

THE INDIVIDUAL AND THE GROUP

CHAPTER OVERVIEW

Humans are a group-seeking species, for most prefer group membership to isolation. When individuals join groups, they 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 blur the boundary between the personal and the interpersonal by transforming the *me* into the *we*.

- ❖ Do humans prefer solitude or group membership?
- ❖ What are individualism and collectivism?
- ❖ Does membership in a group change a person's self-concept and social identity?

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C. P. Ellis: From Klan Member to Enlightened Humanitarian

Claiborne P. Ellis was a man like any other. He grew up in North Carolina, in the southern United States. He never finished school, but he always found work: pumping gas, cleaning offices, driving a bread truck. He married, raised his children, and worked overtime to get by. He believed in America, he went to church every Sunday, and he obeyed the law. Everyone called him C. P. (Terkel, 1980).

C. P. was an individualist. He worked hard, held firm to his personal beliefs when others disputed them, and looked to no one for favors. But C. P., like most people, did not keep to himself. He supported his family, even quitting school with only an eighth-grade education when his father died and his family needed him to earn money. When he was a young man, he joined a number of groups and associations, including a local chapter of the Ku Klux Klan (KKK), a White supremacy group. In time, he renounced the Klan's racist values and joined a local community group that promoted equal treatment for all. Eventually he served on the local school board and was elected chief steward of his union.

C. P. illustrates the fundamental duality of human nature. He was, like most people, capable of existing both in groups and outside of groups. *C. P. the individualist* was a freethinker, independent, a leader, and so self-reliant that he often took unpopular positions on social issues and spoke his mind freely. But *C. P. the group member* was constantly seeking the company of others rather than remaining alone. He did not live free of the influence of others but, instead, sought out memberships in groups—groups that constrained his individuality in powerful ways. Here, we consider the essential tension between a life alone, as an individual, and a life with others, as a member of groups. We also consider how these two sides of human nature combine to determine individuals' values, identities, and sense of self-worth.

FROM ISOLATION TO BELONGING

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 group-oriented animals, who prefer the company of other people to a life alone?

Alone or Together

C. P. guarded his privacy and was often very reserved, in that he rarely shared his ideas, attitudes, and values with others. But C. P. also actively sought the company of others—to such a degree that he sometimes found himself joining groups

just to be included, rather than because he felt an affinity for the group or its members. As he explained, he never meant to get mixed up with the racist KKK group, but he was drawn to the social rewards that affiliation afforded. When a group of young White men congregated near the gasoline station where he worked, he became curious. “They said they were with the Klan and have meetings close-by. Would I be interested? Boy, that was an opportunity I really looked forward to! To be part of somethin’” (quoted in Terkel, 1980, p. 202). Like most people, he preferred affiliation and togetherness to solitude and separation.

ISOLATION VERSUS INCLUSION Henry David Thoreau spent 2 years secluded at Walden Pond, deliberately keeping his memberships in groups to a minimum. He explained,

Society is commonly too cheap. We meet at very short intervals, not having had time to acquire any new value for each other. We meet at three meals a day and give each other a taste of that old musty cheese that we are. Certainly less frequency would suffice for all important and hearty communication. (Thoreau, 1962, p. 206)

As Thoreau suggested, spending time alone, away from others, is often a rejuvenating, pleasurable experience. People, when surveyed about their reactions to isolation, report enjoying the self-discovery, contemplation, and increased spirituality that occurs when one is physically isolated from interactions with and observations by others (C. R. Long, Seburn, Averill, & More, 2003). When alone, people say, they can “discover who I am,” “determine what I want to be,” “meditate and reflect,” “try out some new behaviors,” “recover my self-esteem,” “protect myself from what others say,” and “take refuge from the outside world” (Pedersen, 1999, p. 399). Some philosophers, writers, and artists have reached the apex of their creativity during times of isolation, when they were not distracted by other people (Storr, 1988; Suedfeld, 1997).

But even though most people express a desire for privacy, they also seek the company of others. When people were asked to describe their most satisfying experience from the past month, most spoke of events that slaked their need for autonomy; they were able to act in ways that reflected their personal preferences rather than anyone else’s. These individuals, however, also prized experiences that satisfied their need for relatedness, connection, and intimacy with others (Sheldon, Elliot, Kim, & Kasser, 2001). Most adults prefer the company of others when threatened or distressed (Rofé, 1984), and they 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. Like the stranded Robinson Crusoe, they decry their isolation, complaining, “I am singled out and separated, as it were, from all the world, to be miserable. I am divided from mankind, a solitary; one banished from human society. I have no soul to speak to or to relieve me” (Defoe, 1908, p. 51). As their isolation wears on, they report fear, insomnia, memory lapses, depression, fatigue, and general confusion.

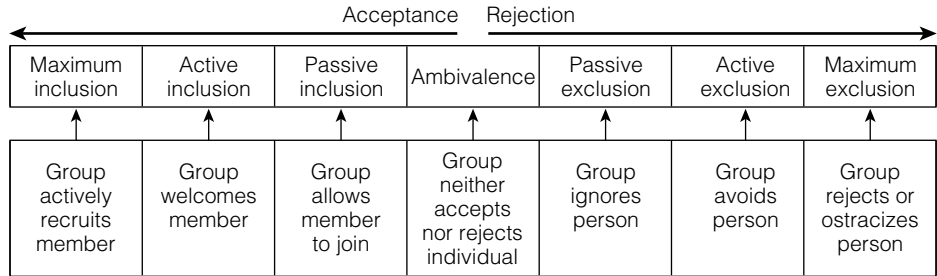
Prolonged periods of isolation are also marked by hallucinations and delusions, as when one solo sailor at sea was startled when he thought he saw a pirate steering his life raft (Bone, 1957; Burney, 1961). The psychological effects of forced isolation are so destructive that some cultures consider solitary confinement a form of torture.

Just the prospect of facing life alone, rather than isolation itself, is sufficient to trigger a range of negative psychological and social reactions. Roy Baumeister, Jean Twenge, and their colleagues studied the impact of anticipated aloneness by asking people to fill out an extensive personality test. They then told some people, at random, that their answers indicated their future would be a solitary one: “You’re the type who will end up alone later in life. You may have friends and relationships now, but . . . these are likely to be short-lived and not continue . . . the odds are you’ll end up being alone more and more” (Baumeister, Twenge, & Nuss, 2002, p. 819). People given this bleak prognostication—in contrast to those who were told that their future would be marked by other sorts of misfortunes—acted more aggressively; they were more critical of others and were more likely to punish others by exposing them to noxious noise levels. They were also more likely to engage in a number of irrational, self-defeating behaviors, such as taking unnecessary risks and procrastinating. And when the researchers asked them to complete a series of general cognitive aptitude measures, they discovered that the forecast of a life alone impaired their capacity for rational, intelligent thought. They concluded that human beings’ mental abilities are linked to their capacity to form and sustain relationships (Baumeister et al., 2002; Twenge, Baumeister, Tice, & Stucke, 2001; Twenge, Catanese, & Baumeister, 2002).

INCLUSION VERSUS EXCLUSION Because most people seek inclusion rather than isolation, they are particularly distressed when they are deliberately excluded by a social group. Individuals who seek admission to a group, such as a sorority or fraternity, are disconsolate when they are turned down but elated when they are accepted. Leaders of small cliques of adolescents use the threat of exclusion to control the activities and loyalties of the members (Adler & Adler, 1995). Many religious societies use **shunning** to punish members who have broken rules or traditions. C. P. was thrilled when the KKK accepted him, but disappointed when the group eventually turned against him. This inclusion–exclusion continuum is depicted in Figure 3-1. Although we are maximally satisfied when a group actively seeks us out, any group that takes us in as a member satisfies our need for inclusion. In contrast, we respond negatively when a group ignores or avoids us, but maximal exclusion—the group rejects, ostracizes, abandons, or banishes us—is particularly punishing (Leary, 1990).

Exclusion and ostracism are powerful negative experiences. Targets of exclusion, such as people shunned by their community, children rejected by their

shunning Systematic ostracism of an individual by a group, usually taking the form of minimized physical or social contact with the outcast.

**FIGURE 3-1**

Is inclusion an all-or-nothing process, or a continuum ranging from maximum inclusion to maximum exclusion? When groups actively seek us out, we experience maximal inclusion, and when they actively ostracize us, we experience maximal exclusion. *Source:* Leary, 1990.

peers, participants ignored by others in an Internet chat room, people at work given the “silent treatment” for whistle-blowing, group members who get the “cold shoulder” from the rest of the group, or children who are not picked for teams during recess, suffer a range of negative cognitive, emotional, and behavioral reactions. When ostracized or ignored by others, people report feeling frustrated, anxious, nervous, and lonely, whereas those who are included in the group feel relaxed, friendly, and comfortable (K. D. Williams, 2001). The ostracized or excluded feel they have been betrayed by the other group members, and they sometimes report frustration, shock, and surprise. Whereas people who are included value their experiences in the group, the excluded sometimes feel as if they are invisible—as if they do not even exist socially (K. D. Williams, 2001; K. D. Williams, Shore, & Grahe, 1998).

Exclusion also influences *self-esteem*—one’s feelings of personal worth. Mark R. Leary and his colleagues examined the impact of exclusion on self-esteem by asking sets of five individuals to interact briefly and exchange some sample essays. Participants then rated each other privately on a questionnaire, indicating with whom they would most want to work. The researchers, after examining the questionnaires, told three of the participants that they would be part of a group for the remainder of the research and told the other two that they would be working alone. In half the sessions, the researchers announced that people who were ranked negatively by the other group members would be the isolates, but in the other sessions, they said that the group-versus-individual decision was determined by a random drawing. The individuals who had been excluded from the group reacted the most negatively to their rejection, particularly if they thought the other participants, and not the experimenters’ random choice, caused them to be excluded. They reported feeling less competent, adequate, useful, smart, and valuable than did the included group members. The rejected members were also more negative than accepted members when they rated their coparticipants, and they also rationalized their exclusion when asked, “How

much did you want to be selected for the three-person ‘central’ group?” Individuals who were rejected said they did not really want to be in the group after all (Bourgeois & Leary, 2001; Leary, Tambor, Terdal, & Downs, 1995).

These findings support Leary’s **sociometer model of self-esteem**. This theory suggests that people intuitively keep track of their inclusion and exclusion in groups, and a drop in self-esteem is an internal signal that warns of possible exclusion. Like a gauge that indicates how much fuel is left in the tank, self-esteem indicates the extent to which a person is included in groups. If the gauge drops, then exclusion is likely. So when we experience a dip in our self-esteem, we search for and correct characteristics and qualities that have put us at risk of social exclusion. The sociometer model concludes that most people have high self-esteem not because they think well of themselves, but because they are careful to maintain inclusion in social groups (Leary & Baumeister, 2000).

The sociometer model explains why people who have been excluded are far more attentive to—and so more likely to accurately recall—the details of a group’s interaction: They are searching for the cause of their dismissal from the group (W. L. Gardner, Pickett, & Brewer, 2000). Excluded individuals are also more likely to amend their behaviors—perform extra work, offer apologies, do favors for other group members, and so on—so as to regain acceptance. Kipling D. Williams and his colleagues demonstrated the earnestness of the excluded in three-person groups that included only one real participant and two confederates. When the experimenter left the room, the confederates began to bounce a ball back and forth between them. In some cases, the confederates included the participant in their game, but in other cases, they stopped bouncing the ball to the participant after about a minute. The participants, when later asked how much they liked the other two group members, rated their partners more negatively when they had been ostracized. Women who had been ostracized, however, worked harder on a subsequent collective task, apparently to regain acceptance by the rest of the group. Women were also more likely to blame themselves for their ostracism (e.g., “I have trouble making a good impression with others”). Men, in contrast, did not compensate by working harder, nor did they take the blame for their rejection (K. D. Williams & Sommer, 1997). Williams and his colleagues have also studied how people react when excluded in chat rooms and e-mail conferences—what Williams called **cyberostracism**. As Focus 3-1 notes, people rejected by others via the Internet find that such rejection is upsetting, but they are more likely to reinsert themselves back into the group by increasing their communication with others (K. D. Williams et al., 2002).

sociometer model of self-esteem A conceptual analysis of self-esteem proposed by Mark Leary that argues self-esteem is not an index of perceived self-worth, but instead is a psychological monitor of one’s degree of inclusion and exclusion in social groups.

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

FOCUS 3.1 Does Cyber-Rejection Hurt as Much as Face-to-Face Rejection?

To have one's individuality completely ignored is like being pushed quite out of life—like being blown out as one blows out a light.

—Evelyn Scott

Not all groups meet in face-to-face settings. In some cases, group members communicate with one another over great distances through the use of information technologies, including e-mail, Internet chat rooms, message boards, and mailing lists. Such groups, although unique in many respects, are still groups, and so, in many cases, their dynamics are similar to those of more traditional, face-to-face groups. Such groups develop norms, admit new members, identify goals, and experience conflict. Members of such groups take the lead, offer suggestions, ask questions, and influence one another. And, in some cases, they ostracize one another. New members of Internet chat rooms are sometimes given the derisive label of “newbie,” and none of the veteran members will communicate with them. Individuals may refuse to respond to e-mails despite frequent attempts to provoke a response. An entire group of people in a chat room or other type of multi-user computer site may refuse to respond to a person who violates the group's norms about communicating, usually by using profanities or making insulting comments.

Given that the members of computer-based groups communicate at a distance and are, in some cases, completely anonymous, one might think that such cyberostracism is relatively inconsequential. However, the studies of Kipling Williams and his colleagues on online inclusion suggest otherwise. In one study, people from 62 different countries used the World Wide Web to take part in what they thought was a study of creative visualization. They thought they would be linked to two other volunteers and that the three would play a game of virtual catch by passing a flying disk from one player to another. The website allowed players to choose whom they would

throw the disk to, and it indicated who possessed the disk, whom it was thrown to, and whether or not the receiver dropped the throw. In actuality, however, the other two players were simulated, and the participants were randomly assigned to one of four conditions: overinclusion (thrown the disk 50% of the time), inclusion (33%), partial ostracism (20%), and complete ostracism (they never received a throw after the initial round of tosses). When the game was over and the participants completed a brief survey over the Web, those who had suffered ostracism displayed the same sorts of negative reactions as evidenced by people in face-to-face groups. Even though the game was meaningless and their partners were total strangers, their social self-esteem dropped, their moods turned negative, and they admitted that they felt rejected (K. D. Williams, Cheung, & Choi, 2000).

Williams reported similar reactions to exclusion in his studies of chat rooms. In this work, he invited participants to join others in online chat rooms—Internet sites where users can type in messages that are read by others who are logged into the site at the same time. Again, some of the participants were excluded by the others in the chat room, who were confederates following a script. Again, the participants reported a variety of negative reactions to the exclusion, but many of them also tried to break into the online conversation by increasing the number of messages they sent. For example, one wrote,

U 2 can keep talking btw yourselves and ignore me, I don't mind!!! . . . maybe I should start a conversation with myself . . . hi how are yah . . . I'm fine how are you . . . I'm fine too . . . come on talk to me. . .

Williams concluded that these provocative actions provided participants with a way to gain control of the situation and may have partially buffered them from the stressful effects of exclusion (K. D. Williams et al., 2002, p. 73).

ALONE VERSUS LONELY Whereas individuals who are excluded will redouble their efforts to regain acceptance by others, individuals who cannot join together with other people in relationships or groups may experience **loneliness**—an awareness that one’s relationships with others are too few or so superficial that one feels a sense of disconnection, sadness, and emptiness. Loneliness, in many cases, occurs when people have trouble establishing a long-term, meaningful, intimate relationship with another person. This distress, termed *emotional loneliness*, might be triggered by divorce, a breakup with a lover, or repeated romantic failures. *Social loneliness*, in contrast, occurs when people feel cut off from their network of friends, acquaintances, and group members. People who have moved to a new city, children who are rejected by their peers, and new employees of large companies often experience social loneliness because they are no longer embedded in a network of friends and acquaintances (L. R. Green, Richardson, Lago, & Schatten-Jones, 2001). Both types of loneliness create feelings of sadness, depression, emptiness, longing, shame, and self-pity.

Groups can provide the antidote to loneliness by (1) organizing and integrating connections with other individuals and (2) promoting the development of warm, supportive, intimate relationships between members (Shaver & Buhrmester, 1983). College students who belonged to a cohesive, satisfying group reported much less loneliness than students who belonged to poorly integrated groups (C. M. Anderson & Martin, 1995; N. Schmidt & Sermat, 1983). Members of groups with extensive interconnections among all the members were less lonely than members of groups with less dense networks (Kraus, Davis, Bazzini, Church, & Kirchman, 1993; Stokes, 1985). Children with friends—even friends who were considered odd or unusual by their peers—were less lonely than friendless children (Asher & Paquette, 2003). People who belonged to groups (e.g., service organizations, religious or church organizations, business or professional organizations, and social clubs) that provided them with social support were healthier and happier than individuals who had few ties to other people (R. E. Harlow & Cantor, 1996). They even lived longer than lonely loners (M. S. Stroebe, 1994; Sugisawa, Liang, & Liu, 1994).

These findings suggest that not all groups are equally effective in buffering their members from both forms of loneliness. As Table 3-1 suggests, transitory, impersonal collectives do little to ease either social or emotional loneliness. Sitting with other people in a theater or striking up a conversation with a stranger on a bus creates a connection momentarily, but only groups that create stable, reliable alliances among members can ward off social loneliness (W. H. Jones & Carver, 1991). Likewise, only groups that connect people together in an intimate, meaningful way reduce feelings of emotional loneliness. Having many superficial relationships with others is far less satisfying than having a few high-quality relationships characterized by high levels of social support, mutual caring, and acceptance (Cacioppo, Hawkley, & Berntson, 2003). In consequence, groups

loneliness Feelings of desperation, boredom, self-deprecation, and depression experienced when individuals feel their personal relationships are too few or too unsatisfying.

TABLE 3-1 The Relationships Between Group Structure, Intimacy, and Loneliness

Type of Group	Examples	Impact on Loneliness
Collectives: create only temporary, superficial alliances among members	Ticket buyers standing in a queue, audiences in a theater, passengers in an elevator	No buffering
Structured groups: organize and integrate connections with other individuals	Military squads, work groups, congregations, regulars at a bar, amateur athletic teams, social clubs	Reduce social loneliness
Intimate groups: promote the development of close, intimate relations among members	Small friendship cliques, lovers, roommates	Reduce emotional loneliness
Intimate structured groups: connect members in close, organized relations	Families, communes, family businesses, close-knit teams	Reduce both social and emotional loneliness

that create connections among their members, such as amateur athletic teams, social clubs, or work groups, will reduce members' feelings of social loneliness, but only more intimate, involving types of groups—families, romantic couples, or very close friendship cliques—will meet members' social *and* emotional needs (W. Stroebe, Stroebe, Abakoumkin, & Schut, 1996).

The Need to Belong

Why do people usually choose affiliation over isolation? Why do people respond so negatively when others exclude them? Why do people monitor their acceptance in groups, and question their self-worth when others shun them? Why is loneliness such a painful experience?

Roy F. Baumeister and Mark R. Leary (1995) suggested that the tendency to prefer membership to isolation, inclusion to exclusion, and sociality to solitude is evidence of our fundamental **need to belong** to social groups. All “human beings have a pervasive drive to form and maintain at least a minimum quantity of lasting, positive, and impactful interpersonal relationships” (p. 497). They likened the need to belong to other basic needs, such as hunger or thirst. A person who has not eaten will feel hungry, but a person who has little contact with other people will feel unhappy and lonely. Baumeister and Leary believed that group membership fulfills a generic need to establish positive, enduring relationships with other people (Rook, 1984).

The idea of a “herd instinct” in humans is not a new one (Edman, 1919; McDougall, 1908). Nearly a century ago, William McDougall (1908) argued that

need to belong The dispositional tendency to seek out and join with other humans; those who are deprived of human contact will experience discomfort and loneliness.

humans are inexorably drawn to “the vast human herd,” which “exerts a baneful attraction on those outside it” (p. 303). Recent advances in evolutionary psychology, however, have sparked new interest in the instinctive basis of human gregariousness. Evolutionary psychology, which was discussed briefly in Chapter 2, draws from Charles Darwin’s original theorizing. Darwin maintained that given the natural variation among individual members of a species, some will have more of the qualities needed for survival than others. The individual with more adaptive qualities will tend to survive longer and produce more offspring, who inherit their parents’ useful characteristics. Over time, nature will selectively favor individuals with the qualities that match the demands of the environment. Darwin’s called this process **natural selection**.

Darwin dealt primarily with biological and anatomical adaptations, but evolutionary psychologists assume that recurring patterns of social and psychological tendencies also stem from evolutionary processes that increase adaptive actions and extinguish nonadaptive practices (E. O. Wilson, 1975). Nature did not just encourage the development of webbed feet on ducks or a keen sense of smell in dogs, but also of social tendencies, such as banding together to ward off intruders, and preferred methods for establishing dominance hierarchies. Contemporary evolutionists have also expanded Darwin’s concept of natural selection to include **kin selection**—the selective favoring of qualities that enhance the survival of one’s relatives and their offspring. Because copies of our own genes are present in our sisters, brothers, and other relatives, when we help them survive and reproduce, we are indirectly encouraging the survival of our own genes in future generations (W. D. Hamilton, 1964).

Evolutionary psychology draws on these concepts to suggest that humans’ propensity to gather in groups is, in part, a genetic adaptation to the environment in which humans lived for thousands and thousands of years. Compared to a single individual, a group of humans roaming the ancient forests and plains probably attracted the attention of more predators. Moreover, when with others, individuals who found a succulent fruit or berry could anticipate losing much of their meal to others in the group. They would also be more likely to suffer from communicable diseases and be harmed by more aggressive humans. But the benefits of sociality are far more substantial than these costs. Those who joined with others in an organized band to hunt large animals or forage for patches of food were likely more successful than individuals who remained alone. Individuals in groups could maintain superior surveillance against predators; they could join forces to ward off predators’ attacks, and they could rely on other members of their group to protect them from the aggressive actions of other humans. Rela-

natural selection An evolutionary process that results in the survival and proliferation of organisms that have characteristics that enhance their survival and reproductive success in a particular environment.

kin selection A form of natural selection that encourages the survival and proliferation of genes that contribute to the reproductive success of one’s relatives rather than one’s self.

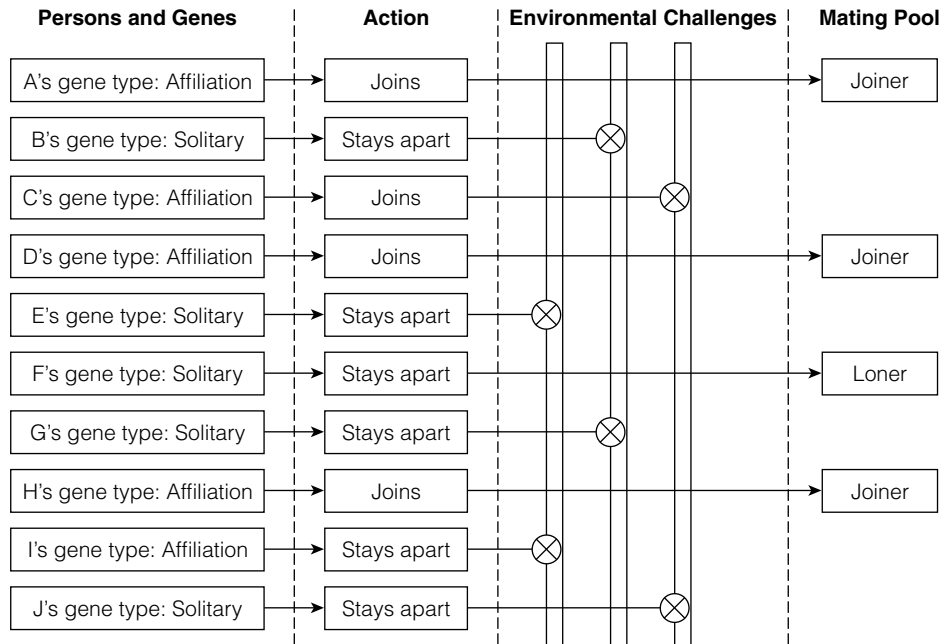


FIGURE 3-2

Do groups give a survival edge to their members? 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 that one's genetic endowment interacts with the environment, so not all individuals who are genetically predisposed to affiliate or remain alone will do so (see, e.g., Person I).

tives who lived in close proximity to one another could sustain and nurture children who carried copies of their genes. 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 (P. Marsh & Morris, 1988; see Figure 3-2).

In the modern world, the advantages of group life over solitude are not 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 the effects of millions of years of natural selection. Gregariousness remains a part of the biological makeup of humans. Your ancestors were, in all likelihood, joiners rather than loners (Buss, 1996; Gaulin & McBurney, 2001; S. Levine, 1996).

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 (L. Mann, 1988). People seem to be naturally predisposed to identify those who are in their own group. And, with no justification, they treat members of their own group more positively than members of other groups (Rushton, 1989). Studies have indicated that infants seem to be predisposed to form strong attachments to others and that babies who are deprived of close human contact have higher mortality rates (Ainsworth, 1979; Bowlby, 1980). Evidence suggests that cooperative group life is a more stable strategy in evolutionary terms than competition and individualism (Axelrod & Hamilton, 1981).

Evolutionary explanations of social behavior remain controversial, however. Researchers are only now subjecting the theory to close scrutiny, so its assumptions should be considered skeptically. The theory is difficult to test experimentally, and its basic premise—that characteristics that enhance our fitness have a genetic basis—is arguable. Just because groups are useful does not mean that we are instinctively drawn to them (R. C. Francis, 2004). The theory also assumes that humanity's evolutionary past was, for aeons, similar to the living conditions anthropologists have documented in their studies of many nonindustrial societies, and this assumption has been questioned (e.g., Festinger, 1983). Moreover, even if we are gregarious by instinct, other factors also play a role in determining our decision to join or leave a group. Early childhood experiences, for example, may determine the extent to which we prefer solitude or the company of others (H. F. Harlow & Harlow, 1966). Nonetheless, the evolutionary approach offers a compelling answer to the question, "Why do people seek out other people?" We instinctively value the contribution that a group can make to our genetic destiny (Caporael, 2000, 2001).

FROM INDIVIDUALISM TO COLLECTIVISM

Across individuals, societies, and eras, humans consistently prefer to live in groups rather than alone. But once we join with others, we must balance our personal needs against the needs of the group. When C. P. was alone, he could do as he pleased without irritating or offending others. He could spend the day reading, working, or relaxing if he chose to do so. But once C. P. joined a group, his self-centered world was replaced by a group-centered one. He could no longer do anything he pleased, for he had to coordinate his activities with others. How did C. P. manage to be both a unique, autonomous individual and a contributing member of the groups he joined?

Characteristics of Collectivism

Living in groups requires concession and compromise, for the needs and interests of a group do not always completely match the needs and interests of each one of its members. A mother asks her children to stop playing a game and spend an hour doing household chores. A group member thinks he deserves to be the leader, but the other group members will not let him say much during meetings.

An employer asks a worker to take a pay cut so the company can avoid bankruptcy. One dinner guest takes more than her fair share of dessert, so others must have much smaller portions. A social clique may pressure its members into expressing opinions that some members do not personally endorse.

When the group's and its members' needs, interests, and outlooks diverge, whose path should be followed? Should the individuals' needs come first, or does the group take precedence over the individual? Most answers to this question inevitably make their way to the distinction between individualism and collectivism. **Individualism** is a tradition or worldview based on the independence and uniqueness of each individual. This doctrine 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 (Kampmeier & Simon, 2001; Simmel, 1908). **Collectivism**, in contrast, puts the group and its goals before those of the individual members. Each person, if even recognized as an independent entity, is inseparably connected to the group or community. Social existence is centered on group relations, for it is the group that creates social obligations based on respect, trust, and a sense of community (Bellah, Madsen, Sullivan, Swidler, & Tipton, 1985).

At their core, these two perspectives differ in their relative emphasis on individuals and groups. In individualism, the person supersedes the group: Each person is unique, autonomous, and free to act in ways he or she considers best. In collectivism, the group supersedes the person: People are group members first, individuals second, and their actions must reflect their position within the confines of the group. Because of these varying priorities, individualistic people, groups, and cultures differ in many ways from ones that are based on collectivism. Table 3-2 and the following sections explore some of these differences, including variations in the nature of interpersonal relationships, norms and roles, motivations, and self-conceptions (Kagitcibasi, 1997; Oyserman, Coon, & Kimmelmeier, 2002; Triandis & Suh, 2002).

“ME” OR “US”: RELATIONS, MEMBERSHIPS, AND ASSOCIATIONS Both individualism and collectivism recognize the human need for belonging and connection, but a collectivistic orientation puts more value on these relationships. Collectivists feel close affinity with one another and, so, are more likely to adopt a communal orientation to their groups (Moemeka, 1998). They focus their time and energy on people who belong to their group—the **ingroup**—and are less

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.

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

ingroup Any group one belongs to or identifies with, but particularly one that is judged to be different from, and often superior to, other groups.

TABLE 3-2 Common Attributes of Individualism and Collectivism

Attribute	Individualism	Collectivism
Relationships, memberships, and associations	Concern for maintaining relations that yield personal benefits and few costs (<i>exchange orientation</i>); memberships are limited to family and close personal friendships	Concern for nurturing and maintaining harmonious relations with others (<i>communal orientation</i>); memberships including family, tribes, villages, organizations, social clubs
Norms, roles, and actions	Behavior is guided by personal attitudes and preferences; context is not as important as personal attitudes	Behavior is guided by group norms and roles; decisions are made by leaders and the group
Motives and goals	Striving for personal success; satisfaction comes from personal triumphs in competition with others	Concern for group success; cooperation among group members; group is protected at all costs; strong sense of duty and pride in group's successes
Self-conceptions	The independent self is based on one's personal, idiosyncratic characteristics; each self is autonomous and unique	The interdependent self is based on group-level relationships, roles, and social identities rather than on individual personal qualities

concerned with people who belong to some other group—the **outgroup**. They value their memberships in their groups more, consider these relationships to be stable and long-lasting, and tend to view boundaries between one group and another to be relatively impermeable. They are less willing to sever their memberships. Individualists, in contrast, do not restrict their relationships to the ingroup, for they tend to interact with more outgroup members. But their social interactions drift toward dyadic encounters, for their daily interactions are often one-on-one encounters rather than group interactions. Although some theorists feel that individualists are as likely as collectivists to interact with family and close friends, all agree that individualists are less likely to spend time in civic, community, or political activities (Cross, Bacon, & Morris, 2000; Oyserman et al., 2002).

Individualists and collectivists also tend to differ in their overall conceptualization of relationships themselves, with individualism associated with an *exchange orientation* and collectivism with a *communal orientation*. Individuals in **exchange relationships** monitor their inputs into the group, strive to maximize the rewards they personally receive through membership, and will become dissatisfied if their group becomes too costly for them. They expect to receive rewards in exchange for their investment of time, energy, and other personal resources. If

outgroup Any group one does not belong to or identify with, but particularly one that is judged to be different from, and inferior to, one's own group.

exchange relationship An interpersonal association between individuals based on each person's desire to increase the rewards they receive from others in the relationship.

individuals cannot identify any personal benefit from helping others in the group or community, then they will not offer any help (Ratner & Miller, 2001). In contrast, people in **communal relationships** are more concerned with what their group receives than with their own personal outcomes. When individuals work in communal groups, they help fellow members more, prefer to think of their work as a joint effort, and feel disappointed if other members insist on reciprocating any help given (M. S. Clark, Oullette, Powell, & Milberg, 1987). They are also more likely to consider the consequences of their actions for others and are more diligent in making sure that others' needs are met (J. Mills, Clark, Ford, & Johnson, 2004).

“RIGHTS” OR “DUTIES”: NORMS AND ROLES Collectivism, because of its emphasis on the group rather than on the individual, stresses respect for those who hold positions of authority and avoids disagreement or dissent (S. H. Schwartz, 1994). A group, to a collectivist, “binds and mutually obligates” each member (Oyserman et al., 2002, p. 5), and so the individual has no right to create disagreement or to disrupt group proceedings. Collectivists prefer, in fact, acquiescence to disagreement and compromise to conflict. They carry out their duties within their groups, and the successful fulfillment of their roles and responsibilities is the primary source of self-satisfaction (S. H. Schwartz, 1994). Individualists, in contrast, are expected to act on the basis of their attitudes, beliefs, and preferences. Whereas collectivists are enjoined to follow the dictates of social norms when making choices and selecting a course of action, individualists are guided by their personal attitudes and preferences. They have the right to speak their minds and to disagree with others (Triandis, 1996). Researchers illustrated this contrast by asking people to complete a short survey. Collectivists were more likely to comply with the survey takers' request when they were told that many other members of their group had agreed to fill out the form, whereas individualists were more compliant when they were reminded that they had complied with a similar request before (Cialdini, Wosinska, Barrett, Butner, & Gornik-Durose, 1999).

Because of these differences in emphasis on duties versus personal rights, collectivistic groups respond more negatively to group members who violate group norms, procedures, and authority. Their operating principle is, “The tall nail gets pounded down.” Individualistic groups are more reserved in their reactions to nonconformity per se, for they assume that “the squeaky wheel gets the grease.” Thus, collectivists hold rulebreakers in contempt, whereas individualists tend to display anger toward those who disregard the group's emphasis on autonomy by seeking to impose their will on others (Rozin, Lowery, Imada, & Haidt, 1999).

“MINE” AND “OURS”: MOTIVES AND GOALS If the goals of the group perfectly matched the individual members' goals, then individualists and collectivists would be indistinguishable. By helping the group prosper, the members help

communal relationship An interpersonal association between individuals who are more concerned with what their partner gets rather than what they themselves receive.

themselves prosper. However, if members must choose between maximizing their own personal goals or helping their group reach its goals, then the self-interest of the individualists will prompt them to further their own ends. Individualists tend to be **self-serving**, or *egocentric*—they strive to extract all the resources they can, while minimizing their contribution of personal resources. Collectivists, in contrast, are **group serving**, or *sociocentric*—they strive to increase the well-being of the community as a whole.

These differences can be clearly seen when members must make decisions about the allocation of resources among group members (Leung, 1997). Whenever groups earn rewards or cover costs, a fair means must be developed to determine how these rewards and costs are distributed across members. Imagine, for example, that your group has earned a reward by winning a lottery or must pay a fine because one of the group members accidentally broke something. The **equity norm** recommends that group members should receive outcomes in proportion to their inputs. If an individual has invested a good deal of time, energy, money, or other types of inputs in the group, then he or she could expect to receive a good deal of the group payoff. Similarly, individuals who contribute little should not be surprised when they receive little. The **equality norm**, on the other hand, recommends that all group members, irrespective of their inputs, should be given an equal share of the payoff. If your group includes all best friends, and collectivism is high, members would likely favor allocating the winnings on an equal-share basis: All should benefit, even if just one of the group members was the one who picked the winning lottery numbers. However, collectivists may also require that the costs be borne more heavily by the individual member who caused the problem, because the group as a whole must be protected against injury (Utz & Sassenberg, 2002). Individualism, in contrast, would favor an equity norm, because the contributions of each member are recognized and rewarded (or punished).

“ME” AND “WE”: SELF-CONCEPTIONS Each one of us is, in a sense, a historian who is writing and rewriting his or her own autobiography (Greenwald & Pratkanis, 1984). Each time we acquire new information that we feel defines who we are, we use this information to revise and redefine our sense of self. Most people’s selves include both a personal, private side and an interpersonal, public side. Unique, individualistic qualities—traits, beliefs, skills, and so on—

self-serving Emphasizing the primacy of one’s own needs, perspective, and importance, particularly in contrast to those of other individuals or the group.

group serving Emphasizing the primacy of the group’s needs, perspectives, and importance, particularly in contrast to those of individual members or oneself.

equity norm A social standard that encourages distributing rewards and resources to members in proportion to their inputs.

equality norm A social standard that encourages distributing rewards and resources equally among all members.

constitute the **personal identity**. The **collective self**, or **social identity**, includes all those qualities that spring from membership in a vast array of social groups, including families, cliques, work groups, neighborhoods, tribes, cities, regions, and countries (Caporael & Brewer, 1995; J. C. Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher, & Wetherell, 1987). The personal identity is the *me* of the self, and the social identity is the *we*.

Collectivism is more concerned with the *we*, and individualism focuses on the *me*. If asked to describe the self's contents, individualists' list of self-qualities would likely include physical qualities such as height, weight, and physical appearance; enduring personality traits and beliefs; attitudes and interests; and personal goals and experiences (Kanagawa, Cross, & Markus, 2001). They would be less likely to mention other people or their relations with them, because the self is considered to be independent of others: Each person is inherently separate from others. The self of the collectivist, in contrast, includes all those qualities that spring from his or her relationships with other people and group membership (see Table 3-3). *Social roles*, such as spouse, lover, parent, stepparent, caregiver, and worker, define one's position in groups and social networks. C. P. was a father, a husband, a union organizer, and the co-chair of a community action group called the Humans Relations Council. The collective self may also include memberships in social *groups*, such as car pools, clubs, or church groups, and memberships in larger social *categories*, based on ethnicity, age, religion, or some other widely shared characteristic. C. P. was a member of the Human Relations Council, a church, a union, and the Ellis family. Collective identities may also include information based on *relations*, or interpersonal bonds, with other people (Brewer & Gardner, 1996). C. P.'s interdependent, relational self included his close friendship with fellow group member Ann Atwater and his feelings for his son Tim (Brewer & Gardner, 1996; Gecas & Burke, 1995; Rhee, Uleman, Lee, & Roman, 1995; Thoits, 1992).

The self of the collectivist, then, is a more *interdependent* self, for it is based on connections with others. The self of the individualist is a more *independent* self, for it is based on one's unique qualities. This difference has implications for how group members think about themselves and others, and we will consider these self-processes in more detail in the final section of this chapter.

Collectivism Across Cultures

When the French sociologist Alexis de Tocqueville visited the United States in the 1830s, he was struck by Americans' self-reliance and independence. They were, he noted, frequently joining together to achieve some collective goal, but even when they were working in groups, they still took inordinate pride in their

personal identity The "me" component of the self-concept that derives from individualistic qualities such as traits, beliefs, and skills.

social identity (or collective self) That "we" component of the self-concept that includes all those qualities based on relationships with other people, groups, and society.

TABLE 3-3 Categories of Information in the Interdependent (Collective) Self

Component	Examples
Roles	athlete, caregiver, churchgoer, community volunteer, daughter, friend, group member, neighbor, parent, relative, secretary, son, spouse, stepparent, student, worker
Groups	book club, class, clique, club, committee, department, executive board, fraternity, gang, neighborhood association, research group, rock band, sorority, sports team, squad, work team
Categories	alcoholic, athlete, Christian, deaf person, Democrat, earthling, fat person, feminist, gardener, gay, Hispanic, retired person, Republican, salesperson, scientist, smoker, Southerner, welfare recipient
Relations	friend to others, in love, close to other people, helpful to others in need, involved in social causes

personal autonomy and self-reliance. It seemed that all Americans act as if they “owe no man anything and hardly expect anything from anybody. They form the habit of thinking of themselves in isolation and imagine that their whole destiny is in their own hands” (de Tocqueville, 1831/1969, p. 508). He coined a new word, *individualism*, to capture this uniquely American spirit of self-reliance (Bellah, 1986).

The view of people as independent, autonomous creatures may be peculiar to Western society’s individualistic leanings. When researchers measured the relative emphasis on the individual and the group in countries all around the world, they found that the United States, other English-speaking countries (e.g., England, Australia), and Western European countries (e.g., Finland, Germany) tended to be more individualistic than Asian, Eastern European, African, and Middle Eastern countries (Hofstede, 1980; Oyserman et al., 2002). Latin and South American countries were more varied, with such countries as Puerto Rico and Chile exhibiting greater individualism than others (e.g., Mexico, Costa Rica). Many Asian, African, and South American societies, in contrast, stress collectivism. The Gahuku-Gama of Highland New Guinea, for example, do not recognize individuals apart from their roles as father, mother, chief, and so on. They do not even grasp the concept of friendship, for such a concept requires liking between two individuals (K. E. Read, 1986). The Akaramas of Peru paint their bodies so elaborately that individuals are unrecognizable. Tribes sleep in same-sex groups of 10 or 12, and when individuals die, their passing goes unnoticed (Schneebaum, 1969). In Japan, the word for self, *jibun*, means “one’s portion of the shared space” (Hamaguchi, 1985). To the Japanese, “the concept of a self completely independent from the environment is very foreign,” as people are not perceived apart from the existing social context (Azuma, 1984, p. 973).

People who live in collectivistic cultures think of themselves as group members first and individuals second, whereas people who live in individualistic cultures are self-centered rather than group centered (see Focus 3-2). Harry C.

FOCUS 3.2 Do Only Individualists Strive for High Self-Esteem?

If I cannot brag of knowing something, then I can brag of not knowing it. At any rate, brag.

—Ralph Waldo Emerson

Most people prefer to think well of themselves rather than admit their faults, limitations, and foibles. People readily embrace positive feedback, but they question comments that are critical. When they make mistakes, they blame external factors, but when they succeed, they quickly claim credit. People tend to avoid comparing themselves to people who are outperforming them and, instead, prefer to contrast themselves with those who are struggling. The idea that people will go to great lengths to protect and enhance their sense of self-worth is “an old, respected, and when all is said and done, probably one of the great psychological truths” (Markus, 1980, p. 127).

Studies of cultural differences in the nature of the self, however, have challenged this idea, suggesting that only Westerners, with their individualistic selves, strive to enhance their self-worth. Compared to individualists, collectivists do not aspire to a positive self-esteem, do not think they are better than others, and do not blame their failures on other people. They are, in fact, self-critical and unassuming rather than self-enhancing (e.g., Chang & Asakawa, 2003; Heine, Kitayama, & Lehman, 2001; Kanagawa et al., 2001).

A team of international researchers representing England, the United States, and Japan

(Sedikides, Gaertner, & Toguchi, 2003), after considering prior studies of this question, concluded that both collectivists and individualists self-enhance, but they do it in different ways. Individualists stress their superiority over others on attributes that pertain to autonomy and independence, but collectivists think of themselves as more relational and self-sacrificing than others. They tested this hypothesis by asking U.S. and Japanese students to imagine they were part of a large group of their compatriots making a decision. Then they presented these students with a list of traits and asked them to indicate if they considered themselves to be better than, equal to, or worse than the typical member of this group. As they expected (see Figure 3-3), the American students described themselves as superior to others on the individualistic traits (independent, self-reliant, unique, leader), whereas the Japanese students described themselves as superior on the collectivistic traits (agreeable, compromising, cooperative, loyal, respectful). A similar pattern emerged when the participants indicated how likely it would be that they would engage in collectivistic behaviors (e.g., avoid conflict, defend the group, avoid open confrontation) versus individualistic behaviors (e.g., argue for your position, put yourself before your group). On the basis of these and other aspects of their data the researchers concluded that “self-enhancement is a universal human motive” (Sedikides et al., 2003, p. 60).

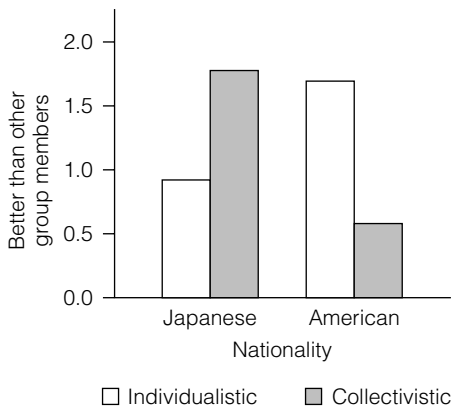


FIGURE 3-3

Is the need for high self-esteem a human universal? When researchers asked Japanese and Americans to rate themselves, both nationalities claimed they were superior to others, but they were culturally selective in their claims. The Japanese noted their superiority when rating their collectivism, and the Americans noted their superiority on traits pertaining to individuality. *Source:* Sedikides, Gaertner, & Toguchi, 2003. ***Credit to come***{COMP: Please leave a couple of lines as a placeholder}

Triandis and his colleagues illustrated this difference by asking people from various countries to describe themselves. As they expected, these self-descriptions contained more references to roles and relationships when people were from collectivistic countries (e.g., Japan, China). Some individuals from the People's Republic of China described themselves exclusively in interpersonal terms. And some U.S. residents used only personal descriptors—they had no elements of a collective self (Triandis, McCusker, & Hui, 1990; cf. Oyserman et al., 2002). Other research has suggested that people from collectivistic countries resist describing their qualities if the social context is not specified. Japanese, for example, described themselves differently when they were with different people and in different social situations. Americans, in contrast, described themselves similarly across different situations (Cousins, 1989). Students in the United States, more than students in China, assume that people's behaviors are caused by personality traits rather than by factors in the situation (Chiu, Hong, & Dweck, 1997). People from individualistic and collectivistic cultures even insult one another differently. Personal insults, such as "You are stupid," characterize conflicts in individualistic cultures, whereas remarks about one's family and group typify disputes between two collectivists (Semin & Rubini, 1990).

These observations are only generalities, for each culture expresses its collectivism and individualism differently. Some collectivistic cultures, for example, are much more hierarchically structured (*vertical*) than others, like the culture of India with its caste system, which stresses tradition, duty, and compliance with authority. Other collectivistic cultures, however, stress equality, and so their society's status and authority structures are relatively flat (*horizontal*). Some collectivistic societies also tolerate considerable conflict within their groups. Members of Israeli kibbutzes, for example, often engage in heated debates, whereas Koreans strive for harmony and avoid discord. Both cultures are relatively collectivistic, yet their approaches to resolving disputes differ substantially (Triandis, 1995, 1996). In contrast, Scandinavians are extremely individualistic, but they are also noncompetitive (A. P. Fiske, 2002). Moreover, as the next section notes, the tendency to classify people into distinct groups on the basis of their nationality overlooks the many subcultures that exist within countries (Joan G. Miller, 2002). It may be that the dichotomy between individualism and collectivism reflects, in part, the cognitive biases of the Western theorists who first proposed this distinction (A. P. Fiske, 2002; Gaines et al., 1997).

Collectivism Across Groups

People's readiness to connect to groups and to put the group's interests above their own varies across racial, ethnic, gender, and other social categories (J. A. Howard, 2000). In the United States, for example, certain areas are more individualistic, whereas others are more collectivistic (Vandello & Cohen, 2004). Communalism is particularly prominent in the southern portions of the United States, where C. P. Ellis lived. This area of the country is more rural, agricultural, and hierarchically structured. When polled, its residents were more likely to agree to such

statements as, “It is better to fit in with people around you,” and “It is more important to be a cooperative person who works well with others.” Individuals living in the western portions of the United States, where the frontier, pioneer tradition stresses self-reliance, are more individualistic. Residents of this part of the country felt that “it is better to conduct yourself according to your own standards, even if that makes you stand out,” and “it is more important to be a self-reliant person able to take care of oneself” (Vandello & Cohen, 1999, p. 285).

Ethnic groups in the United States also exhibit remarkable variations in individualism and collectivism. When Oyserman and her colleagues (2002) combined the findings obtained across a number of studies in a meta-analysis, they found that Asian Americans tended to be more collectivistic than European Americans, but that Japanese and Koreans are more similar to European Americans than were the more collectivistic Chinese Americans. Hispanic Americans did not differ from European Americans in their level of individualism, but they were more collectivistic. Even though Afrocentric cultural traditions, like those emphasized in the African American celebration of Kwanzaa, stress strong family ties and mutual help, the researchers discovered that African Americans tended to score higher than European Americans on measures of individualism and lower than European Americans on measures of collectivism.

Collectivism Across People

Just as cultures differ in how much they stress the individual versus the group, individuals within any given culture differ in the emphasis they put on their individuality versus their group memberships. Some people, termed **independents** (or **idiocentrics**) are emotionally detached from their groups; they put their own personal goals above the goals of the group (Markus, Kitayama, & Heiman, 1996; Triandis, 1995). They value equality, social justice, and self-reliance, and they would likely agree with statements such as, “One should live one’s life independently of others as much as possible” (Triandis et al., 1990, p. 1013), “I often do what I feel like doing without paying attention to others’ feelings” (Kashima et al., 1995, p. 928), and the other statements shown in the top portion of Table 3–4. **Interdependents** (or **allocentrics**), in contrast, put their groups’ goals and needs above their own (Markus et al., 1996; Triandis, 1995). They are respectful of other members of their groups, and they value their memberships in groups, their friendships, and tradition. They would likely agree with such statements as, “The well-being of my co-workers is important to me” (Triandis, 1995, p. 207), “I think it is more important to give priority to group

independent (or **idiocentric**) An individual who is dispositionally predisposed to put his or her own personal interests and motivations above the group’s interests and goals.

interdependent (or **allocentric**) An individual who is dispositionally predisposed to put the group’s goals and needs above his or her own.

TABLE 3-4 The Multiple Domains of Individualism and Collectivism

Domain name	Description	Sample item
Individualism		
Independence	Freedom, self-sufficiency, and control over one's life	I tend to do my own thing, and others in my family do the same.
Goals	Striving for one's own goals, desires, and achievements	I take great pride in accomplishing what no one else can accomplish.
Competition	Personal competition and winning	It is important to me that I perform better than others on a task.
Uniqueness	Focus on one's unique, idiosyncratic qualities	I am unique—different from others in many respects.
Privacy	Thoughts and actions private from others	I like my privacy.
Self-knowledge	Knowing oneself; having a strong identity	I know my weaknesses and strengths.
Direct communication	Clearly articulating one's wants and needs	I always state my opinions very clearly.
Collectivism		
Relating	Considering close others an integral part of the self	To understand who I am, you must see me with members of my group.
Belonging	Wanting to belong to and enjoying being part of groups	To me, pleasure is spending time with others.
Duty	The duties and sacrifices that being a group member entails	I would help, within my means, if a relative were in financial difficulty.
Harmony	Concern for group harmony; desire that members get along	I make an effort to avoid disagreements with my group members
Advice	Turning to close others for help with decisions	Before making a decision, I always consult with others.
Context	Self changes according to context or situation	How I behave depends on who I am with, where I am, or both.
Hierarchy	Focus on hierarchy and status issues	I have respect for the authority figures with whom I interact.
Group	Preference for group work	I would rather do a group paper or lab than do one alone.

Source: adapted from Oyserman, Coon, & Kimmelmeier, 2002.

interests rather than to personal ones.” (Kashima et al., 1995, p. 928), and others shown in the bottom portion of Table 3-4.

One's personal level of interdependence need not correspond to one's culture or ethnic group's collectivism. Triandis and his colleagues (2001) found that about 60% of the people in collectivistic cultures are interdependent types, just

as about 60% of the people in individualistic cultures are independent types. They also reported that interdependent individuals in individualistic countries tend to join more groups, but that independent individuals in collectivistic cultures “feel oppressed by their culture and seek to leave it” (Triandis & Suh, 2002, p. 141).

Interdependents seek out groups and become more interconnected with their groups than independents (Cheek, 1989). People who stress their personal, independent identity tend to play sports that require little interaction with other people. They tend to exercise by jogging or swimming, and they say that they exercise because it gives them a feeling of self-satisfaction. People who stress their interdependence, in contrast, more frequently play team sports such as volleyball or soccer, and they do so because they “enjoy competing or exercising with other people” (Leary, Wheeler, & Jenkins, 1986, p. 16). Interdependents seek jobs that will enhance the quality of their relationships with other people, and their satisfaction with their work depends on the quality of their relationships with their coworkers. Independents choose jobs that are personally fulfilling and that offer them opportunities for advancement (Leary, Wheeler, & Jenkins, 1986). Interdependents may also be more loyal to their groups. A high degree of interdependence is associated with patriotism and pride in one’s country (Kowalski & Wolfe, 1994). The two types also respond differently to conflicts. Independent individuals respond with greater intensity to interpersonal conflicts—disagreements between two individuals—whereas interdependents respond more intensely to intergroup conflicts—those that involve disagreements with members of the outgroup (Derlega, Cukur, Kuang, & Forsyth, 2002). Men and women tend to differ in collectivism and individualism. In Western cultures, at least, women more often stress connections with other people, whereas men tend to stress independence and autonomy (Cross & Madson, 1997; Josephs, Markus, & Tafarodi, 1992).

Individuals who are more independent than interdependent also tend to stress their unique, unusual qualities. One measure of the tendency to set oneself apart from other people—the *Individuation Scale*—asks people to indicate their willingness to engage in attention-getting behaviors, such as self-disclosure and nonconformity (Maslach, Stapp, & Santee, 1985). People who score high on the Individuation Scale report a greater frequency of owning distinctive possessions (such as a special kind of car), having a unique self-expressive symbol (such as a nickname), expressing unique opinions, criticizing someone in front of others, making controversial statements, and looking directly into someone’s eyes while talking to him or her. People scoring low on the scale report a greater frequency of wearing the kind of clothes that others wear, owning standard possessions, avoiding distinctive nicknames, avoiding accessories or colors that get attention, controlling distracting gestures, expressing popular opinions, agreeing with other people, not criticizing others, remaining quiet in a group, and avoiding eye contact. They are more likely to engage in conventional behaviors and seek social acceptance. When these scales are used in collectivistic societies, the respondents distinguish between two forms of individuating behaviors: taking the lead and drawing attention to oneself. Taking the lead was considered to be slightly more

acceptable than drawing attention to oneself in one study of Japanese students (Kwan, Bond, Boucher, Maslach, & Gan, 2002).

Although interdependent types of people are often contrasted with independent types, in all likelihood these two orientations are continuous dimensions of personality that vary in their influence across time and situations. As Marilyn Brewer's **optimal distinctiveness theory** suggested, most people probably have at least three fundamental needs: the need to be assimilated by the group, the need to be connected to friends and loved ones, and the need for autonomy and differentiation. She hypothesized that individuals are most satisfied if they achieve optimal distinctiveness: Their unique personal qualities are noted and appreciated, they feel emotionally bonded with intimates, and they feel similar to other group members in many respects (Brewer, Manzi, & Shaw, 1993; Brewer & Pickett, 2002). Achieving a feeling of uniqueness is as important as satisfying the need to belong (Snyder & Fromkin, 1980).

FROM PERSONAL IDENTITY TO SOCIAL IDENTITY

Before C. P. joined groups, he was concerned only with himself and his needs. When he pondered the question, "Who am I?" he answered, "I am C. P." But when he joined with others, he started acting differently—in ways that the group favored rather than in ways he thought were best. When he joined the KKK, he became a racist who despised all non-Whites. But when he quit the KKK and joined a multicultural community group (the Human Relations Council), he adopted an egalitarian outlook. Even his answer to the question, "Who am I?" changed to include elements that were based on his group memberships: He was still C. P., but he thought of himself as a union leader and a reformer. How did these groups manage to embed themselves into C. P.'s sense of self?

Social Identity Theory

As noted earlier, the self includes both personal and interpersonal elements. Whereas one's individualistic qualities make up the personal identity, one's social or collective identity includes all self-conceptions that arise from membership in social groups, including teams, cliques, communities, and so on. The collective self may also reference larger, more categorical aggregates, such as "I am a man" or "I am an American," if individuals consider these qualities important and relevant to their self-concept.

But how does a group become a part of one's social identity? What impact does this acceptance of the group in one's identity have on one's self-concept and

optimal distinctiveness theory A conceptual analysis proposed by Marilyn Brewer that assumes individuals strive to maintain a balance between three basic needs: the need to be assimilated by the group, the need to be connected to friends and loved ones, and the need for autonomy and differentiation.

self-esteem? **Social identity theory** suggests that two cognitive processes—*categorization* and *identification*—combine to transform a group membership into an identity (Abrams & Hogg, 2001; Hogg, 2001; Tajfel, 1981; Turner & Onorato, 1999).

CATEGORIZATION IN GROUPS When C. P. first met Howard Clements, he assigned him to the categories *man* and *African American*. When he met Terry Sanford, he thought of him as *European American*, *man*, and *leader*. Such categories ignore each individual's unique qualities, but they are useful summaries of vast amounts of information about people in general. As Gordon W. Allport (1954) explained, "The human mind must think with the aid of categories. Once formed, categories are the basis for normal prejudgment. We cannot possibly avoid this process. Orderly living depends upon it" (p. 19).

We do not just categorize other people; we also classify ourselves into various groups and categories. Although people vary in the extent to which their self is independent of others or interdependent with others, at any given moment, the self can shift from *me* to *we* if something in the situation makes that group membership salient to us (J. C. Turner & Onorato, 1999). Individuals who find that they are the only representative of a particular group—for example, the only man in a group of five, or the only left-hander in a class of otherwise all right-handers—may suddenly become very aware of that aspect of themselves (W. J. McGuire & McGuire, 1988). People who feel that they are being uniquely scrutinized by other people are more likely to think of themselves as individuals than as group members (Mullen, Rozell, & Johnson, 1996). If people are asked to spend a few minutes thinking about the ways they were similar to their family and friends, their subsequent self-descriptions will be peppered with group-level descriptors (Trafimow, Triandis, & Goto, 1991).

This process of **social categorization** is an automatic cognitive process rather than a controlled one. Controlled cognitive processes are initiated, monitored, and terminated at will. Automatic processes, in contrast, are rapid, autonomous, effortless, and involuntary, and they take place outside of awareness (Bargh, 1990). Hence, even though people may not notice the activation of their social identities, these identities may influence them nonetheless. This automaticity was illustrated by researchers who used a very subtle procedure to activate individuals' group-level identities (Brewer & Gardner, 1996; Experiment 3). They asked participants to circle all the pronouns in a story, and they primed the collective self by manipulating the kinds of pronouns that people read. In some cases, most of the pronouns focused on "we" or "us"; for others, the pronouns

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.

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

referred to “them” and “they”; and for participants in the control condition, the pronouns referred to “it.” When the participants finished their task, they described themselves in their own words. As predicted, people who had searched for “we” pronouns included more collectivistic components in their self-descriptions than did individuals who had searched for “they” or “it.” This effect was particularly pronounced when the story containing the pronouns described a large group activity (a football game) rather than a small group activity (an automobile trip).

Researchers are continuing to investigate precisely how individualistic and collectivistic information is stored in memory. Some investigators have stressed the qualitatively distinct nature of these two types of information, but others have argued that social and personal identities are intermingled in our memories (Abrams, 1992; Coats, Smith, Claypool, & Banner, 2000; Reid & Deaux, 1996).

IDENTIFICATION WITH GROUPS Most people belong to many groups and categories, but many of these memberships have no influence on their social identities. C. P. may have been a right-hander, a resident of North Carolina, a Democrat, and brown-eyed, but he never gave much thought to these categories. Only some of his memberships, such as his involvement with a social action group named the Human Relations Council, were core elements of his sense of self. He *identified* with these social categories.

Just as Freud (1922) believed that identification causes children to love and imitate their parents, **social identification** causes individuals to bond with and take on the characteristics of a group. As identification increases, group members become more likely 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. They are also more involved in the group’s activities, as indicated by their participation in meetings, their acceptance of group norms, and their willingness to help the group meet its goals. Figure 3–4 describes social identification with a group graphically (J. E. Cameron, 1999; J. W. Jackson & Smith, 1999; Tropp & Wright, 2001).

In some cases, identification with a group develops over time. C. P., for example, did not immediately identify with the Human Relations Council when he first joined it, for it stood for many ideas that he rejected. Only over time did he abandon his older allegiances and fully embrace his membership in the Human Relations Council. Similarly, people’s identification with their ethnic and national groups often develops over time and with experience (Phinney, 1996). One three-stage model of African American ethnic identity, for example, argued that individuals in the first stage of identity development either do not characterize people, including themselves, on the basis of ethnicity (*diffusion*) or they

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.

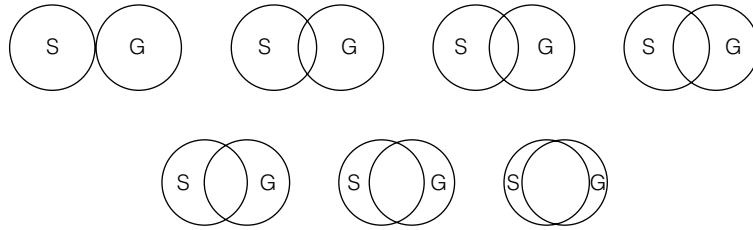


FIGURE 3-4

How much do people identify with their group? When identification is high, the group is included in the individual's sense of self. If asked to select the set of circles that best indicates the extent to which the group (G) overlaps with the self (S), low identifiers should select circles that do not overlap. Increasing identification is indicated by selecting circles where the self and the group overlap to an increasing degree.

Source: "Ingroup Identification as the Inclusion of Ingroup in the Self," by Linda R. Tropp & Stephen C. Wright, 2001, *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 27, pp. 585–600. Copyright 2001 by the Society for Personality and Social Psychology, Inc. Adapted with permission.

accept other people's definition of their ethnicity without question (*foreclosure*). This *unexamined identity stage* ends when individuals begin exploring the meaning of their ethnicity. The *exploration stage* is characterized by immersion in one's ethnic culture and, in some cases, adamant rejection of the values of the majority. The final stage, *identity achievement*, occurs when individuals internalize their ethnicity in their sense of self (Phinney, 1989, 1996; Sellers, Rowley, Chavous, Shelton, & Smith, 1997).

Social identification also becomes more likely when another group is introduced or made salient in some way. If everyone is a member of the same group, this similarity may be unnoticed. But if some people are members of group X and others are in group Y, suddenly people begin to categorize one another, identify with their group (the *ingroup*), and distance themselves from the other group (the *outgroup*).

Self and Social Identity

Once C. P. identified with the Human Relations Council—once he incorporated the group into his social identity “together with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership” (Tajfel, 1981, p. 255)—C. P. changed in fundamental ways. First, the contents of his self were modified as he came to think of himself as more and more similar to the “typical” member of the Council. Second, his evaluation of himself changed as he began to think of himself as

a worthy member of this valuable group. As noted hereafter, social identity influences the contents of the self and how those contents are evaluated.

DEFINING THE SELF When people identify strongly with a group, their self-descriptions become increasingly *depersonalized* as they include fewer idiosyncratic elements and more characteristics that are common to the group. Once C. P. identified with the Human Relations Council, he noticed that all the members were concerned with improving social conditions. They were also targets of discrimination and were economically exploited. C. P. soon realized that he, too, was concerned with improving social conditions, and that he was discriminated against and economically exploited.

This process is known as **self-stereotyping** (or **autostereotyping**) because it involves both (1) accepting generalizations about the qualities and characteristics of the members of one's group or social category as accurate and (2) applying those stereotypes to oneself (Abrams & Hogg, 2001). Medical students, for example, did not define themselves as physicians until their training was nearly complete. By graduation, however, their selves included the component of *physician*, and they described themselves in ways that were consistent with stereotypes about physicians (Preiss, 1968). Gay men agreed that gay-stereotypic words (e.g., creative, complicated) described them better than straight-stereotypic words (e.g., able to lead, insensitive), and this tendency to accept the stereotype's content as self-descriptive was particularly pronounced for negative rather than positive characteristics (B. Simon, Glässner-Bayerl, & Stratenwerth, 1991). When women in sororities rated themselves and other women in their sorority on traits often ascribed to sorority women (e.g., popular, well dressed, conceited, shallow, spoiled), they gave themselves and their group nearly identical ratings—the correlation between self-rating and group rating was .98 (Biernat, Vescio, & Green, 1996). When older people's negative stereotypes about old age were primed by displaying words such as *dementia*, *dementit*, and *senile* so briefly that they never reported seeing the words themselves, they nonetheless subsequently performed more poorly on memory tasks. Older people exposed to positive words showed improved memories, and younger people exposed to these types of words were unaffected, apparently because they did not identify with this group and its age-based stereotype (B. Levy, 1996).

Any factor that increases members' identification with the group can increase self-stereotyping. In one study, the men in ad hoc groups disagreed with the women in the groups. Because this schism along gender lines made members more aware of their membership in the social categories of *man* and *woman*, when they later rated themselves, the men described themselves as more masculine and the women described themselves as more feminine (Hogg & Turner, 1987).

self-stereotyping (or **autostereotyping**) Accepting socially shared generalizations about the prototypical characteristics attributed to members of one's group as accurate descriptions of oneself.

Studies have also suggested that people are more likely to self-stereotype when they are members of a minority group rather than of a larger, dominant, majority group. The experience of being in the minority apparently increases the salience of the social identity based on that membership, and so people are more likely to apply the stereotypical features of the minority group to themselves. Researchers informed some participants that a survey they had just completed suggested that they were extraverted and that only 20% of the population is extraverted. These individuals then gave themselves higher ratings on such traits as *sociable* and *lively* than did people who were told that 80% of the population is extraverted (B. Simon & Hamilton, 1994).

Because individuals who identify with a group take on more and more of the prototypical features of members of that group, they may also adopt the attitudes, preferences, and behaviors that they think typify the group. These attitudes are then likely to influence their behavior, particularly when their membership in the group is salient to them. For example, do all people who realize that exercising regularly is good for them exercise? No, because attitudes are not perfect predictors of behavior. But when researchers distinguished between people who did or did not identify with their group, they discovered that members who identified with a group that valued exercise were far more likely to exercise regularly (Terry & Hogg, 1996). Other researchers confirmed this effect experimentally by directly manipulating the group's norms and the members' degree of identification with the group. Again, identification was associated with greater conformity to the group's norms (Jetten, Spears, & Manstead, 1997).

EVALUATING THE SELF C. P. Ellis felt shame when he was a child, particularly when he compared his tattered shirts and pants with the new clothes his classmates wore to school. But when he joined the KKK, his shame melted away, replaced by self-confidence: "I was led into a large meeting room, and this was the time of my life! It was thrilling. Here's a guy who's worked all his life and struggled all his life to be something, and here's the moment to be something" (Terkel, 1980, p. 203). When C. P. joined this group, he did not just acquire a new identity; he also acquired self-worth.

When individuals join groups, their self-concept becomes connected to that group, and the value of that group comes to influence their feelings of personal worth. People who belong to prestigious groups tend to have higher self-esteem than those who belong to stigmatized groups (so long as they are not reminded that their group's revered social position is undeserved; Branscombe, 1998). High school students, for example, often seek out membership in one of the school's "in crowds." 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 (B. B. Brown & Lohr, 1987). People who were members of prestigious or satisfying groups in high school have higher levels of self-esteem later in life (S. S. Wright & Forsyth, 1997). Sports fans' moods swing up and down as their favorite team wins and loses. After a loss, they feel depressed and

FOCUS 3.3 Can Social Identity Theory Explain Sports Fans?

You may glory in a team triumphant, but you fall in love with a team in defeat. Losing after great striving is the story of man, who was born to sorrow, whose sweetest songs tell of the saddest thought.

—Roger Kahn (1973), *The Boys of Summer*

Fan derives from a slightly longer word: fanatic. A *fanatic* is one who engages in extreme, unreasonable devotion to an idea, philosophy, or practice. Similarly, the die-hard sports fan displays great devotion to a team, with emotions rising and falling with the team's accomplishments. Fans are not actually members of the teams they support. They are only watching the games from the sidelines, and they are not directly involved in the outcome. Yet they often seem to be very closely connected psychologically to their teams. They are elated when their team wins, but after a loss, fans experience a range of negative emotions: anger, depression, sadness, hopelessness, and confusion (Platow et al., 1999; Wann, Dolan, McGeorge, & Allison, 1994). In some cases, fans will even attack the supporters of other teams, with fatal outcomes (Doosje, Ellemers, & Spears, 1999).

Social identity theory offers insight into this odd but exceedingly common group behavior. Die-hard sports fans *identify* with their team and so experience the team's outcomes as their own. When the team wins, they can share in that success. By **basking in reflected glory**, or **BIRGing**, they can stress their association with the successful group, even though they have contributed little to that success (Cialdini et al., 1976; End, Dietz-Uhler, Harrick, & Jacquemotte, 2002). But what happens should their group fail? The casual fan can just downplay the loss by switching his or her allegiance or attention to some other team: **cutting off re-**

flected failure, or **CORFing**. But dedicated fans, whose homes are decorated with team insignia, who wear the team's colors, and who have based much of their sense of self on their loyalty to the team, cannot CORF. Their team's loss will be *their* loss (Snyder, Higgins, & Stucky, 1983).

A team of investigators studied these processes by inviting fans of the men's Indiana University (IU) basketball team to watch a live broadcast of a game. In some cases, the IU team won, but in others, the team lost. After the contest, participants rated the IU team, but they also rated their own mood and their own capabilities. As expected, the fans judged the IU team more positively after a win than after a loss. But they also displayed a number of negative reactions when their team lost. Relative to students who watched the team win, the fans were more depressed after a loss; they were more pessimistic when rating their mental ability; and they predicted that an attractive person would be more likely to reject them. These negative reactions were all exacerbated by the strength of the fan's social identity as a fan of the IU team: Those who strongly identified with the team suffered the most after a loss.

The investigators concluded that being a sports fan may yield many social benefits for individuals, but their data indicated that devotion to a group whose performance is beyond one's control is risky. Fans did not feel any better when their teams won, but when the team lost, their moods soured and their outlook for the future became more bleak. The researchers cautiously concluded that "fans are setting themselves up for a great deal of misery by committing themselves to a team" (Hirt, Zillmann, Erickson, & Kennedy, 1992, p. 724).

basking in reflect glory (BIRGing) Seeking direct or indirect association with prestigious or successful groups or individuals.

cutting off reflected failure (CORFing) Distancing oneself from a group that performs poorly.

TABLE 3-5 Items from the Collective Self-Esteem Inventory

Subscale	Issue	Example Item
Membership Esteem	Am I a valuable or an ineffective member of the groups to which I belong?	I am a worthy member of the social groups I belong to.
Private Collective Self-Esteem	Do I evaluate the groups I belong to positively or negatively?	I feel good about the social groups I belong to.
Public Collective Self-Esteem	Do other people evaluate the groups I belong to positively or negatively?	In general, others respect the social groups that I am a member of.
Identity	Are the groups I belong to an important or unimportant part of my identity?	In general, belonging to social groups is an important part of my self-image.

Source: "A Collective Self-Esteem Scale: Self-Evaluation of One's Social Identity" by R. Luhtanen and J. Crocker, *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 18, 1992. Reprinted by permission.

rate themselves more negatively; but after a win, they feel elated and rate themselves more positively (see Focus 3-3).

Jennifer Crocker, Riia Luhtanen, and their 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** (J. Crocker & Luhtanen, 1990; J. Crocker, Luhtanen, Blaine, & Broadnax, 1994; Luhtanen & Crocker, 1992). Instead of asking people if they felt good or bad about themselves, Crocker and Luhtanen asked individuals to evaluate the groups to which they belonged. Drawing on prior work on social identity and self-esteem, they developed items that tapped four basic issues: membership esteem, private collective self-esteem, public collective self-esteem, and importance to identity (see Table 3-5). When they compared scores on the collective self-esteem scale to scores on more traditional measures of self-esteem, they found that people with high membership, public, and private collective self-esteem scores had higher personal self-esteem, suggesting that group membership contributes to feelings of self-worth.

Even membership in a group that others may not admire is generally associated with higher levels of self-esteem (J. Crocker & Major, 1989). Adolescents with mental retardation do not necessarily have lower self-esteem, even though they know they belong to the negatively stereotyped social category "special education students" (Stager, Chassin, & Young, 1983). African Americans, despite living in a culture where stereotypes about their group are negative, have higher self-esteem than European Americans (Twenge & Crocker, 2002). Members of

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.

groups that are criticized often respond by defending their group and reaffirming their commitment to it (Dietz-Uhler & Murrell, 1998). When C. P. joined the Human Relations Council, his friends condemned the group as too liberal, but C. P.'s self-esteem rose. So long as individuals believe that the groups they belong to are valuable, they will experience a heightened sense of personal self-esteem (J. Crocker et al., 1994).

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*. When C. P.'s identification with the Human Relations Council was complete, he came to value the group's work, while at the same time distrusting the motives and goals of people who were not members of the Human Relations Council. 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 contributes to conflict between groups (see Chapter 13), but it also contributes to the self-esteem and emotional well-being of group members. Social identity theory posits that people are motivated to maintain or enhance their feelings of self-worth, and because our self-esteem is linked to the groups we belong to, our feelings of self-worth can be enhanced by stressing the relative superiority of our groups to other groups.

Even if our group falters, we can nonetheless find ways to protect the group and, in so doing, protect our self. A setback, particularly at the hands of another group, calls for **social creativity**: Group members compare the ingroup to the outgroup on some new dimension. One researcher illustrated such social creativity by asking members of a last-placed ice hockey team (1 win and 21 losses) to rate their team and their opponents on four key attributes: *aggressive*, *dirty*, *skilled*, and *motivated* (Lalonde, 1992). The players admitted that their opponents were more skilled, but they also argued that their opponents were more aggressive and that they played dirty.

PROTECTING THE PERSONAL SELF People protect their collective self-esteem as actively as they protect their personal self-esteem. They deny that their group possesses negative qualities. They consider their group to be superior to

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.

social creativity Restricting comparisons between the ingroup and other groups to tasks and outcomes where the ingroup is more successful than other groups and avoiding areas in which other groups surpass the ingroup.

alternative groups. They give their group credit for its successes, but blame outside influences when their group fails. Should other, more rewarding groups stand willing and ready to take them in, individuals remain loyal to their original group. Identity is the glue that binds individuals to their groups (Van Vugt & Hart, 2004).

However, there are limits to what individuals will tolerate. In most cases, people are more disturbed by threats to their personal self-esteem than to their collective self-esteem. They are also more likely to deny the accuracy of negative individualized information relative to negative group information, and they more readily claim positive feedback when it focuses on them rather than on their group (L. Gaertner, Sedikides, Vevea, & Iuzzini, 2002). They will, if the group continues to threaten their personal self-esteem, eventually turn away from the group. When people can choose the groups they belong to or identify with, they often shift their allegiances, leaving groups that are lower in status or prone to failure and seeking membership in prestigious or successful groups (J. Crocker, Blaine, & Luhtanen, 1993; Ellemers, Wilke, & van Knippenberg, 1993). When C. P. could no longer deny the growing rift between his values and the KKK, he resigned from the Klan and joined a more liberal, more egalitarian organization. Such a change in allegiance is termed *individual mobility* (Ellemers, Spears, & Doosje, 1997).

When C. P. left the KKK, he put his individual needs above his group's needs. He sympathized with the Klan members, but he eventually quit that group and joined the Human Relations Council. Once he was accepted into this group, his social identity underwent a substantial change, and his attitudes, values, and beliefs were reshaped once again. In time, he abandoned his prejudiced ways of thinking, earned a high school education, and became a leader in his community. It was

like bein' born again. It was a new life. I didn't have these sleepless nights I used to have when I was active in the Klan and slippin' around at night. I could sleep at night and feel good about it. . . . My whole life had changed. (quoted in Terkel, 1980, p. 209)

SUMMARY IN OUTLINE

❖ Do humans prefer solitude or group membership?

1. Solitude is sometimes rewarding, but most adults prefer the company of others, particularly when threatened or distressed. Most people find the prospect of facing life alone to be disturbing.
2. People prefer inclusion to exclusion, and as a result, some religious groups practice

shunning as a means of punishing rule-breakers. