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The path of most resistance

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General Discussion



The main aim of this dissertation was to study whether members of disadvantaged groups can resist implicit social identity threat. Across the five empirical chapters, we showed that 1) resistance to implicit identity threat is possible, 2) that resistance can take a number of different forms, and 3) that it occurs across different contexts. In this final chapter, we will present an overview of the findings, and discuss the theoretical and practical implications, as well as the limitations of the current work. We will also highlight some issues that offer interesting directions for future research.

What did we find?

Chapter 2. The chapters on resistance to implicit identity threat in the context of gender were prefaced by Chapter 2, which examined how women think about gender group membership. Chapter 2 showed that attitudes towards gender are governed by two different identity dimensions: identification with women as a group, and identification with feminists. Study 2.1 showed that women's identification reflects attitudes towards the meaning of group membership. Feminist identification reflects the belief women as a group are devalued in the larger social system. These identities have only a small positive correlation, and based on this finding we proposed a taxonomy of four prototypical gender identity subgroups that reflect differences in the aspects of the social construction of group membership that women emphasise.

In Study 2.2, we examined whether this taxonomy could predict resistance-type responses by studying whether it affects tendencies towards moderate and radical collective action. Indeed, results showed that radical collective action on gender issues is endorsed most strongly by "distinctive feminists", women who identify highly with feminists but not women. In Studies 2.3 and 2.4 we showed that the taxonomy also predicts critical attitudes towards gender stereotypes: critical attitudes towards gender stereotypes were most prominent amongst distinctive feminists.

In sum, Chapter 2 showed that women's attitudes towards gender group membership are governed by two distinct identity dimensions: women's identification and feminist identification. Critical attitudes towards gender stereotypes, and endorsement of resistance strategies like radical collective action, are strongest amongst distinctive feminists. Subsequently, we examined resistance at the *implicit* level.

Chapter 3. Chapter 3 described the first evidence for resistance against

implicit identity threat. Women were exposed to implicit associations reflecting gender stereotypes (or counter-stereotypes). Responses to these implicit gender stereotypes were measured using an evaluative decision task, in which participants are required to associate in-group and out-group primes with positive and negative target words.

Across three studies, Chapter 3 showed that exposure to implicit stereotypes leads *low* feminist identifiers to think more stereotypically about their group but leads *high* feminist identifiers to experience threat. Distinctive feminists subsequently resist this threat, through implicit in-group bias. After exposure to implicit stereotypes, distinctive feminists associated positive attributes more readily with the in-group (women) than with the out-group (men). That is, those who were shown, in Chapter 2, to find gender stereotypes most problematic, were also found to resist stereotypes when they are presented at the implicit level. Study 3.3 also included a behavioural measure, which showed evidence for resistance: distinctive feminists showed increased persistence in a counter-stereotypical, but not a stereotypical, performance domain. This suggests that after exposure to implicit gender stereotypes, these women were motivated to disprove stereotypes by making more effort in a counter-stereotypical domain (mathematics). Together, the studies that make up Chapter 3 showed that resistance to implicit stereotypes is possible, both through evaluative strategies and through behaviour.

Chapter 4. Chapter 4 extended evidence from Chapter 3 by showing that resistance to implicit social identity threat also occurs through responses that focus on the out-group, namely through out-group derogation. To the extent that implicit stereotypes imply that men are valued over women, this could be resisted by *boosting* women, or by *downgrading men*. Chapter 3 showed evidence for the former response. In Chapter 4, we focused on the latter response, and examined whether implicit gender stereotypes can be resisted through out-group derogation, that is, by downgrading men. Across 2 studies, women were exposed to implicit gender stereotypes, and asked to complete a Moral Choice Dilemma task in which one person must be sacrificed to save the lives of a number of others. Results showed that distinctive feminists more readily sacrificed men after exposure to implicit stereotypes, compared to implicit counter-stereotypes. That is, distinctive feminists treated the out-group (men) as relatively more expendable after exposure to implicit gender stereotypes.

