimuli in categories on the basis of perceptual similarity and contrast, *social categorization* as a fundamental process shaping human interactions has been initially advanced by social identity theory to explain the emergence of ingroup favouritism in the conditions of the Minimal Group Paradigm (MGP). This paradigm was used by experimental social psychologists at that time as a method to study intergroup perceptions and identify the minimal conditions sufficient to generate in-out discrimination. It consists of experimentally interposing a boundary between participants by assigning them to categories (e.g., those who prefer the art of Klee vs. the art of Kandinsky), and measuring the degree to which they will allocate more resources to ingroup than outgroup members. According to Social Identity Theory's (Tajfel & Turner, 1979) interpretation of MGP experiments (e.g., Billig & Tajfel, 1973; Tajfel & Billig, 1974; Tajfel, Flament, Billig, & Bundy, 1971), the mere categorization is sufficient for participants to define themselves in

terms of the imposed categories, compare themselves to the outgroup, and allocate more resources (points) to unknown ingroup members as a means to achieve positive distinctiveness for the ingroup. Indeed, Tajfel and Turner concluded that "the basic and highly reliable findings is that the trivial, ad hoc intergroup categorization leads to ingroup favouritism" (Tajfel & Turner, 1979, p. 39).

First used to understand intergroup behaviour and specifically discrimination and prejudice, ideas about categorization have been widened by Turner to a general theory of *ingroup formation* (Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher, & Wetherell, 1987; Turner, 1982). Ingroup formation refers to the process through which the person comes to perceive and feel about the self and others as belonging to the same unit or entity, that is, the process that leads to groupness as we use it in this dissertation. Turner's model of ingroup formation has been introduced in a pivotal chapter entitled "Towards a cognitive redefinition of the social group" (1982) where he criticized traditional accounts of groupness and group behaviour (he characterized as social cohesion models) for being unnecessarily preoccupied by the relations and feelings between group members

> *Traditionally, experimental social psychology has been preoccupied with group behaviour as the expression of cohesive or solidary social relationships between individuals* (Turner 1982, p. 15).

As an alternative to group formation (affective) accounts provided by social cohesion models and based on between-person interdependence, he advanced the *social identification model*:

> *The social identification model, on the other hand, assumes that psychological group membership has primarily a perceptual or cognitive basis. As we shall see, it considers that individuals structure their perceptions of themselves and others by means of abstract social categories, that they internalize these categories as aspects of their self concepts, and that social cognitive processes relating to these forms of self conception produce group behaviour* (p. 16).

With this model, Turner introduced a categorical conception of groupness according to which self-definition as a group member, and definition of who is an ingroup member, are

determined by category perception and perception of self and others as an interchangeable member of this category. Groupness is conceived thus as the product of a shift from self-definition at an interpersonal-level (as a distinctive individual) to a self-definition at a group-level (as an interchangeable member of a category). When the person perceives oneself as an interchangeable member of a category, group prototypes—defined as "cognitive representation of features that describe and prescribe attributes of the group" (Hogg & Terry, 2000, p. 123)—become major constitutes of *individual identity (who I am)* and this shift in the self-conception is what produces group behaviour. That is, the key process that transforms a person from an individual to a group member has been referred to as a process of *depersonalization;* "a shift toward the perception of self as interchangeable exemplar of some social category and away from the perception of the self as a unique person" (Turner et al., 1987, p. 50).

What are then the antecedents of groupness? In addition to the question of how one becomes to self-define at a group level, the central question of self-categorization theory was to investigate when this is likely to happen. Following an understanding of group behaviour and group-level self-definition as a product of depersonalization, the factors that lead to groupness are thus the factors that lead to the perception of category membership and one's prototypicality of this category, that is, the factors that make *group* identity (i.e., the prototypical characteristics of the group) salient. According to the meta-contrast principle (Turner, 1985) which states that stimuli are more likely to be categorized as a single entity when intra-category differences are smaller than inter-category differences in a given comparative context, the salience of group identity depends on the degree to which within group differences are perceived to be smaller to differences between groups. As a consequence, the focus within this framework has been on the parameters of the *intergroup comparative context* and how these parameters (e.g., relative group size and status, contextual

salience of group features) influence the salience of category membership and lead in turn to a sense of groupness and group behaviour.

The merits of the categorical perspective. By showing the potency of self-categorization as a sufficient originator of group behaviour, the great merit of this approach has been to disentangle group phenomena and intragroup cohesiveness (e.g., helping and solidarity) from interpersonal knowing. The social identity literature has indeed shown that the mere salience of a common category membership can lead to solidarity and helping in the absence of any previous interpersonal interactions. This has been documented with a large body of empirical studies showing for example that when people perceive themselves and others to share the same category, they expect others to support them when in need, are more ready to provide help to others (Haslam, O'Brien, Jetten, Vormedal, & Penna, 2005; Levine, Prosser, Evans, & Reicher, 2005), and tend to trust each other (Kramer & Tyler, 1996).

The implications (and costs) of the categorical perspective. The social identification model, and more generally the social identity tradition, diverted the attention away from *between-member relations* and shifted the focus to individuals' *perceptions of themselves* in relation to group prototypes. While in the social cohesion model the transformation of individuals to a group was contingent upon the cohesive relations between group members, the present perspective reduced the weight of between group member relations; as stated by Turner himself "What matters is how we perceive and define ourselves and not how we feel about others" (Turner, 1982, p.16).

Indeed, the explanation of groupness and group behaviour based on self-categorization and the underlying self-stereotyping and depersonalization processes do not require, nor necessarily produce, a *motivation to build relations* and seek proximity to other group members. According to the explanation based on self-categorization, the mere motivation to achieve positive distinctiveness for the self is sufficient to trigger group behaviour, to the

extent to which others are perceived as interchangeable with self. A behaviour intended to help and cooperate with others is (motivationally) explained by an extended self-interest induced by a categorical self-conception. If this has the merit to disentangle intragroup behaviour of helping and solidarity from interpersonal knowing, it also makes it contingent on the salience of intra-category homogeneity and inter-category contrast, that is, on an inevitable loss of individuality and corollary discrimination against another social unit (the outgroup).

Moreover, by literally equating group identification with perception of common category membership as exemplified by the quotes at the beginning of this section, the social identification model promoted an understanding of groups where homogeneity and interchangeability of group members are not only the sufficient condition to become a group, but also a necessary one, excluding antecedents of group formation that are not based on categorical awareness and distinctiveness from an outgoup. This is highlighted in the initial formulation of the central hypothesis of the social-identification model:

> *We can hypothesize that awareness of common category membership is the necessary and sufficient condition for individuals to feel themselves to be, and act as a group member* (Turner, 1982, p. 27).

The consequences have been that identification and self-categorization started to be used interchangeably. Additionally, because interpersonal behaviour and feeling (self vs. others) and group behaviour and feeling (ingroup vs. outgroups) are according to self-categorization theory distinct repertories produced by hierarchic self-categorization levels of abstraction, the psychology of groups has become a psychology of intergroup behaviour as opposed to interpersonal behaviour, which becomes considered as irrelevant to the study of group phenomena. Even though the idea of an antagonism between intergroup and interpersonal behaviour has been one of the conceptual tripods of Social Identity theory in its

early formulation (Tajfel and Turner, 1979)[1], this antagonism has become more evident when the idea of salience has been formalized within self-categorization theory, assuming that the individual is regulated either by personal-self or by collective-self depending on the situational or more chronic contextual factors that make one or the other more salient, perceptually and motivationally. This has contributed, in our view, to an unfortunate fragmentation in the social psychological literature between intergroup literature and interpersonal dynamics.

1.4.2. Relational perspective to groupness

> *"Any normal group, and certainly any developed and organized one, contains and should contain individuals of very different character. Two members of one family might be less alike than two members of different families; but in spite of differences in character and interest, two individuals will belong to the same group if their fates are interdependent."*
> *Lewin, 1948, p. 166*

The idea of groupness as a consequence of awareness of category membership is based on a conception of groups as entities pre-existing to individuals and having distinctive characteristics that, when made salient, lead category members through a process of depersonalization to feel and act as group members. A different understanding of what leads people to feel and act as group members will be discussed in this section. This understanding is based on a fundamentally different conception of groups, not in terms of distinctive shared characteristics (group prototypes that can be more or less salient), but as a "dynamic whole based on interdependence rather than on similarity" (Lewin, 1948, p. 184). While the categorical perspective to groupness puts them on the back burner, between-member relations are given the conceptual priority in the perspective discussed in this section.

The core idea of this perspective is that a group is more than simply categorically interchangeable individuals; groupness goes beyond a principle of classification, by involving

[1] The interpersonal-intergroup continuum has been first introduced by Tajfel (1978a) in a paper where he links it to perception of self and others and discusses its consequences.

the degree to which members are internally linked/related to each other. A group may have some salient attributes that members share, but this is not what makes it a group. What shapes the ingroup boundaries is the structure of relations among group members rather than the degree of their similarity to each other or their prototypicality of the same abstract category.

This conception of groups as going beyond a principle of classification based on similarity and dissimilarity goes back in its roots to Lewin's work (1948). Lewin considers that

> *Similarity between persons merely permits their classification, their subsumption under the same abstract concept, whereas belonging to the same social group means concrete dynamic interrelation between persons" (*Lewin, 1948, p. 184).

Viewing parties' interdependence and inter-relations as what make individuals become a group is also rooted in Sherif's conception. Here, reference group identification is defined in terms of perceived interdependence and common fate (e.g., Sherif, 1966). For him, what distinguishes a group from a mere category or aggregate of persons is the internal structure of relations that *develops as long as* group members have goals that necessitate mutual realization (i.e., perceived interdependence in the pursuit of common goals). Sherif and collaborators' classic Robber's cave study is an illustration of how ingroup boundaries (that define who is considered an ingroup member) are shaped and reshaped by the functional relations between interacting individuals. Their study shows for example that confronting two camp groups with a "superordinate goal" transformed hostility previously induced by competition into friendly attitudes and cooperation (Sherif, Harvey, White, Hood, & Sherif, 1961). In a similar vein, Deutsch described a psychological group as individuals "who perceive themselves as pursuing promotively interdependent goals" (Deutsch, 1949, p. 150), and mutually supportive interactions as a direct function of perceived interdependence of goals. Common to those approaches is the idea that interdependence—the process by which

interacting persons depend on each other—is the key process that transforms an aggregate of independent individuals into a psychological group.

In his introduction to the social identification model, Turner criticized the traditional preoccupation of cohesion models (exemplified by Sherif's, Deutsch's and Lewin's conceptions) with solidary relationships as the marker of groupness, and oriented the research on group processes (on both intra-group and inter-groups levels) to the study of factors that make category membership salient, considered the necessary and sufficient condition for group formation and group behaviour.

Rabbie and colleagues (Rabbie & Horwitz, 1988; Rabbie, Schot, & Visser, 1989) formulated in our view the most thorough criticism of the group identification model. Following Lewin's conceptual distinction between categorical classification and group belongingness, they argued that the degree of parties' homogeneity and similarity are antecedents of category perception, which needs to be distinguished from group perception. Equating both and focusing on parameters predicting category salience—as sufficient to understand group formation—obscures an important question: which personal and situational factors explain that some individuals will be more ready than others to perceive a category of individuals as a group of varying degrees of cohesiveness?

> *We elaborated on the Lewinian perspective in considering the question: under what conditions does the perception of a category of individuals become transformed into the perception of a group? We proposed that the transformation occurs when the group is viewed as a locomoting entity, one that actively moves or is passively moved in its environment toward or away from group harms or benefits* (Rabbie & Horwitz, 1988, p. 119).

Accordingly, antecedents of group perception should be examined in the structure of relations between parties, that is, the degree to which they are interdependent for their outcomes.

> *In our view, a necessary condition for perceiving a collection of individuals as a group is that they be seen as capable of receiving good or poor outcomes as an entity or as members of an entity (*Horwitz & Rabbie, 1982, p. 251).

This conception joins Sherif's and Deutch's conceptions discussed earlier, in that it is also based on the structure of relations as the key originator of groupness. However, it is less agentic than these previous conceptions in that it did not require that parties are self-conscious, acknowledging one another in a unified relation and actively pursuing a common goal. Rabbie and colleagues' conception requires only the existence of a structure of interdependence between parties: both individuals who actively relate to each other and perceive themselves as pursuing a common goal and those who are made interdependent for their outcomes by external forces can be perceived as a group.

Rabbie and colleagues argued moreover that parties' interdependence is not only the sovereign principle underlying ingroup formation, but also the key element in explaining intergroup behaviour. They suggested and experimentally validated an alternative reinterpretation of ingroup favouritism found in the Minimal Group Paradigm (e.g., Rabbie, Schot, & Visser, 1989) in terms of perceived interdependence. The key argument is that the experimental conditions of this paradigm—assigning participants to groups and asking them to allocate resources to others—can lead the subjects to perceive within group positive interdependence and between groups negative interdependence at least in two ways: first, they may infer from the experimental conditions that the experimenter will treat them as a whole. Second, because they know that others will award them, they may infer that in-group members will reciprocate and out-group members will discriminate (the ingroup reciprocity hypothesis; Rabbie & Horwitz, 1969, 1988). By experimentally manipulating subject's perceptions about who controls their outcome, they found for instance an outgroup favouritism rather than an ingroup favouritism when participants believed that their outcomes depended on outgroup allocators (Rabbie et al., 1989, see also Locksley, Ortiz, & Hepburn, 1980 for additional support to this hypothesis).

Interdependence theory. Given the centrality of interdependence to those different perspectives, we will first describe the key elements of interdependence theory which has been considered the most comprehensive framework to understand interdependence processes (Van Lange, 2012). The theory focuses on between person *relationships*, considered of primary importance for the understanding of social life. It has been first introduced by Kelley and Thibaut in their book *The Social Psychology of Groups* (Thibaut & Kelley, 1959), and then extended through a series of developments (Kelley et al., 2003; Kelley, 1979, 1984, 1991). Interaction (i.e., the opportunity that persons influence each other) and interdependence of outcomes (i.e., the process by which persons depend on each other) are the key concepts of this perspective. Those key concepts served as a conceptual framework both for group dynamic experiments and dyadic relationships; both are analysed in terms of patterns of interdependence among interacting members. We can find here a key difference with the categorical perspective: group phenomena are an extension rather than an antagonist of dyadic/interpersonal phenomena.

This framework served first for the analyses of encounters among strangers and how the pattern of *situational interdependence* persons found themselves in influences their *interpersonal dispositions* toward each other. That is, how particular structures of interdependence afford interpersonal orientations toward cooperation, altruism, individualism or competition. At the beginning, the goal of this framework was to develop conceptual tools to describe and systematically study *situations* in terms of their patterns of interdependence (Taxonomy of situations or "structures") and the interpersonal dispositions they afford. For example, Thibaut & Kelley (1959) distinghuished between two basic patterns of interdependence: mutual fate control, also called exchange situations (Kelley, 1997), affording interaction partners to helping each other, and mutual behavior control or coordination situation, affording each person to cooperate with the other (of course the

persons may harm instead of help or compete instead of cooperate even if the structure of their interdependence affords these orientations).

The framework was then developed to account for how people may *transform* the interpersonal situations into new situations within interactions that extend over time (Kelley et al., 2003; Kelley & Thibaut, 1978; Kelley, 1984). Introducing this temporal dimension was necessary to account for how relations are transformed during iterated interactions and endowed with emergent characteristics that influence in turn the pattern of interdependence. This development made it necessary to go beyond self-interest motives and rational calculus of costs and benefits in short-term interactions and to provide the necessary tools to study on-going relationships (relationship closeness and group commitment). Thus, beyond purely instrumental interdependence, the perspective considers that people subjectively link themselves in stable relationships with others and can commit themselves to these relationships (either with persons or within the context of a group). For example, having a roommate is a situation that makes two persons or more objectively interdependent, because each one's behaviour impacts strongly the other even if they are not emotionally close (Kelley, 1979), but the friendship that may emerge between the roommates goes beyond their instrumental interdependence.

The concept of interdependent outcomes is central to the theory as it is useful both to characterize *the given setting of interdependence* (the given matrix) to which the interacting persons adapt, that is, the objective structure or situation, but also to describe the patterns of *between-person relationships* that develop over time (the effective matrix). The notion of outcome matrix is derived from game theory, but Kelley specifies however that his use of costs and rewards terminology should not lead to an understanding of his approach as a purely instrumental approach. The notion of *transformation* attests indeed how interdependence perspective goes beyond instrumental understanding of humans' motivations. Thus, focusing

on dyads, Kelley (1979) conceptualized the *enduring change* that characterise a close relationship as a *transformation* of each member's two-person outcome matrix, in a way that each person becomes directly motivated to satisfy other's needs and welfare. Outcome interdependence is used to characterise an enduring relationship, not a situation that makes partners (strangers) objectively dependent on one another for their outcomes. It does not describe a situation, but a pattern of closeness and attachment between persons reflecting the *transformation* of each partner's priorities and sphere of concern in a way that he or she becomes ultimately concerned about the outcomes of the other. Individuals in established relationships are therefore not solely motivated by their self-interest but can frequently be motivated by a desire to respond to the partner's need even when this may interfere with one's personal interest, and a desire to achieve a satisfying relationship in the long-term even if this implies some costs at the short-term (relationship goal).

Horwitz and Rabbie (1982) considered that Kelley's ideas about dyadic relationships can be applied to group processes, and that any relationship a person has with a party (whether an individual or a group) is best characterized by the importance one gives to other's desires and needs. That is, group identification can be conceptualized by the degree to which the person becomes motivated not only by one's own outcomes, but also by the outcomes of other group members and of the group as a whole (the degree to which "one desires that the other's desires be satisfied", p. 264). Similarly, the Inclusion of Others in the Self (IOS) perspective conceptualizes relationship closeness by the notion that the partner's (either an individual or a group) outcomes become one's and "personal and joint outcomes become undistinguishable" (Aron & McLaughlin-Volpe, 2001, p. 101). Both perspectives consider that people are capable of strong commitment to long-term relationships (either with persons or groups) where self and partner (or ingroup) interests/outcomes become linked. Importantly, both argue for the applicability of the processes implied in interpersonal relations

(interdependence of outcome and inclusion of others in the self) to understand group identification, and emphasize the *relational value* of group identification, which goes beyond the instrumental costs and rewards expected in short-term interactions.

The differential meaning given by the relational and the categorical perspectives to group identification must be highlighted: while for the categorical perspective identifying with other group members means to perceive them as interchangeable with the self, for the relational perspective, it means to positively identify with their outcomes. Rabbie and Horwitz (1988) responded to the two critics Tajfel (1982) addressed to their conceptualization of group identification, which are the difficulty of measurement and the reduction of group identification to "liking other members":

> *One was the difficulty of measurement, which we are currently handling by assessing how much a member is willing to lose individually for the sake of a gain to the group as a whole or how much the member is willing to gain individually at the expense of a loss to the group, much as Kelley (1979) has done in measuring one's spouse identification with the others's outcome* (Rabbie & Horwitz, 1988; p. 120).

The idea of loosing individually for achieving positive outcomes for the group and its members attests how individual-group relationship—as an enduring relationship—goes beyond the mere rational search for positive outcomes for the self, and is best reflected by the importance one grants to group (and its members') outcomes even when their realization conflicts with one's own desires/interests. Rabbie and Horwitz moreover considered that accusing their perspective for reducing group identification to interpersonal liking is a misreading that stems from " failing to recognize that groups, unlike categories of individuals can have outcomes, that differ in kind from those of its individual members" (p. 121).

It is noteworthy that unlike the focus of categorization processes on individuals' perceptions of themselves and how prototypical they are of a given category, interdependence analyses focus on how the pattern and the strength of inter-relations change within interactions (in the context of a dyadic relation or of a group). The important dimension is

how *interconnected* people are to each other, how close they are to each other and not how prototypical they are of an abstract category. For instance, interdependence theory assumes that dependence situations (needing and relying on one another) are at the heart of interpersonal closeness; people get close to each other and are likely to perceive themselves as being in a unified relation to the extent to which they (objectively or subjectively) depend on each other and are responsive to each other's needs. Such processes of mutual need satisfaction and responsiveness in interaction are similarly relevant at the group level; group commitment is conceived as a function of the degree to which interactions within the context of the group mediate important needs for the individual and group members are responsive to each other. Therefore, the self is also conceived as dynamic but not in terms of being more personalized (distinctive) vs. more prototypical (interchangeable). The relevant dimension of self-change is from separateness to relatedness, which entails an understanding of the collective self (the self derived from membership in groups) in a fundamentally different way from the one derived from social identification model. Indeed, in contrast to the research within the categorical framework which assumes a qualitative difference between collective self on one hand and both relational and individual self on the other, the interdependence perspective puts the relational self and the collective self in the same qualitative pole in opposition to a separated self.

1.4.3. Self-categorization and perceived interdependent relations as two unique routes to groupness

1.4.3.1. Comparing the categorical and the relational routes

While opponents of the social identification model see interdependence and interpersonal processes as irrelevant and unnecessary for group dynamics (Hogg, 1996, Turner et al, 1987), interdependence theorists have argued that perceived interdependent relations are the necessary condition for group perception and that categorization processes

are not sufficient for ingroup formation (Flippen et al., 1996) and "incomplete at best" for explaining intergroup behaviour (Horwitz & Rabbie, 1982; p. 249).

We think that we should go beyond the debate about the primacy of categorization processes vs. interdependence processes and the comparison between categorization-based and interdependence-based models, as alternative competing models, in terms of which one has greater explanatory power.

It is true that the social identification model (as a model of group formation) and more generally the social identity tradition have been developed against a reduction of group processes to interpersonal relations and interdependence (Abrams & Hogg, 1988; Hogg & Turner, 1985; Turner et al., 1987). In their description of the historical circumstances that prepared the way for the emergence of the model, Turner and Reynolds (2010) stated:

> *By the 1970s, researchers were asking: "whatever happened to the group in social psychology?". The answer was clear—it had been reduced to a collection of individuals interaction to satisfy personal motives and self-interest who had thereby become cohesive and mutually influential"*(p.20).

We think that this perceptive has however become in itself reductionist when it diverted the attention away from the central role of interpersonal relations for psychological group formation. The social identification model, which has become the dominant model of psychological group formation, has indeed considered internalization of social identity through depersonalized self-perceptions a necessary precondition for psychological group formation and relegated between persons relations—"which were not considered necessary or sufficient" (Turner & Reynolds, 2010, p. 20)— to the background. We argue for the importance, specifically when concerned with unequal status relations, of going beyond the categorical-understanding of groupness and of acknowledging between-persons interdependence for need satisfaction as a key, sufficient, originator of groupness. The merit of an interdependence perspective to group formation resides in our view in the importance it

gives to internal relations between group members and their interdependency beliefs, a dimension that has been neglected by the social identification model.

In the social identity literature, interdependence based models have also often been reduced to the assumption that group phenomena could be explained by individual motivation to maximize benefits and avoid losses in situations of interdependence, and have consequently been criticized as merely instrumental explanation of group behaviour to which identity-based models, recognizing the symbolic aspects of human nature, will be preferred (Gagnon & Bourhis, 1996; Turner & Bourhis, 1996; Tyler & Blader, 2001).

We think that advancing our understanding of group phenomena requires going beyond merely comparing the two perspectives as two mutually exclusive alternatives, in terms of which one has greater explanatory power or which one is instrumental or utilitarian and which one acknowledges the symbolic aspect of human nature, as it has been done repeatedly (e.g., Flippen et al., 1996; Gagnon & Bourhis, 1996; Tyler & Blader, 2001; Yamagishi & Kiyonari, 2000). This is in our view not the relevant dimension of comparison; we can actually also interpret the social identity perspective as instrumental in that it explains group behaviour as an instrument to the achievement of a positive self-identity. Moreover, and with the series of theoretical developments the interdependence perspective has known it cannot be reduced to an instrumental view of group behaviour as many of its interpretations suggest. We think that rather than pitting them against each other as mutually exclusive, we should acknowledge that the two perspectives provide very different (and valid) conceptions of what constitutes a group (two group theories) and consequently two fundamentally different routes to groupness (as psychological processes leading individuals to perceive themselves as belonging to the same social unit).

We summarize in table 1 the key elements that distinguish the two routes.

Table 1. Comparison between key features of categorical vs. relational perspectives to groupness

	Category-based groupness	Relations-based groupness
What constitutes a group?	Degree to which parties are similar	Degree to which parties are inter-related, inter-dependent
What shapes ingroup boundaries? (Who is and who is not a group member)	The level of intra-category similarity and inter-category contrast (Homogeneity and distinctiveness from an outgroup)	Between-person structure of relations
What does it mean to identify with others?	To perceive others as interchangeable, equivalent to the self	To perceive others' outcomes (needs and welfare) as important to the self
How does it change the self-concept?	From both individual and relational self to collective self, through self-stereotyping and depersonalization	From individual to both relational and collective self, through relationship building
What are antecedents of group commitment?	Perception of the self in terms of the group prototypes	Past, on-going and future consequences of interactions within the context of the group

We argue that the relational perspective and the categorical perspective are complementary rather than competing because they have different foci, and they provide conceptual tools to understand two different routes to groupness that should be clearly distinguished.

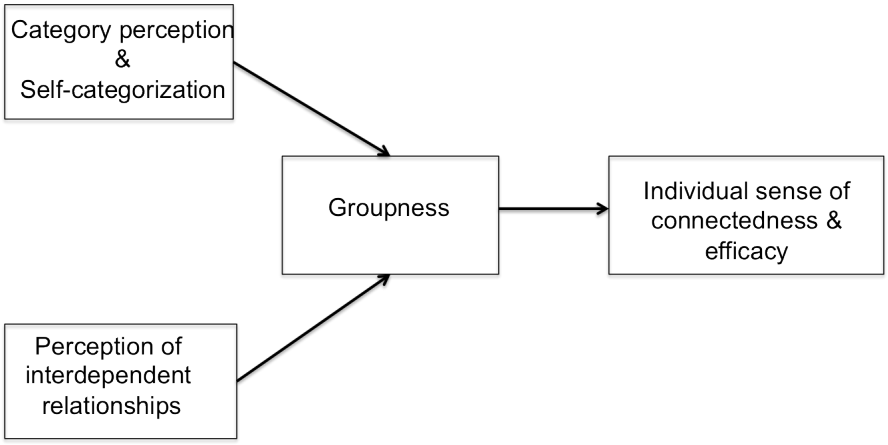

Figure 2. Self-categorization and perceived interdependent relations as two routes to groupness, affecting in turn an individual sense of connectedness and efficacy

By relying respectively on two key psychological processes—self-categorization and perceived interdependent relations—the relational perspective and the categorical perspective generate different research questions: in one case, the question of how we come to identify with others turns out to be a question of how we come to perceive ourselves as members of a common category, and as a result, researchers should basically focus on the factors enhancing salience of category membership as antecedents of identification. The central research question is then to identify the situations that lead a person to perceive oneself as an interchangeable member of a category, that is, the situation where prototypical group features become salient. In the other case, groupness is conceived in terms of the degree of inter-relatedness among parties and identification in terms of the degree to which group's (and its members') outcomes are important for the self. As a consequence, the focus is basically on the structure of interpersonal relations, how it transforms individuals' orientation to each other (e.g., which situations afford interaction partners an orientation to helping and cooperation), and how those relations are in turn endowed with characteristics that change the interpersonal structure. In the following, we argue for the independence of those two dimensions based on recent developments on both group identification frameworks and group perception literature.

1.4.3.2. Category salience and between-member relations as two independent dimensions

Group identification. A person can perceive oneself as prototypical of a group and have at the same time low interdependency beliefs and sense of inter-relatedness to other group members. It is indeed common that one self-defines on the basis of gender or nationality without this entailing any affirmation that one feels concerned with the fate of other group members. The literature on group identification, an individual member's relationship to a group, shifted from the use of uni-dimensional scales during 80s, to the development of multidimensional frameworks of identification, especially by the end of 90s

(Deaux, 1996; Ellemers, Kortekaas, & Ouwerkerk, 1999; Jackson & Smith, 1999; Sellers, Rowley, Chavous, Shelton, & Smith, 1997). Different recent frameworks have indeed distinguished between a) the awareness of category membership and b) perceived interdependence and internal ties between group members, as two independent dimensions of psychological group membership. Research in this field suggests that the strength of internal ties must be treated as independent of awareness of category membership and that it has important consequences on its own (Ashmore et al., 2004; Ellemers et al, 1999; Jackson & Smith, 1999). For example, the dimension of *attachment and interdependence* (e.g., "My fate and my future are bound up with that of Armenians everywhere" and "I have a strong sense of belonging to my own ethnic group") is central in Ashmore and colleagues' framework, which emphasizes that:

> *However, the proposed connection between group and self is much more than simple self-categorization or the perception of self as similar to other members of the group. It contains more elaborated cognitive elements, such as the perception of interdependence or a shared fate with other group members, as well as affective elements, such as felt closeness to and concern about other group members* (Ashmore et al., 2004; p. 90).

While they treat "attachment and sense of interdependence" as a unique dimension in their framework, Jackson and Smith distinguish two dimensions: "attraction to the ingroup" and "interdependency beliefs", but both frameworks considered them as independent from a more cognitive self-categorization (or depersonalization) dimension. Ellemers and colleagues (1999) argued for the need to distinguish an *affective dimension* they referred to as group commitment from a more cognitive dimension; self-categorization. They supported their argument regarding the independence of these dimensions by experimental data showing that factors that enhance awareness of category membership (i.e., relative group size) are not associated with greater commitment to the group, and that the latter dimension (group commitment) and not the former (awareness of category membership) predicted participants' tendency to behave in terms of their group membership.

Group entitativity. Our claim about the need to distinguish prototypical self-definition and interdependency beliefs as two distinct antecedents of groupness is also supported by recent developments in entitativity research. Entitativity is the likelihood that a collection of individuals be perceived as a bounded entity, that is, as a group. It is then similar to the idea of groupness we used until now, with the exception that we used groupness to refer to the perception of self and others as a group, while entitativity refers to the perception of a collection of individuals as a group independently of whether one belongs or not to the group (thus applying both to in- and out-groups). Campbell had introduced the concept in 1958 and distinguished between four sources of entitativity: proximity, similarity, common fate and pattern (the components constitute a well formed figure). Entitativity is treated either as a characteristic of collectives (human collectives are more or less likely to be perceived as bounded) but can also refer to a person's theory about the degree of compactness of a group (different individuals see the same group as more or less entitative).

We can distinguish within the tradition of group perception and entitativity research two general trends: the first one conceptually assimilated groupness (i.e., entitativity) to group homogeneity and focused on its link with essentialist beliefs and stereotyping. The second research line argues for a conceptual distinction between entitativity and homogeneity, entitativity being in this view more a reflection of the degree to which individuals are differentiated, but interdependent.

Entitativity undifferentiated from homogeneity, and cue to essentialistic thinking. The study of entitativity has been closely related to the study of stereotyping and prejudice (Leyens et al., 2001; Yzerbyt, Corneille, & Estrada, 2001; Yzerbyt, Rocher, & Schadron, 1997; Yzerbyt, Rogier, & Fiske, 1998). In this literature relating group entitativity to stereotyping, the concept of entitativity has often been used interchangeably with the concept of group homogeneity and similarity. Entitativity has been operationalized in experimental

research by group homogeneity and manipulated experimentally by changing the degree of similarity (e.g., Brewer, Weber, & Carini, 1995; Welbourne, 1999; Yzerbyt et al., 1998).

Within this framework, entitativity has been studied as a precursor (Yzerbyt et al., 2001, 1997) and sometimes a dimension (e.g., Haslam, Rothschild, & Ernst, 2000) of essentialism[2], and in turn of stereotyping. The key result from this research line is that the more a collective of individuals is perceived as entitative, the more perceivers will try to extract its essence, and the more they will perceive individual members through a generalized rather than an individuated lens (Yzerbyt et al., 1997).

Entitativity disassociated from homogeneity and essence. The previous view is based on the assumption that entitativity, the likelihood to perceive a collective as a group, depends on the perceived homogeneity of its members. Such a view is consistent with the categorical conception of groups we discussed in the previous section. On the other hand, the interdependence conception of groups argued that a social group is more than a category of interchangeable individuals and that group perception should be disengaged from perceived similarity. Such a view of entitativity, disengaging it from similarity and homogeneity, recently gained a renewal of interest (Crump, Hamilton, Sherman, Lickel, & Thakkar, 2010; Hamilton, Sherman, & Castelli, 2002; Hamilton, Sherman, & Lickel, 1998; Jans, Postmes, & Zee, 2012; 2011). Common to these studies is the notion that groupness can be high despite the lack of homogeneity, that is, differentiated but interdependent individuals can be perceived as highly entitative while a collection of similar individuals may not be perceived as such. For example, Crump and colleagues argued that perceived similarity may not be sufficient for a collection of individuals to be perceived as a group. They reinterpreted Brewer

[2] Essentialism refers to attributing essence to social categories (Medin & Ortony, 1989), Rothbart and Park (2004) provided a more constrained conception by considering that it refers to perceiving a group as if it had natural status, as if its characteristics are rooted in nature.

and colleagues' (1995) results as indicating that perceiving a collection of individuals as similar only in perceptual criteria (wearing a Tshirt) was not sufficient for group perception (while other conditions, for example believing that individuals were tested and classified according to their performance generated group perception). They found added support to their claim in Welbourne's (1999) study where she manipulated entitativity both in terms of similarity and common goals and found that similarity did not result in perceived entitativity, while describing the group members as having common goals generated significantly higher levels of entitativity attributed to the group.

Like the development of measures of group identification, the idea that entitativity is best conceptualized as a multidimensional rather than an uni-dimensional concept and that collectives can acquire their groupness as a result of different factors is gaining popularity (Brewer, Hong, & Li, 2004; Hamilton, 2007; Lickel et al., 2000; Rutchick, Hamilton, & Sack, 2008). In a recent review of group perception literature, Hamilton (2007) distinguished the essence and similarity route, characteristic of categorically constructed groups, and the common goal and interaction route, more characteristic of dynamically constructed groups. In a similar vein, Brewer, Hong and Li (2004) distinguished between two theories of group entitativity, essence theory and agency theory, the notion of "theory" stressing that they conceive the essence and agency as two ways or two bases to judge groups that can be used by the same individual.

Lickel and colleagues (2000) argued for the complexity and the multi-dimensionality of the notion of entitativity not from theoretical grounds but based on the factors that lay people associated with what they perceived to be a real group. They asked participants (US university students, study 1, and Polish university students, study 2) to rate 40 groups (e.g. blacks, members of a jury, members of a family, etc.) on entitativity; that is, the extent to which each one represents a group on a scale ranging from 1 (not a group at all) to 9 (very

much a group). Additionally, participants were asked to rate those collectives according to eight other properties (e.g., the frequency of interaction, group members similarity). They found that the frequency of interaction, the importance of the group to its members, the existence of common goals and outcomes, and the similarity between group members are all strongly inter-related and correlated with entitativity.

Castano and colleagues' study provides another empirical support to the idea that different routes lead to perceived groupness, but this time participants judged their own groups (Castano, Yzerbyt, & Bourghignon, 2003). By experimentally manipulating the four factors identified by Campbell, the authors found that perceiving the ingroup as an entity (as one), whatever the basis of the groupness, was associated with a higher tendency to identify with the group.

The literature reviewed in this section shows that the two perspectives to groupness we aimed to distinguish reflect not only two different definitions of groups by social scientists (i.e., two scientific group theories), but also two distinct implicit theories guiding lay perceptions of groups, and two independent dimensions of the self-group relation (i.e., group identification). We have seen indeed that lay perceptions/representations of a collection of individuals as a group is a function both of (perceived) physical or socially constructed similarities and contrasts to other categories, and of the degree to which they are perceived as inter-related (for example by a common fate), and their interactions are perceived as solidary and coordinated toward a common goal, despite their differences. This is true not only for outgroup perception, but also for ingroup identification: different factors can underlie the construction of one's sense of group membership, and people vary in the degree to which their implicit theories about groups are based on shared and distinctive characteristics (category-based group theory) or on relations and interdependency beliefs (relations-based group theory). For example some persons can construe their sense of national membership on

their degree of prototypicality of what they appraise as essential characteristics of national identity, while others can base the same membership on the notion of individuals sharing a common soil and a common future, and a shared goal to better manage their coexistence.

1.5. From structural disadvantage to groupness and coping

We argued in the previous sections for the functional role of a sense of groupness in coping with structural disadvantage and for the relevance of distinguishing between two routes to groupness, derived from theoretical lines previously seen as competing. This distinction is central to the theoretical contribution of this dissertation. Indeed, while existing models of coping with structural disadvantage relate the emergence and the role of groupness to the categorical framework, we argue in this section for the importance, when concerned with unequal status relations, to go beyond this framework. Specifically, we highlight the importance to not confine the understanding of groupness to the categorical framework and the need to go beyond the salience of category membership in comparative contexts as the necessary and sufficient condition for groupness. We develop this argument in several steps. First, we articulate in the next sub-section the categorical route to groupness with research on unequal status relations and discuss the predictions and key empirical results related to how disadvantaged group members respond to the salience of their category membership.

1.5.1. Categorization-based groupness and the disadvantaged

The *salience principle* derived from self-categorization theory and its social identification model defines perception of category membership as a sufficient condition for group behaviour and feeling. Intergroup perceptions and category salience are assumed to trigger collective self-definitions and lead through a depersonalization process to group behaviour. However, situations that make salient a particular social differentiation between two categories have different meanings and consequences according to whether the self-category is socially advantaged or disadvantaged. Intergroup literature has largely

documented status differences in group members' tendency to more groupness (vs. more individualization) as a result of their category membership salience. While from a threat and coping framework the low ingroup status is argued to be a factor that intensifies depersonalization and results in higher tendency to use groupness as a means of coping with identity threat (e.g., Iacoviello & Lorenzi-Cioldi, 2014; Karasawa, Karasawa, & Hirose, 2004), there is also evidence that the low status of the ingroup can be a factor that works against rather than toward greater groupness among the disadvantaged when their category membership is salient (e.g., Lau, 1989; Sachdev & Bourhis, 1987, 1991).

Before discussing more in details this literature, we think that one key element in understanding the difficulty to predict groupness tendencies among the disadvantaged as a consequence of intergroup perceptions and category salience stems from the theoretical tension that arises between the salience principle and the (social identity's) positive distinctiveness principle when it comes to membership in a disadvantaged category. While the salience principle predicts a direct link between awareness of category membership and groupness, we cannot predict such direct link in the case of the disadvantaged according to the positive distinctiveness principle. Indeed, the positive distinctiveness principle considers that people are motivated to have a positive self-image and that group-level self-definition and behaviour are a method to achieve this need. When the self-category is not particularly disadvantaged or stigmatized, assuming the group identity and acting as a group member in order to achieve positive distinctiveness has no cost for the individual's identity. But for members of socially disadvantaged groups, the theory predicts that intergroup perceptions may represent a threat to the individual identity because of the relative lower status of the ingroup. According to the theory, such a situation can lead either to more individuation (i.e., individual-level self-definition and strategies like mobility or passing) or to more groupness (i.e., group-level self-definition strategies like social creativity and social change). Social

identity theory has mainly focused on the role of socio-structural variables of permeability, legitimacy and stability of intergroup boundaries in predicting this choice. The theory predicts indeed that individuals will chose social mobility or social creativity when it is possible, and will only pursue a collective strategy of social change when (1.) Group boundaries are impermeable, (2.) Status relations are perceived as illegitimate (not based on principles accepted by both sides) and (3.) Unstable, meaning that clear cognitive alternatives of the situation are available (Ellemers, Knippenberg, & Wilke, 1990; Haslam & Reicher, 2006; Tajfel & Turner, 1979).

Identity threat. The possibility of an ingroup cohesion effect under threat is well documented in the intergroup literature. This effect refers to the tendency of low status group members, in a salient intergroup situation, to intensify their ingroup identification (Branscombe, Schmitt, & Harvey, 1999), intra-group homogeneity (Karasawa et al., 2004) and the degree to which they judge themselves as prototypical group members (i.e., self-stereotyping; Latrofa, Vaes, & Cadinu, 2012; Latrofa, Vaes, Pastore, & Cadinu, 2009; Spears, Doosje, & Ellemers, 1997). Such groupness tendencies are interpreted as a strategy to better cope with identity threat created by the intergroup perception of ingroup disadvantage. To rule out the potential explanation of this effect by differential socialization according to group status, Iacoviello & Lorenzi-Cioldi (2014) advanced and tested the *Mere social status hypothesis*, suggesting that the mere priming of group status differences results in members of low status exhibiting collectivistic tendencies (preference for collectivistic messages and downplaying uniqueness) and members of high status preferring individualistic tendencies.

Social identity theory however looks to this collective strategy of "closing the ranks" as one option among many to cope with identity threat. According to the theory, when the structural conditions for collective-level strategies are not met, intergroup perceptions become

factors that work against rather than toward more groupness among the disadvantaged. As Turner and Tajfel themselves stated:

> *The evidence suggests, however, that where social structural-differences in the distribution of resources have been institutionalized, legitimized and justified through a consensually accepted status system (or at least a status system that is sufficiently firm and pervasive to prevent the creation of cognitive alternatives to it), the result has been less and not more ethnocentrism in the different status group* (Tajfel & Turner, 1979, p. 37).

While the identity threat literature argues that the salience of ingroup disadvantage in an intergroup comparison context should lead to intensify groupness tendencies for the disadvantaged, highlighting thus the collective option of coping with their relative ingroup low status, the literature on outgroup favouritism we will discuss now suggests in contrast that the low ingroup status can also be an impediment to groupness, an option that the previous quote defines as the most likely when the structural factors for collective options are not met.

Ingroup favouritism but not when status is low. The emergence of ingroup favouritism has been the commonly used indicator of group behaviour in experimental intergroup literature. It is either evaluative (tendency to evaluate more favourably members of in-groups than members of out-groups) or behavioural (tendency to allocate more reward to one's own group than to the other group). While the experimental literature on intergroup relations generally confirms the prediction that salience of category membership (even in minimal groups) is sufficient to trigger ingroup favouritism (Brewer, 1979; Diehl, 1990), studies conducted in the context of unequal status relations have shown that when status and power are manipulated experimentally in artificial groups, intergroup comparisons can take the form of outgroup rather than ingroup favouritism in the case of low status group members. Several experiments by Sachdev and Bourhis (1985, 1987, 1991) exemplify this phenomenon. They manipulated the relative power (1985, 1991) and the relative status (1987, 1991) and found that participants in lower status/power groups did not show ingroup favouritism.

Moreover, they evaluated in some cases more favourably members of out-groups than members of in-groups.

Similarly, explorations with natural groups of differential status also show that members of low status groups tend to show outgroup favouritism in status-related evaluations, especially when the status difference is large (e.g., Boldry & Kashy, 1999). Generally, reviews of ingroup favouritism confirm that high and equal status groups tend to show more bias than low status groups (for meta-analyses, see Bettencourt, Dorr, Charlton, & Hume, 2001; Mullen, Brown, & Smith, 1992). The tendency of low status group members to show outgroup rather than ingroup favouritism is an indication that intergroup perceptions and salience of category membership can in some conditions lead the disadvantaged to value outgroups and potentially to seek more distance from their groups and more proximity to the valued groups rather than being a factor that bring them together and trigger group behaviour.

Intergroup perceptions predict higher identification but not when status is low. Field studies also suggest that intergroup perceptions and salience are factors that can work against rather than toward more groupness among the disadvantaged. For instance, Lau (1989) has found in a study exploring factors associated with group identification in the American context that the temporary salience of one's group in the political context increases identification with mainstream groups (e.g., whites and businessmen) but decreases identification with disadvantaged groups (e.g., blacks and poor people). A recent study (Goeke-Morey et al., 2014) in the context of Northern Ireland similarly found that current perceptions of comparisons between the social groups (protestant and catholic communities) were related to the strength of in-group identity for the advantaged (Protestants), but not for the disadvantaged (Catholics); Among Protestants, perception of their group relative advantaged position predicted the strength of their identification, while among Catholics, the perception of their current relative disadvantage was not associated with identification; what

predicted identification was the degree to which they personally, their families and the community were impacted by sectarian violence and discrimination in the past.

The intergroup literature highlights in our view the importance for disadvantaged group members to close ranks and to value groupness in order to better cope with stressors associated with their relative low status and associated experiences, but acknowledges at the same time the risk that intergroup perceptions and comparisons hinder rather than favour groupness, and the difficulty of construing a beneficial sense of groupness directly from the salient social categories in an intergroup framework. We discuss in what follows the importance of going beyond self-categorization as the exclusive route through which the disadvantaged can construe a beneficial sense of groupness (shown in the figure as route 1). Our argument consists of showing (1.) how experienced disadvantage may result in groupness through the relational route, without this being necessarily based on (cognitive or motivational) inter-category differentiation (route 2 in the figure); (2.) how an integration of the two theoretical lines by considering the interplay between internal relations and category salience can be informative in predicting disadvantaged group members' responses to their relative disadvantage; (3.) how a perspective to groupness based on interdependent relationships is also relevant at the macro-level of unequal status relations, and (4.) how the use of such a group theory by the disadvantaged can have psychologically, politically and socially desirable outcomes.

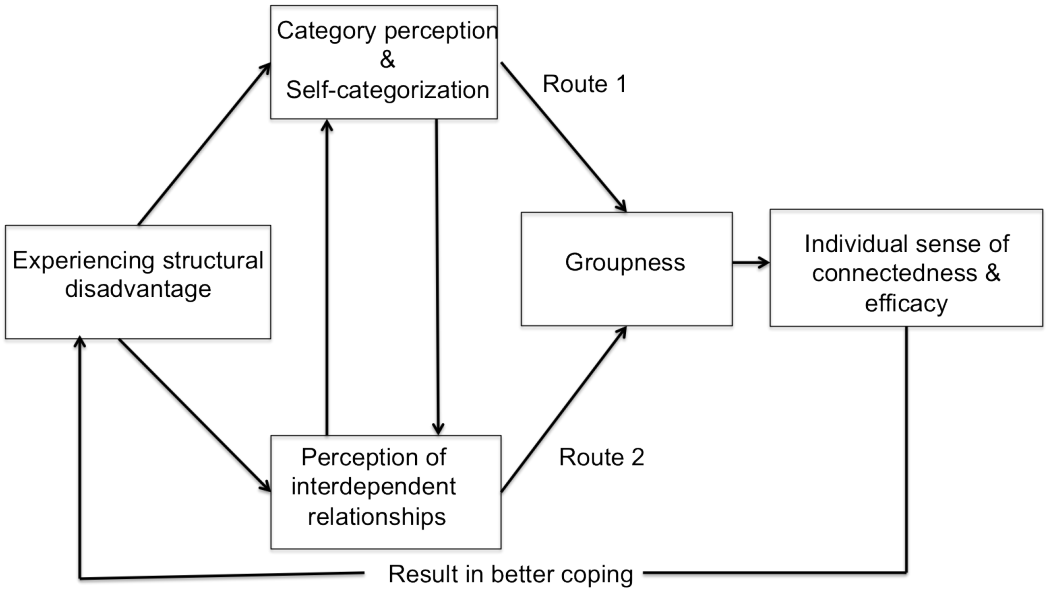

Figure 3. From structural disadvantage to groupness as a means of coping: an integrated two-routes model

1.5.2. Relations-based groupness and the disadvantaged: mutual needs and responsiveness

By virtue of the structural position of their groups, members of different disadvantaged groups are exposed—though at varying degrees of severity and ideological consciousness—to similar stressors and deprivations. The threat to the value of one's social identity as a member of a low status social group when intergroup comparisons are salient has been the most commonly studied form of these stressors. However, members of disadvantaged groups are also similarly exposed to the risk of being categorized and reduced to insignificant facets of their ingroup identity against their will, of being rejected and excluded, and of seeing their choices and possibilities restricted.

We argue that these concrete experiences and the coping efforts they require can be, regardless of individuals' representation and internalization of the social stratifications at their origin, a starting point for a bottom-up sense of groupness. Disadvantaged group members may have low awareness of the macro-level stratifications that create their life conditions. However, the situations and experiences that characterize their everyday struggles can in some conditions lead them to recognize the commonalities of their everyday stressors and to

rely on each other for understanding, support and responsiveness. These processes of mutual responsiveness and reciprocity form in turn the precondition for the emergence of a sense of groupness. Kelley and his colleagues argue that people have indeed an implicit ability to recognize patterns of interdependence and to behave accordingly (Kelley et al., 2003). For example, a person who has experienced rejection can recognize a rejected other's need for respect, acceptance and belonging (Gaines, 2001), and the possibility that on another occasions one can be himself in the situation of the needy. This creates occasions for "exchange", common fate situations, where each person will be motivated to "supply what the other needs in exchange for receiving what he or she needs" (Kelley et al, 2003, p. 22). The experimental literature confirms the emergence of a sense of groupness and solidarity out of common fate and common stress. For example, an experiment by Dovidio and Morris (1975) has shown that a condition of high stress (compared to low stress) facilitates helping if the potential recipient of help is perceived to be in the same stressful situation. In a similar vein, Rabbie has found that individuals under the common threat of an electric shock show a tendency to seek each others' company (Rabbie, 1963), a process he interpreted as the beginning of a sense of groupness (Rabbie & Lodewijkx, 1994).

Even when one knows he or she is unlikely to interact again with the same person, one can be motivated to provide help by virtue of a norm of generalized reciprocity[3] ('I have been helped in the past and I have to provide help') or by virtue of a moral obligation among those who experienced hardship to help others in situations of need, recently evidenced experimentally (Craig & Richeson, 2012; Warner, Wohl, & Branscombe, 2014).

While self-categorization theory postulates a direct link between the macro-level of stratification and individuals' sense of groupness through their internalization of salient

[3] A generalized norm of reciprocity regulating individuals' exchanges has been first proposed by the American sociologist Gouldner (1960).

features of the social structure, we understand the link between these two levels in a more subtle way. Specifically, we think that social stratifications operating at the structural level create experiences, to which a local context of cohesiveness, mutual help, and responsiveness to each other's needs is functional. Interactions characterized by reciprocity and mutual responding in turn function as a "starting mechanism" for the emergence of enduring relationships within the context of dyads and groups (Gouldner, 1960).

Interdependence theorists have been interested for instance in studying the development of communal norms and rules of reciprocity in exchange, and how adaptations in harsh environments create individual motivation to value secure relations and develop rules of reciprocity and potentially communal norms and relationships with those on whom they depend for help and support[4] (Kelley et al., 2003; Tooby & Cosmides, 1996). In line with this, recent studies comparing members of higher vs. lower classes argued and found that because of their more hostile environments, members of lower social class exhibit higher commitment to communal responding (helping, generosity, charity and trust), and tend to prefer communal over exchange norms compared to higher-class members (Kraus & Piff, 2012; Piff, Kraus, & Côté, 2010; Piff, Stancato, Martinez, Kraus, & Keltner, 2012). Accordingly, we argue that the disadvantaged's adaptations to their everyday struggles could create circumstances of mutual dependence. Concrete opportunities of mutual helping and relying on each other can lead to stronger interpersonal bonds and relationships, in particular when the consequences of the interactions are favourable.

[4] Communal norms are rules specifying that each person responds to the others' needs as they occur without expectation of receiving a comparable benefit in return, while rules of reciprocity entail the expectation of receiving in exchange. See Clark and colleagues (Clark, Dubash, & Mills, 1998; Clark & Mills, 1979) for the distinction between communal and exchange relationships.

Those dynamics can take place within the context of varying group-scales (e.g., dyads, the family, local communities or the disadvantaged as a whole). Because they depend upon responsiveness in interactions, they are more likely to take place within the context of local groups (family, friends, local communities), but they can also happen within the context of large-scale categories. Indeed, when interacting partners' common membership in a large group is relevant to them, they can expect cooperation and solidarity by virtue of this common membership. In this case, the degree to which interaction with local group members is characterized by responsiveness, solidarity and mutual caring impacts identification with the group as a whole and furthers one's commitment to reciprocity within the context of the group (even with other group members).

However, the outcomes of such a dynamic resulting from recognizing common difficulties and mutual dependence for solidarity and help cannot transform into ideological group identities unless a strategic and sustained work of mobilization takes place. As a consequence, the outcomes of the dynamic discussed will be naturally located, and thus should be examined at the proximal level (relational groups and local communities). Their translation into the macro-social level is much more complicated and depends in part on the coexistence of clear and organized social movements or ideological identities able to strategically organize the experiences of disadvantage into an ideological project. Ethnic minorities and racial identities often have such an ideological aspect which proves to be central in understanding the role of these identities in individual members' psychological functioning (Gaines & Reed, 1994; Phinney, 1996; Sellers & Shelton, 2003; Sellers & Smith, 1998).

We highlighted another route to groupness, based on common experiences and (expected or effective) reciprocity and mutual understanding, rather than on inter-category perceptual or motivational differentiation. However, the forms of groupness this route

generates could in many cases not reach beyond the interpersonal level. We think that an integration of interdependence and categorization processes is important in order to go beyond this interpersonal-level, but also to better predict the outcomes of categorization processes among the disadvantaged.

1.5.3. The interplay between low intergroup status and between-member relations

Unlike previous claims that an interaction and interdependence route will apply for small dynamic groups and a categorical route will be most suitable for the study of the dynamics linked to membership in large-scale groups or social categories (Prentice, Miller, & Lightdale, 1994; Wilder & Simon, 1998), we argue in this section that further integration of those processes and their interplay in shaping the self-group relations is needed. We think moreover that the integration of both categorization and interdependence processes is particularly required when it comes to membership in a disadvantaged social category.

In the case of groups of equal status and high status groups, awareness of category membership, independently of between-member relations (internal ties), can directly lead to group-level self-definition and work as a factor strengthening the self-group relationship by virtue of a positive distinctiveness principle. However, when it comes to members of socially disadvantaged groups and given the costs that may be associated with the relatively disadvantaged status of these groups, situations that lead to intergroup differentiation and awareness of category membership may not be sufficient to keep them together and create the motivation for a representation of themselves being a group. While Tajfel and Turner (1979) considered that a "consensual definition by others can become, in the long run, one of the powerful causal factors for a group's self definition", Lewin warned that "a minority kept together only from outside is in itself chaotic. It is composed of a mass of individuals without inner relations with each other, a group unorganized and weak" (p. 165). Noticing the importance, beyond shared categorization, of the internal organization and relations among

members of disadvantaged groups, and eloquently describing their interplay, Goffman noted that:

> *A good portion of those who fall within a given stigma category may well refer to the total membership by the term "group" or an equivalent, such as "we" or "our people" […]. However, often in such cases the full membership will not be part of a single group, in the strict sense; they will never have a capacity for collective action, nor a stable and embracing pattern of mutual interaction. What one does find is that the members of a particular stigma category will have a tendency to come together into small social groups whose members all derive from the category, these groups themselves being subject of overarching organization to varying degrees. And one also finds that when one member of the category happens to come into contact with another, both may be disposed to modify their treatment of each other by virtue of believing that they all belong to the same "group". Further, in being a member of the category, an individual may have an increased probability of coming into contact with any other member, and even forming a relationship with him as a result. A category then can dispose its members to group-formation and relationships but its total membership does not thereby constitute a group* (Goffman, 1963, p. 23-24).

As we discussed previously, past research in unequal status relations suggests that awareness of category membership and ingroup disadvantage can lead to higher collective tendencies and efforts on behalf of the group as a means to cope with the identity threat, but can also lead to individuals dissociating themselves from their groups and the costs associated with it. We argue that intragroup cohesiveness is a key resource for coping with the costs associated with a relative in-group disadvantage, but that the socio-structural variables that make intergroup differentiation and awareness of relative disadvantage salient are not sufficient to create a sense of groupness with strong solidary ties among the disadvantaged. Category membership, when imposed because of impermeable boundaries, can be salient cognitively, but results—as noted by Lewin—in unconnected and unorganized groups. Following Lewin's proposition and Goffman's observation, we argue that between-member relations and patterns of interaction are key factors that need to be given priority when we want to predict groupness tendencies as a result of intergroup perceptions and unequal status relations.

The literature that has examined the interplay between intragroup factors and unfavourable intergroup comparisons shows indeed that intragroup factors (e.g., the level of group commitment or intragroup respect) are particularly important in predicting members of disadvantaged groups' responses to the salience of their low group status. For example, Branscombe & Spears (2002) varied orthogonally intragroup respect (respected vs. disrespected by other ingroup members) and intergroup status (devalued vs. prestigious group) and found that they interactively predict investment on behalf of the group: members of the devalued group showed higher investment on behalf of the group, but only when they were respected by other ingroup members.

Several other studies that explored the psychological factors that make people stay in a group and exhibit group-level behaviour in situations of unfavourable intergroup comparison (Doosje, Ellemers, & Spears, 1995; Ellemers & Rijswijk, 1997; Ellemers, Spears, & Doosje, 1997) confirmed the importance of group commitment in those situations. The results yielded that a pre-existing sense of commitment to the group was a determinant of whether people prefer group-level strategies and self-definition or individual-level responses to low group status (Doosje et al., 1995; Spears, Doosje, & Ellemers, 1997). Overall, these studies support our proposition that understanding groupness tendencies in the case of asymmetric status relations requires that one goes beyond analyses of the socio-structural variables of the intergroup context (e.g., salience of group features in comparative contexts, permeability of boundaries). One should give further attention to the internal relations among group members, the intragroup processes that foster the development of strong ties between them, and their interplay with intergroup processes.

1.5.4. Disadvantaged implicit group theories and motivations

Acknowledging that intergroup-perceptions and depersonalization processes are not the exclusive originator of groupness and that people may use relations-based theories to construe

their sense of groupness is particularly important for members of socially disadvantaged groups. We considered that one's position in the bottom of the social structure creates situations of dependence with similarly situated others in the context of everyday experiences, and that these everyday interdependencies can generate a sense of groupness and affiliation. In parallel to this affective-apolitical dimension, it is important to acknowledge the possibility for disadvantaged group members to develop, at varying degrees, a realistic understanding of their position in the social structure, as oppressed groups, and their *strategic* interdependence in the pursuit of social change goals. This understanding is fostered by the co-existence of organized social movement and ideological group identities.

Recognizing this potentiality to construe a sense of groupness based on awareness of macro-level interdependencies is important because the different ways in which the disadvantaged interpret their group membership have different consequences. Specifically, construing one's sense of membership in a disadvantaged group using a category–based group theory vs. a relations-based theory has fundamentally different implications in terms of one's motivation to accept and claim this membership. Construing one's sense of membership based on a category-based group theory entails perceiving the self in terms of group salient attributes (self-stereotyping), and thus the risk of associating the self with the negative stereotypes each stratification system attributes to members of its disadvantaged groups (as a result of justification and legitimization processes). This group membership can however, if construed in relational terms as a position in a structure of unequal relations (for example as an oppressed minority), generate solidary and cohesive relations with others who share the same fate, and a sense of forming together a cohesive social unit in spite of perceived differences among them.

Earlier work showed that members of socially disadvantaged groups can, despite the unattractiveness of the attributes associated with their self-category, choose the option of

emphasizing their category–based groupness, either by engaging in self-stereotyping (Latrofa, Vaes, & Cadinu, 2012; Latrofa, Vaes, Pastore, & Cadinu, 2009) or by highlighting intragroup homogeneity (Karasawa et al., 2004), and that this sense of groupness turns indeed to be helpful for coping with the threat generated by unfavourable intergroup comparisons (Simon, 1998). This tendency may however at the same time contribute to essentializing the disadvantaged, justifying prejudice against them and sustaining social inequalities in the long term. It is true that in their effort to foster relations of solidarity and connectedness among the disadvantaged, social movements and tenets of minority group rights themselves often use category-based group theories by emphasizing for example the visible perceptual similarities (e.g., skin color). However, we think that even though this can contribute to fostering a sense of groupness required to cope with these experiences, this tendency can indirectly contribute to maintaining the inequalities by emphasizing immutable attributes to the disadvantaged, providing thus fertile ground for attributional processes of disadvantage. If this argument is sound, there is a major interest in focusing on other group theories, both for scientists, group leaders and the disadvantaged members themselves.

1.5.5. Group theories, distinctiveness needs, and undesirable social phenomena

Moreover, the different ways in which social scientists conceive of groupness has not only oriented the research on group-related phenomena to very different understandings of its antecedents as we discussed earlier, but also associated groupness to more or less undesirable phenomena. For instance, the predominance of category-based group conceptions that equate groupness to intragroup homogeneity, common to both the stereotyping literature and the literature on outgroup homogeneity effect, contribute to associating group formation with undesirable consequences such as discrimination and non individuated treatment of the others as representatives of an abstract category whose behaviour and capabilities are determined by their membership.

However, these consequences cannot be considered inherent to group formation per se, but to the underlying category-based theory of groupness, given that other studies have shown that individuals are capable to perceive their own groups, as well as target groups as highly grouped and cohesive while being at the same time highly differentiated. This suggests that some forms of groupness can emerge without the negative consequences we associate to it, and that it is not groupness per se which is responsible for these phenomenon, but the implicit theory of groups we as scientists afford to our participants, or which they spontaneously use as their implicit group theory. The relations-based group theory disengages group formation from an inevitable non-individuated treatment of others and a personal loss of distinctiveness.

It seems indeed that when we judge a group, the theory on which we base our judgement depends on whether we belong to the target group or not. Generally, we often spontaneously claim membership in different groups and want others to acknowledge these claims, but at the same time hardly resist any generalization and attribution others make based on our membership, even when they are not prejudicial. This can be interpreted in terms of the co-variation principle, predicting that situations that lead to intergroup differentiation (and awareness of group membership) also foster inter-personal differentiation (Deschamps & Doise, 1978; Deschamps, 1984). But we can also interpret this tendency to see our own groups as highly differentiated and to see members of outgroups as interchangeable in terms of a preferential use of category-based group theory when it comes to outgroups and relations-based group theory when we judge our own groups. Consistent with that, Crump and colleagues (2010) suggest that people generally have a tendency to perceive ingroups as more united but *differentiated* and to exhibit greater essentialism and stereotyping when they judge groups to which they do not belong.

This tendency is also reflected in the extensive literature in the outgroup homogeneity effect, referring to the fact that we homogenize outgroups more than ingroups (Boldry,

Gaertner, & Quinn, 2007; Ostrom & Sedikides, 1992; Park & Judd, 1990; Park & Rothbart, 1982). The literature on unequal status relations shows however that this tendency is moderated by relative group status (Badea & Deschamps, 2009; F Lorenzi-Cioldi, 1998, 2008), with members of low status groups showing a tendency to homogenize also the ingroup. Interpreting this tendency for the disadvantaged to homogenize the ingroup, these authors considered that only the advantaged can achieve distinctiveness within the group, by simultaneously engaging in intergroup differentiation and interpersonal differentiation, while the disadvantaged cannot afford such a privilege because, among other reasons, their relative low status furthers a search for intragroup assimilation and cohesiveness. Recognizing the possibility for highly differentiated individuals to construe a sense of themselves as a cohesive entity despite their heterogeneity makes it possible *also* for the disadvantaged to achieve distinctiveness within the group, for example by perceiving themselves as distinctive individuals who are interdependent in pursuing a common goal of challenging their relative low status.

2. General hypotheses and methodological approach

2.1. General assumptions and hypotheses

This thesis focuses on the role of ingroups and the cohesive relations they entail in the process of coping with structural disadvantage. It aims to complement and extend existing socio-psychological studies, which take the perspective of disadvantaged group members and focus on the role of groups in coping. Existing group-based models of coping with structural disadvantage (e.g., the rejection-identification model) relate the tendency to groupness and its role in coping to an intergroup framework in which categorization processes are central. This framework influences both the nature of the experiences and stressors that have been studied and the understanding of the processes through which these experiences trigger a tendency to groupness as a means of coping. The centrality of categorization processes to this framework also directed researchers' attention to individuals' identification with predefined large-scale social categories of unequal status (e.g., racial categories), assuming they are self-evident for participants and neglecting the many other possibilities they have for shaping ingroup boundaries.

Regarding the nature of the experiences and stressors, a large part of previous studies in social psychology focused on the symbolic aspects related to the threats posed in intergroup contexts due to the relatively low status of the ingroup. Of these threats, the threat to the value of one's social identity as a result of a negative intergroup comparison has been the more largely studied form as evidenced by the extensive identity threat literature. One aim of this thesis is to extend the way experiences of structural disadvantage have been examined by looking through a life course perspective to another facet of structurally induced stressors, namely the restriction of individuals' opportunity structure. This leads us to the formulation of the first general hypothesis:

H1: During critical life transitions like the transition to adulthood[5], members of socially disadvantaged groups should have more difficulty to exercise their agency. More specifically, they should perceive higher constraints to the realization of their concrete projects. Perceived constraints in turn are expected to be harmful for their sense of efficacy and their self-esteem.

Moreover, we developed an approach that claims for the need to go beyond a categorization-based understanding of groupness and of its role for the disadvantaged. Regarding the role of groups in coping and the antecedents of groupness, the following propositions can be derived from the outlined approach:

a) The role of ingroups when facing structural disadvantage is understood in terms of the *sense of connectedness* and *efficacy* derived from perceiving self and others in similar situations as being belonging to the same social unit.
b) Beyond the content and ideological consciousness of particular group identities, *a sense of groupness can in itself be a key ingredient of coping* with structural disadvantage by virtue of connecting together individuals facing similar situations and conditions that exceed resources of a single individual.
c) From an understanding of the role of ingroups based on their connecting and bonding function, a sense of groupness needs not necessarily originate from intergroup comparisons and consciousness of category-based disadvantage (even if

[5] Transition to adulthood is characterized as critical in that it is a crucial stage for the development of a person's identity (Erikson, 1982)and the place of a great number of developmental tasks (e.g., educational choices, job search, residential and marital status changes). Even if some authors challenge the established conception that succeeding all those developmental tasks can (still) be considered the marker of adulthood transition in our today societies (Settersten & Ray, 2010), we focus on this period as a one where adolescents and young adults are required to actively deal with a number of adjustments and difficulties that often exceed their usual resources (Heinz, 2009; Nurmi et al., 2002).

this is possible) to be a buffer against the negative implications of structural disadvantage.

These assumptions lead us to the formulation of the two following general hypotheses:

H2: Provided it is self-relevant and a source of a meaningful sense of connectedness, any social unit that bonds the self to others in similar situations (a sense of groupness)—regardless of whether it is a social category or a small relational group—can help individuals to cope with the structurally induced stressors they face.

H3: The role of groupness in coping is mediated by the sense of connectedness and the sense of efficacy they afford.

Implications: when examining disadvantaged group members' coping resources, we should focus on the variety of options available for them to construe a meaningful sense of groupness with others in similar situations, rather than focusing a priori on the pre-defined large-scale categorical membership as disadvantaged group identification literature has often done. Smaller social groups nested in the large category, local communities, and close others from the same or even from other disadvantaged categories, are all likely to face similar stressors and life conditions (e.g., restricted structure of opportunities and exposure to social injustices) and the capacity to bind in psychologically meaningful units with any of them is expected to have the same buffering function. Accordingly, the paradigm used in the studies that constitute this dissertation explicitly invites participants to reflect on the groups they themselves consider meaningful (paper 1) or focuses on connectedness with different proximal ingroups (paper 2 and 3).

Regarding the assumption that membership in a disadvantaged group may be associated with a higher tendency to groupness as a means of coping, and the processes underlying this tendency, the approach we outlined suggests that experiencing disadvantage can encourage groupness not necessarily by making categorical membership salient (and through

depersonalization and self-stereotyping processes), but also by building cohesive relations among interacting partners through perceived common fate and solidarity and mutual response to experiences associated with it. We also suggested that construing a sense of groupness directly from macro-level category salience might not always be possible. The following hypothesis can be formulated:

H4: Despite the exposure to experiences of structural disadvantage, many factors may complicate the translation of macro-social categories salience into a meaningful sense of group membership. Moreover, disadvantaged group members do have other routes to construe a beneficial sense of groupness in these situations.

In the next section we describe the different papers constituting this dissertation.

2.2. Aim and hypotheses of the three papers

Building on the approach outlined in the introduction, the three empirical papers aim to contribute to a better understanding of the role of ingroups in the process of coping with structural disadvantage. However, even though we are interested in coping with structural disadvantage *specifically*, the three papers do not a priori focus exclusively on members of disadvantaged groups, but study group and coping dynamics among both disadvantaged and more advantaged group members, and thus make possible status comparisons regarding both the exposure to particular stressors (paper 1 and 3) and the differential role of ingroup connectedness according to status (paper 2). This choice derives from our argument that connectedness and efficacy derived from groupness are valuable resources of coping for both disadvantaged and advantaged, but that they may play a more powerful role given the specific stressors and processes operating in the case of the (most) disadvantaged. In what follows, we introduce the aim of each paper and the hypotheses it tests:

The first empirical paper aims to extend the way experiences of structural disadvantage have been examined, by focusing on perceived barriers to life-course projects as another facet

of structural disadvantage. The paper thus examines the extent to which membership in a socially disadvantaged category is associated with higher perceived barriers to one's life project and the psychological implications of this experience in terms of self-esteem and efficacy beliefs. Additionally, it examines if bonding identities—identities connecting the self to significant others whether in terms of social relationships or in terms of common categorical membership—function as a buffer against this stressor's negative psychological effects. We also test a potential mediation of this role through coping efficacy beliefs.

The second empirical paper develops and tests a model that links proximal group connectedness to individual needs satisfaction and argues for its centrality for psychological empowerment both at the individual and societal level. The model thus tests the validity of an understanding of the role of ingroups in psychological empowerment in terms of the sense of connectedness they provide and the resulting efficacy beliefs, rather than in terms of the content or the level of ideological consciousness due to a particular group identity as suggested by existing models of psychological empowerment. Additionally, by including personal-level and societal-level outcomes in the same model, this paper also aims to address a key criticism directed to an approach based on internal bonds *amongst* the disadvantaged themselves, that is, the idea that such a sense of connectedness can protect psychologically but harm socially, by precluding comparisons with the advantaged and lowering the likelihood of protest and desire for change that may result from such comparisons. We examine whether a sense of connectedness with surrounding others (family, friends, and peers) is important both for personal and societal outcomes, and, more importantly, hypothesize that it may play an even more powerful role for the most disadvantaged at the societal-level, by being a base for a bottom-up sense of collective efficacy beliefs.

The third empirical paper examines the differential exposure to particular experiences of social injustice, discrimination and opportunity restrictions amongst disadvantaged and more

advantaged youth populations, and the assumption of an association between those experiences and groupness as a means of coping. It also questions the limits of a direct link between categorization processes and macro social stratification on the one hand and group belongingness as a coping resource on the other, and the importance to consider alternative routes to groupness.

2.3. Context and methods

The research conducted over the course of this dissertation project is part of the collaborative project "Facing Critical events in early Adulthood: A normative Approach to Vulnerability and Life course Regulation", to which I participated with other researchers during the four years of my thesis. For most of this period, I worked in close collaboration with Véronique Eicher (Post-doctoral researcher), Marlène Barbosa (PhD candidate), Aline Hofer (Master student), Christian Staerklé (project leader) and Alain Clémence.

This project is *a sub-project (IP9)* of the Swiss National Centre of Competence in Research NCCR LIVES, granted by the Swiss National Science Foundation. NCCR LIVES is an interdisciplinary centre hosted by the universities of Lausanne and Geneva and bringing together researchers from psychology, sociology, social psychology, demography and economics. Its mission is to examine, based on the analyses of life trajectories across different domains, the impact of structural, cultural and personal resources on overcoming vulnerability. Being part of this project and of the larger LIVES family provided me with a perfect environment, making my PhD research an exciting journey full of opportunities, challenges and exchanges.

The aim of our team composed of social psychologists was to develop a comprehensive psychosocial approach to vulnerability and life course regulation. Specifically, the project focuses on the transition to adulthood and the various developmental tasks and adjustments that it requires (e.g., training decisions, finding a job…). Data collection was therefore done

with youth populations (aged 15 to 30) from three institutions in French speaking Switzerland over a period of several years (data collection for the fourth wave starts in May 2015). Participants were contacted thanks to the agreement we concluded with the three respective institutions, a preparatory vocational school (pre-apprentices and apprentices), a high school (students) and the municipality of a major city (apprentices and young employees). The different backgrounds of participants reflect the diversity of the pathways characteristic of this age period. As our hypotheses require a sizeable proportion of disadvantaged group members, we included youth (many of which with an immigrant background) enrolled in vocational training who have difficulties or are still struggling to find an apprenticeship. We are very grateful to these three institutions that gave us such a valuable opportunity to reach youth from different social and cultural backgrounds, and above all, to all those adolescents and young adults who accepted generously to share their life experiences with us.

Several methods of data collection were used in this project; in addition to paper-pencil (sometimes online) questionnaires and in-depth interviews with a selected subgroup of participants, a third method of data collection was an online social network we designed specifically for this project and proposed to all participants. The features of this network and the rationales behind its proposition has been the focus of the chapter “Data collection through a social network: First impressions” (Eicher, Bakouri, Staerklé, Barbosa, & Clémence, in press), which is part of the collaborative book “Surveying vulnerabilities». Given that participants were generally resistant to use the social network, this tool was finally used as a means to communicate with participants and provide them with feedback rather than as a method of data collection. The difficulties associated with its use for data collection are explained in the chapter.

We describe in the following paragraphs the context of each institution, give an overview of the process of quantitative data collection over the three years, and a general description of the questionnaires.

Context of the three institutions. The first institution is a preparatory vocational school (PVS) attended by adolescents who express difficulty in managing the transition from compulsory schooling to vocational training. Participants affiliated to this institution are either apprentices who already started an apprenticeship, but need to be assisted during their training, or pre-apprentices who are still looking for an apprenticeship position. This sub-sample also includes a considerable proportion of immigrants who are particularly prone to experience transitional vulnerability.

The second institution is a high school (HS) preparing students who aspire for higher education to the maturity diploma leading to admission in universities. The agreement we had with this institution allowed us to recruit 4th and 5th year students enrolled in the different orientations.

Additionally, all employees and apprentices affiliated to the municipality of a major city in French speaking Switzerland (ML), aged between 15 and 30 years, were invited to participate in our survey.

Questionnaires. The main questionnaire was composed of various sections: Job (vs. Training or Education according to the vocational status of the participant), Groups and identity, People around you (social support, needs responsiveness), Injustices and discrimination, You (life satisfaction, self-esteem, coping-efficacy), Daily hassles (financial, interpersonal, health, security), Personal projects, Society (view of, and action in, society) and Personal information (socio-demographic variables). Data has been collected repeatedly with an interval of one year approximately. The questionnaires were not however identical over years. Some sections contained data aimed for longitudinal analyses (e.g., Job, You, Hassles,

Projects) and thus used (mainly) the same scales over the years. Other sections were not linked to longitudinal questioning and were therefore only present in some waves (e.g., injustices and discrimination, society) or were present in different waves but enclosed different measures (e.g., Groups and identity).

The dates of the three consecutive main data collections (waves 1, 2 and 3) are indicated in table 2[6]. In addition, we also used a complementary questionnaire after the second data collection. The complementary questionnaire aimed at testing some additional measures, principally in the sections: Groups and identity (e.g., IOS scale with different groups, multigroup ethnic identity), and Society (e.g., meritocracy and egalitarian beliefs, Perception of social organization and position). It was sent only to participants who indicated in the main questionnaire (2013' data collection) they agree to complete a complementary questionnaire. Table 2 also indicates the total number of participants who completed the questionnaire at each data collection, their distribution in the three institutions (the last column in the table), and their distribution according to when they started their participation (the first column).

The procedure. The first data collection took place in classrooms during specially organized sessions both in the preparatory vocational school and in the high school. This was however not possible with municipality participants; because they are physically dispersed, the first questionnaire was sent to them by letter using the professional address provided to us by the institution. As indicated in the table, questionnaires were sent to more than 800 addresses of which 230 completed and returned the questionnaire.

Participants from the three institutions were then contacted the following years using the personal address that they mentioned in the first questionnaire (we asked both for postal and e-mail addresses). We first sent the online version of the questionnaire to the e-mail

[6] Original French version of the questionnaires that served for 2012's and 2013's data collection are presented in appendix 2. The questionnaire used in 2014 was quasi identical to the one used in 2013.

addresses when available and then addressed paper questionnaires to all those who did not complete the online version or who only provided a postal address. As a consequence, and in contrary to the first year data collection where paper-pencil modality was the basic one, most participants in the following years completed the questionnaires online, except in the PVS (in 2013: Municipality 81%, HS 71%, PVS 9%; in 2014: Municipality 88%, HS 70%, PVS 9%)[7].

PVS participants were indeed the less likely to provide e-mail addresses and many of them told us during the class sessions that they either don't have (or forgot) their e-mail or did not use it frequently. To maximise response rates among this most vulnerable population, we obtained permission to personally collect data in the institution each year. Going to the institution each year allowed us to enhance the chances to reach pupils who already participated the previous years but also to recruit new participants (about 100 participants each year as indicated in table 2). Including new participants at each data collection was indeed important in order to keep this population represented in our sample, given that accompanying them longitudinally was much harder compared to the rest of the sample (only 22.6% of first year PVS participants completed the three waves questionnaires compared to 57.4% in HS and 59.6% in ML).

[7] We checked in the different institutions that there is no systematic bias between participants who completed the questionnaire online and those using the paper pencil modality regarding the key variables (self-esteem, coping efficacy, perceived barriers, connectedness).

Table 2. Dates and procedure of the quantitative data collection.

Waves	Date	Data collection	Participants
Wave 1 (2012) N= 707	04-05. 2012	Data collection in PVS (organized class sessions) Questionnaires sent to more than 800 employees and apprentices affiliated to the Municipality (ML)	PVS: 137 ML : 230
	10. 2012	Data collection in HS (organized class sessions with 4th and 5th year students)	HS : 340
Wave 2 (2013) N= 521 419 started in 2012 102 started in 2013	05. 2013	Organized class sessions in PVS (old and new participants)	PVS : 49 old + 102 new
	07. 2013	Questionnaires sent to PVS who were not present during the class sessions, and to HS and ML participants	ML :163, HS : 207
Complementary questionnaire (N= 175)	08. 2013	Complementary questionnaire sent to PVS participants	PVS : 15
	12. 2013	Complementary questionnaire sent to HS and ML participants	HS : 79, ML : 81
Wave 3 (2014) N= 484 357 started in 2012 27 started in 2013 100 started in 2014	05. 2014	Organized class sessions in PVS (old and new participants) Questionnaires sent to PVS participants who were not present during the class sessions, and to HS and ML participants	PVS : 52 old + 100 new ML : 137 HS :195

Parts of the Data used in this thesis. The three empirical papers that constitute this dissertation draw on questionnaires and interviews of youth who participated in the project. None of the three papers involve a longitudinal design; all are cross-sectional studies. The first and second papers draw only on questionnaire data. Paper one is based on the first data collection (April-May 2012) only with PVS and municipality participants while the second paper is based on data collected the second year (May-July 2013) in the three institutions. The third paper combines quantitative data (from all participants in the project) and qualitative data (from a small PVS sub-sample). Participants' detailed descriptions are provided in each paper.

The first and second papers draw on questionnaire data to examine the role of groups and ingroup connectedness as a psychological resource associated with positive outcomes at

the personal level (coping and well-being, paper 1 and 2), and the societal level (social change commitment and collective efficacy, paper 2). The third paper combines quantitative and qualitative analyses of experiences of structural disadvantage in the service of a better understanding of the processes through which experienced disadvantage can create an orientation toward groupness, and how this can in turn change the coping experience.

3. Empirical Papers

Paper 1: Coping with Structural Disadvantage: Overcoming Negative Effects of Perceived Barriers through Bonding Identities[8]

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Abstract

Members of socially disadvantaged groups often experience societal devaluation, material hardship, and restricted opportunities, especially during critical life-course transitions. In this study, we investigate whether what we term 'bonding identities', that is, identities connecting the self to significant persons whether in terms of social relationships (e.g., family relations) or in terms of categorical collective identities, help individuals negotiate structural constraints on life-course opportunities. We develop and test a model according to which greater perceived barriers to one's life-projects are psychologically harmful. We then test whether bonding identities function as a buffer against these stressors' negative psychological effects. Data were collected with a standardized questionnaire from pre-apprentices, apprentices and young employees in two institutions (N = 365). Results confirm that perceiving barriers to one's life-project was harmful for self-esteem. However, for participants who defined themselves in terms of bonding identities, greater perceived barriers did not decrease their perceived coping-efficacy, and were less harmful for their self-esteem. These findings point to the empowering role of bonding identities (and the social relationships that they imply) for disadvantaged group members.

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Introduction

Members of low status categories - such as immigrants, minorities and the working class - are more likely to face societal devaluation, material hardship, and opportunity restrictions than those in high status categories. Such structural disadvantage is based on membership in a social group or category (Van Zomeren, Postmes, et al., 2008). The present research aims to contribute to understanding the social psychological factors that help disadvantaged group members cope with the negative psychological implications of such stressful life experiences.

Prior research has focused mainly on the psychological effects of societal devaluation as one facet of structural disadvantage. Research conducted with different disadvantaged groups shows that while group membership is a basis for such disadvantage, the strength of identification with the (disadvantaged) group also provides group members with the means to better cope with societal devaluation (e.g., Branscombe, Schmitt, & Harvey, 1999; Leach, Mosquera, & Hirt, 2010; McNamara, Stevenson, & Muldoon, 2013; Outten, Schmitt, Garcia, & Branscombe, 2009). The role of group identification has often been studied in relation to group-based anger and collective efficacy beliefs and how this may result in collective action (Van Zomeren et al., 2012; Van Zomeren, Spears, et al., 2008). Of course, collective action strategies are not always available or possible for disadvantaged group members. However, we argue that even when group identities do not develop into an ideological consciousness of disadvantage which results in protest, they can entail *a sense of connectedness* in everyday interactions among individuals facing similar experiences and life conditions. Such bonding may in itself be a key ingredient for coping with structural disadvantage. Accordingly, in the present study, we test whether a general sense of connectedness helps individuals cope with structural disadvantage. We suggest that group identities are one possible source of this sense of connectedness, but that other forms of identification can also fulfil this same buffering role

if they imply some bonds with close individuals (e.g., strong ties with friends, family or colleagues). This argument is based on the assumption that both ingroup members and close others are more likely to find themselves in similar life conditions compared to outgroup members and distant others (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977). We term identities which imply social bonds with others (whether inter-personal or group) 'bonding identities' and investigated whether and how they help individuals cope with structural disadvantage.

