



Psicologia dei Gruppi e delle Relazioni Sociali

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Theoretical Lessons (Part 1):

- 1- An introduction to the group dynamics (1)***
- 2- An introduction to the group dynamics (2)***
- 3- Studying Groups***
- 4- Inclusion and Identity***
- 5- Formation***
- 6- Cohesion and Development***
- 7- Structure***
- 8- Influence***
- 9- Power***
- 10- Leadership***
- 11- Performance***
- 12- Decision Making***
- 13- Teams***
- 14- Conflict***
- 15- Intergroup Relations***
- 16- Groups in Context***
- 17- Groups and Change***

Experimental activity (Part 2):

- 18- From cognition to social simulation***
- 19- Research in group dynamics***
- 20- Community detection***
- 21- Epidemic Modeling***
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- 23- Reputation dynamics***
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- 28- Personality, Self and Identity (I)***
- 29- Personality, Self and Identity (II)***
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Lesson 4 Outline

- ***From Isolation to Inclusion***
 - *The Need to Belong*
 - *The Pain of Exclusion*
 - *Evolution and Inclusion in Groups*

- ***From Individualism to Collectivism***

- ***From Personal Identity to Social Identity***
 - *Social Identity Theory: The Basics*
 - *Motivation and Social Identity*

Most people prefer group membership to isolation, but once they join with others they find they must sometimes do what is best for the group rather than what benefits them personally. Groups blur the boundary between the self and the others, for members retain their personal qualities—their motives, emotions, and outlooks—but add to them a sense of self that incorporates their collective rather than their individual characteristics. Groups transform the me into the we.



Brian Palmer and Joe Gorman illustrate what has been called “the master problem” of social life: What is the connection between the individual and society, including groups, organizations, and communities (Allport, 1962)?

In this lesson I’ll consider three essential processes that combine to transform the lone individual into a group member:

- ***inclusion:*** the single individual changes from an outsider into an insider by joining a group.
- ***collectivism:*** group members begin to think about the good of the group as a whole rather than what the group provides them.
- ***identity:*** the transformation of identity, individuals change their conception of who they are to include their group’s qualities as well as their own individual qualities



Some species of animals are solitary. The cheetah, giant panda, orangutan, and opossum remain apart from other members of their species and congregate in some cases only to mate or rear offspring. Other animals, such as chimps, hyena, deer, and mice, are social creatures, for they usually forage, feed, sleep, and travel in small groups.



What about humans?

Do we tend to keep to ourselves, guarding our privacy from the incursions of others, or are we grouporiented animals, who prefer the company of other people to a life alone?



Need to Belong

The dispositional tendency to seek out and join with other humans.

Most theorists, when identifying the fundamental psychological processes that drive humans' actions across a range of situations and settings, include a need to belong on their list (Maslow, 1970; Pittman & Zeigler, 2007).

Aristotle famously suggested that "Man is by nature a social animal; and an unsocial person who is unsocial naturally and not accidentally is either unsatisfactory or superhuman."

