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SHORT CONTENTS

Psychological Bricolage: Integrating Social Identities to Produce Creative Solutions

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Abstract

Novel solutions are often created by combining existing but previously unrelated knowledge. Unrelated or disparate knowledge can come from different individuals, but it can also reside within one mind. This chapter introduces the concept of *psychological bricolage,* defined as the process through which an individual integrates previously unrelated knowledge to create novel solutions. It reviews research showing that psychological bricolage is facilitated when individuals can integrate social identities that are often considered separate or in conflict, such as family and work identities, or gender and professional identities. Implications for future research on ideation, innovation, and entrepreneurship are discussed.

Key Words: psychological bricolage, identity integration, identity, creativity, social identity, entrepreneurship

Integrating Social Identities to Produce Creative Solutions

The bricoleur creates with what ever is at hand... uniting internal and external knowledge.

—*Levi-Strauss, 1962*

Creative people [are] able to connect experiences they've had and synthesize new things.

—*Steve Jobs, 1995*

Before the advent of computers, secretaries such as Bette Nesmith Graham faced an annoying problem: correcting mistakes on an electric typewriter that involved a tedious, multistep process with questionable results. Bette came up with a novel solution. The breakthrough came when she recombined knowledge tied to her experiences as a professional typist with knowledge tied to her experiences as a painter. The creative solution involved developing a fast-drying paint formula that could be applied to paper and typed over. The result was a new product, known today as Liquid Paper (Gross, 2013). This example illustrates how novel solutions are created by making use of existing but previously unrelated ideas (Amabile, 1996; James, 1890; Royce, 1898; Schumpeter, 1934). As noted by the 1st-century Roman poet, Lucretius: *Nil posse creari de nilo* ("It is not possible to create something from nothing").

Unrelated ideas can come from different minds, providing the rationale for seeding brainstorming groups with diverse members (Osborn, 1963; Rietzschel, Nijstad, & Stroebe, 2006; Sutton & Hargadon, 1996). However, Graham's story illustrates how disparate ideas can also reside within the same mind (e.g., Cheng, Sanchez-Burks, & Lee, 2008; Leung, Kim, Goncalo, Ong, Qiu, Polman, & Sanchez-Burks, 2012). The process by which individuals create novel solutions by making use of previously unrelated ideas they already possess is what we conceptualize here as *psychological bricolage.*

Our term psychological bricolage draws on and connects two parallel streams of research from different disciplines, starting with the seminal work

on "social bricolage" introduced by the cultural anthropologist Lévi-Strauss (1962) to explain how societies create novel solutions by making use of resources that already exist within the collective social consciousness. The second stream is research on "creative cognition," an intrapsychic approach focusing on how people cognitively engage in the process of retrieving and recombining knowledge sets in new ways (Finke, Ward, & Smith, 1992; Leung, Maddux, Galinsky, & Chiu, 2008). Our term, psychological bricolage, reflects a common underlying concern about the nature of knowledge recombination found across current and classic social psychological and anthropological research.

Psychological Bricolage: Sources and Challenges

A growing stream of research on the socially constructed and dynamic nature of people's identities provides important insights into processes underlying psychological bricolage. This work reveals that one deep reservoir of unrelated ideas is people's collections of social identities, or social groups by which they define themselves. Bette Graham's social identities, for example, included professional typist, amateur artist, and probably others. Each social identity is tied to experiences in distinct social, professional, or cultural contexts, as well as to specific knowledge (Shih, Pittinsky, & Ambady, 1999). For example, Graham's identity as a typist was activated in the context of an office, and the activation of this identity brought to the fore her knowledge about typing. In contrast, her identity as a painter was activated in the context of her art studio, and in that situation her knowledge about painting and design was more cognitively accessible. This suggests that, to facilitate the recombination of existing ideas in new ways, one must understand the factors that influence how unrelated knowledge structures are simultaneously brought to mind and made cognitively accessible.