Because our focus is on showing the psychological benefits of bonding identities in everyday struggles of disadvantaged group members, we focus on a direct manifestation of structural disadvantage in people's lives: the perceived constraints on their life choices and opportunities. More specifically, we argue that facing constraints on one's opportunities during the transition to adulthood is a common experience among disadvantaged group members that interferes with the satisfaction of the basic human need for agency, and thus can have negative psychological implications. We then examine whether identities connecting the self to significant others or groups (what we term 'bonding identities') buffer the negative psychological implications (e.g., low self-esteem) of this stressor. We also investigate whether this effect is mediated through the protection of one's sense of efficacy in successfully coping with life-course demands.

To situate our work, we first discuss the relationship between social bonds and psychological well-being and explore the functional equivalence of collective and relational identities as sources of social bonds and as psychological resources. We then review studies concerned specifically with their role amongst the socially disadvantaged. Finally, we apply our reasoning to the context of life-course transitions, and explain our research design.

Social connectedness and psychological well-being

The core idea behind the present research is that a sense of connectedness, based either on interpersonal relations or shared group identities, is a key resilience factor in coping with

structurally-induced stressors. Numerous perspectives provide convergent support for the central role of connectedness in coping and well-being. Classic studies on happiness, for example, demonstrate that social relationships are a major source of subjective well-being (Argyle, 1987; Myers & Diener, 1995; Myers, 1999). Research also shows that meaningful social relationships constitute a source of resilience in facing stressful events (Mikulincer & Florian, 1998). In turn, studies from the social network tradition reveal that involvement in social networks is fundamentally beneficial for the individual. Using large samples from three sources of survey data, Helliwell and Putnam (2004) explored the extent to which family, friends, neighbours and community involvement were associated with happiness and life satisfaction as two main indicators of subjective well-being. They found that involvement in (different) social relations had both direct and indirect (through health) positive effects on subjective well-being.

Interpersonal relationships are only one source of self-other connectedness; The social identity approach to health and well-being complements this work through the analysis of connectedness based on common group membership as a source of well-being (Jetten et al., 2012). Research from this tradition shows that individuals who define themselves in terms of a common group membership (even in the absence of interpersonal familiarity) tend to be more cooperative (Tyler & Blader, 2001), to seek greater physical proximity (Novelli, Drury, & Reicher, 2010) and to help each other (Levine et al., 2005). Directly relevant to the present research are social identity models of coping that emphasise the role of ingroups in changing the experience and outcome of stressful situations (Haslam, Jetten, O'Brien, & Jacobs, 2004; Haslam et al., 2005; Haslam & Reicher, 2006). Recent studies within this framework have accumulated support for the idea that meaningful group memberships are a basic resource when facing life challenges, such as illness (Jones et al., 2011), life transitions (Iyer, Jetten, Tsivrikos, Postmes, & Haslam, 2009) and even physical challenges (Jones & Jetten, 2011).

Importantly, the feeling that one is part of a larger collective seems to be a resource for coping with challenges even when the identity is not directly related to the challenge. For instance, Iyer and colleagues (2009) have shown that the predictors of well-being among students dealing with the transition to university did not only include identification with other university students, but also identification with previous (i.e., non-university) ingroups.

The group identities examined by social identity researchers interested in health and well-being are varied. They can include large-scale groups such as religious groups in India (Khan, Hopkins, Tewari, Srinivasan, Reicher & Ozakinci, 2014), small-scale groups such as support groups (Crabtree, Haslam, Postmes, & Haslam, 2010) as well as relational entities such as the family (Sani, Herrera, Wakefield, Boroch, & Gulyas, 2012). Yet, despite this diversity, the social identity approach has a common focus that differs from the social network approach: It emphasises the subjective sense of a common identity rather than the frequency of interpersonal contact as a predictor of well-being. For example, in a recent study, Sani and colleagues showed that a subjective sense of family identification had an independent role on psychological well-being, after controlling for the frequency of actual contact (Sani et al., 2012). Focusing on identification rather than on actual contact speaks to a central claim common to both identity (Stryker & Burke, 2000) and social identity (Tajfel, 1978a) theories according to which groups and social relations are seen as integral aspects of the self rather than as external aspects of the environment. Indeed it is common for people to define themselves in terms of their interpersonal relations (e.g., as a mother or as a married person) or by their group memberships (e.g., as members of a family, a religious community, or a national group). Such relational and collective identities, even if different in many ways, are, in our view, functionally equivalent regarding their positive role in coping and resilience: Both provide valuable sources of connectedness and change the self by bonding it to others.

Social relations and common groups as bonding identities

Even though the processes underlying interpersonal relations and the relations between group members are different, we argue that they both affect self-boundaries by including subjectively important individuals or groups as integral parts of the self. Accordingly, they could have the same effect in bonding individuals together and fostering one's sense of efficacy for coping with life challenges.

Consistent with this view, processes initially believed to characterize close relationships (e.g., the expansion of the self and the perception of outcome interdependence) have been judged relevant to understanding the relation between the self and ingroup members. For instance, Rabbie and Horwitz argued that Kelley's conceptualisation of close relationships (e.g., the degree to which a partner's outcomes are important for the self; Kelley, 1979) can be applied to group processes, and that any relationship a person has with others, whether an individual or a group, is best characterized by the importance given to other's desires and needs (Horwitz & Rabbie, 1982). In a similar vein, the self-expansion model (Aron, Aron, Tudor, & Nelson, 1991) which suggests that close relations transform the boundaries between self and others and change the self by including others' resources, perspectives, and identities as if they were one's own, can be applied to both interpersonal and intra-group relations. The idea that close relationships shape self-cognition by including others as part of the self has been empirically tested at both interpersonal and group levels by Smith and colleagues who concluded that "close relationships and group membership both involve some sort of merging of self and other" (Smith, Coats, & Walling, 1999, p. 881). Tropp and Wright (2001) later suggested a conceptualization of ingroup identification as the degree to which the ingroup is included in the self and empirically validated a measure of group identification based on a series of overlapping circles, classically used to assess relationship closeness.

Relational and collective identities are also similarly associated with an enhanced sense of coping-efficacy. Khan and colleagues (2014) found that the positive association between identification as a Hindu and well-being was mediated by participants' belief that they can effectively cope with life adversities. In a similar vein, research based on the self-expansion model suggests that close relationships enhanced the sense of self-efficacy of each partner (Aron, Norman, & Aron, 1998; Aron, Aron, & Norman, 2004). Based on a prospective longitudinal study, Aron, Paris and Aron (1995) found that falling in love was consistently followed by an increase in self-efficacy. As a consequence, individuals who bond with surrounding others in meaningful relational or collective identities may, compared to those lacking such bonding identities, be expected to be more resilient and preserve a higher sense of efficacy in stressful situations.

This enhanced sense of efficacy may be based on the expected or perceived social support associated with relational and collective identities. Indeed, when a relational identity is activated, relationship partners become committed to protecting or helping each other (Brewer & Gardner, 1996). Similarly, when a common group identity is salient, it provides a basis for group members to benefit from effective support from each other (Haslam et al., 2005; Haslam & Reicher, 2006). Support was also found to significantly mediate the positive relationship between family/work-group identification and life/job satisfaction (Haslam et al., 2005).

However, in a recent study with a stigmatized minority in Ireland, McNamara and colleagues (2013) found that even though community identification increased participants' perceptions of support, it was the feeling that they can cope with adversity per se, and not social support, that mediates the positive association between community identification and well-being. Another study exploring the role of racial identity in coping also found that it was the belief that one can effectively cope with emotional consequences of racism rather than the

perception of social support from other blacks that mediates the positive relation between group identification and self-esteem (Outten et al., 2009). These findings suggest that the role of bonding identities in protecting self-esteem may be explained with factors that go beyond the mere reception of external social support by changing the internalised sense of efficacy.

The role of bonding identities in empowering the socially disadvantaged

We believe the value of bonding identities is particularly critical for one's ability to cope with the stressors related to structural disadvantage. The disadvantaged are more likely to face societal devaluation and find their opportunities constrained such that their ability to pursue personal goals is restricted. Such stressors are by definition pervasive and resistant to individual problem-solving efforts. We argue that bonding identities, because they foster one's sense of efficacy to cope with life challenges, are a key resource in coping with such stressors.

A growing body of research has investigated the potential role of group identification in buffering negative psychological effects of societal devaluation among various real-world disadvantaged groups, including 'racial' groups (Branscombe, Schmitt, et al., 1999; Outten et al., 2009), stigmatized minorities (Latrofa et al., 2009; McNamara et al., 2013), immigrant groups (Jasinskaja-Lahti & Jaakkola, 2006) and multiracial groups (Giamo, Schmitt, & Outten, 2012). Overall, these studies suggest that group identification provides resources to better cope with devaluation. Even though many perspectives explain this buffering role of group identities through reference to ideological processes (e.g., perceptions of intergroup illegitimacy and instability), we think that it owes much to intragroup bonding which makes group members more resilient when coping with everyday challenges. For example, the importance of intragroup bonds of recognition and mutual acceptance for the everyday struggles of the disadvantaged is central to the rejection-identification model of the experience of discrimination (Branscombe, Schmitt, et al., 1999). The model suggests that

experiences of rejection lead to greater identification with similarly-situated others who are in a position to afford a sense of acceptance and to help restore one's self-esteem. In a similar vein, Gaines (2001) has suggested that other stigmatized persons are more likely than the non-stigmatized to provide socio-emotional support to stigmatized individuals.

The advantage of what we call 'bonding identities' for the most disadvantaged stems also from the fact that psychological bonds, because they foster both efficacy beliefs and mutual helping, are crucial in situations where the demands are high and individuals cannot meet them on their own. Research on collective resilience shows how the emergence of psychological bonds helps initially powerless individuals effectively face extreme situations. For example, a sense of psychological unity that facilitated mutual helping and coordination helped the survivors of the 2005 London bombings to recover (Drury, Cocking, & Reicher, 2009). A sense of common identity within a crowd has also been shown to contribute to feelings of empowerment (Drury & Reicher, 1999, 2005). Such work suggests that bonding identities, because they engender the subjective feeling that interaction partners are bound together can enhance individuals' sense of efficacy when faced with adversities. That is, bonding identities may impact personal well-being indirectly through feelings of empowerment.

Given our interest in how the disadvantaged cope with everyday struggles, we selected life-course transitions as the context in which to study the buffering function of bonding identities. We asked if bonding identities afford a sense of empowerment for those who perceive restrictions to their choices and opportunities, and whether these identities can mitigate the personal feeling of powerlessness associated with such experiences.

The belief that one has the power to shape one's environment is central to psychological well-being (Bandura, 1982, 1989, 2001; Hitlin, Elder, City, & Marshall, 2007). Developmental psychological research shows that individuals strive to master their life-course

by defining life goals and personal projects (Nurmi, 1992; Salmela-Aro, 2009). The successful realisation of these projects does not depend simply on individual effort and motivation, but also on the surrounding socio-structural context, and the privileged "have more social opportunity to shape their lives and direct their actions than the less endowed" (Hitlin & Elder, 2006, p. 6). Transition periods in young people's life courses often highlight such structural constraints (Heinz, 2009). Such constraints may be particularly debilitating because they may be mis-attributed to oneself and subjectively experienced as individual deficits, thereby harming self-competence and self-efficacy.

The "barriers" impacting on individuals' life course transitions are diverse (Lent, Brown, & Hackett, 2000). Some barriers have been studied with regard to group disadvantage, for example in the context of women's career development (Swanson et al., 1996; Swanson & Woitke, 1997) or with respect to life-course restrictions experienced by racial and ethnic minority groups (McWhirter, 1997). Such research shows status differences in the perception of barriers: for example, women and Mexican-Americans saw more barriers to their educational and career projects than men and Euro-Americans. Moreover, perceptions of educational barriers among adolescents were associated negatively with self-perceptions, in particular with their appraised coping-efficacy and decision-making self-efficacy (Luzzo & McWhirter, 2001). In sum, this literature suggests that disadvantaged young adults perceive higher barriers to their life projects compared to more privileged individuals, and that such perceptions are negatively associated with self-esteem (a relationship which holds regardless of one's group status).

The present study

In the present study, we investigated whether bonding identities functioned as a source of psychological empowerment and thus constituted a source of resilience for those coping with life-course stressors. Our approach requires that we differentiate between individuals

declaring bonding identities to be important aspects of their self-concept from those describing themselves in non-bonding, personal terms. As mentioned, we assume a variety of bonding identities to be functionally equivalent as sources of psychological empowerment. For example, immigrants may experience a sense of bonding with their family, community of origin, other immigrants, or even other disadvantaged locals. Because our approach explicitly allows a great range of bonding identities to act as sources of empowerment, we developed an open measure that neither imposes nor evaluates a specific type of identity, but assesses whether *any* identity that bonds the self to others—regardless of whether it is a social category, a small group or an interpersonal relationship—is self-relevant and provides individuals with a meaningful sense of connectedness.

Assessing the existence and importance of bonding identities. The degree to which such self-other bonding identities are available and significant for a person's self-concept was assessed with an adapted version of the Twenty-Statement Test (TST) (Kuhn & McPartland, 1954), known as the *"Who-Am-I?"* test. The key advantage of this procedure is that it is a commonly used self-concept measure that allows participants to freely describe their meaningful identities in their own words. TST responses have been analysed from different perspectives (Bettencourt & Hume, 1999; Gordon, 1968; Rentsch & Heffner, 1994; Ross, Xun, & Wilson, 2002) and we argue that this measure can be adapted in order to assess the existence and importance of bonding identities. In the original measure in which respondents are invited to freely describe themselves, they often report relational (e.g., 'sister') or collective identities (e.g., 'Swiss'). Spontaneous reports of collective or relational identities can be a sign that these are salient aspects of the person's self-concept. However, we cannot infer that the absence of such identities in an individual's listing means that relational or collective self-definitions are irrelevant. Accordingly, we adapted the TST by explicitly asking participants to define themselves in terms of their meaningful social affiliations and

then to select the most important self-definition. We assumed that with this instruction, choosing a bonding identity (relational or collective) vs. a non-bonding (personal) identity provides an index of the degree to which bonding identities are important aspects of their self-concept.

We hypothesized that adolescents and young adults of disadvantaged groups would perceive greater barriers to their life project (Hypothesis 1). As self-esteem can be based on having a sense of control over one's environment, we expected the perception of barriers to be harmful for one's self-esteem independently of whether the respondent was a member of a disadvantaged group or not (Hypothesis 2). However, we expected bonding identities to moderate this effect such that greater perceived barriers would decrease self-esteem more strongly for individuals who did not appraise a bonding identity as important (Hypothesis 3). Moreover, we tested whether perceived coping-efficacy mediated this effect. That is, we investigated a mediated moderation model in which the expected moderation of the relationship between the independent (perceived barriers) and the dependent variable (self-esteem) by bonding identities (moderator) was explained by perceived coping efficacy (mediator). In other words, we tested whether the expected buffering function of bonding identities was mediated by perceived coping-efficacy (Hypothesis 4).

Method

Participants and Procedure

Since our predictions concerned coping with perceived barriers to life-course projects, and such projects are particularly important for young adults, we focused on this age period and recruited apprentices and young employees aged 15 to 30 as participants. In addition, as our hypotheses concerning disadvantaged groups required a sizeable proportion of low-status participants we targeted youth enrolled in vocational training so as to include those struggling to find or follow an apprenticeship and those with an immigrant background. Data were

collected with a paper-pencil questionnaire in two institutions.

The first institution was a vocational school in Switzerland attended by adolescents experiencing difficulty in managing the transition from compulsory schooling to vocational training. We refer to it as the *Preparatory Vocational School* (PVS). PVS participants were either apprentices who had already started an apprenticeship, or pre-apprentices who were still looking for an apprenticeship at the end of their compulsory schooling. In both groups, immigrants represented almost half of the participants which reflects the difficulties of labour market integration experienced by this population (see Table 1 for details of the sample). To maximise response rates we obtained permission to personally collect data in the institution during specially organized class sessions. Among all the pupils who were expected to participate, 48.3 % of pre-apprentices (N = 58) and 68 % of apprentices (N = 79) attended those sessions.

Table 1: Means, standard deviations and percentages of socio-demographic variables of the whole sample

	PVS		**Administration**		**Total**
	Pre-apprentices	**Apprentices**	**Apprentices**	**Employees**	
Age: M (SD)	16.68 (0.85)	19.35 (1.83)	19.07 (2.91)	26.42 (2.34)	22.24 (4.61)
Men: %	62.1	60.8	63.6	47.4	55.1
Swiss: %	43.9	53.2	78.2	89.0	72.7
N	58	79	55	173	365

Note: PVS= Preparatory Vocational School.

The second institution was the local administration of a major city in Switzerland from which all employees and apprentices aged between 15 and 30 years were contacted by letter, with a return envelope (N = 800). 28.9 % of the apprentices (N = 57) and 28.7 % (N = 173) of the employees completed the questionnaire. As the administration's employees are firmly integrated in the labour market, they represent a higher social status category compared to pre-apprentices and apprentices. Nevertheless, there was also considerable status variation

between the administration's employees (e.g., construction workers, police officers, social workers, administrative personnel). Only 16% of these employees had achieved higher education and 24% of them had higher professional training.

The total number of participants was 365 and allows two status-asymmetry comparisons. The first concerns national status and compares native citizens (Swiss nationality, including double nationality: high-status) with immigrants (without Swiss nationality: low-status). It should be noted that Swiss national citizenship policies are very restrictive such that participants with Swiss citizenship are likely to have been born in Switzerland, or have lived there for most of their lives. The second status comparison concerns professional status and compares administration employees (high-status) with apprentices (mid-status) and pre-apprentices (low-status).

Measures

The questionnaire addressed participants' appraisal of their experiences and life circumstances. We only describe the measures relevant for the present paper. Unless otherwise stated, scales ranged from 1*("no, not at all")* to 6 *("yes, absolutely")*.

Financial worries. In addition to national and professional status, financial worries were used as a third (subjective) marker of social status differences. This was measured by asking participants, on a 1 *(not worried at all)* to 4 *(very worried)* scale, the extent to which they or their family were worried about the following situations: "Not having enough money to cover living expenses, to pay bills, rent or food" and "Being in need of social assistance, unemployment benefits or other institutional support" (r =. 50, M = 2.25, SD = .82).

Self-esteem. Self-esteem was assessed using a five-item scale, adapted from the Rosenberg Global Self-Esteem Scale (Rosenberg, 1979). Example items are "I feel that I have a number of good qualities" and "In general, I feel good about myself". The items were combined into a scale of Self-Esteem (α =. 80, M = 4.55, SD = .83).

Perceived coping-efficacy. We measured the extent to which people felt they were able to cope with life demands using the single item "I have confidence in my ability to overcome my personal problems" (M = 4.76, SD = .95).

Project appraisals and perceived barriers to life projects. In order to assess the experience of structural disadvantage, we examined participants' perceptions of the barriers to their life projects. Participants were asked to write down three projects they were currently engaged in (see Little, 1983). Examples of such projects, classified by domain, are available in Table 2. Participants were then asked to circle the most important project and to rate it along three commonly used dimensions of project appraisal (Nurmi, Salmela-Aro, & Koivisto, 2002): 'Importance' was measured with the single item "This project is important" (M = 5.61, SD = .60); 'Emotional appraisal' was measured with two items: "This project is stressful" and "It is difficult to accomplish this project" (r = .50, M = *3.70*, SD = *1.32*); 'Achievement beliefs' was also measured with two items (" I can achieve this project" and "I know what to do to achieve this project", r = .50, M = 5.07, SD = .88) . We added two dimensions that were central for our research. The first concerned the 'perceived barriers' to achieving the project ("Despite my best efforts, there are a lot of barriers that prevent me from achieving this project": adapted from McWhirter, 1997). We added the words "Despite my best efforts" to expressly make participants think of contextual rather than intra-personal barriers (Table 3 presents the descriptive means of perceived project barriers as a function of the various status categories). The second concerned the dimension of perceived project support ("My family and friends support me in this project", M = 5.04, SD = 1.21). This item was included to check whether bonding identities are indeed a base to access support from others. In addition, the item allows testing whether the mere perception of support in pursuing this project can account for the effect of bonding identities on protecting self-esteem or whether this effect can be explained by an internalized sense of efficacy that goes beyond

external social support (i.e., perceived support was tested as a mediator of the effect of bonding identities on self-esteem). As these five measures refer to different project appraisal dimensions, they will be analysed separately (rather than as a scale).

Table 2: Descriptive results for project domains

Domain	All projects	Person's most important	Examples
Profession/Education	426 (44 %)	133 (36%)	Finish my apprenticeship, have a nice salary, open my own company
Family/Relations	175 (18 %)	79 (22%)	Have children, make my mother proud of me, move in together
Leisure/Spare time	140 (14 %)	19 (5%)	Travels, volunteer work, meet people
Place to live	101 (10 %)	20 (5%)	Get an apartment, leave Switzerland, go back to my country of origin
Competences	36 (4 %)	6 (2%)	Learn languages, get driver's permit, do military service
Health	13 (1 %)	None	Stop smoking, lose weight, have better mental health
Other	79 (8 %)	17 (5%)	Be a millionaire, get Swiss nationality, have more time for myself
	970 projects	**365 participants**	

Table 3: Means (and standard deviations) for perceived barriers according to group status

	Men		Women	
	Swiss	**Non Swiss**	**Swiss**	**Non Swiss**
Pre-apprentices	3.83 (1.64)	3.69 (1.54)	3.87 (1.73)	4.37 (1.76)
Apprentices	2.98 (1.47)	3.38 (1.46)	2.63 (1.69)	3.87 (1.31)
Employees	2.98 (1.43)	3.71 (1.38)	3.01 (1.55)	3.70 (1.42)

Self-definitions. Participants completed an abbreviated and adapted version of the Twenty-Statement Test (Kuhn & McPartland, 1954). In order to assess bonding identities, the instructions included the following: "The society in which we live is composed of groups with

different cultures, backgrounds and lifestyles. *We are all part of different groups. Thinking about the groups you belong to*, we ask you to answer the question "*Who-am-I?"* three times". Once the self-definitions were given, participants were asked to circle the most important one.

TST responses coding. We coded TST responses according to Brewer and Gardner's (1996) distinction between three levels of self-definition: (1) Personal self-definitions, which contain references to individual qualities, traits, or activities, (2) Relational self-definitions, which refer to connections and social relationships, and (3) Collective self-definitions, which refer to membership in a social category. Two independent raters coded all responses with good inter-rater reliability (kappa = .94) and all coding disagreements were reconciled before data analysis. Table 4 gives a description of the self-definition contents. As mentioned before, participants were asked to circle the most important self-definition among their three TST responses. Table 4 also shows the most important self-definition chosen by participants.

Collective self-definitions comprised 30% of the most important self-definitions. Descriptive analyses suggest that only two categories of collective identities were commonly used by participants: vocational/professional (15%) and ethnic/national (8%). Other types were used each by less than 3% of participants (regional; 2%, age; 2%, religion; 2% and gender; 1%). Relational identities were indicated by 8% of participants. The most frequently used forms of bonding identities were thus: vocational/professional, ethnic/national, and relational identities.

Table 4. Descriptive Results for the Content of Self-Definitions

Content	Self-definitions	Person's most important	Examples
Personal	425 (42%)	128 (35%)	Traits: smiling, autonomous, motivated, sportive, creative. Activities: football, musician, traveller
Collective	506 (50%)	111 (30%)	Ethnic/National: Portuguese, immigrant, African. Vocational/professional: apprentice, future mechanic, employee. Regional: Lausannois, Vaudoise. Age: young, young adult. Gender: man, young woman. Religion: catholic, believer
Relational	57 (6%)	28 (8%)	Friends, mother, big sister for 5 little sisters, married, Family
Other	23 (2%)	5 (1%)	Nothing, human, first & second names
	1011 self-definitions	**365 participants**	

We explored differences in the choice of those three bonding identities according to gender, professional status and national status. Analysis revealed that women, compared to men, were more likely to choose relational self-definitions (16% vs. 4%, $\chi^2(1) = 10.33$, $p = .001$), and that apprentices and pre-apprentices were less likely to choose a relational self-definition than employees (3% and 5% vs.16%, $\chi^2(2) = 10.40$, $p = .001$). We also found that 29% of Non-Swiss chose an ethnically-related definition while only 4% of Swiss chose Swiss as the most important self-definition ($\chi^2(1) = 23.26$, $p < .001$).

Level of self-definition. Using this adapted version of TST we sought to distinguish individuals for whom bonding identities (either collective or relational) were important from those for whom they were less important. We assumed that people who chose a non-bonding (personal) identity rather than a bonding (collective or relational) identity in a task where they are explicitly asked to self-define themselves in terms of their *social affiliations* did not give importance to such bonding identities. To test our hypothesis about the degree to which

bonding identities protected people facing barriers to their life projects we used participants' responses in the adapted TST test to construct a new variable, *level of self-definition* (LSD). Its levels were (a) 'un-bonded self', which included those who either chose a personal identity as the most important response, or who did not specify which identity was most important, but only indicated personal identities among the three self-definitions, and (b) 'bonded self', which included participants who indicated a bonding identity, be it a relational identity (e.g., member of a family, married) or a collective identity (e.g., Portuguese, apprentice), or who did not specify which identity was important and had only indicated bonding identities.

The LSD variable was missing for 54 participants, 28 from the PVS (20.4%) and 26 from the administration employees (11.4%). This relatively high level of missing data may be due to the question presentation where participants were asked to go back to their previous responses and circle one of them which may have been confusing for some participants. Alternatively, missing data can also be an indication of the difficulty of choosing between selected self-definitions as *the most important* one. As this variable is central for our research question, all analyses were conducted with those who provided these data (n = 311). Of these, 49% were classified as having a non-bonded self-concept (n = 152), and 51% as having a bonded self-concept (n = 159).

Data analysis

In all tested models, scale predictors were standardized prior to analysis in order to facilitate the comparison of coefficients. We first conducted multiple regression analyses to test for differences in the perception of barriers according to group status (Hypothesis 1). A second set of regression analyses tested the impact of perceived barriers on self-esteem and whether this impact was similar for high and low status groups (Hypothesis 2).

Next, to examine the role of LSD in predicting the relationship between the perception of barriers and self-esteem we tested moderation and mediation models (using *PROCESS*, a

computational procedure for path analysis-based moderation and mediation, Hayes, 2012). Specifically, we tested whether LSD would moderate the relation between perceived barriers and self-esteem (hypothesis 3), and whether perceived coping-efficacy would mediate the moderation effect in hypothesis 3 (i.e, we tested hypothesis 4 in a mediated moderation model).

Results

H1: Perceived barriers according to group status. On average, the perception of barriers was close to the scale mid-point (M = 3.23, SD = 1.55), but differed, as expected, according to group status (see Table 3). To test whether low status group members perceived higher barriers to their projects than high status groups members, perceived barriers were regressed upon the three status variables, that is, financial worries, nationality (non-Swiss = 0, Swiss = 1), and professional status (pre-apprentices, apprentices and employees). Age and gender (women = 0, men = 1) were entered as control variables. Professional status was dummy-coded into two variables such that the group of pre-apprentices was the reference group, yielding a first comparison between apprentices and the two other groups and a second one between employees and the two other groups. Results showed no significant effect for age (B = -.07, SE = .18, p = .69) and gender (B = .02, SE = .17, p = .89). Concerning the three status variables, the results revealed that participants who reported greater financial worries perceived higher barriers (B = .40, SE = .09, p < .001). The effect of nationality approached significance (B = -.40, SE = .21, p = .06), with non-Swiss perceiving higher barriers (M = 3.72, SD = 1.45) than Swiss participants (M = 3.04, SD = 1.54). The first dummy comparison for professional status (apprentices vs. pre-apprentices and employees) was significant (B = -.64, SE = .29, p = .02) confirming a significant effect of professional status on perceived barriers. A follow-up one-way ANOVA with professional status as a factor showed that pre-apprentices (the lowest status group) perceived higher barriers (M = 3.89, SD = 1.60)

compared to apprentices *(M* = 3.13*, SD* = 1.56*; p* = .02*),* and that apprentices did not differ from employees (*M* = 3.11*, SD* = 1.49*; p* = .99*)*, *F*(2, 302) = 4.79*, p* = .009, η^2 = 11.22). These results thus reveal that for all three status indicators (economic status, professional status and nationality) members of low status groups perceived higher barriers to their most important life project than members of high status groups.

H2: Relation between perceived barriers and self-esteem. We expected the experience of perceiving barriers to one's life projects to be harmful for self-esteem independently of one's group status. To test this prediction, self-esteem was regressed upon perceived barriers, with age and gender as control variables. The model was significant, *F*(3, 299) = 10.72*, p* < .001, and explained 10% of the total variance. Results showed a marginally significant effect for gender (*B* = .15, *SE* = .09, *p* = .08), with women reporting lower self-esteem than men. Age had no effect (*B* = -.02, *SE* = .04, *p* = .62). As expected, perceived barriers to life projects were negatively associated with self-esteem (*B* = -.23, *SE* = .03, *p* = < .001*).* To test whether this relation was independent of group status, we conducted three additional models with status indicators (professional status, nationality and financial worries) as moderators. For each moderation model, results show that the corresponding interaction term was not significant and did not increase explained variance, confirming that none of the three status indicators moderated the relation between perceived barriers and self-esteem.

Given that we collected data in two different sites, we also introduced institution (0 = PVS, 1 = Administration) as a moderator in another regression model of self-esteem to check if the relation between perceived barriers and self-esteem was the same in both sites. Results showed that the interaction had no effect (ΔR^2 = 0%, *p* = *.22*), confirming that perceiving barriers to one's project is equally harmful for self-esteem for participants in both institutions.

H3: Level of self-definition (LSD) as moderator. The third hypothesis stated that self-definition in terms of bonding identities would help participants overcome the negative

effect of perceived barriers on self-esteem. We first report zero-order correlations between perceived barriers, perceived efficacy, perceived support and self-esteem as a function of LSD. The findings show that for participants who defined themselves in un-bonded terms barrier perception was negatively associated with perceived coping efficacy (r = -.31, p < .01), perceived support (r = -.31, p < .01) and self-esteem (r = -.37, p < .01). For those who defined themselves in bonded terms, however, barrier perception was unrelated to perceived coping efficacy (r = -.01, ns) and perceived support (r = -.15, ns), and less strongly associated with self esteem (r = -.22, p < .01).

To formally test our hypothesis, we introduced LSD (0 = un-bonded, 1 = bonded) as a moderator of the relationship between perceived barriers and self-esteem (with age and gender as control variables). The model was significant, $F(5, 294) = 8.41$, p < .001, and explained 13% of the total variance (see table 5 for the full regression model). In addition to the main effect of perceived barriers and gender, results revealed a main effect of LSD (B = .19, SE = .09, p = .03), indicating that those who defined themselves in terms of a bonding identity expressed higher self-esteem than those who defined themselves at a personal level. More importantly for our hypothesis is the moderation effect of LSD evidenced by the significant Barriers X LSD interaction term (B = .19, SE = .08, p = .03). The analysis of the conditional effects showed that the perception of barriers was negatively related to self-esteem for both groups, but that this association was stronger when participants defined themselves in un-bonded terms (B = -.34, SE = .06, p < .001) than when they defined themselves in bonded terms (B = -.15, SE = .06, p = . 008) (see Figure 1).

Table 5. Regression of self-esteem on perceived barriers, LSD and their interaction.

	Variable	*B*	*SE*	CI
R^2 = .13***	Age	-.04	.04	[-0.13, 0.04]
	Men	.20*	.09	[0.03, 0.38]
	Perceived Barriers	-.34***	.06	[-0.46, -0.21]
	LSD	.19*	.09	[0.02, 0.37]
ΔR^2 = .01	Barriers X LSD	.19*	.08	[0.02, 0.35]

Note. SE=standard error; CI=confidence interval.
*$p < .05$, ***$p < .001$.

This difference between the bonded and the un-bonded cannot be attributed to mean level differences of barrier perception: both groups perceived similar level of barriers (Un-bonded: $M = 3.20$, Bonded: $M = 3.26$, $F(1, 303) = .15$, $p = .70$). Nor can it be attributed to the importance participants gave to projects or to their subjective commitment to them: We found that ratings on the three project appraisal dimensions (importance, emotional appraisal and achievement beliefs) were unrelated to participants' LSD levels (all Fs < 1). The only project appraisal that (marginally) differed between the two groups was perceived support, with participants who defined themselves in bonded terms perceiving higher support for their projects ($M = 5.17$, $SD = 1.09$) than those who defined themselves in un-bonded terms ($M = 4.90$, $SD = 1.32$, $F(1,297) = 3.39$, $p = .07$). This marginal difference suggests, unsurprisingly, that bonding identities are associated with greater perceived support for one's life projects.

The finding that perceived barriers were more strongly associated with self-esteem for participants who defined themselves in un-bonded terms provides empirical support for one of our key predictions concerning the role of bonding identities in buffering the negative effect of barrier perception on self-esteem.

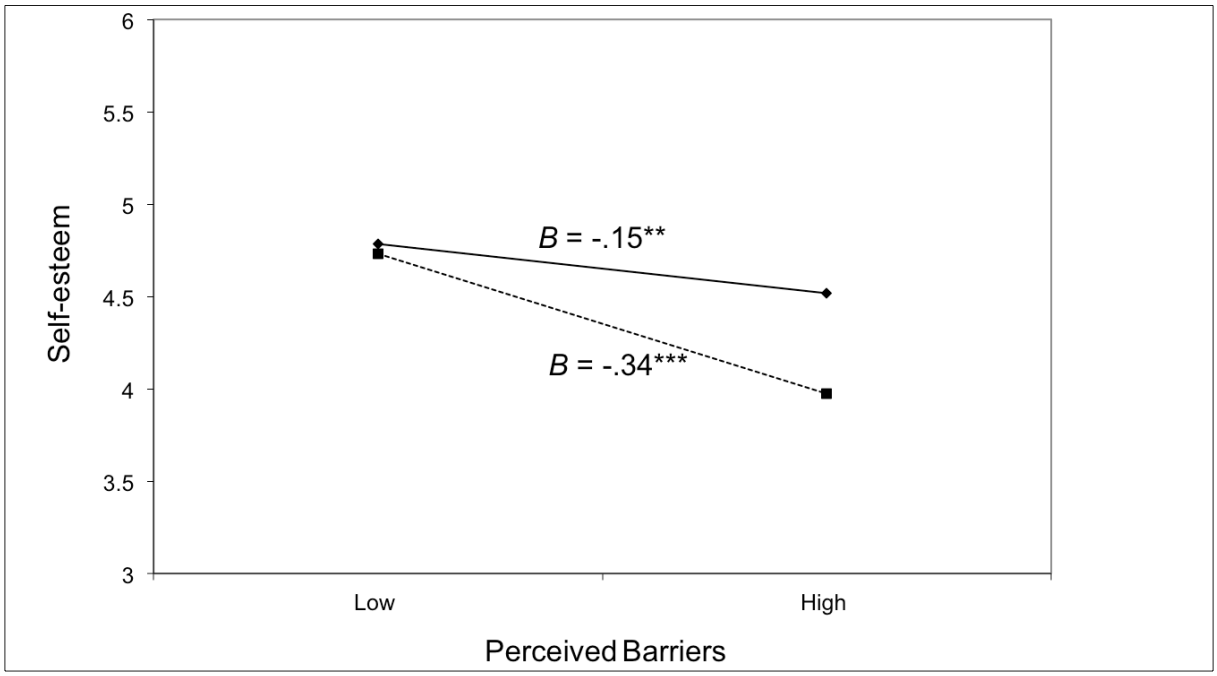

Figure 1. The effect of perceived barriers on self-esteem according to the two levels of self-definition (Solid line = bonded, Dotted line = un-bonded).
Note: $^{**}p < .01$. $^{***}p < .001$.

H4: Perceived coping-efficacy mediates the moderating effect of LSD. We tested our fourth hypothesis – that perceived efficacy was the psychological mechanism explaining the moderating effect of LSD on the relationship between perceived barriers and self-esteem – with a mediated-moderation analysis (see figure 2).

We entered perception of barriers as the independent variable, LSD (0 = un-bonded, 1 = bonded) as the moderator, perceived coping-efficacy as a continuous mediator, and age and gender as control variables. Again we used the PROCESS procedure. This generates coefficients estimating the effect of perceived barriers on self-esteem directly as well as indirectly through perceived coping-efficacy, with both direct and indirect effects moderated by LSD (see Figure 2). Results showed that the indirect effect of the interaction term was positive (indirect effect = .11, *SE* = .05) and statistically different from zero, as evidenced by a confidence interval (CI) excluding zero (95% CI [0.01, 0.21]), confirming the hypothesis that the moderation by LSD was mediated by perceived coping-efficacy.

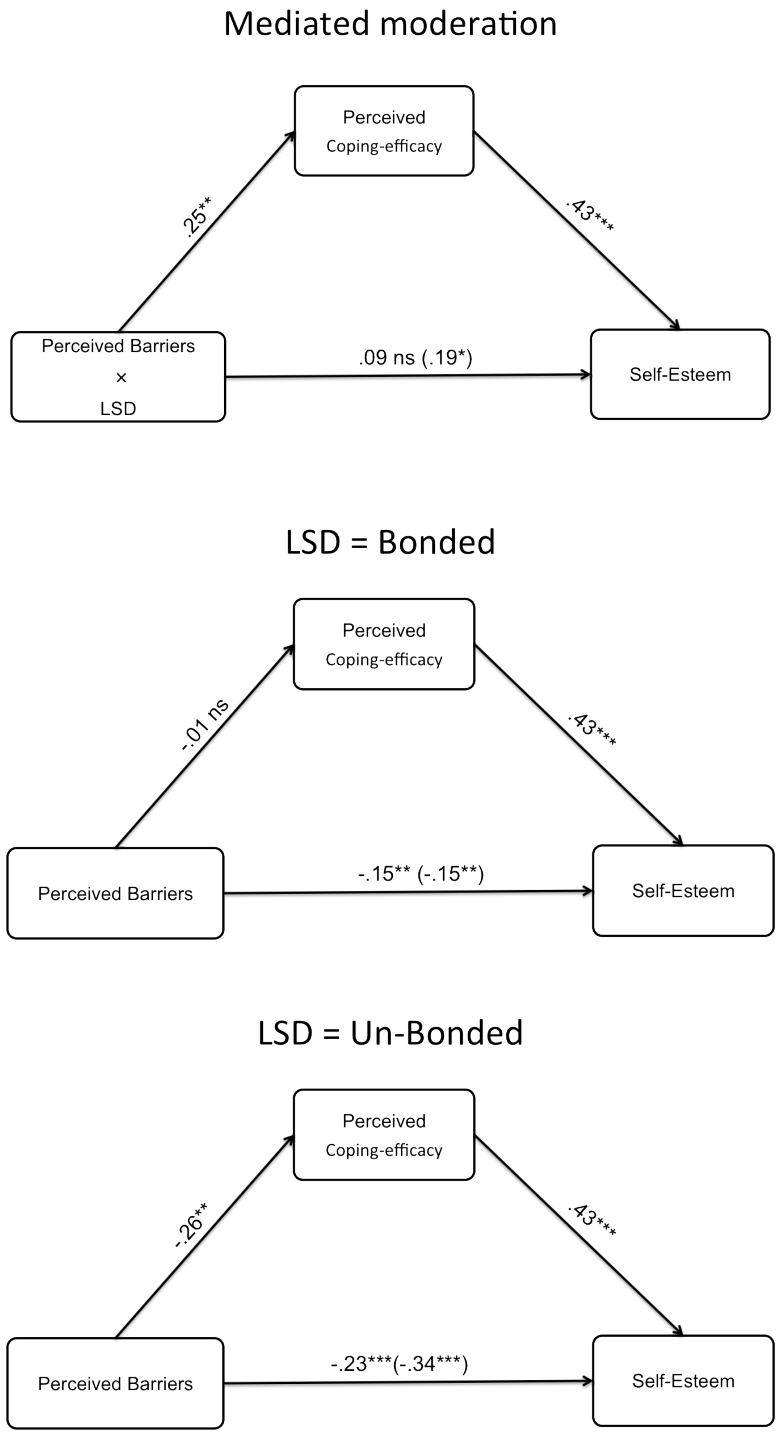

Figure 2. Model for testing mediation of the moderation effect of bonding identities on self-esteem through perceived coping-efficacy. Note: LSD= level of self-definition. *$p < .05$. **$p < .01$. ***$p < .001$.

To simplify the reading of the results, Figure 2 presents the full mediational model,

along with path estimates, for both levels of the moderator (LSD). For participants who defined themselves at a personal level (i.e., un-bonded self), the indirect effect of perceived barriers on self-esteem through perceived coping-efficacy was negative (indirect effect = -.11, *SE* = .04) and significant (95% CI [-0.20, -0.04]), suggesting that un-bonded participants felt ineffective when confronted with barriers and that this sense of inefficacy, in turn, lowered their self-esteem. For participants defining themselves in terms of bonding identities, however, this indirect effect was absent (indirect effect = .00, *SE* = .03, 95% CI [-0.07, 0.06]): Barrier perception did not affect participants' belief in their capacity to cope effectively with life circumstances, and hence, was less harmful for their self-esteem.