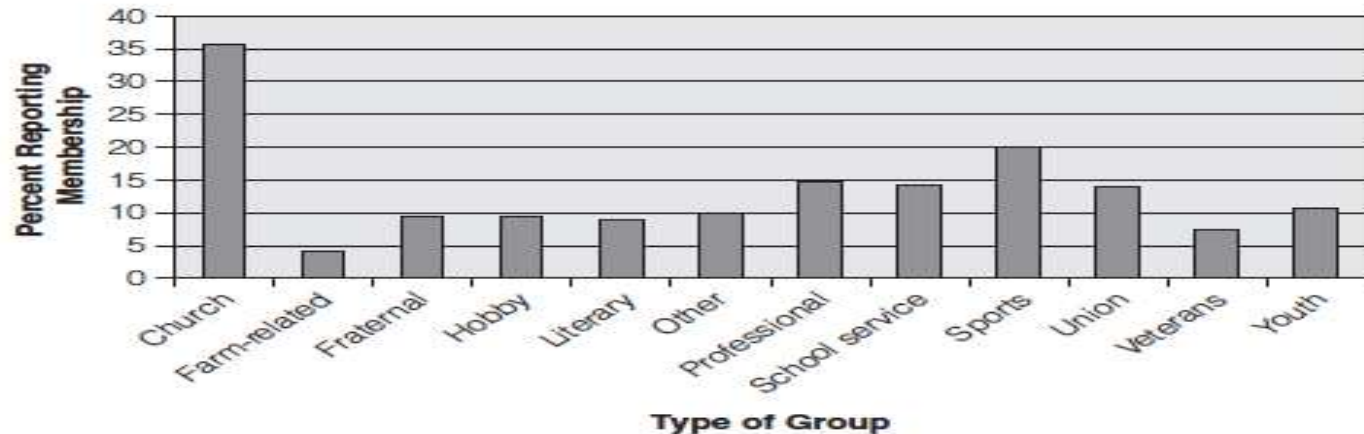
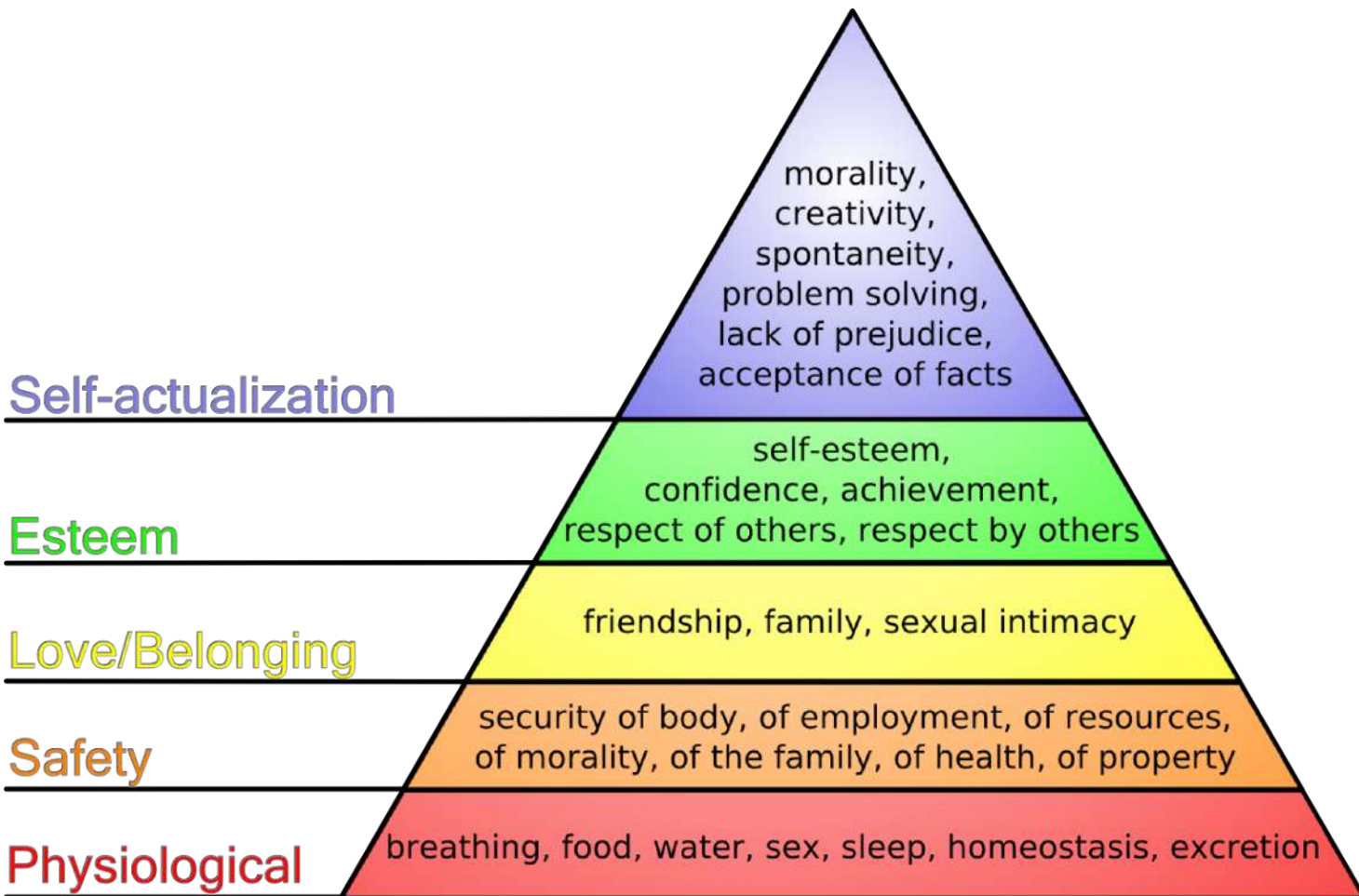


FIGURE 3.1 Percentage of Americans reporting membership in various types of groups.

SOURCE: General Social Surveys, 1972–2006. [machine-readable data file]. Chicago: National Opinion Research Center. Storrs, CT: The Roper Center for Public Opinion Research. Available at <http://www.norc.uchicago.edu>.

Need to Belong

The dispositional tendency to seek out and join with other humans.





The Pain of Exclusion

The strength of the need to belong is seen even more clearly when this need is thwarted. Most people, both young and old, find protracted periods of social isolation disturbing (Zubek, 1973).

The diaries of individuals who have been isolated from others for long periods of time—stranded explorers, scientists working in seclusion, and prisoners in solitary confinement—often stress the psychological costs of their ordeal rather than physical deprivations. As their isolation wears on, they report fear, insomnia, memory lapses, depression, fatigue, and general confusion. Prolonged periods of isolation are also marked by hallucinations and delusions, as when one solo sailor at sea was startled when he thought he saw a pirate steering his life raft (Burney, 1961).

The Pain of Exclusion

People's need to belong is slaked when a group accepts them, but they are most satisfied when a group actively seeks them out. In contrast, people respond negatively when a group ignores or avoids them, and this negative reaction is exacerbated if the group ostracizes, abandons, or banishes them (Leary, 1990).

Ostracism

Excluding a person or group of people from a group, usually by ignoring, shunning, or explicitly banishing them.

- Cliques of adolescent girls, for example, use the threat of exclusion and ostracism itself to control the activities of members, with excluded girls finding that they are suddenly outcasts instead of trusted friends.
- Many religious societies shun members who have broken rules or traditions.
- People who do not toe the line in work or classroom groups are sometimes ignored by the rest of the group, sometimes for months or even years.
- Even nonhuman groups practice ostracism, for a variety of social species, including wolves, bees, and primates, sometimes exclude an individual from the group usually with fatal consequences.

The Pain of Exclusion



Ostracism is extremely stressful.

- ***When asked, the excluded describe themselves as frustrated, anxious, nervous, and lonely (Williams, 2007).***
- ***Sometimes using such intensely negative words as heartbroken, depressed, and worthless (Barnett, 2006).***
- ***Ostracized people evidence physiological signs of stress, including elevated blood pressure and cortisol levels (a stress-related hormone). Brain imaging research even suggests that the pain of exclusion is neurologically similar to pain caused by physical injury. (Eisenberger, Lieberman, & Williams, 2003; MacDonald & Leary, 2005).***

The Pain of Exclusion

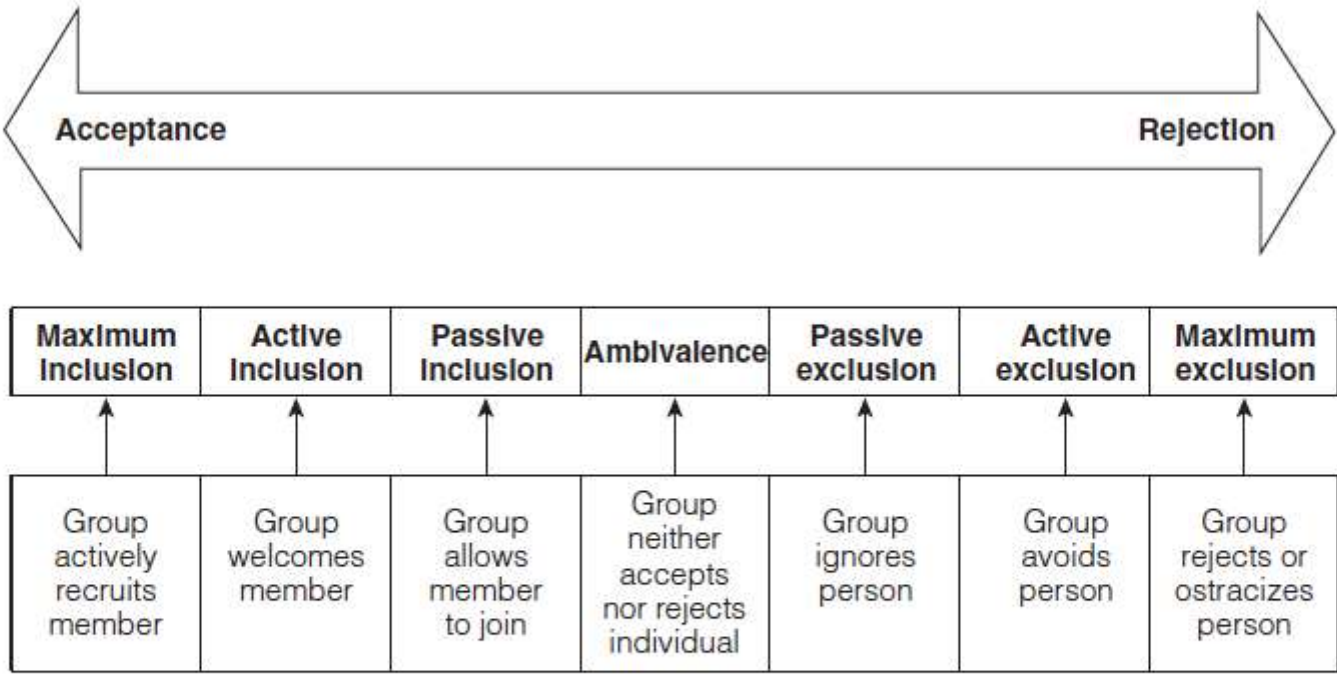


FIGURE 3.2 The inclusion–exclusion continuum. When individuals are actively sought out by groups they experience maximal inclusion, and when groups actively ostracize them people experience maximal exclusion.

SOURCE: Leary, 1990.

The Pain of Exclusion

Cyberostracism Groups no longer meet only in face-to-face situations but also in multi-user forums, email discussions, and game sites on the Internet. Just as people sometimes exclude others from group activities in face-to-face activities, online members also sometimes ignore others, effectively excluding them from the interaction. Williams has labeled this form of exclusion cyberostracism. (Williams, Cheung, & Choi, 2000), (Williams et al., 2002).



Cyberostracism

The exclusion of one or more individuals from a technologically mediated group interaction, such as a computer-based discussion group.

Evolution and Inclusion in Groups

Why do people usually choose membership over isolation? Why do people respond so negatively when others exclude them? Why do groups often deliberately exclude members? Why do people monitor their acceptance in groups, and question their self-worth when others shun them?



Evolutionary theory offers a single answer to all these questions: the need to belong to groups is part of human nature. Evolutionary psychology uses Charles Darwin's theory of natural selection to explain why contemporary humans act, feel, and think the way they do. Darwin dealt primarily with biological and anatomical adaptations, but evolutionary psychologists assume that recurring patterns of psychological and social tendencies also stem from evolutionary processes that increase adaptive actions and extinguish nonadaptive practices. Humans' preference for living in groups rather than alone may also be sustained by psychological and biological mechanisms that evolved over time to help individuals solve basic problems of survival.



Evolution and Inclusion in Groups

Evolutionary theory assumes that these advantages of group life, over multiple generations, eventually sewed sociality into the DNA of the human race.

In the modern world, the advantages of group life over solitude are not trivially always so clear. People who buy their food in grocery stores and live in houses with deadbolts on the doors do not need to worry much about effective food-gathering strategies or protection from predation. These modern conditions, however, cannot undo 130,000 years of natural selection.

- Because those individuals who were genetically predisposed to join groups (“joiners”) were much more likely to survive and breed than people who avoided social contacts (“loners”), with each passing generation, the genes that promoted solitude seeking were weeded out of the gene pool, and the genes that encouraged group joining prospered (Marsh & Morris, 1988).**
- In consequence, gregariousness flourished as part of the biological makeup of humans. Your ancestors were, in all likelihood, joiners rather than loners (Kameda & Tindale, 2006).**

Evolution and Inclusion in Groups

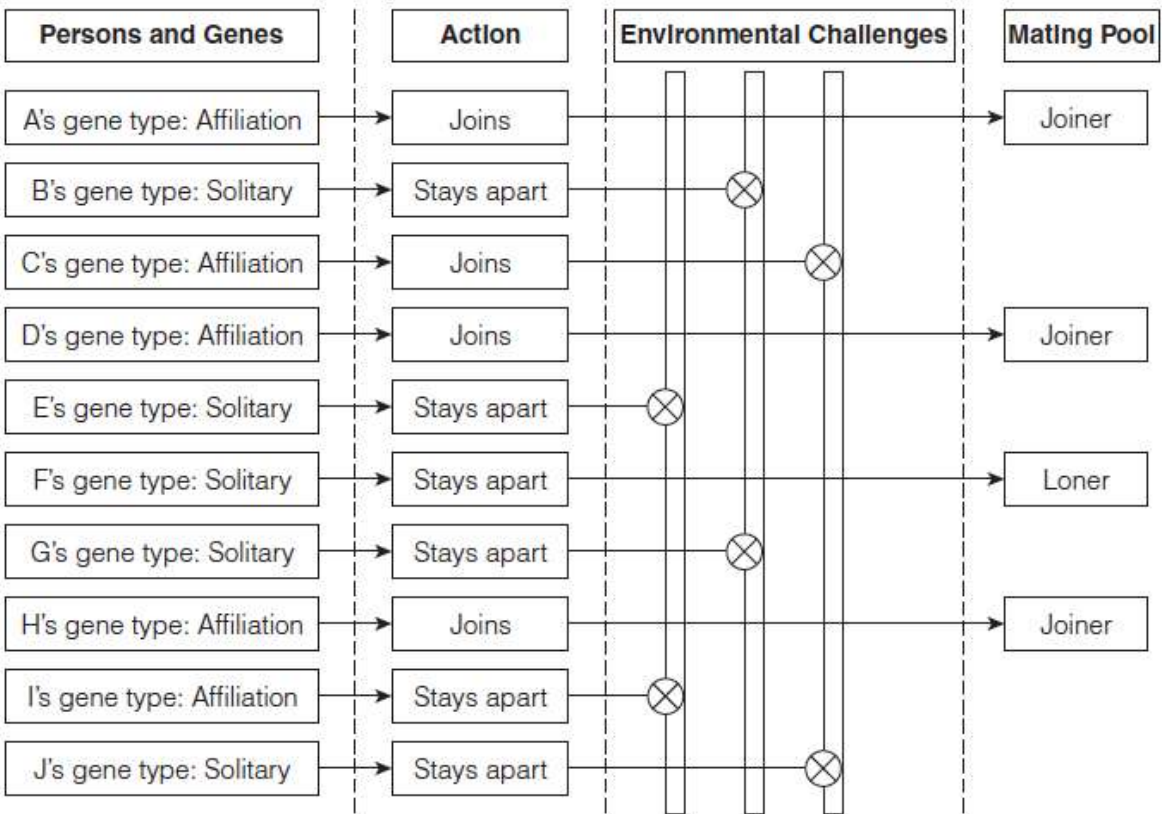


FIGURE 3.4 A schematic representation of the process of natural selection of group-oriented individuals. If humanity's ancestors lived in an environment that favored those who lived in groups, then over time those who affiliated would gradually outnumber those who were self-reliant loners. Note, too, that one's genetic endowment interacts with the environment, and so not all individuals who are genetically predisposed to affiliate or remain alone will do so (see, for example, person I).



Evolution and Inclusion in Groups

Evidence and Issues : Do humans instinctively seek membership in groups?

- ***Anthropologists have documented the great diversity of human societies, but across all these variations, they have found one constancy: People live in groups rather than alone (Mann, 1988).***
- ***Careful analysis of the artifacts left behind by prehistoric humans—primarily bones and stone implements—suggest that even ancient humans lived in groups (Caporael, 2007).***
- ***Other primates, such as chimpanzees and bonobos, also live in small groups with dynamics of inclusion and exclusion that are similar to those seen in human groups (de Waal, 2006).***
- ***The young of the species instinctively form strong emotional bonds with their caregivers, and babies who are deprived of close human contact have higher mortality rates (Bowlby, 1980).***
- ***Cooperative group life is a more stable strategy in evolutionary terms than competition and individualism (Axelrod & Hamilton, 1981).***



From Individualism to Collectivism

Individualism

A tradition, ideology, or personal outlook that emphasizes the primacy of the individual and his or her rights, independence, and relationships with other individuals.

Individualism is based on the independence of each individual. This perspective assumes that people are autonomous and must be free to act and think in ways that they prefer, rather than submit to the demands of the group. Each person is also unique—a true individual—and all people are encouraged to strive to achieve outcomes and goals that will personally benefit them.

Collectivism recognizes that human groups are not mere aggregations of independent individuals, but complex sets of interdependent actors who must constantly adjust to the actions and reactions of others around them. Each person, if even recognized as an independent entity, is inseparably connected to the group or community.

Collectivism

A tradition, ideology, or personal orientation that emphasizes the primacy of the group or community rather than each individual person.

From Personal Identity to social Identities

Henri Tajfel, John Turner, and their colleagues originally developed social identity theory, or SIT, in an attempt to understand the causes of conflict between groups.



Tajfel and Turner's research revealed a systematic bias for humans, they always favored the ingroup over the outgroup, and this bias persisted even though (1) members of the same group never interacted face-to-face, (2) the identities of ingroup and outgroup members were unknown, and (3) no one gained personally by granting more or less money to any particular person (Tajfel & Turner, 1979, 1986).

Social Identity Theory

A theoretical analysis of group processes and intergroup relations that assumes groups influence their members' self-concepts and self-esteem, particularly when individuals categorize themselves as group members and identify with the group.



From Personal Identity to social Identities

Social Categorization

How could these “purely cognitive” groups—groups that had no interpersonal meaning whatsoever—nonetheless influence people’s perceptions and actions? Social identity theory’s answer: Two cognitive processes—categorization and identification—combine to transform a group membership into an identity (Abrams et al., 2005; Hogg, 2005; Oyserman, 2007).

Self-Categorization Social identity theory is based, fundamentally, on the process of social categorization. People quickly and automatically classify other people into social categories. People do not, however, only categorize other people; they also classify themselves into various groups and categories. (Broverman, et al., 1972). Then, through self-stereotyping, one would also apply those stereotypes to himself and would come to believe that he(Abrams & Hogg, 2001; Mackie, 1980).

Social Categorization

The perceptual classification of people, including the self, into categories.

Prototypes (or stereotypes)

A socially shared set of cognitive generalizations (e.g., beliefs, expectations) about the qualities and characteristics of the typical member of a particular group or social category.



From Personal Identity to social Identities

Identification

As social identification increases, individuals come to think that their membership in the group is personally significant. They feel connected and interdependent with other members, are glad they belong to the group, feel good about the group, and experience strong attachment to the group. Their connection to the group also becomes more affectively toned—a “hot” cognitive reaction rather than a “cold” recognition of membership—as individuals incorporate the group into their social identity, “together with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership” (Tajfel, 1981, p. 255). Their self-descriptions also become increasingly depersonalized as they include fewer idiosyncratic elements and more characteristics that are common to the group.

The sense of self changes as the group is, literally, included in the self (Wright, Aron, & Tropp, 2002).

Social Identification

Accepting the group as an extension of the self, and therefore basing one’s self-definition on the group’s qualities and characteristics.



From Personal Identity to social Identities

Motivation and Social Identity

Social identity theory provides key insights into a host of psychological and interpersonal processes, including collectivism, perceptions of the outgroup, presumptions of ingroup permeability, tolerance of deviance within the group, increased satisfaction with the group, and feelings of solidarity (Kenworthy et al., 2008; Leach et al., 2008).

Evaluating the Self Michael Hogg (2005) suggests that at least two basic motives influence the way social categorization and identification processes combine to shape one's sense of self.

- In general, individuals are motivated to think well of themselves, and since their groups comprise a significant portion of their selves, they maintain their self-worth by thinking well of their groups.***
- Second, Hogg suggests that self-understanding is a core motive for most people, and that groups offer people a means of understanding themselves.***

When individuals join groups, their self-concept becomes connected to that group, and the value of that group influences their feelings of personal worth. People who belong to prestigious groups tend to have higher self-esteem than those who belong to stigmatized groups (Branscombe, 1998).



From Personal Identity to social Identities

Motivation and Social Identity

few research ...

- Those who are members of the most prestigious groups generally report feeling very satisfied with themselves and their group. Those students who want to be a part of an “in crowd” but are not accepted by this clique are the most dissatisfied (Brown & Lohr, 1987),
- ... and this interpersonal failure can lead to long-term negative effects (Barnett, 2007; Wright & Forsyth, 1997).
- Jennifer Crocker and her colleagues examined the relationship between people’s self-esteem and their feelings about the groups to which they belonged by developing a measure of **collective self-esteem**. Instead of asking people if they felt good or bad about themselves, they asked individuals to evaluate the groups to which they belonged. They found that people with high membership esteem and public and private collective self-esteem scores had higher personal self-esteem, suggesting that group membership contributes to feelings of self-worth (Crocker & Luhtanen, 1990; Crocker et al., 1994; Luhtanen & Crocker, 1992).

Collective Self-Esteem

A person’s overall assessment of that portion of their self-concept that is based on their relationships with others and membership in social groups.



From Personal Identity to social Identities

Motivation and Social Identity

Protecting the Collective Self

When individuals identify with their group, they also tend to exaggerate the differences between their group and other groups. Once people begin to think in terms of we and us, they also begin to recognize them and they.

The tendency to look more favorably on the ingroup is called the ingroup-outgroup bias.

Gang members view their group more positively than rival gangs. Teammates praise their own players and derogate the other team. If Group A and Group B work side by side, members of A will rate Group A as better than B, but members of B will rate Group B more favorably than A.

The ingroup-outgroup bias often intensifies conflicts between groups, but it also contributes to the self-esteem and emotional wellbeing of group members. Social identity theory posits that people are motivated to maintain or enhance

Ingroup-Outgroup bias

The tendency to view the ingroup, its members, and its products more positively than other groups, their members, and their products. Ingroup favoritism is more common than outgroup rejection.