Inherently, psychological bricolage appears to be a challenge because it entails bridging identities that are often considered separate or in conflict. This may include, for example, handling segmented professional and personal identities (Sanchez-Burks, 2002, 2005) or managing the conflicting expectations of being a woman and being in a male-dominated profession (Cheng et al., 2008; Sacharin, Lee, & Gonzalez, 2009). When people perceive conflict between different identities, opportunities for psychological bricolage are diminished because the multiple identities are less likely to be simultaneously activated, and the knowledge sets associated with these identities are less likely to be made simultaneously accessible. This later challenge is illustrated by an old Mexican-American folktale describing a woman who was trying to buy a bilingual parrot. According to the tale, the parrot spoke Spanish if one pulled its right leg and spoke English if one pulled its left leg. "What happens if you pull both legs?" the woman asked, "Will he speak Tex-Mex?" "No," the parrot answered, "I'll fall on my ass" (West, 1988, cited in Benet-Martínez, Leu, Lee, & Morris, 2002). As this folktale suggests, attempts at experiencing or being both identities at the same time is often seen as foolhardy, leading to a less-than-ideal situation of being a member of neither one group nor the other. These negative effects of belonging to conflicting groups have been well documented in the literature about immigrants (who belong to different cultural/ethnic groups with incompatible values) (e.g., Berry, 1990), women in the work force (who belong to gender and professional groups with competing demands) (e.g., Eagly, Makhijani, & Klonsky, 1992; Martin & Knopoff, 1997), and people who work in matrix organizations and cross-functional teams (who belong to different functional departments with contrasting priorities) (e.g., Glynn, 2000; Hogg & Terry, 2000).

Consistent with the creative cognition approach, which argues that the activation of conflicting identities can be beneficial for creativity, management scholars have suggested that embracing conflicting organizational identities can also accrue benefits. Daft (1982), for example, proposed a "dual-core" model for organizations, whereby they move between two contrasting activities of innovating and implementing (Duncan, 1976). Similarly, Brown and Eisenhardt (1997) suggested that organizations in complex environments need to develop structures and processes that move between the polar states of pure chaos" and "pure structure. In a fast-changing world, the argument goes, organizations need to be ambidextrous; that is, they must be able to live with paradoxes in the form of internal contradictions in the organization's culture and structure (Tushman & O'Reilly, 1997).

This logic applies to individual organizational members as well. McCaskey (1988) argued that, similar to dual-core organizations, individuals in organizations need to be "two-faced," much like the ancient Roman god, Janus, who had two faces on his head, each facing opposite directions. Likewise, Weick (1979) proposed that organizational members should

engage in contradictory activities such as simultaneously using and discrediting precedents. This notion of "requisite variety" suggests that a highly varied environment requires organizations and their members to be similarly varied (Ashby, 1952).

From these various lines of research, it is clear that the ability of organizational members to manage paradoxical identities may be critical when innovation is important to an organization's survival and growth. Yet, as we describe later, it is not easy for individuals to successfully achieve this competency. In this chapter, we examine how the management of multiple, conflicting identities affects an individual's ability to engage in psychological bricolage and the implications of psychological bricolage for creative and entrepreneurial endeavors. We review research on the psychological mechanisms that facilitate or hinder the integration of conflicting identities, describe how such mechanisms relate to creative and entrepreneurial performance, and draw implications for organizational interventions.

Social Identities as a Resource for Psychological Bricolage

The social identities of individuals provide a cognitive resource for psychological bricolage in organizations. Social identities refer to the ways in which people define who they are based on their memberships in different groups (Tajfel, 1981). Racial, gender, religious, professional, community, and organizational groups are just a few of the many types of membership-based social identities that have been studied in the psychological and management literatures. Social identities have been shown to affect how we think, what we know, and how we perform.

Research on social identities has yielded two critical insights with significant implications for understanding creative and entrepreneurial performance in organizations. First, our social identities define the boundaries between insiders and outsiders. Insiders, also called in-group members, are individuals who share membership in the groups to which we belong. For example, an engineer might consider other engineers to be fellow insiders (i.e., in-group members). Outsiders, or out-group members, are individuals who do not belong to and may not be relevant to our immediate groups. An engineer might consider, in particular situations, stay-at-home mothers to be out-group members.