To examine whether the role of bonding identities goes beyond the perception of external support, we tested the same mediated-moderation model as before, but with perceived project support instead of perceived coping efficacy as the mediator. Results showed that perceived project support did not mediate the moderating effect of level of self-definition on the relationship between perceived barriers and self-esteem (indirect effect = .02, *SE* = .02, 95% CI [-0.001, 0.070]). Closer examination of the results revealed that LSD (bonded=1, un-bonded=0) had a positive effect on perceived support (*B* = .24*, SE* = .11, *p* = .03) and significantly moderated the effect of perceived barriers on perceived support (*B* = .25*, SE* = .11, *p* = .02): perceived barriers were strongly negatively related to perceived support for un-bonded participants (*B* = -.38*, SE* = .08, *p* < .001), but were only marginally related to perceived support for bonded participants (*B* = -.12*, SE* = .07, *p* = .08). But when the full mediated-moderation model was estimated, the path between perceived support and self-esteem was weak and only marginally significant (*B* = .08*, SE* = .05*, p* = .09). Perceived project support can therefore not explain the role of bonding identities in moderating the association between perceived barriers and self-esteem. To sum up, when facing external barriers to one's project, LSD moderated the negative effect of perceived barriers both on

one's general sense of coping efficacy and on perceptions of external support in pursuing this specific project. However, the positive role of bonding identities in protecting self-esteem can only be explained with enhanced internal efficacy beliefs rather than with perceived support for participants' specific project.

Alternative model. We also tested an alternative, reverse model in which self-esteem was the independent variable, perceived barriers the outcome variable, LSD the moderator, and perceived efficacy as mediator. This model failed to satisfy the criteria for mediated moderation: First, the relationship between self-esteem and perceived efficacy (B = .53, SE = .06, $p < .001$) was not moderated by LSD (B = .02, SE = .10, p = .85). Second, for both levels of the moderator (LSD), the relation between self-esteem and perceived barriers was not mediated by perceived efficacy. Therefore, the alternative hypothesis that lower self-esteem entailed perception of higher barriers through lowering one's sense of efficacy was not supported.

Discussion

In this study, we argued that perceptions of constraints in relation to one's life-course choices and opportunities are an important manifestation of structural disadvantage. Accordingly, periods of important life transition are suitable for studying the psychological processes involved in negotiating and coping with perceived barriers. As expected, we found that adolescents and young adults from socially disadvantaged groups (i.e., participants who were immigrants, pre-apprentices, or had greater financial worries) perceived higher barriers to their life projects than members of more advantaged groups, a result in line with previous results from career research demonstrating status differences in the perception of such barriers (Luzzo & McWhirter, 2001).

We further argued that analysing these structurally induced experiences is important as they bring risks to individuals' self-esteem, with potentially damaging consequences for

individuals' development. Our findings confirmed the expected association between the perception of barriers and self-esteem: The more participants perceived barriers, the lower their reported self-esteem. This negative association is in line with motivational-developmental theories that emphasise the role of agency, goal-directed action and control over one's environment in the development of young adults (e.g., Brandtstädter, 1998; Heckhausen, Wrosch, & Schulz, 2010; Heckhausen & Schulz, 1995).

The central hypothesis of this study was that when the capacity for action in one's direct environment is structurally constrained, the existence of bonds with similarly situated others (family, peer and larger social groups) provides a buffer against the negative psychological implications of those experiences. Instead of focusing on a specific type of identity, we used an adapted version of the TST to assess the existence and importance of a more general category of identity: self-other bonding identities. Doing so gave us an opportunity to explore the variety of self-definitions people have at their disposal. Results confirmed that participants who defined themselves in terms of 'bonding identities' (defined by relations with others) were better prepared to deal with barriers encountered in their life-course. For such participants, perceiving barriers was less harmful to their self-esteem than it was for participants who self-defined in un-bonded terms. The existence of social bonds, independently of the source of those bonds, seems to be a key resilience factor when one's capacity of action is structurally constrained.

We categorised participants according to their level of self-definition (un-bonded vs. bonded) and assumed this variable to reflect their social connections and the degree to which they provide a sense of meaningful identity internalized in the self. Yet, one could argue that other aspects of the self-concept, unrelated to the degree of connectedness, differentiate the two groups and explain the obtained effects. Indeed, research has shown that people tend to rate their self-definitions as more important when they provide them with self-esteem

(Vignoles, Regalia, Manzi, Golledge, & Scabini, 2006). As a result, it could be that those with a bonding identity derived their self-esteem from social affiliations (explaining why perceived barriers were less strongly related to their self-esteem) while those with a personal identity derived their self-esteem from individual achievements (explaining why perceived barriers lowered their self-esteem). This would imply that personal achievements and projects are psychologically more central for participants in the personal identity group compared to those with a bonding identity. Yet, we found no difference between the two groups in terms of project importance or achievement beliefs which allows us to rule out this alternative interpretation of the result.

How can we understand the role of bonding identities and the relationships they entail in protecting self-esteem? Our findings showed a conditional indirect effect such that for respondents with an un-bonded identity, the detrimental effect of perceived barriers on self-esteem was associated with a decreased sense of efficacy. This indirect effect was absent for respondents with bonded identities for whom perceiving barriers was not associated with coping-efficacy and only weakly associated with lower self-esteem, suggesting that bonding identities mitigate the feeling of powerlessness otherwise associated with perceived barriers. This finding provides additional support for the hypothesis that enhanced coping efficacy beliefs explain why identification increases well-being (e.g., Khan et al., 2014; McNamara et al., 2013; Outten et al, 2009). Our work complements existing research by focusing on the more general category of self-other bonding identities, and by exploring whether their role in moderating the negative psychological effects of a concrete life-course stressor is mediated by efficacy beliefs.

Importantly, and in line with prior studies (McNamara et al, 2013, Outten et al, 2009), social support did not in itself account for the positive role of bonding identities in protecting self-esteem. This suggests that we need to go beyond social support as an explanation for the

beneficial effects of bonding identities. For example, it may be that an individual well-connected with similarly-situated others is more likely to develop, through discussion and comparison with others, an understanding of life's difficulties as challenges inherent to their common social reality rather than as a personal failure. Bonding identities may thus help individuals to cope with feelings of powerlessness and inefficacy through an increased awareness of the situations in which similarly situated others find themselves, thereby developing a more realistic picture of the situations and events that are controllable or not. In this case, one's individual sense of efficacy and agency is preserved thanks to the role of bonding identities in providing a frame of reference that informs individuals where they stand in relation to others and where their sphere of control over life events comes to its limits. In future research, it would be important to explore more systematically the link between psychological connectedness with one's fellow disadvantaged group members and perceptions of controllability of life-course transitions and life challenges.

Inevitably, the present research suffered from a number of shortcomings. First, the relatively poor psychometric properties of some measures call for replication. Perceived coping-efficacy, for example, was unfortunately only measured with a single item asking participants to rate their degree of confidence about their ability to overcome personal problems. While this dimension of coping efficacy clearly is a central factor of self-efficacy (Bandura, 2006), future work should use multiple-item scales to appropriately assess self-efficacy. Also the potential ambiguities associated with the TST task call for alternative ways of assessing bonded and un-bonded identities. Second, as always in correlational studies, no causal claims are warranted. Yet, our study showed a number of promising associations that could be investigated with experimental and longitudinal research designs that allow testing of causal hypotheses. But this intrinsic limitation of our study should not distract from its main conclusions.

Conclusion

By investigating psychological processes involved in barrier perception, this study broadens the way structural disadvantage is examined. First, based on an integration of identity-based mechanisms and life course perspectives, our approach examined the empowering role of bonding identities in the context of mundane, everyday manifestations of structural disadvantage. Second, instead of considering low status social identities as potential threats, we considered how bonding identities may be a source of individual agency. It thereby complements earlier work on the psychological well-being of disadvantaged groups that tends to focus on the risk of subjective devaluation (e.g., Branscombe, Ellemers, Spears, & Doosje, 1999; Crocker, Major, & Steele, 1998). Third, empowering identities can have both an interpersonal and a categorical basis. Providing a single framework for these two types of identities broadens the scope of identity-based negotiations of structural disadvantage.

The results of this study have a crucial implication for interventions with youth aimed at strengthening their sense of agency and efficacy to negotiate critical life-course transitions. These interventions are often based on the liberal credo that individualistic characteristics of responsibility, independence and self-reliance lead to better social integration. Our results suggest on the contrary that it is the capacity of young adults to willingly bind with other persons or groups that promotes the construction of meaningful social identities which in turn become a key factor for negotiating the structural constraints of their life projects. Therefore, young adults may more easily escape the negative psychological consequences of a lowered sense of efficacy and self-esteem that are associated with their constrained life conditions. This conclusion is in line with one of the core lessons of current developments of applied social identity research suggesting that interventions should work *with* group identities and *not against them* (Haslam, 2014). Rather than trying to promote the construction of an elusive

independent and separate self, interventions should identify and engage with the bonding identities that matter most for the young, thereby recognizing the benefits of agency-with-others instead of agency-without-others.

Paper 2: Individual and Collective Empowerment through Ingroup Connectedness[9]

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Abstract

During critical life transitions like the transition to adulthood, young people are required to actively deal with a number of adjustments. The challenges and demands are even more complex for members of socially disadvantaged groups (i.e., immigrants). In line with previous accounts of the critical role of co-agency during transitions, we develop and test a model that examines proximal groups' connectedness as an outcome of individual needs satisfaction and argue for its empowering role both at the personal and the collective level, thus predicting: 1) greater self-esteem and 2) higher commitment to social change actions. While previous group-based models of psychological empowerment are located at the intergroup level of analysis and based on the relevance of a particular categorical identity, this study suggests an understanding of the role of ingroups in terms of the sense of connectedness they provide and the resulting efficacy beliefs. The study thereby focuses on the less explored meso-level of interactions in individuals' direct environment.

The model was tested and supported using survey data of youth populations (15-30) from different backgrounds (N = 521). The results point out the importance of this proximal level of connectedness for both personal and societal dynamics, especially amongst immigrants.

[9] Bakouri, M. and Staerklé, C. (2015), *Individual and Collective Empowerment through Ingroup Connectedness*. An earlier slightly different version has been published as *Lives Working Paper, 2015(40), 1-28*.

Introduction

The emergence and the consequences of strong bonds between the self and the social groups to which one belongs has been a central question for a variety of research traditions, e.g., belongingness theories (Baumeister & Leary, 1995), social identity and self-categorization theories (Tajfel, 1978a; Turner, 1985), social capital (Putnam, 2001) and connectedness theories (Lee & Robbins, 1998), as well as classical sociological and anthropological approaches to community and solidarity (Cohen, 1985; Durkheim, 1893; Weber, 1947). Recently, a large and growing body of empirical studies has documented how relationships with ingroups are critical for both psychological and societal outcomes. Studies from the social identity tradition have shown for example the importance of meaningful ingroups in shaping coping and regulation processes at the personal level (Jetten et al., 2012; Jones & Jetten, 2011; Knowles & Gardner, 2008) as well as their importance for group-level outcomes, e.g., social change and collective action (Drury & Reicher, 2009; Van Zomeren, Leach, & Spears, 2012; Van Zomeren, Spears, & Leach, 2008). In a similar vein, social capital literature has documented the role of involvement with groups (family, neighbours, community) for well-being and health (Helliwell & Putnam, 2004), but also for societal outcomes (e.g., social cohesion) or what Putnam himself termed *public returns to social capital* (Putnam, 2001; Putnam, 2007). Given this growing evidence for the centrality of ingroups, understanding how people become to see themselves in close relationship with their groups, and the mechanisms mediating the link between ingroup connectedness – that is, the perceived strength of bonds between the self and social groups – and outcomes, become more and more needed.

We develop and test a model that links proximal group connectedness to individual needs satisfaction and argues for its centrality for psychological empowerment. By proximal groups we refer to groups directly surrounding the individual; namely family, friends and

peers. Specifically, we argue that the more people feel that their needs for help and recognition are satisfied by surrounding others, the greater will be their sense of connectedness to proximal groups. This sense of connectedness in turn fosters their efficacy beliefs both at an individual and collective level predicting positive outcomes.

The idea of psychological empowerment through ingroups is not novel and the large research from the social identity tradition provides many models explaining the psychological mechanisms underlying it. Those mechanisms are however based on the relevance of a particular categorical identity. For instance, in the majority of studies predicting personal-level outcomes, the group one identifies with is directly related to the particular stressor/challenge one is facing (for example, organizational stress and organizational identification; Haslam, Jetten, & Waghorn, 2009; Haslam, O'Brien, Jetten, Vormedal, & Penna, 2005, stigmatization and identification with the stigmatized group; Crabtree, Haslam, Postmes, & Haslam, 2010). In models predicting social change commitment (Van Zomeren et al., 2012; Van Zomeren et al., 2008), the categorical identities are *those made relevant* by the disadvantage experienced, and operating through an ideological consciousness of its illegitimacy. Moreover, being empowered as a group member is according to those models contingent on intergroup perceptions switching the *personal* identity and goals to the background.

The model we develop in this study suggests a different understanding of the role of ingroups. First, this role is understood mainly in terms of the sense of connectedness they provide and the resulting efficacy beliefs, and not in relation to the content or the level of ideological consciousness due to a particular group identity. Second, the common view that collective empowerment requires downplaying personal identities and goals is challenged by examining the impact of connectedness *simultaneously* at a personal level (i.e., efficacy to handle personal challenges) and a societal level (i.e., efficacy of collective action). Third, and

in relation to the nature of the groups studied, the model points out the importance of *proximal* groups for personal-level dynamics, but also for societal-level ones, which has been neglected in the past.

Ingroup connectedness and individual needs satisfaction

The first claim of our model is that the strength of self-group bonds depends on groups' responsiveness to individual needs and motives. Individuals generally belong to different groups responding to different needs. Given the current study's focus on proximal groups (family, friends, peers), ingroup connectedness will be studied as a function of the satisfaction of needs that people generally receive from close others. This support is classified in two types: instrumental and symbolic/emotional (Schulz & Schwarzer, 2003; Taylor & Seeman, 1999). The instrumental aspect reflects the degree to which others are willing to offer tangible and concrete help in relevant situations (e.g., money, time, care). The symbolic aspect refers to the degree to which others' actions and attitudes make one feel loved, cared of and recognized (Taylor & Seeman, 1999). We argue that the more people feel that surrounding others provide them with the needed *help* and *recognition*, the higher will be their sense of connectedness to those groups. In addition, and contrary to the self-categorization theory view putting individuality against groupness (one depersonalizes in order to be a group member), we argue that this sense of connectedness does not involve any loss of individuality, and may even be a factor strengthening one's personal identity.

By this claim we stress the importance to conceive the self-group relation as a bidirectional concept. When people feel a strong connectedness to a group, they are likely to endorse and work for group goals. Conversely, a feeling of group connectedness is contingent on the group's ability to satisfy individual needs and accomplish important functions for the individual. As noted by Hornsey and colleagues (Hornsey, Grice, & Jetten, 2007) and earlier by Moreland and Levine (1989), the process by which *groups change individuals* to conform

to group norms and endorse group goals (i.e., the assimilation process) received much more attention in the literature than the one by which *members change the group* to suit themselves (i.e., the accommodation process). These processes considered theoretically as concomitant or even as components of the same process (e.g., Breakwell, 1988, see also Brandtstädter & Rothermund, 2002) have, however, not received equal amount of attention empirically. For instance, empirical research has extensively documented how the salience of group membership is associated with an unidirectional group-to-self flow pushing the individual to self-stereotype as an interchangeable exemplar of a group and work for group goals, but paid only scant attention to the opposite direction, looking for example at the degree to which groups' existence and cohesiveness is contingent on satisfying individual needs and motives (e.g., meaning, purpose, efficacy, understanding and support). By defining individual needs satisfaction as an antecedent of connectedness in our model, we contribute to filling this gap.

A partial explanation for this trend can be found in the now dominant perspective to psychological group formation, namely self-categorization theory, which considers that psychological group formation has primarily a perceptive and cognitive basis, and therefore see factors enhancing the cognitive salience of category membership as key antecedents of group formation (Turner, 1982, 1985). The impact of intergroup perceptions and categorical explanations of the self-group relationship should not however divert the focus of the importance of individual needs satisfaction in intragroup contexts as motives for affiliation.

Needs satisfaction was indeed central in classical accounts of psychological group formation, placing the degree to which interaction between parties mediated important goals and needs for the individual as a key determinant of the self-group relation. This is rooted in Lewin's definition of a group as a "dynamic whole based on interdependence of parties" (1948, p. 184), Sherif's (1966) notion of *goals that necessitate mutual realization* and Deutsch's (1949) notion of *goals promotiveley interdependent* as the definitional

characteristics of psychological groups. The importance of individual needs as a determinant of the self-group relation is also at the core of the group socialization model (Levine & Moreland, 1994), that describes the relation between the individual and the group as involving efforts by both parties to assess and fulfil the other's goals and needs. The model views "both parties as potential influence agents" (p. 306). Thus, individuals are not passive subjects of group pressure, but agents who actively change the group in a way that it best reflects their own needs and goals.

Recent empirical work on the self-group relation has also confirmed the importance of individual needs and motives in shaping this relation. For example, work by Amiot and colleagues has shown that the degree to which ingroups participate in coping and adaptation is a cause for integrating them to the self (Amiot, Terry, Wirawan, & Grice, 2010). Bettencourt and Sheldon found that people who perceived they are accepted for who they are and their contributions are valued within the group, reported higher group identification (Bettencourt & Sheldon, 2001). Self-Determination Theory (SDT), a contemporary theory of psychological needs, also defines individual needs and motives' satisfaction as a determinant of the self-group relation (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Based on this theory, Guardia and colleagues found for example that in a sample of university students individual needs satisfaction significantly accounted for the variability on felt security about one's relationships with family members and friends (Guardia et al., 2000). This literature highlights that the degree to which intragroup interaction satisfies individual needs is central for the member's sense of connectedness to those groups.

Individual and Collective Empowerment through Ingroup Connectedness

The second claim of our model is that this sense of connectedness, in turn, empowers the individual both at the personal and the collective level. This claim is based on a view of group connectedness and personal agency as complementary rather than contradictory forces.

The intersection between connectedness and agency has been the subject of a long lasting debate. While traditionally considered as conflicting forces (for example Eidelson' notion of conflict between affiliation and autonomy (1981; 1980) and Bakan's conflict theory opposing connectedness (communion) to agency, 1966), there are many theoretical and empirical reasons to think of their relationship as more complex, and as complementary rather than conflicting. For example, Kagitcibasi (2005, 1996) proposed from a cross-cultural developmental perspective, that the two dimensions underlying connectedness (i.e., the degree to which the self is distanced from others vs. connected to them) and agency (i.e., the degree to which the self is self-governed vs. governed from outside) are independent: One can be high in agency; in the sense of acting willingly toward desired outcomes with a high sense of self-efficacy and without a feeling of coercion, and be simultaneously highly connected with others, in the sense of having self-boundaries fused rather than separated from others. Recognizing the independence of these two dimensions, Kagitcibasi argues that agency and autonomy (she uses interchangeably) do not preclude emotional interdependence and closeness with others as commonly presumed. Similarly, and also from a cross cultural perspective, Green and colleagues provided empirical support for the independence of the two dimensions of self-reliance and interdependence (Green, Deschamps, & Paez, 2005).

A similar claim has been advanced by self determination theorists (Chirkov, Ryan, Kim, & Kaplan, 2003; Ryan, Deci, & Grolnick, 1995; Ryan & Lynch, 1989), who take the reasoning a step further by considering that not only interpersonal connectedness and personal agency are not conflicting, but that they are in many cases positively linked. Specifically, they stress that the constructs of autonomy need to be distinguished from commonly related constructs such as independence (Chirkov et al., 2003) and detachment (Ryan & Lynch, 1989), and that the development of autonomy, understood as "the experience of volition and the self-endorsement of one's actions" (Chirkov et al., 2003; p. 107), does not entail

detachment or independence from others but can rather be positively linked with the development of relatedness (Ryan et al., 1995).

In line with self determination theory, we think of connectedness and agency as complementary rather than conflicting forces, and argue that in social contexts where the demands are high or require interdependent efforts, connectedness may contribute to an enhanced sense of agency. To empirically examine their link, we test if a higher sense of connectedness to proximal groups can be associated with increased efficacy beliefs, considered a central mechanism in human agency, and defined as the expected attainment of valued outcomes (Bandura, 1995, 2001) . We test the link between connectedness with proximal groups and efficacy beliefs at both personal and collective levels. We chose the transition to adulthood (a situation characterized with high demands) and social change (a situation requiring interdependent efforts) as the contexts in which to study the relation between connectedness and efficacy beliefs.

At the personal level, we argue that psychological connectedness with proximal groups can empower young people dealing with the transition to adulthood, through the belief that they can effectively cope with their life challenges (i.e., coping efficacy), thus predicting better psychological outcomes. At the collective level, we focus on beliefs on the efficacy of unified efforts of the disadvantaged to bring social change—in terms of a more just society—and we test whether connectedness to proximal groups can enhance these beliefs, and in turn the willingness to participate in social change actions, specifically among the most disadvantaged.

Proximal groups and critical life transitions. Relations to psychological groups as basis for efficacy beliefs has been largely studied in relation to group and collective goals (Van Zomeren, Spears, Fischer, & Leach, 2004; Van Zomeren & Spears, 2009). However, relations to ingroups may help not only to feel efficacious about the realization of common

goals and motives, but also the efficacy of each group member to effectively resolve one's own challenges (i.e., coping efficacy). We choose the transition to adulthood as the context in which to study the relation between connectedness and efficacy beliefs at the personal level. We focus on this critical life course transition, as a period where adolescents and young adults are required to actively deal with a number of adjustments and difficulties that often exceed their usual resources (Heinz, 2009; Nurmi et al., 2002). It is then an adequate context in which to study the relation between connectedness and efficacy beliefs, specially that studies from a life span perspective have documented the critical role of co-agency (Salmela-Aro, 2009) during this transition.

Developmental psychologists are increasingly examining connectedness to both peers and adults as a main factor of psychological growth among adolescents, with an increased sense of self worth and motivation as key component of this growth (Townsend & McWhirter, 2005). For instance, relationships to teacher, parents and friends have been found to be a predictor of self-esteem among early adolescents (Ryan, Stiller, & Lynch, 1994). The positive relationship between a sense of connectedness and different aspects of self-esteem has been examined and confirmed with a sample of undergraduate female students (Lee & Robbins, 1998).

We argue that connectedness to proximal groups will be positively related to self-esteem and that their relationship can be explained, at least partially, by the role of this sense of connectedness in empowering young people through the belief that they can effectively cope with their life challenges. Important for our claim is the result from SDT based studies showing a positive relationship between interpersonal connectedness (relatedness) and a sense of autonomy and agency (Ryan et al., 1995; Ryan & Lynch, 1989) suggesting that the link between connectedness and positive psychological outcomes can be due to an enhanced sense of confidence about one's own abilities. Our claim is also in line with the general finding

from social identity based literature showing that psychologically meaningful ingroups are a resilience factor in periods of transition (Iyer et al., 2009; Jetten et al., 2012). More specifically, several studies from this tradition show that *coping-efficacy beliefs* significantly mediate the positive relationship between group connectedness on the one hand (i.e., identification) and self-esteem and other indicators of psychological well-being on the other (Khan, Hopkins, Tewari, Srinivasan, Reicher & Ozakinci, 2014; Outten, Schmitt, Garcia, & Branscombe, 2009). Although those studies examined connectedness to large-scale groups (racial and religious groups), studies based on the self-expansion model also confirmed that close relationships are associated with increased efficacy beliefs (Aron, Paris, & Aron, 1995; Aron, Aron, & Norman, 2004).

Taken together, these results coming from independent research lines suggest that psychological connections to others, either based on interpersonal relations or on categorical memberships, are associated with an enhanced sense of self-efficacy. Based on this argument, a recent study with adolescents and young adults found that identities that are a source of connectedness (relational and larger-scale collective identities), helped participants cope with perceived barriers to their life projects (Bakouri & Staerklé, in press). Importantly for our hypothesis, the effect of those identities was mediated by their role in fostering one's sense of efficacy to better cope with life challenges. In line with those results, we hypothesize that ingroup connectedness will positively affect psychological outcomes, namely self-esteem, and that this relation may be mediated by a sense of enhanced efficacy to cope with life challenges.

Proximal group connectedness and social change. At the collective level, we examine the relation between connectedness to proximal groups and willingness to participate in social change, and a potential mediation of this relation by collective efficacy beliefs. The question of what predicts commitment to social change strategies has been studied from

different perspectives (e.g., social identity and relative deprivation as social psychological perspectives, resource mobilization, political processes and collective identity theories as more sociological perspectives). Scholars have focused largely on the role of ideological/structural factors, for example social identity scholars have mainly focused on perceptions of permeability and legitimacy of the intergroup system (Haslam & Reicher, 2012). Limited attention has been devoted in our view to the role of bonds to surrounding others that are perceived in people's direct contexts in predicting social change actions. Social change requires, like many other desired societal outcomes (e.g., living in clean neighbourhoods, less polluted planet), interdependent, unified and enduring efforts. To bring social change, individual efforts are indeed fruitless unless a critical mass of others is equally committed to those actions. What is important then is not only the degree to which I desire this change, but also what I know about others' commitment, and about our capacity to unify our efforts. Given that people build their understanding of the world and possibilities to act in it from their direct experiences and interactions, we suggest that the feeling of connectedness to directly surrounding others can be a key ingredient for their commitment to social change actions. The important role of individuals' direct networks and more crucially the bonds that characterize those networks in predicting their mobilization have been previously evidenced in relational perspectives to collective action (e.g., Diani, 1997; Mische, 2003). In line with this thinking, we test in this study whether a sense of connectedness to proximal groups may predict people's willingness to personally engage in social change actions.

We suggest moreover that connectedness can impact social change commitment also indirectly, especially among disadvantaged group member, by fostering their beliefs about the efficacy of *the disadvantaged as a group*, to change their situation through common efforts. Indeed, social change can be a desired outcome but fail to translate into commitment to social change actions when people believe they have no chance to bring about the desired change. In

line with this reasoning, the construct of group efficacy has become central as a proximal predictor of social change strategies (Drury & Reicher, 2000; Drury & Reicher, 2005; Hornsey & Blackwood, 2006; Mummendey, Kessler, Klink, & Mielke, 1999). In models predicting social change commitment, the group refers often to the larger category of the *socially disadvantaged* or *the most disadvantaged*. An important question to ask is then: how people come to build their beliefs about the efficacy of such a *large-scale social category*? We argue that when people perceive themselves to be member of this large social category, the strength of connections and the networks of trust they perceive in their direct social environments are a proximal predictor of larger-scale efficacy beliefs, which in turns predicts willingness to commit to social change actions.

Hypothesized associations. The full structural model is present in figure 1. We argue that the more people perceive their direct environment as responsive to their both instrumental and symbolic needs, the higher will be their sense of connectedness to proximal groups. We hypothesize that ingroup connectedness will in turn foster efficacy beliefs. We test this link between connectedness and efficacy beliefs both at personal and collective level.

At the personal level, we hypothesize that connectedness to proximal groups will positively affect psychological outcomes (namely self-esteem) and that this relation is mediated by a sense of enhanced efficacy to cope with life challenges.

At the collective level, we hypothesize that connectedness to proximal groups will predict more willingness to engage in social change actions and that this relation is mediated, by an enhanced sense of collective efficacy. Additionally, we hypothesize that connectedness will be more relevant in predicting commitment to social change actions among (disadvantaged) non-Swiss compared to (more advantaged) Swiss participants.

Method

Participants

To test our theoretical model, we collected data in French speaking Switzerland with a standardized questionnaire of youth populations from different backgrounds, aged 15 to 30 (see table 1 for participants demographic information). Thanks to the agreement with three institutions hosting these young, a vocational school (pre-apprentices and apprentices), a high school (students), and the municipality of a major city (apprentices and young employees), we constituted a mixed sample that reflects the diversity of pathways characteristic of this age period. In addition to reflecting the diversity of pathways, our choice of those institutions was also guided by our hypothesis related to the link between connectedness and efficacy beliefs among the most disadvantaged, which led us to include an important portion of young who are potentially disadvantaged (having an immigrant background and/or low educational attainment). Here is a brief description of the context of each institution:

Preparatory vocational school (PVS). This centre is attended by adolescents who express difficulty in managing the transition from compulsory schooling to vocational training. Participants from the PVS, 18 years old average, were either apprentices (have already started an apprenticeship but need specialized coaching by vocational teachers), or pre-apprentices (are still looking for an apprenticeship at the end of their compulsory schooling and are benefiting from the aide of this institution in their research procedure). Apprentices were distributed across various sectors: construction, carpentry, the service-sector, rural work and mechanical work. A high proportion of immigrants and people with an immigrant background attend this centre (47% don't have Swiss nationality).

Municipality. All employees and apprentices affiliated to the municipality of a major city in Switzerland aged between 15 and 30 years were contacted by letter. As for apprentices

from PVS, apprentices affiliated to the municipality were distributed across the various sectors. Employees were also distributed across the various services of the municipality (construction workers, police officers, social workers, administrative personnel…). They also differ in their educational achievement, and only 39% of these employees had achieved higher education.

High School (HS). The third institution is a high school preparing students who aspire for higher education to the maturity diploma (obtained around the age of 18/19) which leads to admission in universities. Table 1 gives a description of the whole sample.

Table 1. Means, standard deviations and percentages of socio-demographic variables of the whole sample

	PVS	HS	Municipality		Total
	(Pre)Apprentices	Students	Apprentices	Employees	
Age: M (SD)	18.42 (2.61)	18.79 (1.00)	19.61 (2.36)	27.45 (2.34)	**20.83 (4.27)**
Women: valid %	42%	62%	42%	55%	**51%**
Non Swiss: valid %	47%	12%	20%	9%	**21%**
N	151	207	35	127	**521**

The distribution of our sample shows that non-Swiss are highly represented among apprentices and pre-apprentices (47%, see table 1) contrary to a low representation among students (12%) and employees (9%), suggesting that non-Swiss in our sample hold lower social position compared to Swiss participants. We additionally compared Swiss to non-Swiss participants according to different indicators of social position, objective (educational attainment of parents) and subjective (perceived material vulnerability). Results revealed the educational attainment of parents is limited to the obligatory schooling for 47% among non-Swiss participants compared to 9% among Swiss, $\chi^2(1) = 76.52$, $p < .001$. With regards to differences in perceived material vulnerability, we found that 59% among non-Swiss participants are *somewhat* or *strongly* worried about "not having enough money to cover living expenses, to pay bills, rent or food" (compared to 45% among Swiss, $\chi^2(1) = 6.40$, $p =$

.01) and 35% are *somewhat* or *strongly* worried about "being in need of social assistance, unemployment benefits or other institutional support" (compared to 22% among Swiss, $\chi^2(1) = 7.37$, $p = .01$).

Given these consistent status differences between Swiss and non-Swiss participants, our hypothesis related to a greater relevance of connectedness in predicting social change commitment among disadvantaged participants will be tested using nationality as a proxy for status, comparing thus disadvantaged non-Swiss ($n = 109$) to advantaged Swiss participants ($n = 404$).

Procedure

521 adolescents and young adults (15-30) from the three mentioned institutions completed our questionnaire. This questionnaire is part of a larger longitudinal survey that started one year before. Participants from the high school and the municipality were contacted by email. However, given the risk of having a low response rate among the preparatory vocational school (the most vulnerable population), we negotiated with the institution the possibility to collect data in special sessions in the institution. The same questionnaire distributed in those sessions was sent by email to participants from the municipality and the high school with a return envelope.

Measures

We only describe the measures of direct relevance for the present paper. Unless otherwise stated, scales ranged from 1 (no, not at all) to 6 (yes, completely).

Needs responsiveness: help and recognition. Received instrumental help was measured using two items from the instrumental subscale of the Berlin social support scale (Schulz & Schwarzer, 2003): "There are people who offer me help when I need it" and "When I am worried, there is someone who helps me". Satisfaction of symbolic needs was

measured by asking to which degree they feel loved and recognized by surrounding others ("I feel recognized by those around me" and "I feel loved by those around me").

Ingroup connectedness. Ingroup connectedness was measured using 6 items, each two referring to one of these three proximal ingroups: family, friends and peers. Peers referred respectively to: other apprentices, other employees and other students according to the vocational status of the participant himself. Using confirmatory factor analyses, we compared two measurement models for connectedness: a one-factor model obtained directly from the six items and a second-factor model, obtained from the three first-order connectedness factors: family-connectedness, friends-connectedness and peers-connectedness. Comparisons of the one-, and second-factor models showed that the one-factor model did not fit the data and confirmed the superiority of the second-order factor. For each first-order factor, two items assessed the strength of ties one feels with the corresponding ingroup ("I am very attached to my family, friends, other apprentices/students/employees" and " I have strong ties with my family/friends/other apprentices/students/employees"). Those items are commonly used to measure the affective component of group identification, also referred to as internal ties (Cameron, 2004).

Individual coping-efficacy. Efficacy beliefs, a central mechanism in human agency, refer to expected attainment of valued outcomes (Bandura, 1982, 1989). The majority of scales that measures efficacy beliefs are domain specific (e.g., Self-efficacy for academic achievement, self-efficacy to regulate eating habits; Bandura, 2006). Given that we were interested in a general sense of being able to cope with everyday adversity, we used two items adapted from Chwarzer & Jerusalem's general self-efficacy scale (1995): "I am confident in my ability to overcome personal problems" and "For each problem, I can think of a solution". The original scale was created with the aim to predict coping and adaptation with different types of stressful life events and was thus adapted to our need.

Collective-efficacy. Collective-efficacy refers to perceptions of the efficacy of a large social category—the most disadvantaged people—to achieve social change. It was measured using the two items: "By working together, the most disadvantaged people can help to reduce inequalities they suffer", and, "By being united, the most disadvantaged people can participate in reducing prejudice against them". Independently of whether the person perceives himself to be a member of this category or not, this measure can predict commitment to social change actions because it entails a belief that a large social category is committed to this change and that this change is in turn more probable. However, a differential meaning of this measure according the subjective perception of one's status must be pointed out: for people who think they are themselves disadvantaged, it is a measure of self-efficacy at the collective-level, while for those who don't believe they are themselves disadvantaged, it reflects a measure of group-efficacy attributed to an outgroup.

Self-Esteem. Self-esteem was assessed using a five-item scale, adapted from the Rosenberg Global Self-Esteem Scale (Rosenberg, 1979). Example items are "I feel that I have a number of good qualities" and "In general, I feel good about myself".

Social change commitment. Social change commitment reflects the degree to which the person is willing to commit to social change actions. To assess willingness to participate in social change actions we used the two items included in the European social survey (round 4): "I am ready to commit myself for that people are all treated with the same respect and have the same opportunities", and "I am ready to commit myself for a more just society where differences in living standards would be smaller".

Individuality variables. We had additional data looking to which degree participants perceive themselves as unique individuals ("I am unique"), independent individuals ("I am independent"), and as having a strong personality ("I have a strong personality"). Those

variables were added to check whether connectedness entailed any loss of individuality or personality strength.

Data analysis

All analyses were conducted with the Lavaan package of R. To test our model, we proceeded in various steps. We first examined the measurement model for our latent variables using confirmatory factor analysis. After examination of the fit of this model, confirming that our items are adequate indicators of latent concepts as will be detailed, we tested the full structural model including the structural paths between the latent variables as indicated in figure 1. We then conducted multiple group analysis to compare the model between Swiss and immigrant participants.

Results

Measurement model

Each item was allowed to load only on the construct it was expected to specify, and no item errors were allowed to correlate. All first-order constructs were measured by at least two items and the three connectedness constructs (family-connectedness, friends-connectedness and peers-connectedness) were specified as indicating a second-order factor of ingroup connectedness.

The fit indices of the global measurement model indicate that the model (the latent constructs) fits well the data. The χ^2 statistic was significant ($\chi 2 = 387.47$ $df = 165$, $N = 521$, $p < .001$), however this statistic is known to be very sensitive to sample size and is often significant with large samples even if the model is a good one (Hu and Bentler, 1999). Given the large sample size, the ratio of χ^2 to the degrees of freedom is a more meaningful statistic (Marsh & Hocevar, 1985). It was 2.35 indicating that the model fits adequately the data ($\chi 2/df$-ratio < 3). We examined additionally other recommended and commonly used fit indices (Hooper et al, 2008): the Comparative Fit Index (CFI) was .955 (cut-off criterion of

0.90 but a value of CFI ≥ 0.95 recommended for good fit; Hu & Bentler, 1999), the root mean squared error of approximation (RMSEA) was .051 (90 % CI [0.044, 0.057], cut-off value of .06; Hu and Bentler, 1999) and the standardised root mean square residual (SRMR) was .039 (upper limit of .05 for well-fitting models; Byrne, 1998; values close to 0.08 are acceptable; Hu and Bentler, 1999). Accordingly, all indices indicated good fit. Additionally, factor loadings were all significant (< .001) and ranged from .56 to .94.

Latent constructs correlations

Table 2 presents the correlations among the latent constructs of the model. To give information about participants' scores on those constructs, the relevant items in each scale were averaged and the scale means and standard deviations are also presented in table 2.

Table 2. Correlations, means and standard deviations for all latent variables

		M (SD)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1.	Instrumental N.S.	4.87(.88)	-	.55***	.41***	.22***	.11+	.28***	.12*
2.	Symbolic N. S.	5.02(.83)		-	.70***	.31***	.10	.47***	.10+
3.	Ingroup connectedness	4.66(.72)			-	.22**	.23**	.45***	.22**
4.	Individual efficacy	4.52(.77)				-	.10	.47**	.10+
5.	Collective efficacy	4.26(.89)					-	.09	.47***
6.	Self-esteem	4.37(.82)						-	.03
7.	Social change commitment	4.59(.99)							-

M: Mean, *SD*: Standard Deviation. + < .10, * < .05, ** < .01, *** < .001

Connectedness correlations with individuality variables. Highly connected participants did not score lower in uniqueness *(r* = .02, *ns*) and independence *(r* = -.03, *ns*),

and they perceived themselves as having stronger personality than those who are less connected *(r* = .15, *p* < .01), suggesting that contrary to a view opposing group connectedness to individual distinctiveness, the two dimensions are independent. Moreover, connectedness contributed to a higher sense of identity strength.

Full structural model

Once we confirmed that the measurement model fit the data, we introduced in a second step the hypothesized structural relations between the latent variables and we tested the full structural model. We first compared the model thus defined to the measurement model where each latent variable was correlated with all others. Results showed the structural model (χ^2= 405.16, *df* = 177, *N* = 521, *p* < .001)—the parsimonious one, that is the one with more degrees of freedom—does not fit worse the data than the measurement model ($\Delta\chi^2$ = 17.69, *df* = 12, *p* = 0.125). Moreover, all fit indices indicated good fit (CFI = .954, RMSEA = .050 (90 % CI [0.043, 0.056]), SRMR = .044).

The estimated paths for all the hypothesized associations are presented in figure 1. Age and gender were added as control variables for all latent constructs. Results showed that all associations were in a direction consistent with our hypothesis even though some are not significant (Instrumental needs→ Connectedness and Connectedness→Social Change Commitment). With regard to the control variables, results show no significant effect of age and gender on connectedness. Moreover, men compared to women reported significantly higher individual efficacy (*B* = .35, *SE* = .08, *p* < .001) and Self-esteem (*B* = .14, *SE* = .06, *p* = .02), lower collective efficacy *(B* = -.16, *SE* = .09, *p* = .07) and marginally lower commitment to social change actions (*B* = -.18, *SE* = .08, *p* = .07). Additionally age had a marginal positive effect on individual efficacy (*B* = .01, *SE* = .00, *p* = .08), and a significant negative effect on collective efficacy (*B* = -.02, *SE* = .01, *p* = .01) and Self-Esteem (*B* = -.01, *SE* = .00, *p* = .03).

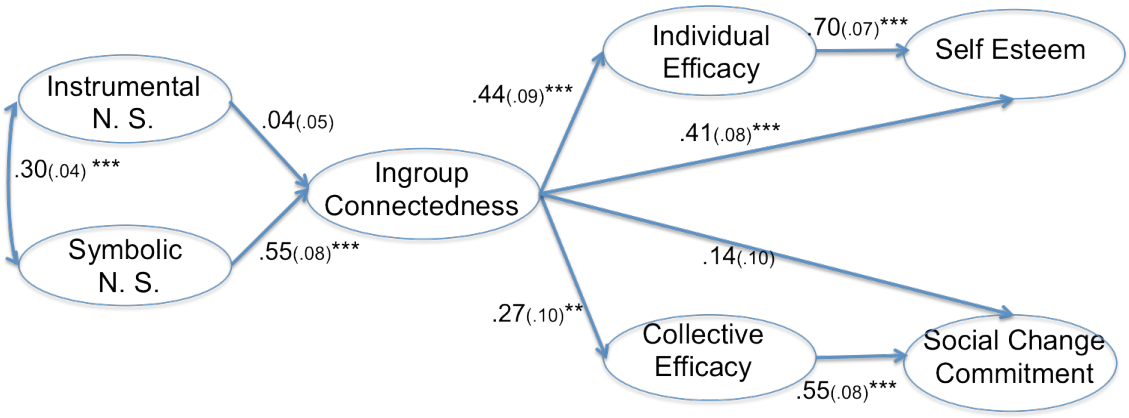

Figure 1. The full structural model showing path estimates (unstandarized coefficients with standard errors) between Needs satisfaction (instrumental and symbolic), connectedness, efficacy beliefs (individual and collective), and outcomes (self-esteem and social change commitment).

