

Developing an inclusive European identity

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The core of the problem: Identity questions

Who am I?

What is my place in the society?

On which aspects of reality do I want to commit to?

I'm still the same person, now that I have [started university, changed my job, got married, had a child, converted to a new religion, changed political party, etc.]?

Identity as a core developmental task for all human beings

Erikson's (1950, 1968) psychosocial theory

- identity as a life-long task
 - crucial in young people (adolescents, emerging adults)
- Individuals can move between two opposite poles:
 - *identity synthesis* (they combine and integrate relevant earlier identifications in a unique and personal way)
 - *identity confusion* (they do not hold yet meaningful identifications that could provide them with a sense of direction)

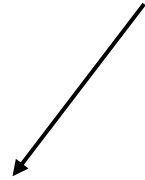
How do individuals cope with the identity formation task?

Marcia's (1966) identity status paradigm

Exploration	Commitment	
	Present	Absent
Present	Identity achievement	Moratorium
Absent	Foreclosure	Diffusion

More insights on identity processes

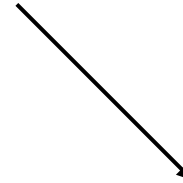
Bosma (1985) and Meeus (1996)



Commitment making

≠

Identification with
commitment



Exploration in breadth

past exploration: its function is to
find new commitments

≠

In-depth exploration

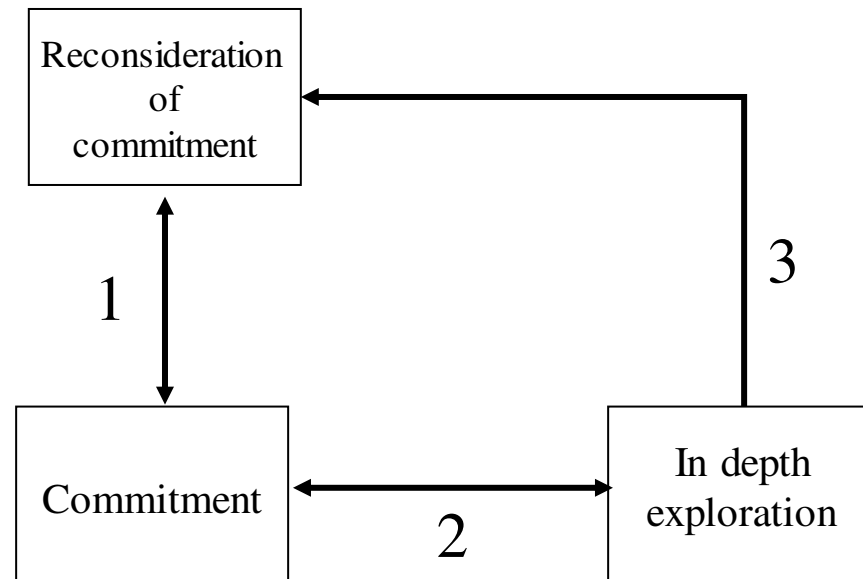
present exploration: its function is
to maintain and validate existing
commitments

Identity as a dynamic and iterative process

Three-factor identity model (Crocetti, Rubini, & Meeus, 2008)

- **Commitment:** choices made in identity relevant areas and self-confidence derived from these choices
- **In-Depth Exploration:** represents the extent to which individuals deal with current commitment actively, reflecting on their choices, looking for information, and talking with others about them
- **Reconsideration of Commitment:** refers to comparisons between current commitments and other possible alternatives and to efforts to change present commitments

- Cycle 1: dynamic of identity *formation* (making a choice and questioning that choice)
- Cycle 2: dynamic of identity *maintenance* (consolidating the choice)
- 3. From cycle 2 to cycle 1