Second, social identities are tightly bundled with specific knowledge sets. At any given moment,

individuals do not have access to all the knowledge they possess. However, activation of any one social identity can lead to better accessibility of knowledge associated with that identity and, in turn, to better performance on tasks related to that knowledge domain. For example, when Asian women's cultural identity (i.e., being Asian) is primed or made salient, they performed better on math tests, a domain in which Asians are stereotypically expected to excel. In contrast, when their gender identity (i.e., being a woman) is primed, they perform worse on math tests, conforming to stereotypes of women as being inferior in math (Shih, Pittinsky, & Ambady, 1999). In a similar study on how people make attributions or explanations about social events, Chinese-American biculturals who were exposed to Chinese cues made more situational attributions (i.e., explained events using factors in situations external to the actors), a prototypically Eastern attributional style. In contrast, those who were exposed to American cues made more dispositional attributions (i.e., explanations using factors internal to the actors), a prototypically Western attributional style (Hong, Morris, Chiu, & Benet-Martínez, 2000). These findings demonstrate that making salient one identity facilitates the accessibility of cognitive frameworks, knowledge, competencies, and skills related to that identity.

In the sections that follow, we build on these two key findings about social identities—that they define insiders and outsiders in a particular context and that different knowledge sets are made accessible when they are activated—to provide better insight into factors that facilitate and inhibit opportunities for psychological bricolage and entrepreneurial performance. Specifically, we argue that psychological bricolage may be more difficult for people who perceive conflict between their different identities. To the extent that multiple social identities are activated one at a time rather than simultaneously, it is less likely that the different knowledge sets tied to those identities will be made accessible simultaneously to enable psychological bricolage. Moreover, individual differences in the management of social identities affect how and when insider and outsider knowledge sets are activated.

Psychological Management of Multiple Identities: Identity Integration

Identity integration (II) represents one strategy that individuals use to manage multiple social identities. II refers to people's subjective perceptions of compatibility between multiple social identities.

Any one person belongs to many social groups at the same time—for example, one can be simultaneously a man, a Latino, a teacher, a volleyball player, and a Republican. Some of these identities do not pose any conflict with one another. It is not problematic to imagine someone who is both a teacher and a volleyball player. However, it is not infrequent for individuals to hold identities that, on their face, have conflicting values, norms, and expectations. For example, a person can identify with being both White and Black, both Republican and pro-choice, both a female and in a male-dominated profession, or both a New Yorker and a fan of the Boston Red Sox.

There is not a single way in which individuals negotiate among these conflicting identities. Roccas and Brewer (2002) proposed four general strategies individuals use to manage multiple social identities: *intersection* (for example, our New Yorker who is a Red Sox fan will identify only with other New Yorkers who are also Red Sox fans), *dominance* (the same person, if she has a dominant "sports" identity, will identify with other Red Sox fans), *compartmentalization* (she will identify with either New Yorkers or Red Sox fans, depending on external cues—e.g., the Red Sox fan identity will be activated at a baseball game), and *merger* (she will identify with New Yorkers and with Red Sox fans). Research on immigrants has established similar taxonomies to describe strategies individuals use to manage their home and host cultural identities: *assimilation* (identification with only the dominant or host culture), *integration* (identification with both cultures), *separation* (identification with only the ethnic or home culture), or *marginalization* (low identification with both cultures) (Berry, 1990).

Importantly, individuals who opt to identify with both of their conflicting identities—those who adopt the *merger* or *integration* strategies from the taxonomies describe—differ in their perceptions of compatibility between the social groups to which they belong (Benet-Martínez & Haritatos, 2005). II measures the degree to which individuals perceive two conflicting identities as compatible or as in opposition to each other (Benet-Martínez & Haritatos, 2005). Individuals with high II perceive their two identities as largely compatible and complementary, but those with low II feel caught between their two identities and prefer to keep them separate. II is typically measured with the use of self-report scales. A sample item might be "I feel torn between 'Identity A' and 'Identity B' [referring to specific social groups with which individuals identify]."

Psychological research on II began with studies of biculturals, who are individuals who identify with two cultural groups that have conflicting values (e.g., Asian-Americans). Subsequently, II has been was extended to the examination of other types of social identities, such as gender, race, or professional identities (for a review, see Nguyen & Benet-Martínez, 2013). For example, women in male-dominated professions such as engineering who have high II feel that their gender and professional identities blend together seamlessly, whereas similar women with low II feel torn between these two identities and report feeling conflicted based on their dual membership.