N. S.: Need Satisfaction. + < .10, * < .05, ** < .01, *** < .001

Mediation Analyses

Additional tests for mediation were conducted to test the degree to which efficacy beliefs mediate the effect of connectedness on positive outcomes: indirect effects (the product of the two regression coefficients) and total effects (the sum of indirect and direct effect) were estimated and tested for significance. Thus, at the individual level, ingroup connectedness had a positive total effect on well-being (total effect = .67, *SE* = .16, $p < .001$, CI [0.41, 1]) which was partially mediated through perceived coping-efficacy (indirect effect = .29, *SE* = .10, $p < .01$, CI [0.12, 0.52]). At the societal level, ingroup connectedness enhanced one's willingness to participate in social change (total effect = .30, *SE* = .13, $p = .02$, CI [0.03, 0.51]) and this total effect was mediated through perceived collective efficacy (Indirect effect = .16, *SE* = .07, $p = .02$, [0.03, 0.32]).

Status differences: **Multiple group analysis**

We hypothesized that ingroup connectedness will be more strongly associated with collective-efficacy beliefs among (disadvantaged) non-Swiss compared to (more advantaged) Swiss participants and thus to be more relevant in predicting commitment to social change

actions. This leads us to conduct multiple group analysis to compare the model between Swiss and non-Swiss participants. We then explored whether our structural model differs between socially advantaged (Swiss participants) and disadvantaged ones (Non-Swiss participants) by conducting multiple group analyses in various steps.

Configural model. First, we tested a configural model without any invariance (same models for both groups but all parameters are free to vary between groups, $\chi^2 = 741.512$, $df = 418$, $N1 = 109$, $N2 = 404$, $p < .001$). This model was reasonable as fit indices indicated an acceptable fit (CFI = .934, RMSEA = .055 (90% CI [0.049, 0.062]), SRMR = .055). This model was used as a basis for comparison to test invariance of factor loadings between groups.

Invariance of factor loadings. In a second step we tested a model where all factor loadings were constrained to be equal ($\chi^2 = 754.543$, $df = 432$, $N1 = 109$, $N2 = 404$, $p < .001$) and then compared it to the configural model. All fit indices were acceptable (CFI = .935, RMSEA = .054 (90% CI [0.048, 0.061]), SRMR = .057). The model with equality constraints on the factor loading across groups does not fit worse the data than the configural model where loading were allowed to vary between groups ($\Delta \chi^2 = 13.03$, $df = 14$, $p = .52$).

Path analyses. Once we confirmed the invariance of factor loadings between groups, we proceeded to test whether the causal model differs between groups. To do this, we fitted a model with equality constraints on both the factor loadings and structural paths and compared it to the previous model where only factor loadings were constrained. Results showed that the fit of the model with equality constraints on the paths ($\chi^2 = 790.72$, $df = 450$, CFI = .931, RMSEA = .055 (90 % CI [0.048, 0.061], SRMR = .064) was worse than the model where those paths were free to vary between groups ($\Delta\chi^2 = 36.119$, $df = 18$, $p = .007$). This result suggests that groups vary at least in one of the paths of the model. By examining the model where paths were free to vary, we identified the paths that differed most between groups:

Connectedness→ Collective efficacy (Swiss: .08(10), ns, Non-Swiss: .80(.19), $p < .001$) and Instrumental needs→Connectedness (Swiss: -.01(.06), ns, Non-Swiss: .28(.12), $p = .02$). We started releasing the constraints on those paths one by one. By allowing the path linking connectedness to collective efficacy to vary between groups, the fit of the model ($\chi^2 =$ 776.678, $df = 449$, CFI = .933, RMSEA = .054 (90 % CI[0.049, 0.060, SRMR = .059) is no longer significantly worse than the equal loading model ($\Delta\chi^2 = 22.13$, $df = 17$, $p = .17$) suggesting that the two groups differ in the strength of this association and that all other associations are not significantly different between them. The link between ingroup connectedness and collective efficacy was not significantly different from zero for Swiss participants while it was significant and particularly strong among immigrant participants[10] (see figure 2).

[10] We also performed similar multiple group analyses using educational attainment of parents as another proxy for status, comparing disadvantaged participants whom the educational attainment of parents is limited to the obligatory schooling ($n = 77$) to participants whom at least one parent has higher educational level ($n = 394$). The pattern of the results is similar to the one obtained with nationality as comparison variable: the path that differed most between groups was the one from Ingroup Connectedness to Collective Efficacy (high educational level: .19 (.10), ns; low educational level: .49 (.17), $p = .004$). It was not significantly different from zero for advantaged participants while it was significant among disadvantaged participants. However, between groups difference was not statistically significant: the unconstrained model where this path was free to vary between groups was not significantly better than the equal path model where all paths were constrained to be equal between groups. The failure to detect a significant difference may be due to the very small number of participants in the low educational level group.

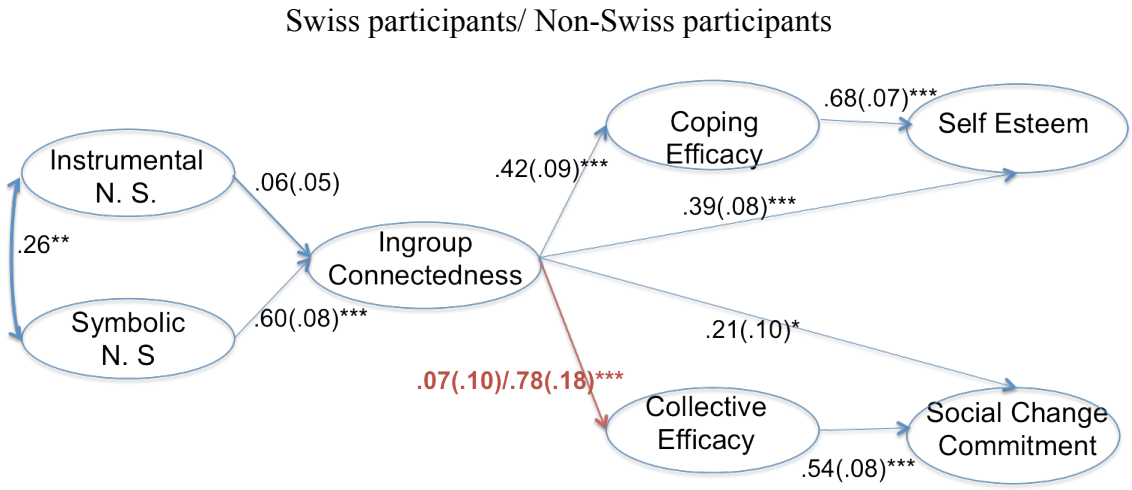

Figure 2. Path estimates (unstandardized coefficients) for Swiss and non-Swiss participants
N. S.: Need Satisfaction. + < .10, * < .05, ** < .01, *** < .001

Discussion

The model developed and tested in the present study puts individual needs satisfaction as antecedents of a proximal sense of connectedness, which is in turn a source of personal agency, but also of collective agency amongst the most disadvantaged. It thus stressed the importance of *proximal-level connections* for individual empowerment, and more interestingly for collective empowerment, an aspect neglected in existing social psychological models of social change.

Generally, the suggested model points out the relevance of a framework that understands self-group relation and groups' role by relating them to intragroup processes. It did so by focusing on needs of help and recognition as antecedents of the self-group relation, and on efficacy beliefs derived from intragroup bonds as the mechanism explaining the role of groups in predicting personal-level and collective-level outcomes.

By its first claim, linking proximal group connectedness to the satisfaction of individual needs of help and recognition from surrounding others, we aimed to point out a possible route to self-group merging and to group-based psychological empowerment that took individual needs rather than the relevance of a categorical identity as its starting point. While in previous

models of group-based psychological empowerment grounded in social identity theorizing, self-group relation is analysed as, or is assumed to be, the result of the degree to which the individual matches the group prototype, our model examines it in relation to the satisfaction of personal needs of help and recognition within the context of interactions with surrounding others. The results show that the degree to which the person's needs, especially the symbolic needs of love and recognition, are satisfied by the surrounding others is a strong predictor of the strength of affective ties to proximal groups. It is worth noting here that some youth development scholars go as far as to include received support and perceived affection and warmth from others in measures of connectedness. By putting them as antecedents in our model we aim however to stress, with others (Karcher, Holcomb, & Zambrano, 2008), the importance to conceptually distinguish between what the person *receives from others* and connectedness which is the *reciprocation* of received support and affection, in our case in form of bonds *toward others*. Our result is consistent with previous work based on Self-Determination theory showing that individual needs satisfaction predicts one's sense of bonds to family members and friends. This result also confirms a central argument in social support theory that the perception of supportive interactions promotes a sense of connectedness (Cutrona, 1986; Sarason, Sarason, & Shearin, 1986).

Even if the model presented good fit, the path between instrumental help and connectedness was not significant in the overall sample. Further path analyses comparing the model between groups show that the association was significant among immigrant participants, suggesting that (high vs. low) status may moderates this association. It is however careful not to go further in this interpretation given that the multiple group analyses showed that the only path that significantly differed between groups is the one linking ingroup connectedness to collective efficacy believes.

Generally, results suggest that the degree to which groups respond to individual needs is an important determinant of the self-group relation. It is often a neglected aspect that deserves further attention in the self-group literature. Recently, many perspectives try to restore equilibrium between intragroup and inter-group accounts of the self-group relation. Yzerbyt and colleagues for example argue for the primacy of the ingroup and the idea that the role of ingroups need not be contingent on the differentiation from an outgroup (Yzerbyt, Castano, Leyens, & Paladino, 2000), while Gaertner and colleagues' argument highlights the importance of understanding group phenomena from a framework that relates them to intragroup rather than intergroup processes (Gaertner & Insko, 2000; Gaertner & Schopler, 1998). More recently, Hamilton and colleagues (Crump, Hamilton, Sherman, Lickel, & Thakkar, 2010; Hamilton, Sherman, & Castelli, 2002; Hamilton, 2007; Lickel & Hamilton, 2000) stressed the importance of recognizing the antecedents of group formation independent of categorization processes. Those studies showed that frequency of interactions, common goals and needs can be a trigger for group formation and that intergroup categorization and comparison are not a necessary prerequisite for the development of a cohesive psychological group. Other routes to a strong self-group relation based on interactions and needs satisfaction are needed to understand instances where connectedness and individuality work simultaneously rather than being at odds with each other. Indeed, while the categorical explanation of the self-group merging presents individuality and group connectedness as contradictory forces, we found that participants who feel highly connected to their proximal groups did not report any loss of their sense of distinctiveness and independence as individuals, and reported higher perceived personality strength compared to participants who scored lower on connectedness.

Regarding the consequences of connectedness, our results highlight two contexts where group connectedness and individual agency work simultaneously (connectedness enhances

efficacy) to predict positive outcomes. The model has the advantage to test the empowering role of ingroup connectedness simultaneously at a personal and collective level. Doing so, it advanced previous models of collective empowerment in showing that being empowered as a group member does not necessarily entail downplaying personal goals and identity. Indeed, an extensive literature shows that connectedness functions as a trigger for group-level agency, but most of this literature is based on the assumption that group-level self-definition entails a shift of personal identity to the background. This study constitutes therefore an important contribution to the literature on how ingroup connectedness can independently enhance efficacy-beliefs about the realization of a common goal as a group member (i.e., collective action), and the personal efficacy of group members to effectively handle their personal challenges (i.e., coping efficacy).

At the personal level, the strong association we found between connectedness and self-esteem, both directly and indirectly through coping efficacy beliefs, provides support to the idea that connectedness and agency are forces that can work simultaneously rather than being at odds. The result showing that the strength of the relationship among the three variables (connectedness, efficacy, and self-esteem) did not differ between Swiss and immigrant participants highlights the importance of *both* connectedness and efficacy beliefs for adolescents' self-esteem, independently of their cultural background.

At the collective level, we found that the direct link between connectedness and social change commitment is positive for both advantaged (Swiss participants) and disadvantaged (non-Swiss participants), suggesting a positive role of proximal connections in predicting willingness to engage in social change independently of one's status. Importantly, this proximal-level seems to play an even more crucial role in predicting social change commitment among (disadvantaged) immigrant participants. In addition to its direct effect, proximal connectedness also predicted commitment to social change through its effect on

enhancing the belief about the efficacy of the disadvantaged as a group to change their situations through common effort. This indirect effect existed only for the disadvantaged group, but its absence among the advantaged is not surprising given that our measure of collective efficacy reflects—in the case of those who do not self-define as disadvantaged themselves—a belief about the efficacy of "the most disadvantaged" *outgroup.* For those who perceive themselves to be disadvantaged, this same measure is an assessment of the efficacy of a large-scale *ingroup* (we, the disadvantaged). The strength of connections a person perceives in direct environment within the context of proximal groups seems thus to be a key factor predicting this large-scale sense of collective efficacy.

How can we interpret this strong association? We think that this result owes to the fact that people build their understanding of the world and possibilities to act in it from their day-to-day experience. When one is in a situation of social disadvantage, the feeling of connectedness at a local level, and the resulting capacity of coordination and mutual trust, can be important in building beliefs about the efficacy of the *most disadvantaged*, as a larger social category, to work co-ordinately toward the desired change.

This points out a bottom-up account of collective-efficacy beliefs based on local connections and networks of affection and trust. While accounts of social change commitment are dominated by a focus on ideological and structural variables, further attention should be given to proximal relations in people's direct environment. We believe that the bottom-up route to collective efficacy beliefs our model suggests is not conflicting with a top-down account based on the consciousness of the illegitimacy of group-based disadvantaged made relevant by intergroup relations. Rather, it complements it and may replace it when those relations are too complex and too ambivalent to translate into concrete occasions for building a clear categorical consciousness. Contrary to the hypothesis of some scholars that internal connections among the disadvantaged can be psychologically beneficial, but socially harmful

by precluding comparisons with the most advantaged and the likelihood of protest and desire for change that may result from such comparisons, we argued and found that they are a factor of psychological empowerment both at the personal and the societal level. People live most their lives in small intragroup contexts, the role of proximal groups deserve then much more attention than what we have done until now.

Paper 3: From structural disadvantage to groupness: examining the self-categorization and the inter-relatedness routes[11]

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Abstract

Most group-based models of coping with structural disadvantage take as their starting point the categorical identity made salient by intergroup perceptions of disadvantage. Experiences of disadvantage are indeed assumed to make a particular categorical identity relevant and to foster identification with it. The resulting sense of groupness, in turn, affects the coping experience and its outcomes. The present study argues that the context in which disadvantage is experienced and the process through which it acquires meaning are complex. Accordingly, experiences of structural disadvantage can be linked to groupness in a more subtle way than the one assumed by self-categorization based models of coping. A design using both quantitative and qualitative data is used to account for this complexity and to highlight alternative (indirect) routes linking experiences of disadvantage to groupness.

Based on questionnaire responses amongst disadvantaged and more advantaged youth populations, we found that the most disadvantaged reported higher likelihood of exposure to particular experiences of social injustice and discrimination. However, they were less likely to self-define as a member of a disadvantaged group at the societal level.

Analyses of face-to-face interviews with 12 disadvantaged youth showed how, even though categorization-based experiences are frequent and have major consequences for their well-being and concrete opportunities, their complex and multifaceted nature preclude their direct translation into meaningful group identities. Moreover, experiences of groupness were common in their narrative about the ways they cope with those experiences, but were often related to the (solidary) relationship with close others and group members rather than to categorical self-definitions characterized by an ideological consciousness.

[11] Bakouri, M. (2015), *From structural disadvantage to groupness: examining the self-categorization and the inter-relatedness routes.* Manuscript in preparation.

Introduction

Structural disadvantage refers to all forms of constraints and stressors based on membership in a socially disadvantaged category (Van Zomeren, Postmes, et al., 2008). Because of their group membership, ethnic minorities, the working class, immigrants and other disadvantaged group members are more likely to be target of societal devaluation, discrimination, and opportunity restriction (Turner & Avison, 2003; Turner et al., 1995). Those experiences may have negative implications for their well-being (Schmitt, Branscombe, Postmes, & Garcia, 2014), health (Pascoe & Richman, 2009) and sense of agency (Mirowsky & Ross, 1989, 2003), thus contributing to lower educational and professional attainments, and in turn to the reproduction of the system of inequalities. However, these negative implications can be reduced when individuals belonging to disadvantaged groups have effective means to cope with them. For this reason, identifying the social psychological factors that underlie these coping strategies has been and continues to be one of the key subjects of social inquiry.

This study focuses on the role of groupness (i.e., a sense of social unity with others) in these coping processes. Specifically, it investigates the assumption that membership in a disadvantaged group results in a higher tendency to groupness as a means to cope with the experiences associated with this membership, and claims that the processes underlying this tendency are more complex than those assumed by prevailing models of coping with structural disadvantage based on self-categorization theory.

We first discuss existing models that conceive groupness resulting from experienced disadvantage as originated from the salience of categorical membership and intergroup perceptions and comparisons. We then discuss three factors that may preclude the direct link between experiencing disadvantage, category membership awareness, and groupness as coping resource. Accordingly, we formulate the prediction that exposure to experiences of

social disadvantage may not be sufficient to trigger claims of belongingness to a socially disadvantaged category, a prediction that we empirically examine using questionnaire responses. More importantly, we argue that qualitative data can give valuable insights on how these factors operate to preclude a direct translation of experiences of structural disadvantage into meaningful group identities, and how these experiences can be linked to groupness in a more subtle way than the one assumed by self-categorization based models.

From structural disadvantage to groupness:

The self-categorization route

While structural disadvantage represents by definition stressors associated with membership in a socially disadvantaged group, a subjective sense of groupness seems paradoxically also to be a central ingredient of coping with these experiences. Indeed, a growing amount of literature has shown that for different socially disadvantaged group members (e.g., Southern Italians, Latrofa, Vaes, Pastore, & Cadinu, 2009; stigmatized minorities in Ireland, McNamara, Stevenson, & Muldoon, 2013; African Americans, Outten, Schmitt, Garcia, & Branscombe, 2009), higher identification with the group was associated with positive outcomes in terms of coping and well-being. This result points out the prospect of a group-based psychological empowerment that counterbalances the potential negative implications of group-based disadvantage.

Different social psychological models have been developed to account for this group-based empowerment (e.g., the dual pathway model of coping with collective disadvantage; Van Zomeren, Leach, & Spears, 2012, and the rejection-identification model; Branscombe, Schmitt, & Harvey, 1999). These models are largely located at the intergroup level of analysis, taking as starting point intergroup perceptions of ingroup disadvantage. Such models have in common the assumption that experiences of disadvantage make a particular categorical identity relevant, foster identification with it, and that this sense of groupness in

turn helps to cope with the disadvantage. Thus, the dynamic dual pathway model (Van Zomeren et al., 2004; Van Zomeren, Leach, & Spears, 2012) "explicitly suggests that collective disadvantage makes group identity salient, the main aim of the current research is to elucidate the role of the relevance of this group identity in emotion- and problem-focused coping with collective disadvantage" (Van Zomeren, Spears, & Leach, 2008, p. 355). According to the model, the categorical group identity made salient by the experience of group-based disadvantage in turn gives rise to two paths to protest, one instrumental through group-based efficacy and the other emotional through group-based anger, explaining individuals' participation in collective action.

A different understanding of how group identification changes the experience of coping with structural disadvantage is advanced by the rejection-identification model (Branscombe et al., 1999; Schmitt, Spears, & Branscombe, 2003). This model similarly conceives group identification as *originated from* the categorical identity made salient by intergroup perceptions of disadvantage, but rather than focusing on collective action, it looks at how group identification can in itself be an emotional strategy that reduces the psychological costs of rejection. According to this model, rejection from the dominant group leads to greater identification with ingroup members who are in a position to afford acceptance and belonging.

The idea well illustrated by these models that a sense of groupness and togetherness can develop out of the common disadvantage and in turn play a key role in coping with this disadvantage is appealing. These models are however based on an understanding of groupness that puts intergroup differentiation and self-categorization processes at its heart. The link between the experienced disadvantage and groupness is explained as follows: Experiences of disadvantage are assumed to enhance the salience of common membership in a disadvantaged category (in comparison to an advantaged out-group), leading to groupness through a process

of depersonalization. That is, self-perception in in terms of group prototypes, as an interchangeable member of a category, is the proximal psychological process of group formation, and experiences of disadvantage are a factor enhancing the role of category salience.

The two aforementioned models thus assume direct links between both experiences of disadvantage and category membership salience, and category salience and a sense of group identification. We agree with those models that a sense of groupness may be particularly functional when coping with structural disadvantage, but question the limits of understanding groupness as a direct product of category-salience and the socio-structural variables of the intergroup context (e.g., relative status, salience of group prototypes).

We argue that even though experiences of structural disadvantage involve by definition asymmetric intergroup power relations, they increasingly take place in non-dichotomous categorical settings, which do not necessarily make a particular intergroup comparison (and an advantaged outgroup) salient. Additionally, many categorical memberships, even when they are cognitively salient, can hardly translate into a meaningful sense of group belongingness. In the next section, we discuss factors that complicate a direct link between experiences of structural disadvantage, awareness of category membership, and groupness.

When a direct self-categorization route is hindered

A. The complex nature of stratification systems

Experiences of structural disadvantage continue to shape the reality of many people. However the societies in which they happen are becoming more and more complex, requiring a shift of intergroup literature's focus from dichotomous comparisons to the complexity of multiple group memberships (Brewer, 1999). Dichotomous settings (contrasting the disadvantaged to the advantaged) are important for the (self-) categorization processes implied in existing group-based models of coping. Experimental research has indeed

evidenced the attenuation of self-categorization and intergroup comparisons in cross-categorization settings (Crisp & Hewstone, 2007; Deschamps & Doise, 1978). When the stratification systems are overlapping and the societies are multicultural, an individual's experience of structural disadvantage becomes complex, as it may imply different (combinations of) memberships and is likely to take place in cross-categorization rather than in dichotomous settings. Additionally the different individual memberships do not exist, and are not subjectively represented, as isolated from one another but as inter-related (Roccas & Brewer, 2002).

For example, stratification based on national status often overlaps with economic stratification and cultural stratification. Thus, the experience of two immigrants will largely differ according to their cultural groups of origin, the economic status of these groups and the person's social position within the group. As a result, the individual's experience is neither subjectively felt, nor objectively explained, in terms of a single intergroup differentiation distinguishing the advantaged and the disadvantaged. Likewise, the perceived constraints to life-course opportunities an immigrant apprentice from a low-income family can subjectively experience during the transition to adulthood cannot objectively be attributed to one category membership. This example highlights one aspect of the difficulties associated with the process of construing the discrimination and injustices one faces in terms of a defined group membership, even when the person is conscious of the structural nature and the illegitimacy of these experiences.

B. Experiences are a function of macro level factors while awareness of category membership depends on direct environment factors

Another impediment to the translation of experiences of disadvantage into claimed belongingness to a disadvantaged category is that experiences of disadvantage are determined by *societal macro-level* factors, while psychological salience of category membership is

closely linked to the structure of one's *direct environment*. Exposure to structural disadvantage is a result of the extent to which one or several categorical memberships are a marker of opportunities in the society (e.g., criteria of institutional admission or selection) or a trigger of socially shared stereotypes (e.g., temporal or chronic salience of category stereotypes in the media), that is, on *factors located at the macro social level*. The psychological awareness of category membership, on the other hand, is no doubt influenced by those macro-level factors but is more closely linked to the structure of one's direct environment. Indeed, studies with both natural and experimental groups have shown that the structure of intergroup contact in the direct social environment is a determining factor of awareness of group membership, with one's group being a numerical minority associated with greater awareness of group membership (McGuire, McGuire, & Winton, 1979; McGuire & McGuire, 1978; Simon & Hamilton, 1994; Simon & Pettigrew, 1990).

In natural settings, the most disadvantaged group members are likely to interact within their direct occupational or residential environment with those who are similarly disadvantaged. As a consequence, a person who belongs to different severely disadvantaged categories, but for whom the direct social environment does not make any dichotomous categorization salient will be more exposed to disadvantage while having less opportunities to associate it to relevant intergroup differentiation, compared to another person belonging to a moderately disadvantaged category but living in a clear dichotomous context. The more exposed will thus not necessarily be the more likely to claim belongingness to a socially disadvantaged group.

C. Low belongingness motivation despite the awareness of category membership

The overlap of different social groups can preclude the emergence of group belongingness not only because of the complexity of attribution and the lack of awareness of category-based disadvantage as we discussed in points A and B, but also for motivational

reasons. As Kurt Lewin pointed out much earlier, "the overlapping of the many social groups to which the same individual belongs is one of the main reasons why many individuals ask themselves again and again whether it is necessary to maintain their membership in the [disadvantaged] Jewish group. They often think that they no longer belong to the group, especially if they endeavour to avoid the disagreeable facts connected with this membership" (Lewin, 1948, p. 149). Accordingly, a person disadvantaged because of a particular group membership and having the opportunity to highlight other less disadvantaged memberships, will be motivated to dissociate from the group, publicly by disguising the markers of this particular membership (passing or assimilation strategies; Goffman, 1963), and privately by disengaging psychologically form the group (Lewin, 1948). This tendency is reinforced to the extent to which the group membership concretely interferes with the achievement of important short-term personal goals.

Another reason why disadvantaged group members may have low motivation to associate themselves with the self-categories made salient in intergroup contexts is linked to groups' differential power in defying the relevant criteria of comparison. Because they have greater power, the advantaged can impose as criteria of comparison those that favour them and justify the treatment and the outcomes of the disadvantaged (Fiske, 1993). Studies based on the ingroup projection model (Mummendey & Wenzel, 1999) provided empirical evidence for the proposition that the advantaged group imposes its characteristics as prototypical, thereby justifying the exclusion and devaluation of the disadvantaged group (Waldzus, Mummendey, & Wenzel, 2005; Wenzel & Mummendey, 2003). Accordingly, the group features that are made salient by the intergroup context are not necessarily those the disadvantaged would claim as their defining characteristics, but those that confirm and justify the superiority of the advantaged.

The group identity made salient in this unequal status context represents high cost for the disadvantaged personal identities and their desire to achieve a positive identity (Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Timotijevic & Breakwell, 2000). The salience of intergroup perceptions in a clear context of unequal status relations can thus become a factor preventing rather than triggering groupness and identification. This proposition is supported by experimental research showing that in dichotomous high vs. low status settings, members of the low status groups tend to dissociate rather than assimilate themselves to the salient group identity (Doosje et al., 1995). This tendency appears however only among participants whose ties to the group were weak (i.e., low commitment), highlighting the importance of the dimension of internal ties and inner attractiveness of the group for that it can be a basis for self-definition and thus for resilience. In many cases the disadvantaged succeed in converting the negative category imposed on them into a shared identity they can use to collectively resist their devaluation (Howarth, 2006; Howarth, Wagner, Magnusson, & Sammut, 2014). This is however not always the case. Lewin (1948) distinguished the outside pressure and the inner relations as two factors that *keep the disadvantaged together*, but according to him, the mere fact of being forced together in a disadvantaged category (through outside pressure) is not sufficient for the formation of a cohesive group: "a minority kept together only from outside is in itself chaotic. It is composed of a mass of individuals without inner relations with each other, a group unorganized and weak" (p.165).

Overall, the discussed aspects of real world stratification systems suggest that exposure to experiences of structural disadvantage does not necessarily make a particular category membership salient, and that when it does, awareness of category membership may in many cases works against rather than toward a sense of group belongingness. Accordingly, we predict that higher exposure to experiences of social disadvantage may not translate into higher claims of belongingness to a socially disadvantaged category.

An alternative route to groupness:

Self-categorization vs. interdependence and solidarity

We discussed in the previous section some limits of intergroup perceptions and category salience as originators of groupness in the case of unequal status relations. Given the complexities associated with this categorization route to groupness, it becomes important to examine whether experiences of disadvantage can encourage a sense of groupness by any other route than the internalization of salient disadvantaged social categories.

The starting point of our argument can be found in the rejection-identification model itself. Even though the model explicitly grants category salience the central role, it is implicit in the model that the categorical salience of the disadvantage leads to identification *through a process* of common fate and mutual dependence: It highlights devalued group members' need for mutual recognition, understanding and support, in order to restore esteem. This observation led us to question the respective role of categorization and mutual dependence processes in this dynamic and to the larger debate on the social psychological literature around the primacy of categorization and interdependence as explanations of psychological group formation (e.g., Gaertner & Insko, 2000; Rabbie & Lodewijkx, 1996; Yamagishi & Kiyonari, 1999).

In contrast to awareness of common category membership, interdependence theorists provide an alternative understanding of the antecedents of groupness (Flippen, Hornstein, Siegal, & Weitzman, 1996; Hornstein, 1972; Horwitz & Rabbie, 1982; Rabbie & Horwitz, 1988). Specifically, the interdependence perspective to groupness suggests that what makes individuals feel and behave as group members is not the degree of their perceived similarity but the degree to which they perceive themselves to be dependent on each other. The idea of interdependence as key feature of groups can be traced back to Lewin's work (1951). It has been developed by Rabbie and colleagues in the realm of intergroup literature (Rabbie &

Lodewijkx, 1996; Rabbie, Schot, & Visser, 1989) and by Kelley and colleagues within the study of interpersonal relations (Kelley & Thibaut, 1978; Thibaut & Kelley, 1959).

Perceiving self and others to be under a common fate is conceived according to interdependence theorists as an exchange situation[12] that disposes people to help each other (Kelley, 1997), thus encouraging cohesion and solidarity. This can be accentuated by categorization processes making a blameable outgroup relevant but the salience of an outgroup is not required per se. According to interdependence tenets, the perception of a common category is not *necessary* for a sense of groupness to emerge but is only important for group formation in so far as it makes interacting people aware of their interpersonal interdependencies. For example, Flippen and colleagues provided experimental support for the idea that categorization and the resulting similarity perception are not sufficient to trigger group behaviour (in the form of helping an unknown target), but that the interdependency beliefs derived from categorization explained the observed differences in helping behaviour (Flippen et al., 1996).

We draw on the interdependence perspective in order to put forward a different understanding of how experiencing disadvantage can result in groupness tendencies. Analysing membership in a disadvantaged group and associated experiences from this lens, we can assume that people whose circumstances generate common disadvantages and deprivations may—when interacting with each other—potentially recognize to be to some degree under a common fate. Experiences of rejection, discrimination and restricted opportunities are common to members of different socially disadvantaged groups. Individuals who are exposed to those experiences may need to compare/share with others who can understand and support them. This can create an orientation to each other by virtue of an

[12] An exchange situation is a situation where each person will be motivated to "supply what the other needs in exchange for receiving what he or she needs" (Kelley et al., 2003, p. 22)

expectation of mutual responsiveness and reciprocity and in turn enhance a sense of social unity between self and others. However, the inter-relationships between these interpersonal processes, group membership, and ideological consciousness of unjust disadvantage are complex. These processes can indeed take place in contexts where different interpersonal relations or group memberships are salient, and where individuals' understandings of their sociological realities are constantly reshaped. People may interact *as persons,* representing their realities as merely personal without a clear awareness of the macro-level interdependencies that shape their experiences. In this case the processes of mutual responsiveness operate mainly within the context of dyads but also proximal groups like family and friends. They may however take place in contexts where interacting partners' shared membership in a large scale-group is salient and be equally important in understanding individuals' identification with the group as a whole. For instance, the sharing of large-scale memberships (e.g., having the same national origin or sharing a racial identity) can give further occasions for awareness/expectation of common fate. In a situation when national membership is salient, for example, a foreigner aware of being a potential target of devaluation, or unfavourable institutional treatment, may expect support and understanding from other nationals. The resulting solidarity one feels from the local group members can increase one's level of identification to the group as a whole.

The idea that the recognition of common fate and mutual needs can in itself encourage a sense of groupness leads us to the prediction that, even when structural disadvantage is experienced in contexts that are not favourable for categorical awareness, a sense of groupness can originate from daily interactions among members of different disadvantaged groups, by the mere recognition that they face the same stressors and difficulties.

Arguments in favour of the expectation of such an intra-disadvantaged sense of solidarity and groupness can be found in recent experimental results from two different

paradigms. The first one by Craig and Richeson has shown that making experimentally salient the discrimination against *one's racial group* can lead to felt closeness and identification with members of *other disadvantaged minorities* (Craig & Richeson, 2012). In a similar vein, Warner and colleagues have found that reminding participants about their own past suffering and victimization triggered a sense of obligation to help members of other victimized groups (Warner & Branscombe, 2012; Warner, Wohl, & Branscombe, 2014). In one of the experiments (experiment 2 in Warner, Wohl, & Branscombe, 2014), the authors reminded their participants about their own experiences during historical suffering (Jewish participants during the holocaust), and found a higher obligation to help members of different suffering target groups, independently of whether the target group suffered from intergroup conflict (Sudanese suffering from genocide in Darfur), or from a natural disaster (Chinese earthquake survivors). This suggests that the salience of the blameable/advantaged outgroup may not play a key role in the underlying process.

The present study

The present study draws on quantitative and qualitative analyses of experiences of structural disadvantage and ways to cope with them. It aims to address the following research questions:

Using questionnaire data, the first research question examines status differences in exposure to experiences of social injustice, discrimination and opportunity restriction (i.e., structural disadvantage) amongst disadvantaged and more advantaged youth populations, and the extent to which exposure to structural disadvantage is associated with claims of belongingness to a disadvantaged social category.

The second research question examines the process through which the most disadvantaged give meaning to these experiences in order to understand the translation of these experiences into a societal-level claims of being a member of a disadvantaged group.

Qualitative data with a subsample of the most disadvantaged population are used to address this research question.

The third research question investigates whether and how experiences of disadvantage may result in a tendency to groupness as a means of coping. We use qualitative data to show that the processes underlying this link may be more complex than assumed by models based on self-categorization theory.

To address these research questions, we used data collected as part of LOLYS (Longitudinal Lausanne Youth Study), a larger project that follows youth populations (15 to 30) from three institutions in French-speaking Switzerland over a period of several years (2012-2015). As explained, the study is based on a mixed method design that involves both quantitative data with the whole sample and qualitative face-to face interviews with a selected small sub-sample. In this design, the in-depth qualitative interviews are used in order to better understand the quantitative results and to highlight the complexity of the processes underlying the link between experiences of disadvantage and groupness.

Method & Results

Quantitative data and analyses

The overall quantitative sample includes 909 youth with different socio-educational backgrounds: (pre) apprentices, students and young employees, reflecting the diversity of pathways characteristic of this age period (see Table 1 for detailed demographic information). They participated in different waves of the study and thus may not have answered the questionnaire in the same time period. Questions about exposure to experiences of social injustices and discrimination were not available in the first round of data collection and as a consequence are available only for 656 participants. All participants were contacted thanks to agreements with the three institutions to which they were affiliated:

Preparatory vocational school (PVS). The first institution is a vocational school attended by adolescents who express difficulty in managing the transition from obligatory schooling to vocational training. They are either still looking for an apprenticeship (pre-apprentices) or started one but need coaching (apprentices).

High school (HS): the second institution is a high school preparing students who aspire for higher education for the maturity diploma leading to admission in universities.

Municipality (ML): the third institution is the administration of a major city of which all apprentices and employees aged less than 30 years were invited to participate in the study.

Table 1: Means, standard deviations and percentages of socio-demographic variables of the whole sample

	PVS	Municipality	High School	All
Participants	339	230	340	909
Age (*SD*)	18.05 (2.60)	24.60 (4.02)	18 (.98)	19.70 (3.90)
Swiss (%)	166 (49%)	199 (86.5%)	306 (90%)	671 (73.8%)
Men (%)	213 (62.8%)	118 (51.3%)	151 (44.4%)	482 (53%)

Note: PVS= Preparatory Vocational School.

Measures

The questionnaire was composed of different sections. The measures of direct relevance for the present paper are:

Perceived barriers to life project. In a section entitled "Projects", participants were asked to write down three projects they were currently engaged in (see Little, 1983) and to indicate the most important project among them. Perceived barriers to achieving this project were measured using the single item "Despite my best efforts, there are a lot of barriers that prevent me from achieving this project" (adapted from McWhirter, 1997).

Exposure to experiences of social injustice and discrimination. Questions about experiences of social injustice were presented in the questionnaire under the headings

Discrimination and Experiences of injustices. This section started with the introduction: "In each society, some groups can be less well treated or have less chances (e.g., for work or training) than others…" Participants were then asked to indicate whether or not they experienced any one of those experiences: "Being unjustly refused a job, a placement or a training", "Being treated unjustly by authorities", and "Being insulted because of one's origins".

Self-definition as a member of a disadvantaged group. To examine the degree to which participants construe their experienced disadvantage in terms of an unjust treatment toward a group to which they belong, they were asked: "Yourself, are you a member of a group that you think is treated less favourably than other groups in the Swiss society?" If they indicated 'yes', they were then asked to name the group in question.

Indicators of social position

National status. National status is based on Swiss nationality and compares (high status) Swiss participants to (low status) non-Swiss participants. Table 1 indicates the percentage of non-Swiss in each institution showing that they are overrepresented in the PVS (49% compared for example to less than 10% in the high School).

Parents' educational attainment. Educational attainment has been proposed as a key indicator of social position (e.g., Lareau, 2003). At the end of the questionnaire, participants indicated the educational attainment of each of their parents. Using this information, a composite indicator of parental education was calculated and contrasts participants for whom both father's and mother's education were limited to obligatory schooling to those for whom at least one parent had a higher educational attainment.

Financial worries. In addition to national status and educational attainment of parents, financial worries have been used as a subjective marker of social position. This was measured by asking participants, on a 1 *('not worried at all')* to 4 *('very worried')* scale, the extent to

which they or their family were worried about the following situations: "Not having enough money to cover living expenses, to pay bills, rent or food" and "Being in need of social assistance, unemployment benefits or other institutional support" (*r* =. 57**).

Results and discussion

All indicators of social position show that PVS participants are in a disadvantaged position compared to participants from the two other institutions; 49.5% of them do not have the Swiss nationality, vs. 13.5% (ML) and 9.7% (HS), $\chi^2(2) = 162.88$, $p < .001$. Additionally, the educational attainment of parents is limited to the obligatory school for 40% amongst them (vs. 9% (ML) and 9.3% (HS), $\chi^2(2) = 91.19$, $p < .001$). Moreover, they perceive higher financial worries (M= 2.36, SD= .87) compared to municipality participants (M= 2.19, SD = .82, $p < .001$), who also scored higher compared to high school participants (M = 1.98, SD = .87, $p < .001$, $F(2, 890) = 15.99$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = 23.51$). Thus, according to the three indicators of status, PVS participants were in a lower status position compared to ML and HS participants. If we take the educational attainment of the participants themselves as an additional indicator of status, it is also clear that PVS participants are in a disadvantaged position given that they are by definition in an institution for young people who have difficulties following or even finding an apprenticeship, which is the least qualified educational pathway.

Perceived barriers to life project. A one-way ANOVA of perceived barriers with institution as a factor showed that PVS participants perceived higher barriers to their most important life project (M = 3.55, SD = 1.49) compared to both ML participants (M = 3.07, SD = 1.47) and HS participants (M = 2.97, SD = 1.15; $F(2, 873) = 16.88$, $p < .001$).

Exposure to experiences of social injustices and discrimination. PVS participants reported higher exposure to all three experiences of injustice and discrimination considered (see Table 2 for details).

Table 2. Exposure to experiences of social injustice and discrimination by institution.

		PVS	Municipality	High School	All
Being unjustly refused a job, a placement or a training	No	149 (59.4%)	142 (81.6%)	216 (93.5%)	507 (77.3%)
	Yes	102 (40.6%)	32 (18.4%)	15 (6.5%)	149 (22.7%)
	All	251	174	231	656
Being treated unjustly by authorities	No	165 (66.5%)	151 (87.3%)	199 (86.1%)	515 (79%)
	Yes	83 (33.5%)	22 (12.7%)	32 (13.9%)	137 (21%)
	All	248	173	231	652
Being insulted because of one's origins	No	165 (66%)	142 (82.6%)	201 (87%)	508 (77.8%)
	Yes	85 (34%)	30 (17.4%)	30 (13%)	145 (22.2%)
	All	250	172	231	653

S**elf-definition as a member of a disadvantaged group.** Results show that overall 17% of the participants self-defined as a member of a disadvantaged group. The percentage was respectively 12% (PVS), 27% (ML) and 16% (HS). Importantly, the percentage was the lowest amongst PVS participants, the objectively most disadvantaged population and those who subjectively experienced the highest disadvantage (it did not significantly differ from high school but was significantly lower compared to municipality). Even though PVS participants were more exposed to experiences of disadvantage and discrimination and perceived higher barriers to their projects, they were less likely to claim belongingness to a socially disadvantaged group.