Chapter 5. The aim of Chapter 5 was to provide more information about implicit social identity threat as a trigger for resistance, by manipulating the interpretation of implicit stereotypes as more or less threatening to identity. This chapter used Spanish-German intergroup relations in the context of the economic crisis in Europe. Spanish participants were exposed to implicit associations that reflected either a non-threatening control condition, in-group stereotypes, in-group disadvantage, or in-group stereotypes that *legitimised* disadvantage. Results from 2 studies showed that resistance is most pronounced in the condition where implicit social identity threat is strongest, that is, when stereotypes legitimise intergroup inequality.

In Study 5.1, resistance took the form of in-group favouritism: participants more readily associated positive targets with their own group, rather than the out-group. In Study 5.2, resistance took the form of out-group derogation: participants more readily associated negative targets with the out-group rather than the in-group. Thus, Chapter 5 replicated the findings of Chapters 3 and 4 in the context of national identity. Moreover, Chapter 5 showed that resistance is triggered in response to implicit information that legitimises intergroup inequality, thereby providing further evidence for the role of implicit social identity threat as a trigger for resistance.

Chapter 6. In Chapter 6, we attempted to replicate findings of Chapter 5 in the context of regional identity in the Netherlands. Results of this study showed no evidence for resistance to implicit social identity threat. In fact, there was some evidence for in-group derogation: instead of resisting, participants seemed to accept the threatening implications of implicit stereotypes at the implicit level. One possible explanation for why resistance did not occur here is that the intergroup context was unfamiliar to participants. Though preliminary, this line of reasoning suggests that, if participants are not familiar with the context of threat in their daily lives, they cannot build up resilience, and implicit forms of that threat cannot be resisted. As such, this interpretation suggests that previous exposure to identity threat is an important factor that allows members of disadvantaged groups to resist implicit social identity threat.

Although this chapter showed no evidence for resistance to implicit identity threat, we considered it worthwhile to include these findings, not only for the sake of completeness and transparency, but also because it illustrates an important boundary condition of resistance to implicit identity threat. This chapter thus offers a cautionary note, illustrating that the familiarity of the

threatening context represents an important limit on the resistance to implicit identity threat.

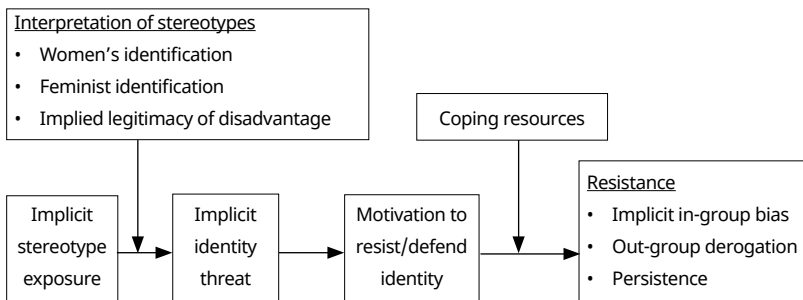
A model of resistance to implicit threat. Summarising the findings of the empirical chapters graphically illustrates the process behind resistance to implicit social identity threat (see Figure 7.1). Specifically, the occurrence of resistance seems to depend on 2 important criteria: the presence of implicit social identity threat, and the availability of coping resources. Such a 2-part model is reminiscent of stress-and-coping models (Lazarus & Folkman, 1991) in which the primary appraisal reflects the assessment of the stressor as threatening or not, and the secondary appraisal reflects the resources to cope with the stressor.

In our model, then, the first criterion for resistance is the experience of implicit social identity threat. As discussed above, findings from the empirical chapters underscored that resistance occurs in those circumstances, and amongst those people, where implicit stereotypes are most threatening to identity. The fact that not all associations that were presented during the manipulation phase were resisted, but only those that were threatening to identity, further suggests that resistance is the result of a motivated process, specifically, the motivation to resist identity threat and defend social identity. In addition to this, Chapter 3 showed evidence for resistance through behavioural persistence, which has been described as the ‘hallmark’ of motivational processes such as goal pursuit (Bargh et al., 2001; Gollwitzer & Schaal, 2001). Based on these findings, the model presented in Figure 7.1 includes a motivational component: when implicit social identity threat is present, people become motivated to defend their social identity and resist the threat, which then triggers resistance as a way of fulfilling this motivation.