Identity Integration and Creativity

Of particular importance to this chapter, II has been shown to predict levels of innovation and creative performance in multiple settings. A study of academics with multidisciplinary professional identities (e.g., someone who obtained a PhD in one discipline but has an academic appointment in another) found that those with high II (i.e., those who saw their disciplinary identities as compatible) had more publications than those with low II (i.e., those who perceived conflict between their disciplinary identities). To the extent that a successful publication record requires both novelty (original ideas) and integration of existing ideas (building on ideas, theories, or evidence that already exists), this study provides initial evidence that II may be related to creativity (Cheng, Sanchez-Burks, & Lee, 2013).

Other research has more closely examined how individuals with multiple cultural identities perform on creative tasks. One study found that, when performing a creative task that requires cross-cultural knowledge (e.g., coming up with a novel dish using both Asian and American ingredients), Asian-American biculturals with high II (i.e., those who perceived their Asian and American cultural identities as compatible) developed more dishes that were more creative—that is, more novel, useful, and marketable to customers—than those with low II. Importantly, biculturals with high II were more creative only when the task required knowledge from different cultures (cooking with ingredients from both cultures). When asked to come up with creative dishes using *only* Asian or *only* American ingredients, there were no differences in creative performance between those with high versus low II (Cheng et al., 2008).

In a follow-up study, Cheng et al. (2008) replicated this finding with ascribed and achieved

identities focusing on female engineers as examples of women in a male-dominated profession. Female engineers who had high II between their gender and their professional identity were more creative when designing a new cell phone targeted for women, but they did not outperform their counterparts with low II when designing a cell phone for a more general audience. These studies suggest that individuals with high II are not inherently more creative than those with low II. Rather, they are more creative *only* when knowledge relevant to the conflicting identities is required. For Asian-Americans, this may be cooking with Asian and American ingredients; for female engineers, it may be designing technological products for women. In summary, when individuals perceive their two identities as compatible, or have high II, they are more likely to integrate knowledge sets that are associated with these identities, facilitating their creative performance on tasks that draw on those disparate knowledge sets.

Revisiting Identity Integration through The Lens of Organizational Boundaries and Insider/Outsider Perspectives

Thus far, we have examined the potential to enhance creativity from the joint activation of two or more social identities. In this section, we contextualize this process. As noted earlier, psychological bricolage is related to individuals' ability to simultaneously activate conflicting or unrelated social identities and their associated knowledge structures. However, what is considered conflicting or unrelated identities may be different in different contexts. For example, in the context of a corporate strategy meeting, one's identity as a manager will be salient, but one's identity as Little League baseball coach will not. The first identity as a manager is an "insider" identity, insofar that it is highly relevant in this context. The second identity as a baseball coach is an "outsider" identity because it is generally viewed as irrelevant to this particular context.

Organizational boundaries often provide the main context to define insider and outsider identities. At a typical work setting, organizational or professional identities are considered insider identities, whereas other identities (e.g., gender, ethnicity, nationality) are often considered outsider identities. In work settings, knowledge and perspectives shared by other insiders or organizational members are activated and made more accessible, but unique knowledge that is presumably irrelevant to the organization is less likely to be made salient. Here,

the opportunity to bring in a novel insight arises from drawing on one's existing knowledge that is *not* shared by other insiders within the organization. In the following section, we elaborate on this overarching framework to discuss how organizations can better promote the activation of outsider identities to foster creativity.

Strategies that Facilitate (and Inhibit) the Activation of Outsider Identities

One common way in which organizations attempt to integrate inside and outside perspectives is to bring in new individuals, such as consultants or new hires, to supplement existing members in the organization. Implicit in this practice is the belief that insiders and outsiders possess different knowledge sets and different experiences. However, the research on II suggests that outsider perspectives do not come exclusively from individuals outside the organization. Rather, insiders or current members of an organization have many outsider identities within them. In this sense, organizations already possess the outsider perspectives needed to facilitate creativity. Barriers to creative performance include organizational factors that inhibit the expression and integration of outsider identities and perspectives. Some of these forces are well documented in the research literature. For example, work on *Protestant relational ideology* and professionalism has shown that there exists a strong norm within work contexts to suppress employees' thoughts about and exhibition of non-work experiences and identities (Sanchez-Burks, 2005; Sanchez-Burks, Neuman, Ybarra, Kopelman, Park, & Goh, 2008). As such, non-work identities and their associated knowledge sets are less accessible for developing solutions to workplace problems (Higgins, 1990). The challenge for organizations, therefore, is to facilitate insiders' abilities to engage in psychological bricolage by leveraging their existing outsider identities and bringing the associated knowledge sets to the fore. This in turn requires dismantling some of the long-standing beliefs and norms that act as barriers to the activation of non-work–related identities in the workplace. In the next section, we outline several managerial practices that can achieve these goals.