Basis of the disadvantage. We classified the content of the groups provided by participants according to the basis of the disadvantage (e.g., origin/ethnicity: 24.8%, socio-professional status: 25.5%, personality and physical characteristics: 13,6%, subculture: 7.5%). There was a great diversity in the way people labeled their groups and also in the level of self-categorization they used. For example, among those categorized as disadvantaged on the basis of their origin, that is, referring to a stratification natives/immigrants, participants used

different labels to indicate the ingroup that captures this stratification. Many participants used "foreigners" and equivalent terms ("immigrants", "another origin"), but this large-scale category of foreigners was also divided by ethnicity and culture, for example: 'Arab foreigner', by legal status: 'naturalised foreigner' or 'Swiss of foreign origin', by time of arrival or concrete consequences of being foreigner in one's trajectory: 'I did not attend school in Switzerland'. This result suggests that even when the same macro-social stratification constrains the experiences of different persons, it constitutes a common background for diverse forms of consciousness, each person drawing differently the boundaries of the ingroup subjectively felt as relevant to account for this experience. The processes through which people construe and give meaning to experienced disadvantage in relation to their belongingness to a social group thus seems to be complex.

Its complexity is also evidenced by the unexpected result that PVS participants, the objectively most disadvantaged population (based on indicators of social position) and subjectively (based on self-reported exposure to experiences of injustices, discrimination and constraints) appear to have the lowest consciousness of being members of disadvantaged groups at the societal level. We discussed in the introduction the possibility that awareness of large-scale category membership can be more closely linked to the structure of one's *direct environment* than to the objective exposure to structural disadvantage. We explored whether the available data can give some support to this hypothesis.

Structure of intergroup contact. PVS participants are assumed to be members of disadvantaged groups because a majority of them are immigrants, have a low educational attainment, and their parents have the lowest levels of socio-economic status and educational attainment. All these categories are held in low status and are markers of objective opportunities *at the societal level*. However, one can argue that because of the characteristics of their immediate social environment, PVS participants spend the large part of their days at

their vocational school, where the majority are foreigners, and have similar difficulties to find or to succeed in an apprenticeship. The opportunities of intergroup perceptions and comparisons that are important in order for that a disadvantaged category membership to become psychologically salient, are then rare in their direct social environment. Accordingly, they may have lower chances to develop a consciousness of stratification based on nationality, socio-economic or educational status, compared to participants from the two other institutions.

The data provides some support to this hypothesis. As shown in Table 3, in the PVS where foreigners are overrepresented (among the 339 participants, 163 do not have Swiss nationality), only 9 participants self-defined as disadvantaged group members based on their origin or ethnicity. On the other hand, in the HS where foreigners are underrepresented (only 30 participants among the 340 are without Swiss nationality), 20 participants declared being disadvantaged based on their origin (among them individuals who have the nationality). Immigrants are numerical minorities at the large-scale of the society, but in the direct PVS social environment, they *are all foreigners* as many of them stated in the interviews, precluding intergroup comparisons necessary for the consciousness of an in-group disadvantage.

The key result of the quantitative data was that the higher exposure to experiences of injustice and discrimination did not translate into higher claims of belongingness to a disadvantaged category, questioning the assumption of some models of coping according to which such experiences are the trigger for categorical identity salience and categorical self-definitions (Branscombe, Schmitt, et al., 1999; Van Zomeren et al., 2012). The results also tentatively suggest that the structure of intergroup contact that characterizes individuals' direct environment, more than the personal exposure to experiences of discrimination, seems

to play a powerful role in transforming the macro-social stratification into claimed group self-definitions.

The quantitative data and analyses overall suggest that the link between experiences of structural disadvantage and group belongingness claims is far from being straightforward. We argue that only an examination of the subjective experiences of structural disadvantage in their complexity grounded in individuals' rich lived experiences can account for the complexity of this link.

Qualitative data and analyses

We conducted in depth face-to-face interviews with a sub sample of PVS participants, the objectively and subjectively most disadvantaged population. The open-ended nature of qualitative data makes it—compared to the closed-ended quantitative data—best suited to emphasize the opinions of participants and to allow their own perspectives to emerge[13] (Creswell & Clark, 2011). It thus allows one to access the subjective experience of disadvantage in its complexity, acknowledging participants' own perspective, and providing valuable insights on what complicates the translation of experienced disadvantage into societal-level consciousness and the claim of being a member of a disadvantaged group. These rich data will also help to address the third research question related to coping resources, and particularly the possibility of the emergence of other forms of groupness implied in the process of coping (not directly based on intergroup perceptions and comparisons of disadvantage).

Qualitative data also allows giving more importance to the context without reducing it to a set of variables, which is particularly important for our research questions. Individuals indeed give meaning to their disadvantage and cope with it *in context*. Therefore, our analyses

[13] Being aware of this key advantage of qualitative data, the interviewer avoided using academic jargon and tried to use participants' own vocabulary.

were based on an exploratory approach grounded "in data collected from participants on the basis of the complexities of their lived experiences in a social context" (Fassinger, 2005, p. 157). Specifically, we used thematic analyses in the service of reporting and organizing "the reality" of the participants (their experiences and the meanings they give to them), that is, largely at a semantic level (Boyatzis, 1998; Braun & Clarke, 2006) rather than at a discursive level. Our analysis lies between a deductive approach or « theoretical » thematic analysis, in the sense that we coded sections of the data « for a quite specific research question » (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 12), and an inductive approach, in the sense that the sub-themes we identified are strongly grounded in the data and not based on pre-existing theoretical categories.

Choice of the qualitative subsample. Because we aimed to access the subjective experiences of the most disadvantaged, we targeted immigrant participants from PVS. Indicators of social position were the lowest amongst PVS Participants and amongst them, immigrants were in a more disadvantaged position.

Who are PVS immigrants? The quantitative data indicate that among participants who did not indicate Swiss as their first nationality, Portuguese were by far the most represented community (33%), followed by Italians (12%) and French (5%), and a variety of other less represented communities. The high representation of Portuguese reflects the fact that they are one of the main immigrant communities in Switzerland (with Italians, French and Germans). However, their relatively high representation at the PVS compared to the French and Italians may also be a reflection of their relatively lower social position. Our recruitment strategy was to target half of the participants from the Portuguese community (the less valued among the main immigrant communities) and half of the participants from different other less established communities. Recruitment was however harder among the other communities.

Recruitment started between the first and second waves of the quantitative data collection. Using demographic information provided by PVS participants in the first questionnaire, 31 participants who fulfil the criteria and who provided contact information and agreed to pursue their participation in the project were identified. They received a letter thanking them for their previous participation and expressing our interest to have in depth face-to-face interviews with them. The invitation letter contained a return envelope and a card where they can indicate if they agree to be contacted for interviews, their phone number, and which one of three gift voucher for a value of 20.- CH they would like to receive as a reward for their potential participation. Only nine participants filled and returned the card and in the end only five have indeed been interviewed (the others were either unreachable or apologized when they were contacted). Because of these difficulties we introduced at the end of the second questionnaire a box with the information that some participants will be contacted for one-hour interviews rewarded for a value of 20.- CH. Participants had to indicate in this box whether they agree to be contacted and their phone number. This information makes it easy for us to reach other participants who fulfil our recruitment criteria and seven additional interviews have been conducted.

Participants. After all, 12 participants were interviewed: 5 were pre-apprentices, and 7 apprentices in different fields: cleaning, mechanic, housekeeping and carpentry. They came to Switzerland at different ages. The mean age of participants was 18.4 years (ranging from 16 to 22 years) and the majority were males (10 participants). The sample included 7 Portuguese and 5 from the following communities: Kosovo, Haiti, Cameroon, China and Somalia. Table 3 summarizes demographic characteristics of participants.

Table 3. Interviewee demographic information.

Gender	Age	Years in Switzerland	Vocational status	Nationality
Male	16.00	Born in Switzerland	Pre-apprentice	Portugal
Male	22.00	8.00	Apprentice in cleaning	Somalia
Male	20.00	8.00	Apprentice in mechanic	Haiti
Female	17.00	From birth to 7, back to Switzerland 3 years earlier	Pre-apprentice	Portugal
Male	17.00	17.00	Pre-apprentice	Portugal
Male	18.00	11.00	Pre-apprentice	Cameroon
Male	17.00	5.00	Pre-apprentice	Portugal
Female	18.00	Came when she was baby	Apprentice in housekeeping	Kosovo
Male	18.00	6.00	Apprentice in metal construction	Portugal
Male	21.00	8.00	Apprentice in cleaning	Portugal
Male	17.00	5.00	Apprentice in cleaning	Portugal
Male	20.00	3.00	Apprentice in carpentry	China

Procedure/data collection. When contacted by phone, participants were informed that an interview lasted about one hour and was paid 20.- CHF. They were asked whether it is convenient for them to meet at the main entrance of the train station at the city centre and they all agreed. All interviews were conducted by the first author of this paper, took place in a café near the train station, and took between 50 and 90 minutes. Before starting the interview, participants were provided with a general explanation of the context of the project and asked for their consent to record the interview and use it for research aims.

The semi-structured interviews covered different themes: Childhood aspirations and current dreams and projects, general and project-related resources and difficulties, personal experiences of structural disadvantage and general perceptions of the stratification system in

Switzerland. Those themes structured the interview and directed it to answer the research questions while allowing access to a deep subjective experience.

Given that our research questions are related to the complex nature of experiences of structural disadvantage and their potential translation into groupness tendencies, participants were invited at the beginning of the interview to talk about their projects, the difficulties they faced or may face in the future to achieve them, and the ways they cope with them. Afterwards, the theme of social stratification and experiences linked to it was explicitly addressed. Unlike the questionnaires, participants were not asked to define the group on the basis of which they felt disadvantaged, or whether or not they have experienced predefined discrimination experiences, but to reflect on the different situations where they perceived a differential treatment because of their origin or any other characteristic.

Transcriptions. A student assistant and the first author transcribed all interviews using usual conventions and all transcriptions were revised by the first author. Verbatim transcriptions regarding the verbal content were used and non-verbal aspects of the talk like hesitations and intonations were not transcribed as this is not required for the thematic analysis we are conducting (Braun & Clarke, 2006), unlike narrative and discourse analysis where a refined level of transcriptions is required (Edwards & Potter, 1992). Transcriptions were introduced and analysed in the qualitative data analyses software NVIVO.

Results and discussion

A major goal of our investigation was to better understand the weak tendency to claims of belongingness to a disadvantaged category among PVS participants. In order to do so we had to get into the complexity of the experiences linked to their membership in disadvantaged social categories, how they are translated in concrete life conditions and how they are subjectively experienced and managed. Given these aims, we systematically analysed all the sections in the interviews where participants spontaneously reflected (during the general

discussion about their projects and difficulties) on a categorization-based experience as well as their responses to the specific questions related to social stratification. We coded as categorization-based experience all the situations where one or a combination of categorical memberships is experienced as the source of an unpleasant, discriminatory or less favourable treatment[14].

Even though only 3 participants among the 12 interviewees indicated in the questionnaire being a member of a disadvantaged group, participants who answered this question negatively and did not provide any group in the questionnaire reported in their narratives many examples of categorization-based experiences, and not less than those who identified as a member of a disadvantaged group. In a preliminary step, we analysed these narratives in order to understand the different forms in which membership in a disadvantaged category shapes individual experiences and the psychological and concrete implications of these experiences in everyday lives. This analysis showed that the different experiences involve one or more of the three main following categories: The first one, we called *individuality lost*, reflects the psychological distress related to being subsumed under a general category as if it determines in specific ways how the person will act and is capable of. The interviews provide many examples of people's resistance to the attribution of their behaviour to their social categories and the reductionist way others look to them. The second one—that we called *opportunity restrictions*—reflects the concrete costs in terms of restricted chances and opportunities connected with membership in a given category, mainly in forms of institutional categorical treatment and selection in jobs, internship and education. Participants often recognize the illegitimacy of the categorical treatment and either reject the existence of

[14] During the coding process, we identified participants' terms relating to these experiences (e.g., labels, foreigners, racism, categories) and used Nvivo Text Search queries to identify *categorization-based experiences* that may have been omitted during the initial coding.

the boundary (for example the relevance of a school classification in hierarchic levels), or claim the criteria as self-defining but refuse others taking it as a base of differential treatment (as in the illustration from interview 2 below: "if you change your name, they will take you, but why? I don't want to change my name"). The third category—that we called *symbolic devaluation*—is linked to the psychological cost related to the perception that one's category is socially devalued, which corresponds to the facet of structural disadvantage most commonly studied. Table 5 summarizes and gives examples of each category.

Table 5. Different facets of experienced disadvantage

Individuality lost	Being categorized in a general abstract category, as though the category say something significant about the person	*I: I find that people here are more open to other cultures, but sometimes I actually feel it's a little ... sometimes it's just not very ... sometimes it's a bit not very ... not very, not very ... I do not feel very good sometimes, is that with my colleagues sometimes we laugh a little, and then often someone will say "aaah you are Chinese," that is what I mean.* *Interview 12: apprentice in carpentry, 20 years old*
Opportunity restrictions	Having less chances and less opportunities because of membership in a given category	*I: well, it is like I told you, that to me when I arrived, they put me directly, without knowing my education level.* *M: but they put you in VS…* *I: VSO, the lowest level.* *M: ok* *I: So I could just do an apprenticeship I could not continue to achieve the 12th year and go to (gymnase).* *…* *I: because I have not been to school here, they put me directly in 9th VSO, so I did not even have the time to increase my notes or to do anything, even if I had wanted to add another year, I couldn't.* *Interview 4, pre-apprentice, 17 years old*
Symbolic devaluation	Perception that one's category is socially devalued	*And there is also another thing, is that ... there was also a newspaper article, an article with a small picture, a small graphics like that. They put a truck, a garbage truck that raised a container labeled VSO with students inside. It was a funny caricature, I did not understand. So we are reduced, we are already in VSO we were reduced to being a little bit the lowest in this context, but then even more like garbage? no, pff, I did not understand their system* *Interview 5: pre-apprentice, 17 years old*

The complexity of categorization based experiences: Multifaceted, overlapping, forced and personal. Exploring the nature of experiences of disadvantage in interviews was a good opportunity to get more insights on what may complicate the translation of macro-level stratification into self-definitions in terms of membership in disadvantaged groups. In direct relation with this research question, we analysed the sections related to categorization-based experiences in terms of their complexity, that is, in terms of the factors that complicate the construction of the different experiences as a function of membership in disadvantaged groups. In this section, we summarize the key characteristics that are common to different interviews and illustrate each one by an example.

Multifaceted. The characteristic of categorization-based experiences as *multifaceted* emerged in many interviews. By multifaceted we mean that the same person can be categorized and disadvantaged based on different memberships or aspects of group-memberships depending on the context, the place, or the life-course task the person is facing. The clearest illustration comes from the interview with a Somali apprentice in cleaning who described different prejudicial experiences, but each time because of a different social membership, or a particular aspect of this membership; Because of having an Arab name when searching for a job:

I: It's a little bit complicated, I know of a case, he is Algerian, it is difficult to find a job, because wherever he goes, there is an Arab around, that affects you, because you are an Arab they will say you are a terrorist, people don't like this, they are afraid, so the boss will say "no I have no job, I hired someone", he has not even hired someone, because we saw on the computer that it was free, we went there, he will say the job is given to someone else,
...
I: So, because, when they see his name
M: Arab
I: that he has an Arab, he will say he is a Muslim, he is like the others
M: So you have the impression that Muslims have more difficulty finding a job?
I: Exactly, but if you change your name, they will take you, but why? I don't want to change my name...

Because he is an immigrant when he listens to the media and read the newspapers:

M: Okay. Do you have the impression here, that sometimes you are treated differently because you come from another country?
I: It's always the case, you are treated badly, you are the foreigner who does something, always in the newspaper, everywhere there are foreigners, foreigners everywhere, you never see a Swiss who made this and that, so this hurts you a little bit, but well, you manage anyway ...
M: But you… can you tell me about particular experiences where you felt you have been treated differently?
I: No, in the newspaper, I look in the newspaper…

Because he is doing an apprenticeship in cleaning when he is with other Somalis:

I: Yes I live at Chauderon, alone, there are many Somalis but I avoid, I avoid. Because they speak badly.
M: They speak bad about you?
I: they tell me that.. me.. I have been in Switzerland for quite a while now, I have not a good job, I am working outside, cleaning the shit of others, so I avoid all that, I go home quietly. Last night I returned home, I bought something at the Coop, when I returned, there was, on the stairs, there were only Somalis who were sitting in my building, so: " you are Somali but look the kind of job you have, I arrived in 2003 and I am a mechanic", we are not the same thing, because if you know mechanic, I don't.

Because of his French when he looked for an apprenticeship in *sales*; the field that particularly interests him:

M: Okay, but … so for sales, have you tried to look in this domain?
I: I tried many, many times, everywhere in Lausanne I tried, I have not found, it means that I don't have chance. The bosses, they tell me that I have a problem with language, because me to, I was not born here, so I cannot fully learn French.
M: Okay, okay, you think this problem is complicating the ...
I: They told me, they told me already, because they told me that with your vocabulary, I don't think that you will be able to deal with the reservations, the orders... I said, Well, I will learn, for the moment, it is possible … But…I need time.

Interview 2, apprentice in cleaning, 22 years old

Overlapping. Analysis of the personal narratives moreover revealed the characteristic of categorization-based experiences as overlapping. Like the previous one, this characteristic results from the fact that the same person belongs to different disadvantaged groups. However, it points out the fact that not only the person can be treated unfavourably on different bases as revealed by the preceding example, but also that it may be difficult to clearly disentangle the single membership involved in a particular situation or treatment. This can cause the person to doubt about the accuracy of his construction of the experience in

terms of a given membership. We can find an illustration in this passage from the interview with a Haitian apprentice in mechanic:

M: Do you get sometimes the feeling that you can be treated differently because of your origin
I: Yes it can happen ... I don't even think that it is about origin, I think it is a matter of colour. Because most people, they do not even know that I'm Haitian, but they put me in an African country, or something like that. It's more because I am black, sometimes there is a different treatment but ...
M: Okay… For example? ... You have examples of this treatment, things that marked you, things that ...
I: for example, for work issues, even in my job my boss, he noticed, because ... my boss is himself from Albanian origin, it was he who hired me…earlier, he was speaking with some clients, and because he is nice, he always introduces me to clients, and then sometimes when he talks to them, and introduced me to the clients, he notices that, for example, there were two clients who were a little more ... retained.
M: They were a little more what?
I: a little more, a little more ... they were more careful, because I'm a little black and like that ... how I work ...

Interview 3, apprentice in mechanic, 20 years old

We can notice some hesitation and doubt about the accuracy of attributing the behaviour of those clients to the prejudice against black people specifically, and also the awareness that being foreigner is also involved (when he states that the boss is also from Albanian origin). This doubt becomes clearer in the next passage when, trying to make sense of the experience, he included the fact that his is *also* a new apprentice.

M: And there are situations or contexts where you… well, where people behave this way more than in others? For example ... well, when you were in the COFOP, when you were in the garage?
I: Yes in the garage it is a little more. Because in the COFOP, clients were more… we knew each other because they are COFOP's clients who work and therefore often came there. And I think that I am still new, it's not the same, when one is an apprentice sometimes there is distrust. But in this case it was… he noticed twice that it was still a bit extreme ... because the way they looked at me show that they indeed had no confidence.

Forced and unattractive. Another characteristic of categorization-based experiences that may explain the failure to their translation into meaningful self-claimed memberships is that in many cases they are based on a differentiation that is rejected or at least resisted by the participants themselves. While self-definitions are necessary based on criteria one personally claims or at least accepts, macro-social stratification is not always based on criteria

meaningful for the person, as for example an ethnic or cultural membership, but can also be based on qualities that are imposed beyond one's control and choice. In those cases, the experienced disadvantage makes salient a particular category membership, but because the salient category has no inner attractiveness, situations making it salient are opportunities to reject rather than to embrace the category as self-defining.

Examples of forced categorization that have no inner attractiveness for the categorized person are well illustrated in some narratives about experiences linked to classification in VSO (Voie Secondaire Options), the lowest level of qualification in the secondary education. Indeed, the educational Swiss system is characterized by early selection. In the canton of Vaud and by the time when participants were in obligatory school, the school system differentiated between VSO, providing the lowest qualification level, VSG (voie secondaire générale), the general option, and VSB (voie secondaire baccalauréat), representing the higher level of qualifications leading to higher education. Many PVS participants had followed the lowest school level and this classification was frequently mentioned either as a basis of personally experienced disadvantage or as a salient disadvantaged group when participants reflect about the social categories devalued in Swiss society. This is an example of a participant speaking about being classified as something called VSO:

M: ... are there any situations where you can be treated differently due to the fact that you are a foreigner, or you are different?
I: Well, for me …it is rather in the VSO options that I have been told that, about my nationality not so much, no.
M: Okay, especially because of being in this option.
I: Well, there were no stories or whatever racist or nationality issues. I never had this problem myself, it's just that well, I was just something that has been classified like that, in VSO.

A little further on he added:

Because I am ... because my qualities is that I'm someone who can work, who... has the will to do what he wants, what he wants to do. Now, in VSO, in VS... now where I was, I was in a system where they divided people: those who were very good, those who were good and those who are not so good. And they put me in that side.

Interview 5: pre-apprentice, 17 years old

The analysis of those life trajectories also showed that sometimes what leads the person to reject or contest the association between the self and a salient social category is not the fact that the membership is itself not attractive for the person. Rather, it suggests that the salient characteristics associated with the subordinated group reflect irrelevant bits of the in-group identity from the person's own view, but are those that others consider as the most relevant. The following passage illustrates this point:

M: ok. And so, being foreigner, finally being Portuguese who lives in Switzerland, what does this mean for you?
I: That does not mean very much, well, we are normal people, except that we receive more criticism about the… let's say the fish
M: What?
I: They talk to us about fish all the time
M: about fish
I: Yeah, because Bacalao is Portuguese…

Interview 7, pre- apprentice, 17 years old

Moreover, many categorization-based experiences those young told about are related to temporary fluctuating memberships. We mean that they have happened in a given moment in their trajectory, as it is the case for example for being classified in VSO during school or being ignored because having no mastery of French. As a result, they may continue to affect people's lives but they represent no longer a significant basis for group membership at the present.

Personal. Another important thing that these data suggest, and especially when we look at the parts of the interviews where participants reflect spontaneously upon their barriers and difficulties, is that even when the barrier is clearly structural/social, its consequences and the way it is experienced and talked about are deeply personal. As an illustration of this tendency, mastery of the language as a serious obstacle emerged in the majority of the interviews when participants were asked to reflect on the difficulties and barriers they have encountered or may encounter. Even those who were born in Switzerland or came as a baby and who did not

experience the mastery of language as a personal difficulty themselves, acknowledged it is decisive for the opportunities of their peers. The way each participant expressed it is however deeply personal.

M: And you said that in the meantime you went to stay a week in a normal class and it did not work.
I: Yes in the middle of the 9th year, I did a one-week course, that is
M: and why it did not work in your opinion?
I: I did not have enough knowledge. My French was, it was my writing ... my math was okay but the language is too difficult.
M: it is mainly the language
I: Yes. Whenever I want to express myself, either it comes out of a sudden, or it takes time to get out… and that is, well, it is built gradually.

Interview 9, apprentice in metal construction, 18 years old

Experiences of groupness and their role in coping. The third research question aims to investigate the assumption that membership in a disadvantaged group and associated experiences result in a tendency to groupness as a coping resource. In order to address this research question and to examine whether and which forms of groupness emerged in the narratives, we analysed the interviews focusing on participants' descriptions of their resources and the strategies they undertake to cope with their difficulties, with a focus on the role of significant others and groups in this process. We coded a 'we-ness experience' every passage that indicated "an emotional merging of self with others" (Allport's definition of identification; 1954, p.293) in the context of coping with the adversities one faces[15]. We analysed this material in order to understand on which bases this merging occurs, what it represents for the participants, and which role it has in coping efforts specially in relation to categorization-based experiences.

[15] We also identified the vocabulary associated with such experiences (e.g, group, united, close, family, together, like me…) and used Nvivo text search queries tool to check we did not miss other 'we-ness experience' in our initial coding.

Generally, the analyses suggest that experiences of groupness are indeed important factors of coping, but rather than being related to intergroup comparisons and categorical appraisals of disadvantage, they were grounded in local interactions and relations with surroundings others, either from the same or different social categories, in the context of people's daily adaptation with the difficulties and challenges they face.

Indeed, 'we-ness experiences' were more often related to face-to face groups and less likely to larger socially disadvantaged categories, and even when they related to larger groups (often ethnic groups), they were often focused on the importance of intragroup processes of mutual understanding, acceptance and communal responding. However, even if the forms of groupness invoked by participants were often located at a proximal form (friends, family), they were in many cases based on some recognition of commonalities in life conditions and worries generated by macro-level stratifications, as for example the worry about rejection and distrust from others, the risk of loneliness and the perception of the scarcity of resources. This recognition resulted from direct interpersonal interactions and knowing each other's stories, but was also deduced from the salient social memberships of the others. For example, a Portuguese girl describing how she felt rejected and misunderstood when she first arrived in Switzerland and what helped her managing this, mentioned:

> *I: And then, she was in a corner and then she spoke to no one. And me, as I knew no one I went to her and then I asked her if she knew anyone, even if I knew. And then we spent the rest of the day together; every time we saw someone who was all alone we went to them.*
> *M: okay*
> *I: we did our little group and then at the end of the year we were still together, finally, still the same group.*
> *M: Okay, okay.*
> *I: and then as we were all from different countries, we enjoyed each one telling something about her country and then, ... things happening there and like that, we get on really well.*
>
> *Interview 4: pre-apprentice, 17 years old*

This passage describes how these young girls sought proximity to each other based on their common loneliness and immigration status, and how their responsiveness to each other's needs of belonging (not being alone) and being understood, built in turn a strong sense of

themselves being a cohesive group. Their different origins were not an impediment to their sense of being a group, on the contrary, it was a base for their cohesiveness. The process described here is similar to some extent to the one claimed by the rejection-identification model that experiences of rejection result in a greater tendency to groupness as means to satisfy one need to feel accepted and recognized (Branscombe, Schmitt, et al., 1999; Jolanda Jetten et al., 2001). The passage shows however that this need can be fulfilled amongst similarly situated individuals by virtue of their common fate despite their awareness of their differences ("as we were all from different countries"). This example highlights the importance of mutual understanding and responsiveness that was common in many narratives.

Such processes seem to be relevant even when it comes to large groups. Indeed, the interplay between categorically shared social characteristics as for example a common origin, and an expectation of mutual understanding was also common. For example, a participant explains in the next passage how common origin served as a base for interpersonal closeness through the expectation of a commonality of experiences and activities.

> *M: you say it rarely happens that you're the only Portuguese ...*
> *I - it's rare! I go mostly with Portuguese friends actually. Not that I'd rather be with Portuguese, but that's because I find that just because we come from the same country, we spend a bit the same holidays. It goes well between us, discussions and everything ... it gets better.*
>
> *Interview 1: pre-apprentice, 16 years old*

But as explained by the following passage, the sharing of categorical membership entails the expectation of understanding and acceptance from ingroup members, but is not a guarantee that one can effectively feel understood and cared for.

> *M: ok, and you said that you have not been well received by your ...*
> *I: Yeah, by my classmates, I have not been well received, I remember there was, I think I was the only Portuguese, there were all origins but I was the only Portuguese I think, if I remember, I was the only one. And then they did not treat me very well, bah I was alone, I was talking to no one because I did not know speak French very well yet. I did not feel comfortable and so ... this screws everything up.*
> *M: and you think if, if there were, you think if there were other Portuguese would it be different? Because you said that you were the only Portuguese?*

I: it depends on the Portuguese, because honestly there are Portuguese with whom I did not get on at all! Because there are some Portuguese, that honestly…Well, that is, I was not well … I feel I have not been very well received.

Interview 7: pre-apprentice, 17 years old

Another example of the interplay between membership in the same (disadvantaged) category and interpersonal closeness is given in the next passage where a participant spoke about who his friends are and with whom he did what:

I: with the other, I prefer go to the cinema, things like that, and then with them it is rather, as we are blacks, we talk and like that ... for example with both the first and the third, Saturday, we went to... France, and then something happened to us with the system in France, it was in a store and then we were buying something and then there was a security guard who followed us and then we noticed him...

Interview 3: apprentice in mechanic, 20 years old

That is, being the potential target of the same stigma seems to be an important aspect of the friendship that associate him to the two other persons, in line with the idea that relationships among stigmatized facilitate the socio-emotional support needed to cope with it (Gaines, 2001). In another passage, the same participant described his boss's supportive attitude when he was, as a black, a target of some clients' prejudiced treatment, despite the fact that this may represent a high cost for the boss (loosing clients):

I: He is Albanian and he said: "yes it is normal" and then after he added "So the client will never come back to the garage" And then I say, "yes, I'm sorry if you miss ... a client because of me" and then he said:" Yes, it doesn't matter". Because before he was not a boss himself and he said:" When I was not a boss, also before my boss lost clients because I was Albanian" and ... he said that it is they who have to grow up in their minds too.

In line with the idea of an intra-disadvantaged solidarity (Craig & Richeson, 2012; Warner et al., 2014), we can see in this passage an expression of a form of generalized reciprocity among the disadvantaged, where one can receive support from another, and feel the duty to provide support to another even if not the same person; when the Albanian boss was apprentice, he was supported by his boss, and now being in the position of the helper himself, he understands what the apprentice is experiencing and feels the duty to support him

in turn, despite the costs associated with him doing so. Such forms of reciprocity are argued to generate even stronger bonds of solidarity and trust that direct forms of reciprocity (Molm, Collett, & Schaefer, 2007).

Another passage shows how the commonality of difficulties can be per se a factor of psychological closeness and groupness.

> *I: well, at the beginning in COFOP, there are plenty who went to COFOP, who have difficulties in some areas, once we see these people in COFOP, we realize that we are like them and, at the beginning one is afraid to talk to the first coming person. When you get to COFOP, you see all these young people you know from nowhere, one remains in his corner, after one tries to integrate into the groups and then we become a family, it goes we are best friends, and then it is like that.*
>
> *Interview 9: apprentice in metal construction, 18 years old*

We can make some parallel between the dynamics mentioned in this passage and the claim that adaptation in a harsher environment creates mutual dependence and thus dispose to value relations to similarly situated others and to develop rules of reciprocity and communal responding characteristic of family relationships (Kraus & Piff, 2012; Piff et al., 2010). The next two passages highlight, in the context of the family and of team work, how relying in each other creates a valuable sense of bonding:

> *I: Yes, in any case in our family we support each other. It is nevertheless, a rather strong family because everyone helps each other and everyone has done some work in order that the others get some things. There is never one that does nothing, there is always, always someone doing something and then, well if someone finished his tasks he can be quiet. But we help each other, we are a family that always mutually helps and for me I have an important role in the family because for me I want to make this strong bond sustained, that it stays hooked.*
>
> *Interview 5: pre-apprentice, 17 years old*

> *But we work in team, that means, one has to do a task alone or in a team, one must always need someone, so I prefer to have a good understanding, communication with everyone, rather than doing my work with someone I do not like, there will be quarrels and the work will not progress. So I prefer to communicate well with people, in the family, and like that, so the work can make good progress. We always accept each other, we support each other, it is great!*
>
> *Interview 10: apprentice in cleaning, 21 years old*

Overall, these narratives indicate that perceiving self and others in situations of mutual dependence, whether this perception is induced in interpersonal interactions or deduced from social characteristics, plays a key role in motivating people to develop norms of reciprocity and show solidarity. Supportive interactions in turn strengthen the representation of self and others as a group, either within the context of relational groups or large-scale communities, consistent with a view that conceives solidary relations as leading to and resulting from psychological group formation.

General discussion and conclusion

Using questionnaire data, we examined and confirmed status differences in exposure to experiences of social injustice, discrimination and opportunity restriction (i.e., structural disadvantage). We found however that the population that was the most exposed to these experiences (i.e., PVS participants) was the less likely to claim belongingness to a socially disadvantaged group. We used interviews in order to access to the subjective experience of structural disadvantage in its complexity and to gain more insights on what may complicate the translation of experienced disadvantage into claims of belongingness to a disadvantaged social category.

The qualitative data and analyses provided indeed many illustrations of the complexity of the context in which structural disadvantage is experienced and of the process through which it acquires meaning. For instance, this complexity is well illustrated by the multifaceted and overlapping nature of these experiences, leading potentially to low salience/consciousness of the particular categorical memberships at their source. This complexity can be a possible explanation for the finding from quantitative data that despite their higher exposure to experiences of structural disadvantage, PVS participants were the less likely to claim membership in a socially disadvantaged group. Moreover, the analyses of the interviews also suggested that even when the experiences of disadvantage take place in contexts where

intergroup boundaries are salient and clearly point out the relative disadvantage of the self-category, awareness of this categorical membership and of the disadvantage associated with it leads individuals in many cases to dissociate themselves from this membership. The characteristics of categorization-based experiences as forced and unattractive illustrate this aspect. These characteristics point out another possible explanation of the unexpected findings, not in terms of a *lower consciousness/salience* of membership in a socially disadvantaged category but in terms of a *lower motivation* to associate the self with the negative features socially linked to one's self-category despite the fact that one's membership in it may be cognitively salient.

We can conclude that even though experiences of structural disadvantage involve by definition asymmetric intergroup relations, both the association between experienced disadvantage and category salience and between category salience and group belongingness can be hindered, precluding thus the emergence of a sense of groupness as a direct product of category-salience and the socio-structural variables of the intergroup context (e.g., relative status, salience of group features, permeability of intergroup boundaries).

However, even if this route to groupness based on intergroup perceptions and comparisons may often be hindered in real world stratification systems, the results suggest that some forms of groupness can develop out of the experiences of structural disadvantage in a more subtle way. Understanding this sense of groupness requires however going beyond a mere focus on the socio-structural variables of intergroup contexts and their impact on intra-individual cognitive processes of depersonalized self-perception. It relies on greater interest in the processes underlying the interactions in disadvantaged members' local contexts, the interpersonal dependencies and vulnerabilities that characterize these contexts, and the possibilities of solidarity and responsiveness they create, building thus an emergent sense of groupness. From this perspective, solidary and reciprocal interactions should be seen not only

as *consequences* of a group-level, depersonalized self-perceptions, but also as *causes* of social unity and group formation. The qualitative data has been very informative in exploring and illustrating these processes.

The findings of this study highlight that we can understand the link between experiencing structural disadvantage and a tendency to see self and others in unified units not only as a direct one—through individuals' cognitive internalization of salient macro-social categories—but also through the mediation of local, interactive processes. Macro-social stratifications shape personal experiences and life conditions and create situations where interaction partners need and rely on each other in the context of their everyday coping efforts with structurally induced stressors. The degree to which interactions in turn are characterized by effective solidarity, reciprocity and mutual concern contribute in consolidating a sense of groupness that helps better cope with these experiences. These processes are not only relevant at the purely interpersonal level; Large groups whom members are unknown to each other personally, can also be seen as systems of indirect reciprocity where these interactive processes are relevant (Yamagishi & Kiyonari, 2000). Interactive and interdependence processes may indeed interact with categorization processes when they take place in contexts making salient a common categorical membership. In these situations, expectation (and effective) reciprocity from local category members influences one's level of identification to the group as a whole, contributing to a larger-scale sense of groupness. The qualitative data has provided many illustrations of the interplay between categorically shared social characteristics (e.g., common origin), and an expectation of reciprocity and mutual understanding. This data also showed that even it does not go beyond a local, interpersonal form, a sense of groupness can be per se a key ingredient of coping that requires further attention in the literature.

Overall, the results of this study point out the relevance of a perspective to groupness based on perceived common fate and intragroup processes of solidarity and understanding, in addition to the dominant perspective based on depersonalized self-perceptions. Such a perspective is particularly needed for disadvantaged group members facing overlapping systems of stratification and living in non-dichotomous settings.

4. General Discussion

In this dissertation, we underlined the need for an understanding of group formation and group role that puts the structure of interpersonal relations at its heart, in order to complement existing group-based models of coping with structural disadvantage. In order to show the relevance of this approach, we drew on theoretical arguments and empirical explorations. We argued in the theoretical introduction for the importance of between-person relations as a key dimension of groupness. Moreover, we discussed how this dimension is particularly important in the context of coping with disadvantaged status experiences, and how it complements but cannot be replaced by a categorization-based understanding of groupness. Empirically we tested in three papers the validity of an understanding of the role of ingroups in terms of the sense of connectedness they provide (and the resulting efficacy beliefs) rather than in terms of a particular group identity (distinctive) content. Before discussing the implications and limits of this approach, we will first briefly discuss the key empirical findings of the three papers.

Key empirical findings

In the first empirical paper, we found that adolescents and young adults from socially disadvantaged groups face higher barriers to their most important life projects than members of the corresponding high-status groups. This was particularly true for non-Swiss compared to Swiss participants, participants with higher—compared to lower—financial worries, and pre-apprentices compared to both apprentices and employees. That is, the three indicators of social position revealed status differences in barriers perception. We found that barriers perception is negatively associated with self-esteem independently of group status. More importantly, having a bonded sense of self, either based on categorical identities or proximal groups and relations, seems to mitigate the feeling of powerlessness associated with this experience, resulting in less severe harm to participants' self-esteem. Two main conclusions can be drawn from these results: (1.) the importance when studying the psychological

implications of membership in groups that are socially disadvantaged to give further attention to the ways in which members' structure of opportunities is concretely restricted (as a function of their relative group status), and how (and when) structural restrictions are likely to be subjectively experienced as a difficulty to exercise one's agency causing psychological harm (2.) The relevance of a sense of groupness and the resulting coping-efficacy beliefs—independently of its basis—as a key ingredient of coping when one's capacity of action is structurally constrained.

Our use of the notion of bonding *identities* in this paper aimed to acknowledge that *ingroups can be internalized as integral parts of one's self-concept and change one's sense of identity, resources and perspectives*. This is particularly important in order to understand the result showing that self-efficacy, and not perceived support from others, is what mediates the positive role of self-defining groups on self-esteem. Indeed, mediation analyses using respectively perceived support from others and coping efficacy as mediators, have shown that the positive role of bonding identities in protecting self-esteem can only be explained with enhanced internal efficacy beliefs rather than with perceived support for participants' specific project[16].

The second paper develops and tests a model that defines individual needs satisfaction as antecedent of a proximal sense of ingroup connectedness (i.e., subjective ties with family,

[16] We share this claim related to the potential internalization of psychological in-groups as integral part of individuals' identities with Social Identity theory. However, it is important to note that when it comes to the understanding of the place of identity-processes in psychological group formation, that is, as antecedent of groupness, we disagree with Turner position (1982) that the salience of social identity (i.e., prototypical group attributes) is the *precondition* for psychological group formation and acknowledge the existence of other independent factors of groupness. The notion of identity is however important in our approach in order to account for the idea that groups, once formed (based on identity and positive distinctiveness processes or on interdependence processes), can be integrated aspects of the self and change one's internal resources.

friends and peers), which predicts in turn individual and collective empowerment. The proposed model aimed at providing additional support for the relevance of a framework that relates group formation and group role to intragroup cohesiveness and the strength of interpersonal ties. It contributed to this aim by focusing on needs of help and recognition as antecedents of the self-group relation, and on efficacy beliefs derived from intragroup bonds as the mechanism underling the role of ingroups,

The model presented good fit, therefore providing an important contribution to the literature on how ingroup connectedness can simultaneously and independently enhance efficacy-beliefs about the realization of common goals (i.e., social change) and the personal efficacy to effectively handle one's personal challenges (i.e., coping efficacy). Moreover, multiple group analyses comparing disadvantaged (immigrants) to advantaged (Swiss) participants yielded that this proximal-level of connectedness, often neglected in social change models, plays a particularly important role in predicting commitment to social change among disadvantaged. Indeed, in addition to its direct effect on social change commitment confirmed for both advantaged and disadvantaged group members, proximal ingroup connectedness also predicted social change commitment indirectly for immigrant participants by enhancing their belief about the efficacy of *the most disadvantaged* as a cohesive group to change their situation.

A key criticism that can be directed toward an approach based on between-disadvantaged internal relations is that such sense of connectedness can protect psychologically but harm socially by precluding intergroup comparisons and the desire to protest resulting from such comparisons (Leach & Vliek, 2008; Major, 1994). By focusing on a proximal-level of bonds and on their impact on efficacy beliefs simultaneously at the personal-level and the societal-level, we were able to address this criticism. Indeed, the findings show that a subjective sense of connectedness in one's direct environment is not only

beneficial psychologically at a personal–level, but also plays an important role at the societal-level, especially for the most disadvantaged, by being a basis for a bottom-up sense of collective efficacy beliefs. Strong interpersonal relations between disadvantaged group members may thus complement rather than conflict with a sense of collective efficacy driven by the awareness of unstable and illegitimate intergroup boundaries, when such awareness has been developed.

One can also criticize our approach for being largely focused on interpersonal processes (i.e., interconnectedness, mutual responsiveness) and ask whether the presented data requires the group-level of analysis and could not be explained by the mere interpersonal-level, that is, as indicating a protective role of interpersonal connections. Theoretically, the notion of groups goes beyond interpersonal ties in that membership in groups implies beyond person-to-person ties, a person's ties to a social unit perceived as a whole. We have in our data, both quantitative and qualitative, indications for this notion of a whole that transcends its parts, and goes beyond persons knowing each other. The results of paper one have shown for example that when asked to define themselves in terms of group membership, participants indicated sometimes small groups whom members know each other personally, but they most often indicated groups where it is impossible for group members to know each other (and interact with each other) personally (e.g., Africans, immigrants…). The common point among those groups is that they all can be a source of a person's sense of ties to a social unit larger than self, and our argument was that this sense of unit-forming is important per se, independently of its basis. The interviews also provide indications that interactions among strangers who meet for the first time can be shaped by their understanding of themselves as belonging to the same social unit (e.g., immigrants), and that sustaining the context of concern and cohesiveness that social units provide can be perceived as an ultimate goal in itself (as for example at the end of the passage from interview 5 reported in page 173).