However, there is also evidence that the motivation to resist implicit social identity threat is not sufficient for resistance to occur: people must also have the resources to resist. Chapter 6 provided some preliminary evidence that such resources may need to build up over time, as chronic exposure to the threatening context increases. Specifically, Chapter 6 indicated that when chronic familiarity with the threat is lacking resistance to implicit social identity threat does not occur, even though participants did seem to experience implicit identity threat. The joint role of motivation and opportunity is familiar from models such as the MODE model, which postulates that the extent to which attitudes guide behaviour depends on people’s motivation and opportunity to control their behaviour (Fazio, 1990; Olson & Fazio, 2008).

Implicit social identity threat, then, leads to the motivation to resist, which in turn leads to resistance when coping resources are available. The last component of the model shows that resistance to implicit social identity threat can take a variety of forms, namely implicit in-group bias (Chapters 3&5), (implicit) out-group derogation (Chapters 4 & 5), and persistence in counter-stereotypical domains (Chapter 3).

Figure 7a Conceptual model of resistance to implicit social identity threat



What have we learned?

About resilience amongst disadvantaged groups. The main aim of this dissertation was to examine resilience amongst members of disadvantaged groups. Given evidence that social devaluation of disadvantaged groups takes increasingly subtle forms, we focused specifically on resilience in the face of *implicit* cues of devaluation. Until recently, it seemed that threatening cues that are present at the implicit level cannot be resisted (Barreto et al., 2010; Kray et al., 2001). In contrast, in this dissertation we argue that members of disadvantaged groups are able to resist threats to their social identity even when they occur outside of conscious awareness, and consequently that their resilience extends to the implicit realm. Indeed, the empirical chapters of this dissertation provided evidence for such resistance to implicit social identity threat. The findings of this dissertation are in line with theories of intergroup relations that argue that members of disadvantaged groups can challenge and resist unequal group relations. Specifically, our findings provide support for Social Identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Spears et al., 2001; Ellemers et al., 2002), in showing that identity concerns influence the processing of implicit information. Only recently have theorists begun to study whether and how existing frameworks of social relations might be applied to the implicit

realm (de Lemus et al., 2013; Kray et al., 2001; Ramos et al., 2015). As such, this dissertation represents an important step in the application and extension of Social Identity theory to the implicit realm, by showing that members of disadvantaged groups are more resilient than previously thought, and can resist threats to social identity that occur outside of conscious awareness.

About the nature of resistance.

Resistance is triggered by implicit identity threat. Our definition of resistance postulates that resistance arises in response to implicit social identity threat, and there are several aspects of the findings that support this notion. In the chapters on gender identity, the role of implicit social identity threat is evidenced by the fact that resistance is found only amongst the distinctive feminists, who were shown to find stereotypes threatening, both at the explicit level (Chapter 2) and at the implicit level (Chapter 3: approach-avoidance task). Similarly, in Chapter 5, resistance occurred only in those conditions that represented the greatest (implicit) threat to social identity for our Spanish participants. That is, resistance varies over people and circumstances in such a way that it occurs only when implicit social identity threat is high, suggesting that it is a response to implicit social identity threat. Moreover, our findings cannot be explained by features of the manipulation other than implicit social identity threat, such as its valence, or its reference to stereotypes *per se*. Firstly, there is evidence that resistance is not just a response to the (negative) valence of the in-group associations. In Chapter 3, the stereotypes used in the manipulation were pretested to be neutral. Conversely, Chapter 5 used negatively valenced stereotypes in three out of four conditions, but resistance occurred in only one of those conditions. That is, resistance is not due to the valence of the associations shown. Moreover, Chapter 5 excluded the possibility that resistance is triggered by stereotypes *per se*. There were 2 conditions that exposed participants to implicit in-group stereotypes, but only one of those conditions produced resistance. Taken together, the findings from the empirical chapters support our hypothesis that resistance is a response to implicit social identity threat.