Making Non-Work Identities Salient

Google's well-known management practice of requiring engineers to spend 20% of their time on "personal projects" is commonly considered a

catalyst for bringing employees' non-work identities, knowledge, skills, and competencies into the workplace (Mediratta, 2007). Indeed, just asking employees to discuss or think about identities outside their profession may be a way of making salient these outsider identities. These activities may be particularly useful during the ideation stage of the creative process.

Social psychological research shows that external cues such as perceptual stimuli (words, sounds, pictures) are often highly effective in activating different social identities. Simply working outside the traditional workplace—in a coffee shop, at home, in a park—exposes people to a myriad of non-work–related cues and may serve to make salient non-work identities during work. Cues such as attire can also activate outsider identities. For example, one study showed that asking people to wear causal clothing while performing a task can activate non-work–related psychological processes at work (Sanchez-Burks, 2005). In short, relatively simple interventions such as allowing employees more flexibility in where they work or allowing more causal work attire can attenuate the strong and pervasive boundary between our work and non-work identities.

Other organizational artifacts can also activate outsider identities to invigorate creativity. For example, when Bank of America acquired MNBA, Bank of America invested tremendous effort to retain MNBA's original organizational identity (Creswell & Dash, 2005). To the surprise of many MBNA employees, MBNA mottos reflecting their mission and culture remained on the office walls after the merger. The post-merger organization had two dress codes—a more formal one reflecting MBNA's strength in front-office operations, and a more casual one reflecting Bank of America's strength in back-office operations. This explicit policy to maintain an outsider organizational identity within Bank of America enabled the post-merger Bank of America to retain and integrate the outsider perspectives, skills, and knowledge brought in by MNBA employees. This practice of facilitating outsider perspectives in turn plays a critical role in enabling Bank of America to continuously experiment and innovate, a key competitive advantage for the organization (Lee, Edmondson, Thomke, & Worline, 2004).

When Insider Identity Strength can Inhibit Creativity

As described earlier, successful integration of insider and outsider identities lies in part in organizational members' openness to outsider perspectives

and ideas. Successful integration may also be a function of employees' perceptions of their insider rather than outsider identities. A recent study exploring how multicultural experiences relate to creativity found that individuals who "glorified" their insider identity—that is, those who viewed their cultural in-group as superior to foreign cultures or cultural out-groups—had decreased levels of creativity after extensive multicultural experiences. In contrast, individuals who were just "attached" to their insider identity—those who identified with their cultural in-group but did not necessarily view it as superior to or better than cultural out-groups—experienced increased levels of creative performance after extended multicultural experiences (Clerkin, 2013).

This finding shows that the nature of a person's insider identity may be an important factor that influences his or her ability to integrate outsider identities and engage in psychological bricolage. Organizations need to walk a fine line between increasing attachment to the organization among their employees without inducing glorification. Indeed, glorification of one's organization—seeing one's in-group as superior to the out-group—can lead to positive illusions about insiders' perspectives and negatively biased perceptions of outsiders' perspectives as inferior. This creates barriers to psychological bricolage and highlights a possible downside of unquestioning pursuit of higher levels of organizational identity from employees. New employees go through intensive socialization to the organization's culture and norms; rituals and artifacts are introduced to reinforce and delineate a clear boundary between inside and outside identities and perspectives. Such tactics may be effective for building cohesion, loyalty, commitment, and citizenship behaviors, but research suggests that they may also reduce psychology bricolage and, in turn, creativity.