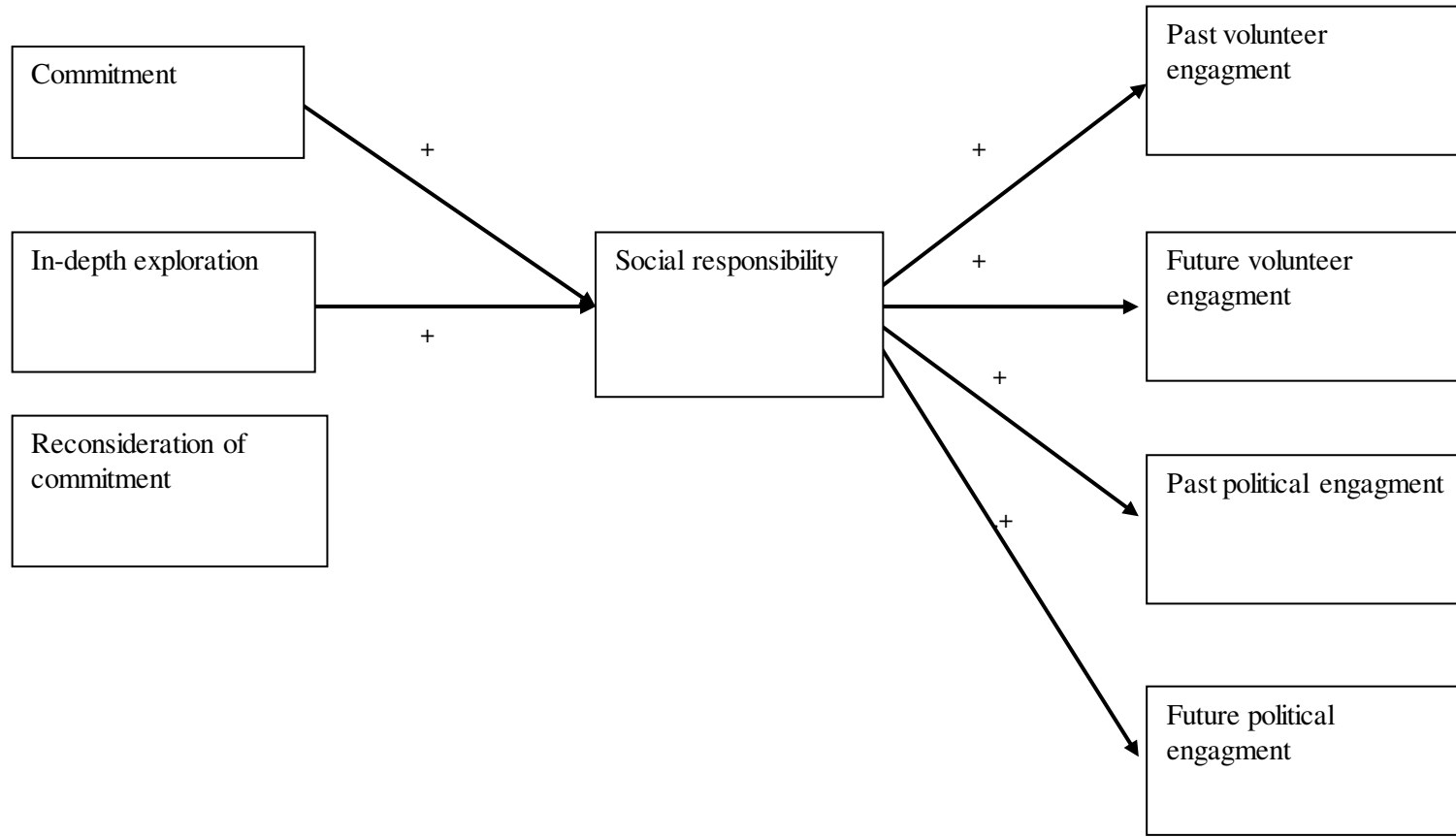
Identity and adjustment

	Internalizing problems	Externalizing problems	Positive well-being
Com	--	--	++
Exp	+		++
Rec	++	++	--