Our definition of resistance not only posits that resistance is a response to implicit social identity threat, but more specifically, that it is a response that *counteracts* implicit social identity threat. Again, we believe that the empirical chapters provide considerable evidence for this notion. We have seen that resistance to implicit social identity threat can occur through in-group favouritism (Chapters 3 and 5), or through out-group derogation (Chapters 4 & 5).

Both these responses can counteract implicit identity threat, and restore positive social identity, either directly (in-group favouritism) or in relative terms (out-group derogation). To illustrate this, we can take the example of Chapter 5, which focused on national identity in Spain. In that chapter, the manipulation made negative associations with the in-group and positive associations with the out-group. Participants counteracted this by reversing the associations: they made positive associations with the in-group (Study 5.1) and negative associations with the out-group (Study 5.2). Moreover, implicit identity threat arising from stereotypes can also be counteracted by persistence in a counter-stereotypical performance domain (see Chapter 3): persistence in a counter-stereotypical domain reflects motivation to achieve in that domain, and disprove negative stereotypes of the in-group. Taken together, though there are several different forms resistance can take, all of these are aimed at counteracting implicit social identity threat.

Resistance is motivated. The motivational, rather than cognitive, basis for the effects reported in these studies is evident from several different observations. For instance, Motivational effects are known to be less susceptible to rapid decay than cognitive effects (Förster et al., 2007; Kuhl, 1987). Here we found that, in some cases, resistance was evident from measures completed later in the experimental procedure, but not present on measures earlier in the procedure. Moreover, in Chapter 3, resistance was evident from a measure of behavioural persistence, which has been described as a ‘hallmark’ of motivational processes such as goal pursuit (Bargh et al., 2001; Gollwitzer & Schaal, 2001), which provides further evidence resistance is the outcome of a motivational process. More specifically, findings from this dissertation show that resistance to implicit social identity threat is internally motivated, as internally motivated goals and goals that serve psychological functions are known to have more behavioural consequences than externally imposed or instrumental goals (Gollwitzer & Bargh, 1996). Several experimental interventions have shown that it is possible to recondition implicit responses though externally imposed instructions or training. For instance, classical conditioning techniques - pairing stigmatized groups with positive images and words - can reduce students’ implicit stereotypes about groups like the elderly, black Americans, or skinheads (Devine, Forscher, Austin, & Cox, 2012; Karpinski & Hilton, 2001; Kawakami et al., 2000; Olson & Fazio, 2008). Crucially though, in the case of resistance, such training is not necessary - resistance “comes from within”, rather than being imposed externally. For these rea-

sons, cognitive salience or related explanations cannot readily account for the findings of these studies. Instead, we argue that the functionality of resistance in addressing and redressing specific components of implicit social identity threat is evidence that resistance is the outcome of a motivated process.

About forms of resistance. If we compare the resistance responses observed in this dissertation to resistance responses that have been documented in response to *explicit* social identity threat we see considerable overlap. For instance, intergroup bias has often been documented in response to explicit social identity threat (Voci, 2006; Oakes & Turner, 1980). Previous studies have also found that persistence in counter-stereotypical domains is used as a way of addressing explicit social identity threat (e.g. Nussbaum & Steele, 2007). Here we show for the first time that implicit forms of these responses are also used to resist identity threat that occurs at the implicit level. The implicit focus of the resistance responses documented in this dissertation also differentiates them from identity management strategies documented in the literature on social identity theory (Ellemers et al., 1993; Spears et al., 2001; Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Until now, the possibility of identity management through implicit strategies has not featured in SIT. Yet, findings from this dissertation, together with previous research (de Lemus et al., 2013, 2017; Ramos et al., 2015), underscore the fact that identity management can indeed happen through implicit strategies. Specifically, the resistance responses documented here extend the idea of social competition to the implicit level.

The resistance that was observed in these studies occurred at the same level as the threat: when threat to social identity was implicit, resistance responses were either implicit (implicit in-group bias; implicit out-group derogation) or indirect (persistence; willingness to sacrifice). All studies reported in the empirical chapters included measures of explicit resistance alongside implicit and indirect measures, but robust effects were rarely found, and if so, did not demonstrate evidence for resistance. There are several possible explanations for why resistance occurred on implicit and indirect rather than explicit measures. Firstly, as the explicit measures make the intergroup context explicit, they had to be completed at the end of the study, and the effects of the implicit manipulation could have worn off by the time the explicit measures were completed. This might be reinforced by a sense of goal completion after resisting on the implicit measures, leading to goal inhibition (Rothermund, 2003). Alternatively, it could be that implicit social identity threat is simply too subtle to elicit explicit resistance. The fact that implicit social identity threat

cannot be consciously evaluated or attributed to any source (Major et al., 2003) might make explicit resistance strategies such as anger, protesting and explicit in-group bias less viable. That is, in dealing with an implicit threat, implicit strategies are perhaps more applicable. Together, these factors could explain why resistance to implicit social identity threat is more likely to occur on implicit or indirect rather than explicit measures. A third possibility is that explicit resistance to implicit social identity threat is possible, but simply did not occur in these studies, because we did not use appropriate explicit measures. Given that our focus on *implicit* dependent variables is an important reason why our findings show evidence for resistance to implicit social identity threat while previous studies did not, it seems that the choice of outcome measure is an important one in the context of resistance to implicit social identity threat.

The fact that resistance to implicit social identity threat did not occur on explicit measures, means that the findings of this dissertation are in line with the findings of previous studies; that implicit social identity threat does not lead to *explicit* resistance. However, our findings do not support the conclusions of previous work: namely that implicit social identity threat cannot be resisted. Because we draw upon implicit measures of resistance, we were able to show that implicit social identity threat *can* be resisted, but that this resistance occurs primarily through implicit or indirect strategies rather than through explicit strategies.

About the role of intergroup inequality in resistance. In introducing the topic of resistance to implicit social identity threat, we have focused on intergroup inequality as an important antecedent of (implicit) social identity threat. So is there any evidence that intergroup inequality plays a role in the effects observed in this dissertation? Previous research has shown that stereotypes play a role in intergroup inequality, by legitimising the social system (Kressel & Uleman, 2015; Reyna et al., 2006). But the question is whether people perceive this at the implicit level, and whether it affects resistance to implicit social identity threat. In Chapters 5 and 6 we manipulated the interpretation of stereotypes to answer to this question. Results showed that resistance occurred only when stereotypes legitimised intergroup inequality. This suggests that the broader social system of intergroup inequality is an important reason why implicit stereotypes threaten social identity. This line of reasoning is supported by findings from Chapter 6 suggesting that the context in which the threat occurs must resonate with the group's experiences with-

in the broader social system. If this is not the case, the threat is unfamiliar, and resistance to implicit social identity threat does not occur. Thus, it seems that the social system of intergroup inequality is an important reason why implicit stereotypes are threatening to social identity and ultimately trigger resistance.

About implicit processing. This dissertation adds to a growing body of work showing that implicit processing is not an associative, stimulus-response system, but shaped by goals and motivations (Glaser & Knowles, 2008; Moskowitz et al., 2000; Moskowitz & Li, 2011). The empirical chapters show that these motivations include *identity motivations*: implicit information is evaluated in terms of its implications for identity, and managed accordingly. In fact, these findings are in line with a broader trend in which implicit and automatic processes that were previously thought to be associative are shown to depend on participants' interpretation and evaluation of the stimuli in question. One example of this is evaluative conditioning. Evaluative conditioning is a process whereby an originally neutral stimulus acquires the valence of another stimulus paired with it. This effect was thought to arise out of purely associative processes, but recent evidence shows that evaluative conditioning effects are partly due to allocation of attention (Dedonder, Corneille, Yzerbyt, & Kuppens, 2010), and propositional knowledge (Hu, Gawronski, & Balas, 2017). This dissertation, then, shows that identity concerns affect how people respond to implicit information.

Societal implications of findings

In addition to the theoretical implications discussed above, this dissertation also has a number of societal implications. Firstly, this dissertation has implications for how we approach implicit biases in our daily lives. Previously, we touched upon the fact that biases are deeply ingrained, and very difficult to eradicate. Evidence that victims of these biases are able to resist implicit social identity threat could be taken to suggest that it is not necessary to confront such implicit biases because victims are able to resist their detrimental effects before they reach conscious awareness. Nevertheless, we would like to argue that we should continue to try to understand and eradicate our implicit biases towards members of out-groups (which would then render implicit resistance unnecessary). Firstly, Chapters 3 and 4 show that resistance varies over individuals: not all members of disadvantaged groups resist. In fact, Chapters 3 and 4 showed those who do *not* identify with femi-

nists associated their group with *more* stereotypical attributes after exposure to implicit stereotypes. That is, some people went along with implicit devaluation of their in-group. Thus, given that not everyone resists implicit cues of in-group devaluation, it is important to continue to fight implicit biases.

We also believe that it is worth reconsidering the extensive list of devalued social groups mentioned in the introduction. Groups that face devaluation in our society include ethnic groups, women, those with non-heterosexual identities, the lower-educated, the poor, people who are overweight, the elderly and many other groups. This long list means that when we say “members of disadvantaged groups” this includes nearly everyone, depending on which identity is salient in a certain context. Although these groups clearly differ in the extent of their disadvantage and the frequency with which group members are confronted with devalued group membership, the crucial issue is that the processes described affect nearly all of us. We might wonder whether all of the groups listed above would be able to resist implicit social identity threat. In principle, there is no reason why it should not be possible to observe resistance to implicit identity threat in contexts such as ethnic group membership or sexual identity groups. However, we would expect this only in cases that conform to the requirements described in the model above. That is, resistance to implicit social identity threat is expected to occur only amongst group members who experience implicit social identity threat, are motivated to resist, and have the resources to do so.

‘What good is implicit resistance?’ Given that we interpret resistance to implicit identity threat as a form of resilience on the part of members of disadvantaged groups, it is relevant to consider whether resistance to implicit identity threat is functional in reducing threat, or beneficial to the person in some other way. Firstly, resistance to implicit social identity threat could reduce the subsequent experience of threat. This notion is theoretically compatible with the idea of resistance, and there is some evidence for such a process in Chapter 5. There was evidence for two different types of resistance, but each was strongest when the other was weak, suggesting that once one type of resistance had taken place, the other became less necessary (Heine et al., 2006; Tesser, 2000). This effect could be due to resistance reducing threat experience, after which further resistance is no longer necessary. However, resistance need not *necessarily* reduce threat directly. In fact, it could be important to remain vigilant to the threat. After all, the experience of threat is part of what allows resistance to take place. Thus, rather than reducing the

threat in a particular instance, resistance could serve to build up resilience and efficacy to confront *future* instances of threat. Alternatively, the beneficial effects of resistance might occur more “down-stream” of threat experience. For instance, resistance might protect against detrimental effects of threat on self-esteem or negative emotion (Barreto et al., 2010). Previous research has shown some evidence for such beneficial effects of identity management for those who engage in them. Sherman and colleagues (2009) have shown that participants who completed an implicit self-affirmation task subsequently showed improved performance and reduced defensive bias in response to threatening information. Similarly, the beneficial effects of resistance can lie in the feeling of “having done something”, increasing feelings of empowerment and efficacy (see e.g. Cocking & Drury, 2004; Drury & Reicher, 2005, for examples in the context of collective action) without necessarily making the threat itself less acute. Evidence for such a process has been demonstrated in the context of gender identity: feminist identification is known to increase the experience of gender identity threat and perceptions of sexism (e.g. Moradi & Subich, 2002), but at the same time a well-developed feminist identity has beneficial consequences for well-being (K. J. Saunders & Kashubeck-West, 2006) and body image (Murnen & Smolak, 2009). This suggests that awareness of disadvantage is associated with threat and discomfort in the short term, but ultimately contributes to well-being. This might similarly apply to resistance: though it might not reduce threat directly, it could still encourage resilience in the long run. Thirdly, it is possible that beneficial effects of resistance simply lie in the fact that resistance means that the implicit devaluation of the in-group is not accepted. In other words, the beneficial effects of resistance may lie in the fact that it is oppositional to acceptance. Finally, possible beneficial effects of resistance to implicit identity threat can lie in contributing to changes in status quo or attitudes of perceivers. As we have seen in Chapter 3, resistance can take the form of persistence in counter-stereotypical performance domains. Such (attempts at) non-conformity to stereotypes could have positive effects beyond the experience of the individual, but rather at a group level. The reduced stereotype conformity of those who resist implicit identity threat could contribute to weakening stereotypical attitudes of perceivers, and as such ultimately contribute to changes in intergroup relations. Thus, there are many ways in which resistance to implicit social identity threat can have beneficial effects. Nevertheless, in this dissertation we have not directly tested this issue, and as such this is an important avenue for future research.