The quantitative analyses of the third paper showed that membership in a socially disadvantaged group is associated with higher exposure to particular experiences of social injustices, but that participants who were highly exposed to these experiences were not more likely to claim belongingness to a socially disadvantaged group. The qualitative analyses shed light on how the multifaceted and overlapping nature that characterizes real-world stratification systems makes experiences linked to structural disadvantage too complex to translate into a clear-cut salience of a categorical membership opposing disadvantaged ingroup to an unjustly advantaged outgroup. Additionally, these analyses suggest that experiences of groupness, which were common in participants' narratives, were often related to the solidarity and responsiveness that characterize interactions within proximal groups or with local members of larger social groups rather than to memberships characterized by an ideological consciousness. Therefore, the paper highlighted the complexities that may be associated with the construction of a valuable sense of groupness (i.e., a sense of membership in a cohesive group that provides support and solidarity) directly from intergroup perceptions and category salience. It thus provided an additional argument for the importance to give more room to conceptions of group formation that are independent of intergroup comparisons and self-categorization processes.

Contributions/ Theoretical implications

Overall, the results from the different papers add empirical support to the considerable weight of evidence emphasizing the centrality of ingroups as bases of resilience and psychological empowerment (e.g., Drury, Cocking, & Reicher, 2009; Haslam & Reicher, 2006; Outten, Schmitt, Garcia, & Branscombe, 2009; Schmitt, Spears, & Branscombe, 2003) and illustrate the particular importance of groupness for coping with the stressors associated with membership in a socially disadvantaged group. In so far as we stress the functional role of psychological groupness within the context of coping with disadvantaged status

experiences, our approach may seem redundant with prior social identity-based models of coping with structural disadvantage (e.g., Branscombe, Schmitt, & Harvey, 1999; Van Zomeren, Leach, & Spears, 2012). However, these models take as a starting point intergroup perceptions of disadvantage, the categorical identity made salient by the relevant dimension of intergroup comparison, and how individuals' self-categorization at a group-level change the experience and outcome of coping. While these models have approached the question of structural (category-based) disadvantage and group-based empowerment from a framework based on intergroup analyses, we outlined in this dissertation a different framework. The key characteristic of the framework we suggest is a shift of focus from the (comparative) content and ideological aspects of group identities to their connecting and bonding aspects, and from intergroup-perceptions to analyses of solidary interactions and inter-relatedness among disadvantaged group members. We summarize what the suggested framework adds to existing literature and how it advances our understanding of the implications of structural disadvantage and of the role of ingroups in coping with it.

The first aim of the proposed framework was to complement existing literature by expanding the way structural disadvantage has been examined within social-identity based models of coping. Building on the central notion of social identity theory that individuals seek positive identity and derive part of their identity from their salient groups, existing models examined the experiences associated with membership in a disadvantaged group mainly in terms of the identity consequences associated with salient unfavourable intergroup comparisons. These comparisons were assumed to make salient the relative low status of the ingroup, constituting thus an identity threat with which members of disadvantaged groups have to cope (Branscombe, Ellemers, et al., 1999; Tajfel, 1978b; Tajfel & Turner, 1979).

Our data from the first and third papers on the (differential) exposure to social stressors shows that beyond the psychological cost derived from unfavourable intergroup comparisons,

membership in a socially disadvantaged group can be associated with a higher risk of seeing one's choices and opportunities restricted during critical life-course transitions, of being rejected and excluded based on a complex combination of category memberships, and of being treated in a non-individuated way against one's will. These experiences are not contingent upon one's identity claims and awareness/internalization of membership in a relatively disadvantaged group, but derive from the objective membership in socially disadvantaged categories. Indeed, even in the absence of any internalization of a particular category membership, the mere relevance of this category for the perceiver can result in restricted opportunities and unfavourable treatment. This highlights other needs that may be threatened by membership in socially disadvantaged categories, in addition to the need for a positive identity threatened by the unfavourable intergroup comparisons; namely, the need for efficacy which may be threatened by the restricted structure of opportunities and the difficulty to exercise one's agency, the need for connectedness, likely to be undermined by experiences of exclusion, and the need for personal recognition threatened by the categorical non-individuated treatment. Members of disadvantaged categories are likely to face these treatments independently of whether they personally claim the particular categorical membership as self-relevant or not.

The results of the third paper suggest indeed that the exposure to these experiences is more directly a function of stratification systems operating at the macro-level, and did not necessarily translate at the psychological-level into a claimed self-categorization as a member of a disadvantaged group. The model tested in paper one and participants' narratives analysed in paper three highlight the complexity of experiences of structural disadvantage, their interference with life-course outcomes and with the realization of personal needs of efficacy and connectedness. Two main implications can be drawn at this point:

First, social psychologists need to further integrate their analyses of the psychological implications of structural disadvantage with life-course analyses. The field of life-course studies is probably the main field that has explicitly focused on human agency (and the ways it can be structurally constrained) from an empirical perspective (e.g., Heinz, 2009; Shanahan, Elder, & Miech, 1997), and this is central to the understanding of disadvantaged group members experiences. In that sense, the conceptual tools derived from life-course analyses (e.g., bounded agency; Evans, 2007) and the insights gained from empirical transition studies (e.g., Collins, 2001) are of great value.

Second, the results point out the need for a better understanding of the relationship between membership in a disadvantaged group and the realization of basic psychological needs. Specifically it points out the necessity to go beyond an intergroup framework focued on the need to achieve positive identity through favourable comparisons, and to give further attention to efficacy and connectedness needs. These needs are equally threatened by the experiences associated with membership in a disadvantaged group, and strongly implicated in the psychological functioning and well-being as evidenced by various framework of human motivation (e.g., Deci & Ryan, 2000; Vignoles, Regalia, Manzi, Golledge, & Scabini, 2006).

Regarding the processes through which a sense of psychological groupness may be developed as a means to cope with disadvantaged status experiences, prevailing models have placed the bulk of attention on the processes of intergroup differentiation and internalization of salient distinctive social identities, conceived as the necessary pre-condition for psychological group formation (Turner, 1982). As a result of this understanding of psychological group formation, the question that has been at the core of most research within this framework was how the socio-structural parameters of the intergroup context (e.g., relative group size and group status, contextual salience of group features, boundaries' permeability, legitimacy and stability) influence the salience of category membership, further

depersonalization processes and lead in turn to a sense of groupness, influencing both intra- and inter-group dynamics.

This view of groupness gives the primacy to perceived intergroup differences as the originator of psychological group formation and considers intragroup cohesiveness as a *consequence* of depersonalized self-perception. We emphasized the limits, in the case of unequal status relations, of intergroup perceptions as antecedents of groupness and the importance to reconsider a view, common to classical cohesion models of groupness, that conceives within group positive interdependence and solidary relations as *makers*, rather than mere consequences, of group formation.

In line with previous claims that "categorization alone cannot account for a full range of identification phenomena" (Deaux, 2000, p.1), the different parts of this dissertation provide cumulative arguments for the need to go beyond a categorization framework in order to fully understand group formation and group role in coping with structural disadvantage.

The first introductory chapter discussed theoretically the limits of category salience and intergroup perceptions as sufficient triggers of groupness, and how complementing this literature by a group theory based on between-person interdependency for needs satisfaction and responsiveness can provide a more complete account of group formation as response to disadvantaged status experiences. Participants' responses to the TST measure in the first paper have shown the variety of options people have at their disposal to construe a meaningful sense of groupness with others. The moderation and mediation analyses have shown how this sense of groupness, regardless of the content of a particular identity, can be an important ingredient when coping with structural disadvantage. The model tested in the second paper validated an understanding of group role based on efficacy beliefs derived from proximal intragroup bonds. The multiple group analyses moreover emphasized the importance among the disadvantaged of this often neglected proximal-level of bonds—in the

middle of a predominant focus on socio-structural parameters—as a predictor of social change commitment. The third paper provided additional support for the importance to go beyond intergroup perceptions as originators of groupness, by analyses showing the barriers to the categorical-route to groupness due to the complex nature of stratification systems and the multicultural settings in which individuals' coping efforts take place.

Overall, the findings presented in this dissertation support previous calls for the need to further develop frameworks that relate group-based phenomena (and understand group role) to intragroup processes in order to balance the dominant focus on intergroup contexts and categorization processes (Deaux, 2000; Gaertner & Schopler, 1998). They are also in line with Yzerbit and colleagues' argument about the primacy of the ingroup, as a coherent entity, and the idea that the role of ingroups need not to be contingent on the differentiation from an outgroup (Yzerbyt et al., 2000).

It is important to clarify that our approach joins self-categorization theory and specifically its health and coping tradition in emphasizing the importance of a sense of groupness for coping, by virtue of the relational shift toward understanding, responsiveness and support it triggers among group members. Our main point of disagreement with this theory is not related to the important (behavioural, emotional and perceptual) consequences of group-level self-definitions, but concerns specifically its social identification model of psychological group formation. We do not join Turner's (1982) position according to which category salience and intergroup-perceptions/differentiations should be considered the sole basis for psychological group formation and that interpersonal interdependence for the satisfaction of important needs should be rejected or relegated to the background as unnecessary or insufficient.

We think as noted in our model, that explicit categorization of the social world and perceived intergroup differences are only one possible route to psychological groupness

(through cognitive depersonalization processes and positive distinctiveness motives). This route however should not be considered as the exclusive framework in which to understand psychological group formation. We argue that individuals' sense of groupness is not necessarily an internalization of socially salient intergroup differentiation, and that it is important to recognize a bottom-up understanding of psychological group-formation, where between-persons (expectations of) solidarity and mutual responsiveness are both *antecedents* and consequences of psychological group formation. This conception requires, however, an understanding of psychological groups as dynamic, continuously reshaped by emergent social relations and not as determined by the existing structure of social reality[17].

While the idea that a categorization framework may not fully account for the complexity of group identification has been repeatedly formulated, much of the "solutions" proposed to balance social identity's neglect of between-member interpersonal processes are based on a clear distinction between interpersonal and categorical groups, governed by different processes. That is, they share the assumption that an interaction and interdependence framework will better apply for small face-to-face groups and a categorical framework would be most suitable for the study of dynamics linked to membership in large-scale groups or social categories (e.g., Prentice, Miller, & Lightdale, 1994; Wilder & Simon, 1998). Many researchers have indeed proposed a distinction between groups for whom group identification derives from the salience of intergroup-perceptions and comparisons and those for whom it derives basically from relational connectedness and is less influenced by intergroup perceptions (Brewer & Chen, 2007). Such a proposition based on the distinction between two

[17] This does not however exclude a full recognition of the actual structural features of the society, as for example we did when we used the notion of disadvantaged groups in this dissertation in order to acknowledge the structural organization of society in categories inter-linked by relations of privilege and disadvantage in a given historical moment.

types of groups has been formulated earlier in terms of common identity vs. common bonds groups according to prentice and colleagues (Prentice et al., 1994) and in terms of categorical vs. dynamic groups according to Wilder and Simon (1998), while Brewer and Roccas (2001) proposed to distinguish between two incompatible types of collectivism; relational (personalised) and group (impersonalized) collectivism.

Such group typologies seem necessary if we leave unquestioned the idea of an inherent antagonism between, on the one hand, interpersonal interactions and personal identity assumed to be sovereign in face-to face small groups, and on the other hand, interactions in terms of categorical membership necessarily downplaying personal identities. Such antagonism—rooted in initial formulations of the social identity approach as well as in optimal distinctiveness theory inspired from it—contends that operating psychologically as a distinctive individual or as a group member are inherently conflicting; to act and feel as a group member implies in perceptual terms to perceive the self as an interchangeable member of a category as assumed by self-categorization theory, and in motivational terms to shift from serving a need of distinctiveness to serving a need for belonging/connectedness as assumed by optimal distinctiveness theory (Brewer, 1991)[18]. The two levels of self-perception and motivation are assumed to be antagonist, and group feeling and behaviour are conceived as contingent on a shift away from the inter-personal extreme and toward a qualitatively distinctive inter-group extreme.

However, recent development within the social identity tradition itself (e.g., Hopkins, Kahani-Hopkins, & Reicher, 2006; Postmes, Spears, Lee, & Novak, 2005; Reicher, 2004) as well as the approach we outlined in this dissertation question such inevitable antagonism between personal and group levels of self-definition and argue that all groups, regardless of

[18] Brewer's optimal distinctiveness theory argues that humans have two fundamental conflicting needs: belonging and inclusion on one hand and distinctiveness and differentiation on the other.

their size and whether all their members interact interpersonally with each other or not, can be more or less dynamically and more or less categorically constructed. We discuss briefly these developments and then discuss how our approach converges and differs from them.

Reicher, Hopkins and their colleagues have significantly contributed in stressing the dynamic nature of social identities and the undesirable consequences of understanding social identities as fixed categories (Drury & Reicher, 2000; Hopkins, Kahani-Hopkins, & Reicher, 2006; Hopkins & Kahani-Hopkins, 2009; Reicher, 2004). For example, Hopkins & Kahani-Hopkins (2009) stressed "the importance of respecting social actors' own constructions of social reality (rather than imposing our own)" (p. 99), and illustraed the utility of this approach using qualitative data. Drury and Reicher argued for the need to consider social identity in a more dynamic way, that is, "as a model of one's position in a set of social relations alongwith the actions that are possible and proper (legitimate) given such a position", rather than as "a list of attributes or else a collection of traits" (Drury & Reicher, 2000, p. 581). Their insightful analyses of crowd dynamics point to the flexibility that social identities can have *in action* and the long-term changes in the self concept that can result from participation in collective action (Drury & Reicher, 2000; Reicher, 1996). Similarly, Reicher and Hopkins analyses of category construction, sepcificaly in the the context of national identity, illustare how the traditional way of treating social identities as a list of attributes can be misleading (Reicher & Hopkins, 2001a, 2001b). With their Interactive Model of Identity Formtion (IMIF), Postmes and colleagues stressed how, regardless of group size, social identity can be actively (re) shaped through communication and intercations (Postmes, Haslam, & Swaab, 2005; Postmes, Spears, Lee, & Novak, 2005). Rather than considering that there is a fundemental difference in the nature of groups, the model assumes that there are two pathways for the formation of group identity, and that any group can have more or less deductive identity (defined as what differentiates the group from the background within an

intergroup context) and inductive identity (constructed through communications and contributions of group members).

Additionally, Postmes, Jetten and their colleagues have particularly contributed in balancing the lack of elaboration in initial formulation of self-categorization theory of the question of individuality and distinctiveness *within the group*. Part of this contribution consisted in showing that highly identified individuals can show high personal agency. Therefore, contrary to a view of personal and group identity as antagonistic, acting (and feeling) as a group member and acting as a distinctive person can work simultaneously in many ways (Hornsey & Jetten, 2004; Jetten & Hornsey, 2011; Postmes & Jetten, 2006). This argument has been further developed in Jans dissertation thesis (2013), where she suggests that individual distinctiveness and groupness are in many ways complementary (particularly for groups formed by the contribution of their members), and showed how distinctiveness can *strengthen* group cohesiveness through bottom-up group formation processes. These research lines provided a considerable amount of evidence for the idea that, even from a social identity perspective, the personal/distinctive self needs not to be shifted to the background in order for group membership to be important for behaviour and emotions.

Our approach converges with these developments in questioning the antagonism between individuality and group membership. We also don't think that because groups differ in their size that we need different psychologies for small and larger groups. Like the IMIF, our theoretical approach is based on the distinction between two routes to groupness that can apply simultaneously to the same group independently of its size, rather than two types of groups. Therefore, we don't think that a dynamic route is relevant only for small groups interacting in intragroup contexts and in which all members necessarily know each other *personally*, while the social identity processes are only relevant for large social categories and in intergroup contexts. We argue that interdependence processes operate also in the context of

large-scale groups and our qualitative data has indeed provided many illustrations of the interplay between categorically shared social characteristics (e.g., common origin), and an expectation of reciprocity and mutual understanding.

Yet, our theoretical approach can be criticized for being too focused on intragroup processes and overlooking the relevance of intergroup processes and contexts. The importance we gave to interpersonal relations stems from our aim to balance the focus on cognitive processes of intergroup differentiation and depersonalized self-percetions as exclusive explanations of group formation, by a reconsideration of classical explanations based on interdependence processes. However, even if this view gives precedence to solidary and cohesive relations as markers of group formation, it should be noted that an analysis in terms of interdependence processes is not relevant only at the intragroup level, but also at the intergroup level of analysis. Indeed, intergroup contexts making salient the illegitimate disadvantage of the self-category can lead to perceived negative interdependence with an out-group and/or positive interdependence with similarly categorized others, stimulating in both cases solidary intragroup relations, and in turn, group formation.

The development within the social identity approach we discussed stressed how social identity and self-categorization processes can apply equally well to small interactive groups and large social entities. Taking this claim further, we wanted to stress that a view of groupness based on interdependence processes and dissociated from positive distinctiveness and depersonalization processes can also apply both to proximal and large-scale social entities. That is, while these solutions are formulated within the social identity framework and through making social identities more dynamic (Postmes, Spears, Lee, & Novak, 2005), and self-categorization process more agentic (Reicher, 2004), our approach points out the limits that may result from adopting the categorical framework as the exclusive perspective to groupness, specially in unequal status relations.

The need to go beyond the categorical perspective to group formation stems particularly from the inconvenience it presents of taking the intra-individual cognitive processes at the expense of between-person pattern and level of inter-relatedness as the unit of analysis. By defining the cognitive process of self-categorization as the sovereign principle, this framework hides in our view a key element in psychological group formation among disadvantaged group members, which is their interdependence in form of common fate in a system that disadvantages them and the resulting mutual need for responsiveness (i.e., acceptance, understanding and support) in the context of their everyday coping efforts. A disadvantaged group is a large-scale category that evolves in a macro-level context, but at the same time, it is a number of persons interacting, communicating, and struggling to cope with direct consequences of their membership in their lives, both symbolic and material.

Understanding the formation and the role of ingroups for disadvantaged group members requires a thorough consideration of the interplay between these two levels: the unequal intergroup relations at the macro-level and the relational-level of intragroup ties. We offered one way to conceive the articulation between these two levels with our hypothesis that the stratifications operating at the macro-level expose those at the disadvantaged side to particular experiences, to which a psychological sense of unity and groupness at the local-level would be functional. It is however important to consider other approaches in the literature that offered other ways to conceive the articulation between the structural level of unequal status and the intragroup relational level.

Dechamps's co-variation hypothesis (Deschamps, 1984) and Lorenzi-Cioldi's distinction between collection and aggregate groups (Lorenzi-Cioldi, 1995) are key approaches, that can both be seen as a qualification of self-categorization theory's formulation of the link between intergroup differentiation and within group relations. In its initial formulation, self-categorization theory postulated a direct link between the salience of

structural intergroup differences and intragroup homogeneity/cohesiveness (the salience principle). Dechamps qualified this link by considering that the interplay between intergroup- and intragroup- levels will take different forms according to group status. In his co-variation hypothesis, he considered that inter-category differentiation is associated with intra-category assimilation/homogeneity as predicted in the initial formulation of self-categorization theory only for members of disadvantaged groups. What he predicted and found for members of advantaged groups is that the salience of intergroup differentiation is associated with intra-catgeory *differentiation* rather than *assimilation*. Therefore, intra-category relations should be qualified as a function of social status. Fabio-Lorenzi Cioldi distinction between collections and aggregate groups is an elaboration of this idea. According to him, there is a difference in the nature of within-group relations, that is in the nature of groups, according to status: advantaged groups are a collection of highly differentiated, separated, individuals who are more prone to individualistic tendencies, while disadvantaged groups are often composed of undifferentiated individuals who have a preference for collectivistic tendencies.

Those approaches are important in highlighting how asymmetric status relations shape the interplay between intergroup processes and internal relations within the group. However, in line with the social identity framework, they take salient inter-category differentiation as their starting point and depersonalization (i.e., a shift toward perception of self in terms of group prototypes as an interchangeable member of a category, and away from the perception of the self as a unique person) as the process *explaining* psychological group formation. They thus give the importance to the socio-structural variables of the intergroup-context (e.g., salience of group features in comparative contexts, relative status, permeability of boundaries) in shaping individuals' perceptions of themselves in terms of abstract categories and advance varying predictions regarding the nature of the resulting intra-category relations. Therefore,

they give precedence in psychological group formation to the structural, macro-level differentiations, over the relational internal ties.

On the contrary, our understanding considers that a key mechanism of psychological group formation among disadvantaged groups' members is their relational interdependence in the context of coping with the everyday experiences linked to their membership in disadvantaged groups. We consider that the stressors and experiences linked to membership in a disadvantaged social category, because they are resistant to individual efforts and often exceed individual resources, create a need for a context of mutual concern, understanding, and commitment to each other's welfare. This context can be achieved within varying scale groups and needs not necessarily originate from a direct internalization of the categories and the dimensions made salient by intergroup comparisons at the structural level. Thus, we think that understanding why disadvantaged group members are more inclined to groupness and collective tendencies requires to go beyond the mere focus on the salient features of the social structure and the parameters of intergroup contexts and to give sufficient attention to the vulnerabilities and interdependencies that characterize their direct contexts. We consider that cohesive intragroup ties can develop in the direct contexts of everyday efforts of coping with structurally induced stressors, take place within the context of varying scale groups (including but not limiting to large-scale categories), and interact with the more or less realistic understanding of the macro-level sources of these stressors[19].

Our approach gives precedence to the relational dimension of cohesive and solidary relations not only in the understanding of how groupness emerges but also in how the role of ingroups is conceived. This is in some way similar to Baumeister and Leary's evolutionist approach according to which the advantage of group membership is understood in terms of

[19] Thts is, we see the relational dimension and the ideological awareness of illegitimate disadvantage as two dimensions that develop in parallel and influence each other.

the network of ties they afford and the adaptive role of these ties (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). The theory posits that humans are fundamentally motivated to have positive interactions with others "in the context of a temporally stable and enduring framework of affective concern for each other's welfare" (p. 497). Therefore, the role of ingroups from this perspective is to provide a context of mutual concern and caring for each other needs, which is very similar to our position. However, the theory considers group belongingness to be a universal need while in our approach we examine how it could be particularly needed for coping with the stressors linked to membership in socially disadvantaged groups. Individuals who are exposed to structural stressors, resistant to their individual efforts (i.e., societal devaluation and restricted structure of opportunities), may be more strongly motivated to join groups and build bonds of mutual concern. In support to this idea, Baumeister & Leary's litterture review (1995) suggests that under conditions of scarcity, lack of resources and threat, the need for group belongingness is stimulated. One's position in the social structure give to some individuals many occasions to realize the importance to build contexts of mutual concern with surrounding others, and give to others the impression that they are independent and self-sufficient.

Practical implications.

The findings of these studies have practical implications for the ways in which the costs and stressors associated with membership in a disadvantaged group should be examined. By documenting structurally induced differences in perceived barriers and exposure to social injustice in the context of education and career opportunities (paper one and three), the results point out the importance of the contextualization of the social experience. Specifically, studies that examine the consequences of group membership should take into consideration the particular life-tasks individual members are dealing with in particular periods of their life-course and the ways in which multiple group memberships interplay to shape the experiences

they have to deal with. Given this need, qualitative data can be very useful for understanding the social contexts in which individuals' experiences and coping efforts take place. Using qualitative data in our project has been particularly informative in understanding the ways in which memberships in socially disadvantaged groups can overlap, and interfere with the achievement of personal needs and goals of group members, and the complexity of the process through which individuals give meaning to, and deal with, these experiences. The use of both quantitative and qualitative explorations can also be very valuable, so that each method can enrich and complement the weakness of the other, as for example qualitative analyses in paper three helped interpreting the quantitative results by giving access to a rich and deep subjective experience.

Both the first and third papers highlighted the importance of a sense of groupness as a valuable coping resource for the particular experiences youth from socially disadvantaged groups face, calling therefore for renewed youth policies. For instance, the results showing the importance of groupness for efficacy-beliefs (and the importance of such beliefs when one faces structural constraints to choices and opportunities) have key implications for youth programs which aim at strengthening disadvantaged youth's sense of agency and autonomy. While a view of autonomy and agency as requiring self-reliance and independence from others has been at the core of most youth programs, our results suggest that the capacity to bind with others in meaningful psychological units is particularly important for the most disadvantaged as a key ingredient for negotiating the structural constraints they are likely to face. Their sense of control and agency in their environment can therefore be strengthened rather than lowered by the connections they are able to build with others who share their experiences. Consequently, interventions should identify and support the construction of such connections and reorient them when the practical consequences of particular group-identity contents are not desirable, for example when they are defined in terms of negative relations

with non-members (Livingstone & Haslam, 2008) or associated with undesirable behavioural intentions (e.g., substance use, smoking and risky behaviour).

The approach developed and validated in this dissertation emphasizes the importance of groupness for the every-day struggles of disadvantaged group members. The consequences of such an approach at the methodological-level need to be discussed. One important implication of this approach is that research on unequal intergroup relations should go beyond the prevailing focus on pre-defined large-scale categories and allow participants more freedom to reveal which psychological units, that is which groupings, are meaningful to them. Researchers should also be able to acknowledge the potential role of these units as *real and agentic social entities* even when they are different from the categories they *knew* were relevant based on their own understanding of the objective intergroup relations. These units can be as we have seen in the results of the first and third papers nested in larger categories (e.g., naturalized foreigners) or cross-cutting categories (e.g., Africans) but have despite their varying content and scales, the same buffering effect as a glue that link together by norms of mutual responding individuals facing similar life conditions and constraints. Reicher & Hopkins (2001) have warned earlier from the conservative political consequences of a general tendency in measures used both in stereotypes and intergroup-relations research to impose pre-defined categories (e.g., racial categories) on participants as if these categories were "self-evident". Their concern was that always treating them as such—when many other possibilities for shaping ingroup boundaries are possible—contributes to categories' reification and in turn to conserving the status quo.

We have avoided this inconvenience in our methodology by involving, unlike previous examinations of group-based empowerment, groups of various sizes ranging from relational groups to membership in large social categories. The promising results and the uncertainties linked to the measures we used call for further development of strategies and methodologies

which allows us to account for the complex process through which individuals construe a valuable sense of "We-ness" by shaping boundaries at different levels and translating their experiences into a different consciousness.

The findings of the second paper have important implications for the social psychological research on antecedents of social change in unequal status relations and how this question can be approached. While prevailing models of social change are either focused on improving intergroup-relations (prejudice reduction models, e.g., Gaertner & Dovidio, 2000) or on the political struggles of disadvantaged groups to change the macro-level structure (i.e., collective action models; Drury & Reicher, 2009; Van Zomeren, Spears, & Leach, 2008), the results of the second paper point out the relevance of a less explored meso-level of analyses focusing on every-day interactions and the structure and strength of interpersonal relations among disadvantaged group members in their local contexts. Indeed, one key result of this study was that a proximal sense of connectedness, that is the strength of interpersonal ties to groups directly surrounding the individual (family, friends and peers) is a strong predictor of social change commitment both directly and indirectly through a bottom-up sense of collective-efficacy. This proximal-level of bonds has often been neglected at the expense of the centrality of (politicized) large-scale group identification in collective action literature. The results of this paper suggest that the politically oriented understanding of the role of group identities that prevails in social change literature can benefit from integrating the bonding view outlined in this study. Individuals build their understanding of the world and possibilities to act in it from their day-to-day experiences involving interactions with members of proximal groups and local members of large-scale groups. Because individuals live most their lives in intragroup contexts, we think that internal relations deserve much more attention than what we did until now, and it is precisely this void that our perspective offers to complete.

Limitations of the present research

We will discuss in this section some general limitations of the present research. First, we should clearly acknowledge the correlational nature of our data and the fact that no firm causal links can be claimed from our results. Correlational data and field studies are very rich and promising, and unlike laboratory experiments, they allow to account for real-world patterns and for the cumulative effects of personal and collective history. They however present several inherent limitations, like the issue of social desirability and validity of self-reported measures, the question of causality, and whether the results hold true in different social contexts. Further explorations in different contexts and longitudinal research able to test causal hypotheses are needed to complement this work and investigate more systematically the promising associations that the studies point out.

Certainly, a main shortcoming of this work is the relatively poor psychometric properties of some measures, specifically in the first paper where for example coping efficacy was measured using a single item. As we explained in the introduction, data for these studies has been collected as part of a collaborative project involving several researches. A main challenge of the data collection was to integrate the measures aimed at addressing the research questions of various researchers in an easy reading and well-structured questionnaire within the limits of a reasonable length. In the second wave of data collection we tried to have at least two items for each corresponding construct, but we were rarely able to include without adaptation existing scales, or to use more than two items for a given dimension, apart from the 5-items self-esteem scale, which was a central construct used by different researchers and for different research questions. These constraints have been imposed by the nature of our project as a collaborative project, and as a field study among vulnerable populations who are not familiar with the task of responding to psychological scales and of whom many have low language mastery.

Another limitation concerns the sample itself. Being able to have a mixed sample reflecting the diversity of pathways characteristic of this age period was a great advantage of this project. However, collecting the data in different sites, with different institutional constraints, and managing a composite database was not an easy work. Additionally, the test of some hypotheses was complicated by the different dimensions of social position on which it was possible to compare participants, and the overlap between institutional affiliations and professional/vocational status (for example between the preparatory vocational school and the municipality both hosting apprentices but providing them with different contextual climates). As a result, we had to engage in attentive reflections on the appropriate dimensions of comparison and of control. The complexity of the sample also precluded the possibility to appropriately make some relevant comparisons because of the low number of participants in a given group or the largely unequal groups size when particular comparisons are done.

Another point that should be addressed is the use of an adapted Twenty Statements Test (TST) and the reservations linked to its interpretation. In the first paper we used and adapted the TST measure by asking participants to define themselves in terms of their meaningful social affiliations and used their responses in order to distinguish between individuals with a bonded vs. un-bonded sense of self. The rationale behind the choice and adaptation of this measure was that it is a commonly used self-concept measure that allows participants to freely describe the identities meaningful to them in their own worlds. Acknowledging this strong point, we should not ignore the uncertainties into the interpretation of the results that it triggers. We examined in the discussion of the first paper alternative interpretations of the results and we were able to rule out the most plausible one thanks to the available data from the project appraisal scale, which also provided some support to our interpretation. The idea beyond using this measure, that is, to assess one's overall sense of "we" (groupness) without imposing a predefined group, is promising and central for our approach but needs to be

supported by the use of other strategies that allow us to assess the existence and the importance of a sense of "We-ness" for one's self-concept.

Future directions

This dissertation has offered some steps toward an integration of the asymmetric intergroup literature and the interpersonal relationships literature and argued for the necessity of such integration to better understand the functional role of psychological groupness among disadvantaged group members. We argued specifically that the study of the challenges faced by disadvantaged group members and their adaptation efforts requires we consider the macro-level of unequal intergroup-relations and their concrete consequences in the lives of the disadvantaged, but also to focus on the nature of the interactions and relationships in their local contexts, and how these two levels interact in shaping their experiences and coping efforts.

The difficulty to integrate these two levels stems from the general fragmentation in social psychological literature between the group literature dominated by social-identity approach and the interpersonal relationships literature (with some exceptions; e.g., Deaux & Martin, 2003; Deaux, Reid, & Mizrahi, 1999). There have been recently calls for such integration (e.g., the research project on *Integrating group and personality processes* (2006-2010) awarded to Reynolds et. al), but the mission is just in its beginning. Relatedly, the field of social psychology is marked by a surprising lack of integration between research on intragroup and intergroup processes despite their common focus on groups as noted by Dovidio's (2013) in his recent landmark article. As we did in this dissertation, the article discusses the fruitfulness of investing more efforts in this direction.

The realization of this integration requires in our view further development of innovative methodologies that allow to study enduring human relations within the context of various sized groups and to recognize the temporal nature of relationship phenomena and the

dynamic nature of groups as continually shaped by human interactions. While several methodological advances have allowed a systematic study of the cognitive and perceptual processes linked to categorization processes, the study of interactions that extend over time and transform interpersonal structures of relations is much more complicated and the methodologies allowing it much less advanced. The interdependence perspective provides in our view a basis on which to begin such a project, but the existing conceptual and methodological tools are much more focused on dyadic relations and small task-oriented groups than on how we can study macro-level interdependencies and the ways they manifest in people's lives and transform in self-conscious realities. Here again, integration between interpersonal processes on the one hand and categorization processes on the other, and the development of new methodologies allowing for the study of their interplay, are strongly needed.

Through this dissertation, we have argued for the central role that a sense of psychological groupness may play in the process of coping with structural disadvantage, which is hardly a new argument. We think that apart from providing further support for the centrality of groupness for the struggles of the most disadvantaged as has been repeatedly done, this thesis is interesting because it challenges the dominant understanding of the processes underlying the emergence of groupness out of the situation of structural disadvantage. Therefore, the contribution of this dissertation does not stem only from the empirical support it provides for the beneficial role ingroups can have for psychological and social functioning, but also from challenging the categorical framework as the exclusive valid framework in which to understand group formation and group role in the context of coping with structural disadvantage.

The importance of challenging this framework as the exclusive valid one stems from the understanding of group identification as contingent on self-categorization (and intergroup

comparisons) it advances, and the risk it thus presents of associating groupness—even if not intended by the theory—with negative social phenomena of stereotypes and intergroup conflict[20] and with an inevitable loss of individuality and self-direction highly valuable in our societies. Given the central role that a sense of psychological groupness may play in coping with structural disadvantage and a general fear of groups in our societies, researchers concerned with challenging inequalities have the responsibility of dissociating the idea of groupness from the negativity associated with it within our discipline. In our view, an important step toward the achievement of this aim relies on our capacity to elaborate group conceptions that do not deprive self-direction and individuality, and which are not contingent on the existence of an excluded other. In so far as pre-defined categories continue to be used interchangeably with psychological groups and relative similarity continues to be seen as the necessary condition for groupness, we think that self-categorization based research unintentionally sustains, against the interests of the most disadvantaged, a general fear of groups. This appears sufficiently ironic when we consider that the initial project of Turner when he started to be interested in groups "was a reactive project in the sense of rejecting all the various ways in which social psychology tells us that groups are bad for us"(Reicher, Haslam, & Reynolds, 2012, p. 203). Further efforts within the social identity approach to emphasize the dynamic and agentic nature of self-categories are no doubt required, but they should also be complemented by efforts to go beyond the categorical framework of groupness, and this is what this dissertation has done when it reconsidered the fruitfulness of recognizing interdependent relations as a separate route to groupness.

[20] The association between groupness and negative social phenomena stems in part from the idea that individuals' pursuit of positive distinctiveness may lead them in some conditions to derogate and prejudice against outgroups. It is noteworthy that categorization processes are central to stereotyping and prejudice literature, and that this centrality owes much to the idea derived from SIT that a motivational benefit (positive distinctiveness) can be derived from intergoup differentiation.

Conclusion

The theoretical discussions and empirical findings from the present dissertation make several contributions to the research literature:

(1.) First, regarding the way structural disadvantage has been examined within social psychological literature, this thesis points out a promising avenue for new research, which consists of more integration with life-course perspective and the conceptual tools it provides. Such integration can be, as suggested by the results of this thesis, an effective way of expanding the traditional focus on merely symbolic aspects of structural disadvantage toward a greater consideration of its concrete constraining effect on life-course opportunities and outcomes.

(2.) Second, the sociological literature on life-course transitions and their interplay with structural disadvantage recognizes the centrality of interpersonal relationships (for example within the context of the family, social networks and local communities) as a resilience factor, operating mainly through the process of social support (Hitlin & Elder, 2006; Thoits, 2006). The notion of psychological groupness could complement and expand this literature in a promising way. For instance, the human capacity to psychologically form groups of various sizes dissociates the shift toward responsiveness and mutual support from interpersonal knowing, and allows us to consider forms of connectedness between individuals who meet for the first time, based on their shared belief of belonging together (we-bonds). Therefore, category awareness can through both social-identity processes and interdependency beliefs result in a sense of groupness in the absence of any interpersonal knowing, which can in turn change individuals appraisal of their coping resources and options. Additionally, and as has been highlighted by results of paper one, psychological groupness operates through lasting cognitive and emotional changes in the self and associated changes in psychological resources

(i.e., efficacy beliefs) that go beyond the mere reception or expectation of social support from others.

(3.) This thesis has made an important step toward a needed integration within the field of social psychology between interpersonal relationships literature and unequal group relations (and between intragoup and intergroup literatures). We think that more efforts need to be engaged in this direction.

The idea that a sense of social unity among individuals facing structural stressors is central for coping regardless of the particular group identity content on which it is based can probably provide a parsimonious account of various findings in independent literatures: Why individuals who report an achieved ethnic identity are better equipped to deal with acculturation demands and discrimination in the context of immigration and national minority status (Phinney et al., 2001; Syed, Azmitia, & Phinney, 2007)? Why having racial identity as central is protective for African American well-being in the context of racial discrimination (Neblett, Shelton, & Sellers, 2004; Sellers, Caldwell, Schmeelk-Cone, & Zimmerman, 2003)? Why disadvantaged group members show greater collective tendencies and greater group identification in unequal intergroup contexts (Iacoviello & Lorenzi-Cioldi, 2014; Karasawa et al., 2004)? And why members of lower social class show interdependent models of self (Grossmann & Varnum, 2011; Stephens, Fryberg, Markus, & Johnson, 2012) and value communal relations more than members of higher social classes (Kraus & Piff, 2012; Piff et al., 2010).

Our argument that a sense of groupness in disadvantaged persons' direct contexts is important *per se* and that it can have different basis, inevitably gives rise to the question: with whom a sense of groupness is likely to develop so as to be effective in coping with structural disadvantage? We advanced a perspective that goes beyond the dominant focus of existing socio-psychological studies on cognitive and perceptive processes of (self-) categorization.

By discussing both the category-based perspective to groupness exemplified by the social identity tradition, and the relations-based perspective illustrated by the interdependence framework, and articulating both perspectives with the structural dimension, we outlined the advantages of acknowledging and further understanding routes to groupness that are not based exclusively on outgroup differentiation and self-categorization processes.

Because structural disadvantage is the manifestation of the objective position of a social category in the bottom of the social structure, many of its aspects are shared among members of different categories. It is true that often the mere awareness of common category membership may be accompanied by beliefs about similar experiences and triggers both through self-categorization processes and interdependency beliefs a sense of psychological groupness and expected responsiveness, but individuals from different disadvantaged categories interacting with each other can also acknowledge similarities in their experiences beyond categorical (ethnic, cultural, religious or gender) lines. Additionally, any category can be divided into subcategories with different degrees of disadvantage, and the sharing of category membership is sometimes not sufficient as a trigger of responsiveness and group formation (for example immigrants from the same country can be divided into rich and poor immigrants having totally opposite experiences in the hosting country). It is then important not to impose pre-defined categorical boundaries on the groups we study as psychological resources of coping with structural disadvantage. Experiences of structural disadvantage (i.e., perceived structural barriers to one's choices, perceived rejection by the majority, being categorized against one's will) go beyond categorical lines and so are the possibilities of groupness that can develop as a response to them.

It is indeed important to acknowledge that salient social categories are not, through the dimension of comparisons and the group boundaries they make salient, the exclusive originator of a sense of groupness. The relations-based route recognizes the possibility of

emergent forms of groupness out of individuals' commitment to relationships with each other in the context of their everyday struggles. If we conceive the possibilities of groupness only as correlates of existing categories that shape the current unjust structure, it is difficult to find a way out of the reproduction of this mere reality. As Gouldner has noted decades before: "People are continually brought together in new juxtapositions and combinations, bringing with them the possibilities of new social systems" (Gouldner, 1960, p. 177). Only when we attribute to experiences, interactions and felt interdependence of goals and projects the power to originate new forms of groupness that a social reality organized differently becomes possible.

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Appendix 1

Items included in the different scales (Original French version)

Financial worries

VOS PRÉOCCUPATIONS

Dans quelle mesure les situations suivantes constituent-elles une préoccupation pour vous aujourd'hui ?

	Cela ne me préoccupe pas du tout	Cela me préoccupe un peu	Cela me préoccupe assez	Cela me préoccupe fortement
1. Ne pas avoir suffisamment d'argent pour couvrir les dépenses courantes, pour payer des factures, le loyer ou la nourriture (vous ou votre famille).	❒1	❒2	❒3	❒4
2. Avoir besoin de l'aide sociale, des indemnités de chômage ou d'autres aides institutionnelles (vous ou votre famille).	❒1	❒2	❒3	❒4

Self-Esteem and Coping-efficacy

VOUS-MÊME

Comment vous voyez-vous personnellement ?

	Non, pas du tout	Non	Plutôt non	Plutôt oui	Oui	Oui, tout à fait
1. Dans l'ensemble, je suis satisfait-e de moi-même.	❒1	❒2	❒3	❒4	❒5	❒6
2. J'ai confiance en ma capacité à surmonter mes problèmes personnels.	❒1	❒2	❒3	❒4	❒5	❒6
3. Je pense que j'ai beaucoup de qualités.	❒1	❒2	❒3	❒4	❒5	❒6
4. Mes conditions de vie sont bonnes.	❒1	❒2	❒3	❒4	❒5	❒6
5. Généralement, je me sens bien dans ma peau.	❒1	❒2	❒3	❒4	❒5	❒6
6. Je suis satisfait-e de ma vie.	❒1	❒2	❒3	❒4	❒5	❒6
7. A chaque problème j'arrive à trouver une solution.	❒1	❒2	❒3	❒4	❒5	❒6
8. Je suis satisfait-e de mon apparence corporelle.	❒1	❒2	❒3	❒4	❒5	❒6
9. Parfois, je pense que je ne vaux pas grand-chose.	❒1	❒2	❒3	❒4	❒5	❒6

Self-Esteem was measured with the 5 items: 1, 3, 5, 8 and 9(reversed). Perceived coping-efficacy was measured using the single item number 2 in paper 1 and items 2&7 in paper 2. Life satisfaction items (5 & 6) were not used in this dissertation.

Important Project and project appraisals

VOS PROJETS

*Nous nous intéressons maintenant à vos **projets pour l'avenir**.*

Quels sont les projets que vous aimeriez réaliser dans les années à venir ?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

*Maintenant nous vous demandons d'**entourer le projet le plus important** pour vous.*

En pensant à ce projet, veuillez indiquer votre degré d'accord avec les propositions suivantes

	Pas du tout d'accord	Pas d'accord	Plutôt pas d'accord	Plutôt d'accord	D'accord	Tout à fait d'accord
1. Je pourrai probablement réaliser ce projet.	❒1	❒2	❒3	❒4	❒5	❒6
2. Je sais ce que je dois faire pour réaliser ce projet.	❒1	❒2	❒3	❒4	❒5	❒6
3. Je trouve que ce projet est stressant.	❒1	❒2	❒3	❒4	❒5	❒6
4. Je trouve que ce projet est difficile à réaliser.	❒1	❒2	❒3	❒4	❒5	❒6
5. Ma famille et mes amis me soutiennent dans la réalisation de ce projet.	❒1	❒2	❒3	❒4	❒5	❒6
6. Ce projet est important pour moi.	❒1	❒2	❒3	❒4	❒5	❒6
7. Malgré mes efforts, beaucoup d'obstacles m'empêchent de réaliser ce projet.	❒1	❒2	❒3	❒4	❒5	❒6

Adapted TST

QUI SUIS-JE ?

*La société dans laquelle nous vivons est composée de **groupes** avec des cultures, des origines et des styles de vie différents.*
Nous faisons tous partie de différents groupes que nous utilisons pour décrire qui nous sommes. Par exemple, « je suis » vaudois-e, musicien-ne, apprenti-e, etc.

En pensant aux groupes dont vous faites partie, nous vous demandons de répondre trois fois à la question : « Qui suis-je ? »

Veuillez écrire les trois groupes qui décrivent le mieux qui vous êtes.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

*Maintenant nous vous demandons d'**entourer le groupe le plus important pour vous**.*

Discrimination

DISCRIMINATION

*Dans une société, certains groupes peuvent être moins bien vus, moins bien traités ou avoir moins de chances (par ex. pour le travail ou la formation) que d'autres. On parle alors de **groupes discriminés**.*

Vous-même, est-ce que vous faites partie d'un groupe qui selon vous est moins bien traité que d'autres groupes dans la société suisse ?

❒$_1$ Oui, *précisez lequel :* _____ ❒$_0$ Non

Needs responsiveness: Help and recognition

VOTRE ENTOURAGE

Dans quelle mesure les propositions suivantes vous correspondent-elles ?

	Non, pas du tout	Non	Plutôt non	Plutôt oui	Oui	Oui, tout à fait
1. Il y a des personnes qui me proposent leur aide quand j'en ai besoin.	❒$_1$	❒$_2$	❒$_3$	❒$_4$	❒$_5$	❒$_6$
2. Quand j'ai des soucis, il y a quelqu'un pour m'aider.	❒$_1$	❒$_2$	❒$_3$	❒$_4$	❒$_5$	❒$_6$
3. Au sein de mon entourage, je me sens reconnu-e.	❒$_1$	❒$_2$	❒$_3$	❒$_4$	❒$_5$	❒$_6$
4. Au sein de mon entourage, je me sens aimé-e.	❒$_1$	❒$_2$	❒$_3$	❒$_4$	❒$_5$	❒$_6$

Items 1&2 measure instrumental needs (help) and items 3&4 symbolic needs (recognition).

Ingroup connectedness

Nous souhaitons connaître les liens que vous entretenez avec votre entourage. Indiquez à quel point les affirmations suivantes vous correspondent.

		Non, pas du tout	Non	Plutôt non	Plutôt oui	Oui	Oui, tout à fait
1.	Je suis très attaché-e à ma famille.	❒1	❒2	❒3	❒4	❒5	❒6
2.	J'ai des liens forts avec ma famille.	❒1	❒2	❒3	❒4	❒5	❒6
3.	Je suis très attaché-e à mes amis.	❒1	❒2	❒3	❒4	❒5	❒6
4.	J'ai des liens forts avec mes amis.	❒1	❒2	❒3	❒4	❒5	❒6
5.	Je suis très attaché-e aux autres apprentis.	❒1	❒2	❒3	❒4	❒5	❒6
6.	J'ai des liens forts avec les autres apprentis.	❒1	❒2	❒3	❒4	❒5	❒6

Collective efficacy and social change commitment

AGIR DANS LA SOCIÉTÉ

Veuillez indiquer à quel point vous êtes d'accord avec les affirmations suivantes.

		Pas du tout d'accord	Pas d'accord	Plutôt pas d'accord	Plutôt d'accord	D'accord	Tout à fait d'accord
1.	En travaillant ensemble, les personnes les plus défavorisées peuvent contribuer à réduire les inégalités qu'elles subissent.	❒1	❒2	❒3	❒4	❒5	❒6
2.	En étant unies et solidaires, les personnes les plus défavorisées peuvent participer à réduire les préjugés à leur égard.	❒1	❒2	❒3	❒4	❒5	❒6
3.	Chacun doit faire de son mieux pour le bien de la communauté.	❒1	❒2	❒3	❒4	❒5	❒6
4.	Chacun doit consacrer une partie de son temps/de son énergie pour le bien de la communauté.	❒1	❒2	❒3	❒4	❒5	❒6
5.	Je suis prêt-e à m'engager pour que les gens soient tous traités avec le même respect et aient les mêmes opportunités.	❒1	❒2	❒3	❒4	❒5	❒6

	Pas du tout d'accord	Pas d'accord	Plutôt pas d'accord	Plutôt d'accord	D'accord	Tout à fait d'accord
6. Je suis prêt-e à m'investir pour une société plus juste, où les différences dans les niveaux de vie seraient plus petites.	❒1	❒2	❒3	❒4	❒5	❒6

Collective efficacy was measured using items 1 and 2. Social change commitement was measured with items 5 and 6. Civic responsibility (items 3 and 4) were not used in this dissertation.

Appendix 2

Complete 2012's and 2013's questionnaires (Original French version)

Appendix 2.1: 2012's questionnaire

Projet EXPERIENCES

Bonjour,

Comme nous vous l'avons dit, nous avons besoin de vous pour réaliser notre étude sur les **expériences, les difficultés et les projets d'avenir des jeunes**. C'est pourquoi nous vous demandons maintenant de répondre à un petit questionnaire. Nous espérons que ce questionnaire vous encouragera à poursuivre votre participation à notre étude.

Dans ce questionnaire, il n'y a pas de « bonnes » ou de « mauvaises » réponses. Ce qui nous intéresse, c'est **ce que vous pensez vous-même, votre avis personnel**.

Nous allons vous demander **votre nom et vos coordonnées de contact**, car nous souhaitons suivre vos projets et votre parcours. Nous vous garantissons que **vos réponses seront traitées de façon confidentielle** par les seuls membres de notre équipe. Bien entendu, vous pourrez aussi les obtenir et ainsi voir **l'évolution de votre parcours**.

Vous êtes bien sûr libre de répondre ou non à chacune des questions.

Nous vous **remercions d'avance** de votre collaboration et nous espérons **pouvoir compter sur votre participation pour la suite de l'étude.**

Les membres de l'équipe,

Christian Staerklé, Alain Clémence, Véronique Eicher, Mouna Bakouri, Marlène Barbosa

Pour nous contacter : contact@ProjetExperiences.ch

Attention à ne pas sauter des pages, le questionnaire est recto-verso !

LIVES
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VOTRE FORMATION

Pour commencer, nous vous demandons d'indiquer quelle formation professionnelle vous suivez actuellement :

_____

Voici quelques propositions sur la formation que vous êtes en train de suivre. Pour chacune d'elles, indiquez votre degré d'accord en cochant la réponse qui correspond le mieux à votre avis.

	Pas du tout d'accord	Pas d'accord	Plutôt pas d'accord	Plutôt d'accord	D'accord	Tout à fait d'accord
1. Je suis cette formation avec enthousiasme.	❒1	❒2	❒3	❒4	❒5	❒6
2. Je suis très intéressé-e par ma formation.	❒1	❒2	❒3	❒4	❒5	❒6
3. J'ai beaucoup d'énergie pour suivre ma formation.	❒1	❒2	❒3	❒4	❒5	❒6
4. Je ne suis pas très motivé-e et je pense souvent à abandonner ma formation.	❒1	❒2	❒3	❒4	❒5	❒6
5. Je me fais du souci pour ma formation.	❒1	❒2	❒3	❒4	❒5	❒6
6. Je me demande à quoi sert ma formation.	❒1	❒2	❒3	❒4	❒5	❒6
7. Je me sens dépassé-e par ma formation.	❒1	❒2	❒3	❒4	❒5	❒6
8. J'aime bien suivre cette formation.	❒1	❒2	❒3	❒4	❒5	❒6

QUI SUIS-JE ?

*La société dans laquelle nous vivons est composée de **groupes** avec des cultures, des origines et des styles de vie différents.*

Nous faisons tous partie de différents groupes que nous utilisons pour décrire qui nous sommes. Par exemple, « je suis » vaudois-e, musicien-ne, apprenti-e, etc.

En pensant aux groupes dont vous faites partie, nous vous demandons de répondre trois fois à la question : « Qui suis-je ? »

Veuillez écrire les trois groupes qui décrivent le mieux qui vous êtes.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

*Maintenant nous vous demandons d'**entourer le groupe le plus important pour vous**.*

En pensant à ce groupe, veuillez indiquer votre accord avec les propositions suivantes :

		Pas du tout d'accord	Pas d'accord	Plutôt pas d'accord	Plutôt d'accord	D'accord	Tout à fait d'accord
1.	Je suis fièr-e de faire partie de ce groupe.	❒1	❒2	❒3	❒4	❒5	❒6
2.	Je suis très attaché-e à ce groupe.	❒1	❒2	❒3	❒4	❒5	❒6
3.	Je pense souvent au fait que je fais partie de ce groupe.	❒1	❒2	❒3	❒4	❒5	❒6
4.	Ce groupe influence ma manière de voir les choses.	❒1	❒2	❒3	❒4	❒5	❒6

DISCRIMINATION

Dans une société, certains groupes peuvent être moins bien vus, moins bien traités ou avoir moins de chances (par ex. pour le travail ou la formation) que d'autres. On parle alors de ***groupes discriminés****.*

Vous-même, est-ce que vous faites partie d'un groupe qui selon vous est moins bien traité que d'autres groupes dans la société suisse ?

❒$_1$ Oui, *précisez lequel :* _____ ❒$_0$ Non

Si vous avez indiqué un groupe, veuillez indiquer votre accord avec les propositions suivantes.

	Pas du tout d'accord	Pas d'accord	Plutôt pas d'accord	Plutôt d'accord	D'accord	Tout à fait d'accord
1. Personnellement, je me sens traité-e différemment parce que je suis membre de ce groupe.	❒$_1$	❒$_2$	❒$_3$	❒$_4$	❒$_5$	❒$_6$
2. Je subis des commentaires négatifs parce que je suis membre de ce groupe (par ex. insultes ou blagues).	❒$_1$	❒$_2$	❒$_3$	❒$_4$	❒$_5$	❒$_6$
3. Parce que je fais partie de ce groupe, j'aurai des difficultés pour trouver un emploi.	❒$_1$	❒$_2$	❒$_3$	❒$_4$	❒$_5$	❒$_6$
4. Les gens autour de moi voient facilement que je fais partie de ce groupe.	❒$_1$	❒$_2$	❒$_3$	❒$_4$	❒$_5$	❒$_6$

VOUS-MÊME

Comment vous voyez-vous personnellement ? Veuillez cocher les réponses qui correspondent le mieux à votre avis.

	Pas du tout d'accord	Pas d'accord	Plutôt pas d'accord	Plutôt d'accord	D'accord	Tout à fait d'accord
1. Dans l'ensemble, je suis satisfait-e de moi-même.	❒1	❒2	❒3	❒4	❒5	❒6
2. Parfois, je pense que je ne vaux pas grand-chose.	❒1	❒2	❒3	❒4	❒5	❒6
3. Je pense que j'ai beaucoup de qualités.	❒1	❒2	❒3	❒4	❒5	❒6
4. Généralement, je me sens bien dans ma peau.	❒1	❒2	❒3	❒4	❒5	❒6
5. Je me sens souvent mal à l'aise avec les autres.	❒1	❒2	❒3	❒4	❒5	❒6
6. Mes conditions de vie sont bonnes.	❒1	❒2	❒3	❒4	❒5	❒6
7. Je suis satisfait-e de ma vie.	❒1	❒2	❒3	❒4	❒5	❒6
8. J'ai le sentiment de n'avoir aucune prise, aucun contrôle, sur des aspects importants de ma vie.	❒1	❒2	❒3	❒4	❒5	❒6
9. Je suis satisfait-e de mon apparence corporelle	❒1	❒2	❒3	❒4	❒5	❒6
10. J'ai confiance en ma capacité à surmonter mes problèmes personnels.	❒1	❒2	❒3	❒4	❒5	❒6

VOS ACTIVITÉS

Participez-vous aux activités d'un groupe ou d'une association (cochez tout ce qui convient) ?

❒1 Club sportif, précisez lequel : _____
❒2 Groupe musical ou artistique, précisez lequel: _____
❒3 Groupe d'ami-e-s
❒4 Syndicat, parti ou mouvement politique, précisez lequel: _____
❒5 Groupe religieux
❒6 Groupe de bénévoles, précisez lequel : _____
❒7 Autre groupe ou association : _____

VOS PRÉOCCUPATIONS

Dans quelle mesure les situations suivantes constituent-elles une préoccupation pour vous aujourd'hui ?

		Cela ne me préoccupe pas du tout	Cela me préoccupe un peu	Cela me préoccupe assez	Cela me préoccupe fortement
1.	Ne pas avoir suffisamment d'argent pour couvrir les dépenses courantes, pour payer des factures, le loyer ou la nourriture (vous ou votre famille)	❒1	❒2	❒3	❒4
2.	Avoir besoin de l'aide sociale, des indemnités de chômage ou d'autre aide institutionnelle (vous ou votre famille)	❒1	❒2	❒3	❒4
3.	Devoir faire face à une maladie ou à un problème de santé mentale	❒1	❒2	❒3	❒4
4.	Devoir faire face à des conflits avec des membres de votre famille	❒1	❒2	❒3	❒4
5.	Vous retrouver seul-e (par ex. sans ami-e-s, sans famille)	❒1	❒2	❒3	❒4
6.	Etre victime d'une agression	❒1	❒2	❒3	❒4

INTERNET ETC.

1. *Est-ce que vous disposez (ou avez un accès facile à) des appareils électroniques suivants ?*

ordinateur ❒1 téléphone portable ❒2 smartphone ❒3

2. *A quelle fréquence utilisez-vous internet ?*

Jamais ou presque	*Quelques fois par mois*	*Quelques fois par semaine*	*Tous les jours*	*Plusieurs fois par jour*
❒0	❒1	❒2	❒3	❒4

3. *Qu'est-ce que vous faites sur internet (cochez tout ce qui convient) ?*

❒1 lire et écrire des messages électroniques

❒2 participer à des réseaux sociaux (par ex. Facebook)

❒3 échanger avec des amis (par ex. des photos, des vidéos)

❒4 tenir un blog

❒5 naviguer sur les sites internet

VOS PROJETS

*Nous nous intéressons maintenant à vos **projets pour l'avenir**.*

Quels sont les projets que vous aimeriez réaliser dans les années à venir ?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

*Maintenant nous vous demandons d'**entourer le projet le plus important** pour vous.*

En pensant à ce projet, veuillez indiquer votre degré d'accord avec les propositions suivantes

	Pas du tout d'accord	Pas d'accord	Plutôt pas d'accord	Plutôt d'accord	D'accord	Tout à fait d'accord
1. Je pourrai probablement réaliser ce projet.	❒1	❒2	❒3	❒4	❒5	❒6
2. Je sais ce que je dois faire pour réaliser ce projet.	❒1	❒2	❒3	❒4	❒5	❒6
3. Je trouve que ce projet est stressant.	❒1	❒2	❒3	❒4	❒5	❒6
4. Je trouve que ce projet est difficile à réaliser.	❒1	❒2	❒3	❒4	❒5	❒6
5. Ma famille et mes amis me soutiennent dans la réalisation de ce projet.	❒1	❒2	❒3	❒4	❒5	❒6
6. Ce projet est important pour moi.	❒1	❒2	❒3	❒4	❒5	❒6
7. Malgré mes efforts, beaucoup d'obstacles m'empêchent de réaliser ce projet.	❒1	❒2	❒3	❒4	❒5	❒6

Comment vous voyez-vous dans cinq ans ?

_____

_____

_____

_____

INFORMATIONS PERSONNELLES

Pour conclure nous vous demandons de répondre aux questions suivantes. Nous vous rappelons que toutes les données seront traitées de façon confidentielle.

1. **Vous êtes**: Femme ❒$_1$ Homme ❒$_2$

2. **Votre âge** _____

3. **Votre nationalité:** Suisse ❒$_1$ Autre ❒$_0$ Précisez: _____

4. **Nationalité de votre père**: Suisse ❒$_1$ Autre ❒$_0$ Précisez: _____

5. **Nationalité de votre mère:** Suisse ❒$_1$ Autre ❒$_0$ Précisez: _____

6. **Si vous n'êtes pas né-e en Suisse, depuis combien d'années résidez-vous en Suisse ?** _____

   Où avez-vous habité avant de venir en Suisse ? _____

7. **Combien de frères et sœurs avez-vous?** Frère(s) _____ Sœur(s) _____

8. **Etes-vous** : Célibataire ❒$_1$ Marié-e ❒$_2$ Pacsé-e ❒$_3$ Séparé-e / Divorcé-e ❒$_4$ Veuf-ve ❒$_5$

9. **Avez-vous des enfants** Non ❒$_1$ Oui, un ❒$_2$ Oui, deux ❒$_3$ Oui, 3 ou plus ❒$_4$

10. **Vivez-vous** :

    ❒$_1$ En famille, *précisez*:

Avec votre mère	*Avec votre père*	*Avec vos frère(s) et/ou sœur(s)*	*Avec votre conjoint-e*	*Avec vos enfants*	Autre, *précisez:*
❒$_1$	❒$_2$	❒$_3$	❒$_4$	❒$_5$	_____

    ❒$_2$ Seul-e
    ❒$_3$ En couple
    ❒$_4$ En colocation
    ❒$_5$ Autre, précisez : _____

11. **Comment situez-vous vos préférences politiques sur une échelle Gauche-Droite ?**

Extrême gauche	*Gauche*	*Gauche modérée*	*Centre*	*Droite modérée*	*Droite*	*Extrême droite*
❒$_1$	❒$_2$	❒$_3$	❒$_4$	❒$_5$	❒$_6$	❒$_7$

Pas de préférence : ❒$_0$

Le questionnaire est terminé.

Comme nous vous l'avons expliqué précédemment, nous souhaitons vous recontacter afin de savoir comment votre parcours évolue.
Merci de nous indiquer votre adresse e-mail et/ou votre nom et votre adresse ci-dessous.
Nous vous rappelons que vos données seront traitées de façon strictement confidentielle par notre équipe de recherche uniquement.

Prénom, Nom _____

Rue _____

Numéro postal et localité _____

Adresse e-mail _____

Pseudonyme souhaité pour le réseau en ligne _____
(si vous n'indiquez pas de pseudonyme, nous utiliserons votre prénom)

MERCI BEAUCOUP D'AVOIR REPONDU A CE QUESTIONNAIRE !

Appendix 2

Complete 2012's and 2013's questionnaires (Original French version)

Appendix 2.2: 2013's questionnaire

Projet EXPERIENCES

Bonjour,

Comme nous vous l'avons dit, nous avons besoin de vous pour réaliser notre étude sur les **expériences, les difficultés et les projets d'avenir des jeunes**. C'est pourquoi nous vous demandons maintenant de répondre à un petit questionnaire. Nous espérons que ce questionnaire vous encouragera à poursuivre votre participation à notre étude.

Dans ce questionnaire, il n'y a pas de « bonnes » ou de « mauvaises » réponses. Ce qui nous intéresse, c'est **ce que vous pensez vous-même, votre avis personnel**.

A la fin du questionnaire, nous allons vous demander **votre nom et vos coordonnées de contact**, car nous souhaitons suivre vos projets et votre parcours. Nous vous garantissons que **vos réponses seront traitées de façon confidentielle** par les seuls membres de notre équipe. Bien entendu, vous pourrez aussi les obtenir et ainsi voir **l'évolution de votre parcours**.

Vous êtes bien sûr libre de répondre ou non à chacune des questions.

Nous vous **remercions d'avance** de votre collaboration et nous espérons **pouvoir compter sur votre participation pour la suite de l'étude.**

Les membres de l'équipe de l'Université de Lausanne,

Christian Staerklé, Alain Clémence, Véronique Eicher, Mouna Bakouri, Marlene Barbosa, Aline Hofer

Pour nous contacter : contact@ProjetExperiences.ch

Attention à ne pas sauter des pages, le questionnaire est recto-verso !

LIVES
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FORMATION

Pour commencer, nous vous demandons d'indiquer quelle formation vous suivez actuellement.

_____

Voici quelques propositions sur la formation que vous êtes en train de suivre. Indiquez à quel point chacune d'elles vous correspond.

	Non, pas du tout	Non	Plutôt non	Plutôt oui	Oui	Oui, tout à fait
1. Je suis cette formation avec enthousiasme.	❒1	❒2	❒3	❒4	❒5	❒6
2. Je suis très intéressé-e par ma formation.	❒1	❒2	❒3	❒4	❒5	❒6
3. Je me fais du souci pour ma formation.	❒1	❒2	❒3	❒4	❒5	❒6
4. Je me sens dépassé-e par ma formation.	❒1	❒2	❒3	❒4	❒5	❒6
5. Je me fais du souci pour mon avenir professionnel.	❒1	❒2	❒3	❒4	❒5	❒6
6. J'ai peur de ne pas trouver ma place dans la société.	❒1	❒2	❒3	❒4	❒5	❒6

VOTRE ENTOURAGE

Dans quelle mesure les propositions suivantes vous correspondent-elles ?

	Non, pas du tout	Non	Plutôt non	Plutôt oui	Oui	Oui, tout à fait
1. Il y a des personnes qui me proposent leur aide quand j'en ai besoin.	❒1	❒2	❒3	❒4	❒5	❒6
2. Quand j'ai des soucis, il y a quelqu'un pour m'aider.	❒1	❒2	❒3	❒4	❒5	❒6
3. Au sein de mon entourage, je me sens reconnu-e.	❒1	❒2	❒3	❒4	❒5	❒6
4. Au sein de mon entourage, je me sens aimé-e.	❒1	❒2	❒3	❒4	❒5	❒6

QUI SUIS-JE ?

Veuillez répondre trois fois à la question : « Qui suis-je ? »

(Donnez trois réponses qui décrivent le mieux qui vous êtes)

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Parmi les réponses données, choisissez celle qui est la plus importante pour vous actuellement :

_____

Nous souhaitons connaître les liens que vous entretenez avec votre entourage. Indiquez à quel point les affirmations suivantes vous correspondent.

	Non, pas du tout	Non	Plutôt non	Plutôt oui	Oui	Oui, tout à fait
1. Je suis très attaché-e à ma famille.	❒1	❒2	❒3	❒4	❒5	❒6
2. J'ai des liens forts avec ma famille.	❒1	❒2	❒3	❒4	❒5	❒6
3. Je suis très attaché-e à mes amis.	❒1	❒2	❒3	❒4	❒5	❒6
4. J'ai des liens forts avec mes amis.	❒1	❒2	❒3	❒4	❒5	❒6
5. Je suis très attaché-e aux autres apprentis.	❒1	❒2	❒3	❒4	❒5	❒6
6. J'ai des liens forts avec les autres apprentis.	❒1	❒2	❒3	❒4	❒5	❒6

Précisez votre pays ou votre communauté d'origine : _____

	Non, pas du tout	Non	Plutôt non	Plutôt oui	Oui	Oui, tout à fait
1. Je suis très attaché-e à mon pays/ma communauté d'origine.	❒1	❒2	❒3	❒4	❒5	❒6
2. J'ai des liens forts avec mon pays/ma communauté d'origine.	❒1	❒2	❒3	❒4	❒5	❒6

VOUS-MÊME

Comment vous voyez-vous personnellement ?

	Non, pas du tout	Non	Plutôt non	Plutôt oui	Oui	Oui, tout à fait
1. Dans l'ensemble, je suis satisfait-e de moi-même.	❒1	❒2	❒3	❒4	❒5	❒6
2. J'ai confiance en ma capacité à surmonter mes problèmes personnels.	❒1	❒2	❒3	❒4	❒5	❒6
3. Je pense que j'ai beaucoup de qualités.	❒1	❒2	❒3	❒4	❒5	❒6
4. Mes conditions de vie sont bonnes.	❒1	❒2	❒3	❒4	❒5	❒6
5. Généralement, je me sens bien dans ma peau.	❒1	❒2	❒3	❒4	❒5	❒6
6. Je suis satisfait-e de ma vie.	❒1	❒2	❒3	❒4	❒5	❒6
7. A chaque problème j'arrive à trouver une solution.	❒1	❒2	❒3	❒4	❒5	❒6
8. Je suis satisfait-e de mon apparence corporelle.	❒1	❒2	❒3	❒4	❒5	❒6
9. Parfois, je pense que je ne vaux pas grand-chose.	❒1	❒2	❒3	❒4	❒5	❒6
10. On ne peut jamais être sûr de rien dans la vie.	❒1	❒2	❒3	❒4	❒5	❒6
11. Mon comportement a de l'impact sur les autres personnes dans la société.	❒1	❒2	❒3	❒4	❒5	❒6
12. Je pense qu'il y a peu de règles vraiment importantes dans la vie.	❒1	❒2	❒3	❒4	❒5	❒6
13. En fait, personne ne sait vraiment ce qu'on attend de lui/d'elle dans la vie.	❒1	❒2	❒3	❒4	❒5	❒6
14. J'ai le sentiment que j'ai quelque chose d'important à apporter à la société.	❒1	❒2	❒3	❒4	❒5	❒6
15. Je suis seulement les règles que j'ai envie de suivre.	❒1	❒2	❒3	❒4	❒5	❒6

Indiquez à quel point les affirmations suivantes vous correspondent.

		Non, pas du tout	Non	Plutôt non	Plutôt oui	Oui	Oui, tout à fait
1.	J'ai une forte personnalité.	❒1	❒2	❒3	❒4	❒5	❒6
2.	Je suis ouvert-e d'esprit.	❒1	❒2	❒3	❒4	❒5	❒6
3.	Je suis attentif/-ve aux besoins des autres.	❒1	❒2	❒3	❒4	❒5	❒6
4.	Je suis doux/-ce.	❒1	❒2	❒3	❒4	❒5	❒6
5.	Je suis unique.	❒1	❒2	❒3	❒4	❒5	❒6
6.	Je suis chaleureux/-se.	❒1	❒2	❒3	❒4	❒5	❒6
7.	Je suis indépendant-e.	❒1	❒2	❒3	❒4	❒5	❒6
8.	Je suis semblable à mes proches.	❒1	❒2	❒3	❒4	❒5	❒6
9.	J'ai des qualités de commandement.	❒1	❒2	❒3	❒4	❒5	❒6

VOS PRÉOCCUPATIONS

Dans quelle mesure les situations suivantes constituent-elles une préoccupation pour vous aujourd'hui ?

		Cela ne me préoccupe pas du tout	Cela me préoccupe un peu	Cela me préoccupe assez	Cela me préoccupe fortement
1.	Ne pas avoir suffisamment d'argent pour couvrir les dépenses courantes, pour payer des factures, le loyer ou la nourriture (vous ou votre famille).	❒1	❒2	❒3	❒4
2.	Avoir besoin de l'aide sociale, des indemnités de chômage ou d'autres aides institutionnelles (vous ou votre famille).	❒1	❒2	❒3	❒4
3.	Devoir faire face à une maladie ou à un problème de santé mentale.	❒1	❒2	❒3	❒4
4.	Vous retrouver seul-e (par ex. sans ami-e-s, sans famille).	❒1	❒2	❒3	❒4
5.	Etre victime d'une agression.	❒1	❒2	❒3	❒4

EXPERIENCES D'INJUSTICE

Nous nous intéressons maintenant aux expériences d'injustice. Veuillez indiquer dans quelle mesure chacune des expériences décrites est fréquente dans votre vie.

	Jamais	Presque jamais	De temps en temps	Assez souvent	Très souvent
1. Être traité-e avec peu de courtoisie ou de respect.	❒1	❒2	❒3	❒4	❒5
2. Être pris-e de haut.	❒1	❒2	❒3	❒4	❒5
3. Recevoir un service médiocre, par exemple dans une administration publique.	❒1	❒2	❒3	❒4	❒5

Veuillez indiquer si vous avez connu l'une des expériences suivantes:

	Oui	Non
1. Se voir injustement refuser un travail, un stage ou une formation.	❒1	❒0
2. Être traité-e injustement par les autorités.	❒1	❒0
3. Être insulté-e à cause de mes origines.	❒1	❒0

Voici différentes façons de réagir à de telles situations d'injustice. Indiquez à quel point chacune d'elles s'applique à vous.

	Non, pas du tout	Non	Plutôt non	Plutôt oui	Oui	Oui, tout à fait	Je ne suis pas concerné-e
1. Je ne laisse pas ces expériences affecter mon estime de moi-même.	❒1	❒2	❒3	❒4	❒5	❒6	❒0
2. Parler avec des personnes ayant subi des expériences pareilles m'aide à me sentir mieux.	❒1	❒2	❒3	❒4	❒5	❒6	❒0
3. Je gère mes émotions pour que de telles expériences n'aient pas d'impact sur moi.	❒1	❒2	❒3	❒4	❒5	❒6	❒0
4. Face à l'injustice, d'autres personnes, ayant subi des expériences pareilles, sont là pour m'écouter.	❒1	❒2	❒3	❒4	❒5	❒6	❒0

*Dans une société, certains groupes peuvent être moins bien vus, moins bien traités ou avoir moins de chances que d'autres (par ex. pour le travail ou la formation). On parle alors de **discrimination**.*

Vous-même, est-ce que vous faites partie d'un groupe qui selon vous est moins bien traité que d'autres groupes dans la société suisse ?

❒1 Oui, *précisez lequel :* _____ ❒0 Non

VOS PROJETS

*Nous nous intéressons maintenant à vos **projets pour l'avenir**.*

Quels sont les projets que vous aimeriez réaliser dans les années à venir ?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

*Choisissez **le projet le plus important** pour vous :* _____

En pensant à ce projet, veuillez indiquer à quel point les propositions suivantes vous correspondent.

		Non, pas du tout	Non	Plutôt non	Plutôt oui	Oui	Oui, tout à fait
1.	Je pourrai probablement réaliser ce projet.	❒1	❒2	❒3	❒4	❒5	❒6
2.	Si ce projet ne peut pas se réaliser, je commencerai à travailler sur d'autres projets.	❒1	❒2	❒3	❒4	❒5	❒6
3.	Je sais ce que je dois faire pour réaliser ce projet.	❒1	❒2	❒3	❒4	❒5	❒6
4.	Ma famille et mes amis me soutiennent dans la réalisation de ce projet.	❒1	❒2	❒3	❒4	❒5	❒6
5.	Si ce projet ne peut pas se réaliser, je penserai à d'autres projets importants.	❒1	❒2	❒3	❒4	❒5	❒6
6.	Ma famille et mes amis s'intéressent à ce projet.	❒1	❒2	❒3	❒4	❒5	❒6
7.	Malgré mes efforts, beaucoup d'obstacles m'empêchent de réaliser ce projet.	❒1	❒2	❒3	❒4	❒5	❒6
8.	Si ce projet ne peut pas se réaliser, il sera difficile pour moi de le laisser tomber.	❒1	❒2	❒3	❒4	❒5	❒6
9.	Malgré mon engagement, il peut être compliqué de réaliser ce projet.	❒1	❒2	❒3	❒4	❒5	❒6
10.	Si ce projet ne peut pas se réaliser, il sera difficile pour moi d'arrêter d'y penser.	❒1	❒2	❒3	❒4	❒5	❒6

VOTRE REGARD SUR LA SOCIÉTÉ

Finalement, nous voulons voir le regard que vous avez sur la société en général. Veuillez indiquer à quel point vous êtes d'accord avec les affirmations suivantes.

	Pas du tout d'accord	Pas d'accord	Plutôt pas d'accord	Plutôt d'accord	D'accord	Tout à fait d'accord
1. En travaillant assez dur, les gens peuvent se construire un bon niveau de vie.	❒1	❒2	❒3	❒4	❒5	❒6
2. Généralement, lorsqu'on échoue quelque part, c'est qu'on n'a pas fait suffisamment d'efforts.	❒1	❒2	❒3	❒4	❒5	❒6
3. En règle générale, la société suisse est juste.	❒1	❒2	❒3	❒4	❒5	❒6
4. La Suisse fait partie des meilleurs pays où habiter.	❒1	❒2	❒3	❒4	❒5	❒6
5. La société suisse est organisée de façon à ce que, généralement, les gens reçoivent ce qu'ils méritent.	❒1	❒2	❒3	❒4	❒5	❒6
6. La Suisse aurait besoin de grandes réformes politiques.	❒1	❒2	❒3	❒4	❒5	❒6
7. Les femmes feront mieux avancer leur cause en étant patientes et en n'exigeant pas trop de changements.	❒1	❒2	❒3	❒4	❒5	❒6
9. En Suisse, il reste beaucoup à faire pour que l'égalité entre les hommes et les femmes soit vraiment réalisée.	❒1	❒2	❒3	❒4	❒5	❒6
10. Une femme qui travaille peut garantir une relation tout aussi chaleureuse et sécurisante avec ses enfants qu'une femme au foyer.	❒1	❒2	❒3	❒4	❒5	❒6
11. Avoir un travail c'est bien, mais ce que la plupart des femmes veulent vraiment, c'est un foyer et des enfants.	❒1	❒2	❒3	❒4	❒5	❒6
12. Quand une femme a un emploi à plein-temps, cela a généralement des conséquences négatives sur la vie de famille.	❒1	❒2	❒3	❒4	❒5	❒6

AGIR DANS LA SOCIÉTÉ

Veuillez indiquer à quel point vous êtes d'accord avec les affirmations suivantes.

	Pas du tout d'accord	Pas d'accord	Plutôt pas d'accord	Plutôt d'accord	D'accord	Tout à fait d'accord
1. En travaillant ensemble, les personnes les plus défavorisées peuvent contribuer à réduire les inégalités qu'elles subissent.	❒1	❒2	❒3	❒4	❒5	❒6
2. En étant unies et solidaires, les personnes les plus défavorisées peuvent participer à réduire les préjugés à leur égard.	❒1	❒2	❒3	❒4	❒5	❒6
3. Chacun doit faire de son mieux pour le bien de la communauté.	❒1	❒2	❒3	❒4	❒5	❒6
4. Chacun doit consacrer une partie de son temps/de son énergie pour le bien de la communauté.	❒1	❒2	❒3	❒4	❒5	❒6
5. Je suis prêt-e à m'engager pour que les gens soient tous traités avec le même respect et aient les mêmes opportunités.	❒1	❒2	❒3	❒4	❒5	❒6
6. Je suis prêt-e à m'investir pour une société plus juste, où les différences dans les niveaux de vie seraient plus petites.	❒1	❒2	❒3	❒4	❒5	❒6

Comment vous voyez-vous dans cinq ans ?

INFORMATIONS PERSONNELLES

Pour conclure nous vous demandons de répondre aux questions suivantes. Nous vous rappelons que toutes les données seront traitées de façon confidentielle.

1. **Vous êtes**: Femme ❒$_1$ Homme ❒$_2$

2. **Votre âge** _____

3. **Votre nationalité:** Suisse ❒$_1$ Autre ❒$_0$ Précisez: _____

4. **Nationalité de votre père**: Suisse ❒$_1$ Autre ❒$_0$ Précisez: _____

5. **Nationalité de votre mère:** Suisse ❒$_1$ Autre ❒$_0$ Précisez: _____

6. **Etes-vous** : Célibataire ❒$_1$ Marié-e ❒$_2$ Pacsé-e ❒$_3$ Séparé-e / Divorcé-e ❒$_4$
   Veuf-ve ❒$_5$ En couple ❒$_6$

7. Quel est le **niveau de formation** le plus avancé que votre **père** a atteint ?

   ❒$_1$ École obligatoire (École primaire et secondaire, Cycle d'orientation, …)
   ❒$_2$ Écoles professionnelles (École de culture générale, École de commerce, CFC, …)
   ❒$_3$ Écoles secondaires supérieures (préparant à la maturité, gymnase, collège,…)
   ❒$_4$ Formations professionnelles supérieures (HES, HEP, HEC, …)
   ❒$_5$ Études supérieures (université, polytechnique,…)
   ❒$_6$ Autre, *précisez* :_____

8. Quel est le **niveau de formation** le plus avancé que votre **mère** a atteint ?

   ❒$_1$ École obligatoire (École primaire et secondaire, Cycle d'orientation, …)
   ❒$_2$ Écoles professionnelles (École de culture générale, École de commerce, CFC, …)
   ❒$_3$ Écoles secondaires supérieures (préparant à la maturité, gymnase, collège,…)
   ❒$_4$ Formations professionnelles supérieures (HES, HEP, HEC, …)
   ❒$_5$ Études supérieures (université, polytechnique,…)
   ❒$_6$ Autre, *précisez* :_____

9. **Si vous n'êtes pas né-e en Suisse, depuis combien d'années résidez-vous en Suisse ?** _____

   Où avez-vous habité avant de venir en Suisse ? _____

10. **Combien de frères et sœurs avez-vous?** Frère(s) _____ Sœur(s) _____

11. **Etes-vous** : Célibataire ❒$_1$ Marié-e ❒$_2$ Pacsé-e ❒$_3$ Séparé-e / Divorcé-e ❒$_4$
    Veuf-ve ❒$_5$ En couple ❒$_6$

12. **Avez-vous des enfants** Non ❒$_1$ Oui, un ❒$_2$ Oui, deux ❒$_3$ Oui, 3 ou plus ❒$_4$

13. **Vivez-vous** :

❒$_1$ En famille, *précisez*:

Avec votre mère ❒$_1$	*Avec votre père* ❒$_2$	*Avec vos frère(s) et/ou sœur(s)* ❒$_3$	*Avec votre conjoint-e* ❒$_4$	*Avec vos enfants* ❒$_5$	Autre, *précisez:* _____

❒$_2$ Seul-e ❒$_3$ En couple ❒$_4$ En colocation ❒$_5$ Autre, précisez : _____

14. **Comment situez-vous vos préférences politiques sur une échelle Gauche-Droite ?**

Extrême gauche	*Gauche*	*Gauche modérée*	*Centre*	*Droite modérée*	*Droite*	*Extrême droite*
❒1	❒2	❒3	❒4	❒5	❒6	❒7

Pas de préférence : ❒0

Le questionnaire est terminé. Nous vous remercions beaucoup d'y avoir répondu !

Nous souhaitons vous recontacter afin de savoir comment votre parcours évolue. Merci de nous indiquer votre adresse e-mail et/ou votre nom et votre adresse ci-dessous.
Nous vous rappelons que vos données seront traitées de façon strictement confidentielle par notre équipe de recherche uniquement.

Merci d'écrire vos coordonnées en lettres majuscules**.**

Prénom, Nom _____

Rue _____

Numéro postal et localité _____

Numéro de téléphone _____

Adresse e-mail _____

Pseudonyme souhaité pour le réseau en ligne _____
(si vous n'indiquez pas de pseudonyme, nous utiliserons votre prénom)

Entretiens rémunérés

Comme le questionnaire ne donne pas la possibilité de décrire librement vos expériences et vos préoccupations, **nous proposons, à ceux qui le désirent**, d'approfondir la discussion dans le cadre d'un **entretien individuel**. Cet entretien, **d'environ une heure**, sera **rémunéré 20 francs**.

Je suis d'accord d'être contacté-e pour un entretien Oui ❒1 Non ❒0

Pour se coordonner, je préfère être contacté-e sur mon natel : _____