Mere Exposure to Outsider Perspectives Versus Integration of Identities

It is commonly assumed that exposing insiders, such as organizational employees, to outsider perspectives can increase creative performance. For example, organizations might encourage their employees to train outside the organization to learn "best practices" from other organizations. However, recent research suggests that mere exposure without identification can potentially undermine effective psychological bricolage. This is supported by studies examining the integration of multiple

cultural identities. For example, Asian-Americans who have lived for at least 5 years in an Asian country and 5 years in the United States, and therefore have substantial exposure to both cultures, nevertheless can have low levels of II between these cultural identities and in turn may exhibit lower levels of creativity on tasks requiring both Asian and American knowledge.

In addition, there are empirical data showing that multicultural experiences alone (e.g., such as living in many countries starting at a young age, participating in study-abroad programs) can lead to *lower* levels of flexibility and openness if exposure is not accompanied by identification with the different foreign cultural groups (Hanek, Lee, & Brannen, in press). Presumably, being exposed to another culture (without identification with that foreign culture) can highlight ways in which the foreign culture differs from one's home culture, and this *decrease* the likelihood that outsider identities or perspectives will be integrated.

Given this research, it appears that simply introducing outsider perspectives, knowledge, and expertise within an organization may do more harm than good when it comes to increasing creative performance. Such interventions might reinforce the differences between outsider and insider identities, making it more difficult for outsider perspectives to be brought to bear on innovative endeavors. In other words, just knowing about a different, contrastive perspective often makes salient the polarization between the different groups and social identities, reinforcing the belief that multiple identities and related knowledge sets are unbridgeable.

Generalized Identity Integration: Cross-Domain Individual Difference for Creativity?

Although we have focused thus far on how integration of insider and outsider identities supports psychological bricolage, there may be ambiguity about which of numerous outsider identities are most critical for the creative task at hand. In prior empirical research, the critical outsider identity is often made explicit by the research design. For example, when researchers examine how people create innovative fusion dishes in America, we know that an Asian culinary perspective is a useful outsider perspective for this specific task. Or, when we study how people design a new cell phone for women, it is understood that a female perspective is a useful outsider perspective to complement the insider/engineer perspective. However,

there are many creative challenges in which it is unclear which outside perspectives and knowledge sets might facilitate creativity. For example, when designing a new cell phone for an unknown or shifting target market, it is not clear which outsider identity should be brought to bear during the creative process.

This issue is partially addressed by emerging research on "generalized identity integration" (GII), an individual difference measure of how people generally manage their multiple identities, regardless of what those identities are (Hanek, 2013). In essence, individuals high in GII have lowered barriers for activating any and all outsider identities in regard to an organizational task. For example, when designing new cell phones, an engineer with high GII would have heightened access to many, if not all, of her outsider perspectives—being a woman, a Latina, a Buddhist, a bird watcher, and so on. Such an engineer may show higher levels of creativity in multiple tasks, each drawing on different outsider-related knowledge sets. Individual differences in GII suggest the possibility that organizations need not define, a priori, the domain of the outsider identity that is needed to increase creative performance for any given task. This also suggests that GII may be an important trait for organizations to consider when recruiting for positions that require high levels of creativity.

Lessons for Mergers and Acquisitions

The example of the merger of Bank of America and MBNA underscores the point that bringing in outsider perspectives (e.g., through mergers) without retaining and integrating the associated outsider identities may do little to advance organizational creativity and innovation. Indeed, mergers and acquisitions are common strategies used by business firms to bring in outsider knowledge sets so as to generate innovation. The merger of Sprint and Nextel, for example, was based on a strategic decision to combine cell phone technology (Sprint's expertise) with walkie-talkie technology (Nextel's expertise), and the acquisition of YouTube by Google was similarly touted as a way to combine search engine technology (Google's expertise) with multimedia/video material (YouTube's expertise). However, prior research has provided equivocal evidence that mergers and acquisitions successfully increase organizational creativity and innovation. Indeed, studies have found that mergers and acquisitions are just as

often predictive of lower rather than higher levels of innovation (Cassiman, Colombo, Garrone, & Veugelers, 2005).

The II perspective suggests that one reason for this failure: after the merger, most firms are quick to create a new, unified "insider" organizational identity, often at the expense of the pre-merger "outsider" organizational identities. Employees brought into the parent organization are often expected to adopt the organizational identity of the parent organization and abandon the one associated with their former organization. Unfortunately, suppression of the outsider identity makes knowledge, expertise, routines, and networks associated with the former organizational unit inaccessible. Ironically, this undermines the underlying rationale for the merger, which is bringing together insider and outsider expertise and knowledge sets (*not* abandoning prior expertise and knowledge). In effect, policies that retain and integrate insider and outsider organizational identities may be a critical post-merger strategy that enables organizations to reap the elusive benefits of a merger.

This idea is consistent with a study in which multicultural employees with different cultural identities exhibited higher global skills *only* when the organization had a diverse rather than a unified identity (Fitzsimmons, 2011). In contrast, when organizations embraced a singular organizational identity, the various cultural skills that multicultural employees brought with them were dampened. Further, employees who did not identify strongly with the organization for which they worked were better able to counter the attenuating effects of a unified organizational identity, and their diverse skills were more likely to be employed. It seems reasonable, therefore, to suggest that organizations that want to leverage the diverse knowledge inherent in their employees' outsider identities need to allow for more variegated and even contrasting organizational identities.

Entrepreneurship and Identity Integration

Like other creative endeavors, entrepreneurship entails generating and developing ideas that are both new and useful (Ward, 2004). As such, psychological bricolage may be a helpful framework for understanding entrepreneurial behavior. Mitchell, Busenitz, Lant, McDougall, Morse, and Smith (2002) introduced the concept of *entrepreneurial cognition*, which focuses on "the knowledge structures that people use to make assessments, judgments, or decisions involving opportunity

evaluation, venture creation, and growth" (p. 97). We suggest that psychological bricolage may an important mechanism that enables entrepreneurial cognition. Arguably, integrating knowledge structures related to multiple identities can enable the conceptualization of new means, ends, or means–ends relationships, which are defining characteristics of entrepreneurial ventures (Eckhardt & Shane, 2003).

Summary

In this chapter, we introduce the notion of psychological bricolage to provide an overarching framework for understanding the individual processes underlying creativity. Recent studies have shown that individuals who are able to integrate multiple and conflicting social identities are better able to bring together different sets of knowledge to improve creative performance. These studies have included, among other groups, people with multiple and conflicting cultural identities and people with multiple and conflicting gender, class, and professional identities. Psychological bricolage describes the common experience across these samples of managing multiple and conflicting social identities.

Our exploration of psychological bricolage leads us to several conclusions that extend and challenge common assumptions in theory and practice. First, we propose that the differentiation and integration of insider versus outsider identities provides a general framework to understand previous research. For example, within the United States, one's "insider" cultural identity means being American, but one's "outsider" cultural identity may refer to being Asian. For women at work, one's professional identity is the "insider" identity, but one's gender may be seen as an "outsider" identity. Because insiders and outsiders have access to different knowledge relevant for different types of tasks and situations, integration of insider and outsider identities is a critical factor that engenders creativity.

Second, existing organizational research suggests that organizations benefit from employees' identifying with the organization. Organizational identification has been shown to relate to a multitude of positive outcomes, ranging from organizational citizen behavior to commitment (Mael & Ashforth, 1992; Feather & Rauter, 2004; Van Dick, Grojean, Christ, & Wieseke, 2006). Our discussion of psychological bricolage, particularly as it relates to insider and outsider identities, suggests that a strong organizational identity can also have downsides. Specifically, reinforcing

the insider identity of employees can weaken outsider identities, making the knowledge associated with outsider identities less accessible in organizational settings. Indeed, this chapter questions the assumption that a singular, monolithic, and stable organizational identity is ideal and suggests strategies organizations can use to blur the constraints of insider identities and thereby facilitate their integration with outsider identities.

In conclusion, insiders seeking novel solutions to problems can benefit from outsider perspectives, even when they reside within one's own mind. The holy grail of increasing creative performance does not necessarily lie in the development or recruitment of individuals with extraordinary creative talent; rather, it entails leveraging employees' existing and broad repertoires of outsider identities beyond those associated with the organization. Organizations that can facilitate the activation of outsider identities, and weaken the norms that inhibit them, are better able to leverage psychological bricolage to enable creative performance, innovation, and entrepreneurship.

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