Future Directions

The findings of this dissertation also give rise to some new questions regarding resistance to implicit identity threat that provide interesting directions for future research.

The role of motivation. Above, we have argued that resistance is the outcome of a motivated process. While we believe this dissertation offers considerable evidence for such a link between motivation and resistance, several questions remain regarding the relationship between social identity threat and motivation. Specifically, in the model presented in Figure 7.1, the motivation to resist follows directly from the experience of implicit social identity threat, suggesting that whenever a person experiences implicit social identity threat, this will increase the motivation to resist. This is in line with stress-and-coping models that we have referred to previously (Lazarus & Folkman, 1991), in which exposure to a stressor induces the motivation to address it. However, motivation could also function as a moderator of the relationship between implicit social identity threat and resistance, such that implicit social identity threat leads to resistance *only when* the motivation to resist is also high, thus representing a third criterion for resistance alongside threat experience and coping resources. This latter alternative is in line with the MODE model (Fazio, 1990) and would suggest that there are circumstances in which the experience of implicit social identity threat is high, but the motivation to resist is not. In sum, more evidence for the relationship between social identity threat and motivation would be beneficial to our understanding of resistance to implicit social identity threat.

Encouraging resistance. Given that not everyone resists, we might consider possibilities of encouraging people to develop resistance to implicit threat. In considering the options for this, we must first study why some people do *not* show resistance to begin with. Firstly, it is possible that people do not resist because they do not experience implicit identity threat. Alternatively, it is possible that people experience implicit social identity threat, but are unable to resist. Resistance to implicit cues of devaluation would be desirable in both these cases. To the extent that resistance is a response to cope with social identity threat, resistance would not be needed if the individual does not experience social identity threat. However, previous studies have demonstrated that implicit stereotype exposure often leads to stereotype conformity, which can have detrimental effects on the group beyond the individual. Therefore, it seems worthwhile to try to encourage resistance to

implicit cues of devaluation even amongst those who do not experience them as threatening. One way to do this would be to attempt to increase threat experience, for instance by raising awareness, just as has been done for explicit devaluation (Aldana, Rowley, Checkoway, & Richards-Schuster, 2012; Rosenthal, 1984). Similarly, Chapter 6 indicated that increasing exposure to the threatening context can serve to build up resilience, amongst those people who are unable to resist at the implicit level even though they do experience implicit identity threat. However, an important drawback of such approaches that focus on increasing implicit social identity threat is their ethical implications, and it seems preferable to encourage resistance to implicit in-group devaluation without increasing threat experience. That is, we might be able to encourage the resistance *response* without first triggering implicit social identity threat, for instance by training people to develop positive or counter-stereotypical in-group associations.

In sum, having established that resistance to implicit social identity threat is possible, future work should study the factors that determine its presence or absence, and the possibility of encouraging resistance to implicit social identity threat through policy or training.

Motivated conformity. Finally, aside from future directions focusing on further examining the processes involved, future research could also focus on examining the experience of members of disadvantaged groups more broadly. Specifically, here we consider resistance to be a motivated response, but have not considered the possibility that conformity to stereotypes may be a motivated response as well. That is, instead of passively accepting stereotypes, people may *actively* accept them. For instance, factors that increase affiliation motivations (e.g. mimicry) have been shown to increase stereotype conformity (Leander, Chartrand, & Wood, 2011; Sinclair, Huntsinger, Skorkinko, & Hardin, 2005), suggesting that affiliation increases the motivation to act in line with the interaction partner's expectations. Thus, under some circumstances, conformity to stereotypes may be a motivated response aimed at smoothing social interaction.

Strengths & Limitations

When interpreting the findings of this dissertation it is worth noting a number of strengths and limitations to this work.

Strengths. The work comprising this dissertation has a number of strengths. Firstly, in terms of study design, we studied the phenomenon of

resistance to implicit social identity threat in a number of different contexts, notably gender identity, national identity and regional identity. Additionally, in the context of national identity in Spain, we were able to manipulate the implications of stereotypes: in the context of gender, stereotypes associated with women, and the devaluation and disadvantage they imply are closely intertwined. Especially amongst women who are highly identified with feminists, exposure to gender stereotypes likely brings to mind immediately the disadvantage faced by women in society. However, in the context of national identity this link is less strong, and we were able to disentangle how stereotypes, and their implications for devaluation, independently contribute to resistance. Additionally, we used different outcome measures to demonstrate that resistance can take different forms. Our studies also included a number of explicit outcome measures which were present in previous studies. This allowed us to replicate findings from previous studies that demonstrated that resistance to implicit social identity threat is not evident on explicit measures.

In terms of methodology, strengths of this work include its use state-of-the-art analytical methods such as pooled analysis (or Integrative Data Analysis, Curran & Hussong, 2009) and the use of multilevel modelling to analyse reaction time data. These analytical methods allowed me to collapse studies with the same design, and account for variance explained by random factors. In this way, we were also able to control for differences between samples, and differences between individuals, which increases the statistical power of the analyses and reduces vulnerability to statistical artefacts.

Limitations. In terms of limitations, it is important to note that our manipulations relied quite heavily on stereotypes. There were a number of reasons why stereotypes were a suitable basis for our manipulations of implicit social identity threat. Firstly, stereotypes are socially shared, which means that group stereotypes are familiar to both in-group and out-group members (Chen et al., 2004; Crocker, 1999). Moreover, stereotypes can be presented implicitly in an experimental context (Banaji & Hardin, 1996; Hess, Hinson, & Statham, 2004), allowing us to draw upon this work to inform our methodology. Additionally, stereotypes need not be negative in valence, which means that the effects shown are not confounded with valence. Based on these considerations, we selected stereotypes as a basis for our manipulations of implicit social identity threat. Though we believe the empirical chapters provide substantial evidence that it was not stereotypes *per se* that gave rise to resistance, it would nevertheless be worthwhile to examine resistance to

implicit identity threat arising from sources other than implicit stereotype exposure. For instance, future research might focus on threat arising from implicit performance feedback. Such a line of research could not only inform us on resistance to implicit identity threat based on concerns other than stereotypes, but also about the possibility of resistance to implicit threat arising from individual rather than group-based threat.

An additional limitation of this work, in terms of methodology, is the fact that nearly all of these studies rely on student samples, except Study 2.3. Student samples differ from community samples in age and level of education, which may have affected the findings of our studies. In the case of national or regional identity there is no reason to expect great differences based on these factors, but in the context of gender, for instance, levels of feminist identification might depend on a woman's age (Zucker & Stewart, 2007). Therefore, it would be worthwhile to replicate these findings with non-student samples.

Concluding remarks

Social inequality and devaluation is deeply ingrained in many societies, including our own. Importantly, there is evidence that such social devaluation is expressed in increasingly subtle ways. When cues of social devaluation are subtle or even implicit, this can lead members of disadvantaged groups to experience implicit social identity threat. This is especially pernicious, because implicit social identity threat is more difficult to recognise and to address directly, and research suggests that this undermines resilience (Kray et al., 2001; Major et al., 2003). In other words, previous research indicates that implicit social identity threat cannot be resisted, but instead leads to acceptance and conformity. This dissertation disputes whether this has to be so and focuses on the possibility of *resistance* against implicit social identity threat. Evidence from five empirical chapters shows that members of disadvantaged groups can build up psychological resilience, like physical immunity, and resist implicit social identity threat through evaluative and behavioural responses. As such, this dissertation highlights how implicit cues of social devaluation can inspire disadvantaged groups to choose the path of most resistance.