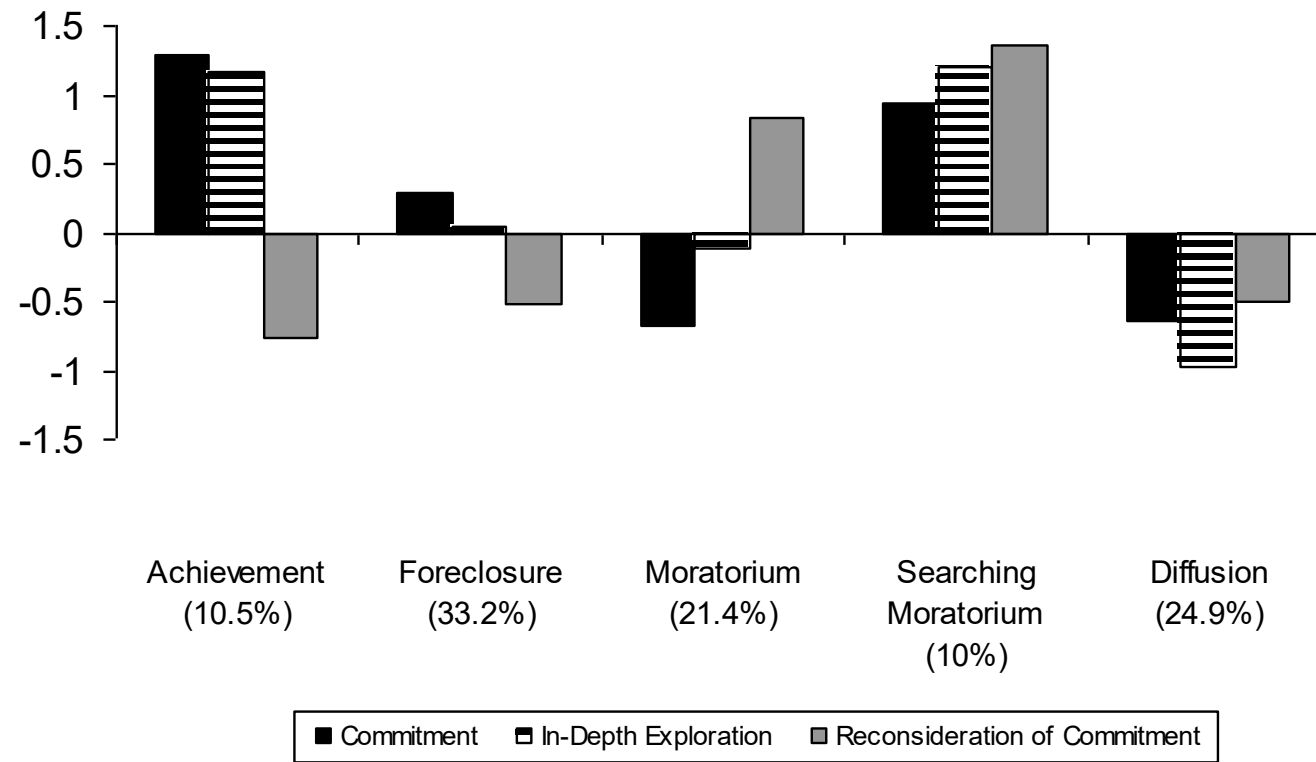
Identity and quality of interpersonal relationships

	Maternal relationship	Paternal relationships
Com	++	++
Exp	++	++
Rec	--	--

Identity and civic engagement



From identity processes to identity statuses



N = 1952, Age 10-19

Identity domains

- ✓ Educational identity
- ✓ Interpersonal identity
- ✓ Job identity
- ✓ Religious identity
- ✓ Regional identity
- ✓ National identity
- ✓ **European identity**
- ✓ Etc.



➤ **Different identity configurations**

Identity challenges for adolescents with a migrant background

- Development of *ethnic identity* (Phinney, 1990)
- Challenges in identity domains common to all adolescents (e.g., educational identity, interpersonal identity)

Ethnic differences in the Netherlands

	Achievement	Closure	Moratorium	Searching Moratorium	Diffusion
Dutch adolescents	9.6	35.7	19.6	7.1	28
Ethnic minority adolescents	12.2	23.4	30.3	20.7	13.5
Total	10.1	33.6	21.4	9.4	25.5

(Crocetti, Rubini, Luyckx, & Meeus, 2008)

Ethnic differences in Italy

	Adolescents from Italian families	Adolescents from mixed families	Adolescents from migrant families	<i>F</i> (2, 509)	η^2
Identity processes					
Commitment	3.59 (0.59)	3.48 (0.59)	3.61 (0.59)	1.71	.01
In-depth exploration	3.25 (0.53)	3.22 (0.59)	3.25 (0.58)	0.19	.00
Reconsideration of commitment	2.54 ^a (0.70)	2.53 ^a (0.74)	2.87 ^b (0.76)	12.26***	.05

Identity statuses	Adolescents from Italian families	Adolescents from mixed families	Adolescents from migrant families
Achievement	29.1%	26.0%	20.3%
Early Closure	24.5%	25.0%	23.6%
Moratorium	23.0%	19.0%	18.9%
Searching Moratorium	14.9%	16.0%	29.1%
Diffusion	8.4%	14.0%	8.1%
Total	100%	100%	100%

(Crocetti, Fermani, Pojaghi, & Meeus, 2011)

Ethnic differences

- Ethnic minority adolescents have to develop their own identity evaluating at the same time the collective values of their cultural heritage and the more individualistic values of the receiving society (e.g., Phalet & Hagendoorn 1996).
- They have to consider and reconsider different identity alternatives, probably to a greater extent than their mainstream counterparts

Measuring identity processes

Utrecht-Management of Identity Commitments Scale (U-MICS; Crocetti et al., 2008; 2015)

- 13 items, response scale from 1 (completely untrue) to 5 (completely true).
- Sample items:
 - “My education gives me certainty in life” (commitment)
 - “I think a lot about my education” (in-depth exploration)
 - “I often think it would be better to try to find a different education” (reconsideration of commitment).
- Possible applications:
 - 1 or more domains / overall identity
 - To focus on processes and/or to classify participants into identity statuses

Take home message

- Identity is a life long developmental task for all human beings
 - Particularly urgent in young people
- Identity dynamics can be captured by the interplay of identity processes
 - Commitment, in-depth exploration, and reconsideration of commitment
- Identity statuses can be obtained from specific combinations of identity processes
 - Achievement, early closure, moratorium, searching moratorium, diffusion
- Identity development is more challenging for migrant adolescents

Social Identity

- Social categorization,
- Social comparison
- Social identification
- Positive distinctiveness

Social categorization

Social categorization, defined in terms of “nouns that cut slices of the human group” (Allport, 1954)

It divides the social world in “us” and “them” by distinguishing between ingroup and outgroup members (Tajfel & Turner, 1979).

It is a fast and efficient way of providing information about others, to reduce uncertainty, by providing a clear set of expectations about others and the self (Turner et al., 1987).

Social comparison

- Individuals learn about themselves through social comparison with others (Festinger, 1954).
- Social comparison processes are fundamental to understand who we are, what are our positive qualities, and we do this by exchanging feedbacks in the interactions with meaningful others.

Social identification

- Social identification represents the internal, psychological criteria of a group existence that is distinct from the external attribution criteria (Tajfel, 1982).
- It relies on three components (Ellemers, Kortekaas, & Ouwerkerk, 1999):
 - the cognitive component captures the awareness of membership
 - the evaluative component refers to the value attributed to one's membership
 - the emotional component refers to the affective experience linked to one's group membership.

Positive group distinctiveness

- Ingroup-outgroup comparison along meaningful dimensions allows group members to appreciate their own ingroup (Tajfel, 1972)
- This appreciation forms the basis for achieving, maintaining, and enhancing group distinctiveness, which is the main motivation for individuals to join social groups
- Positive distinctiveness, in turn, augments individual self-esteem

From a dichotomous ingroup-outgroup approach to Multiple Categorization and Multiple Identities

- We do not belong to only one group
- We have multiple membership of a variety of groups
- We are Turks , Dutch, German, Italian Meditterreanean people, European people. Can this be a resource?
- We need to consider ourselves as unique people and yet affiliated to multiple groups.
- We need to acknowledge that the other always contains a bit of the self
- We can rely on our communality and yet be aware and pride of our specificity

- Peace: to make whole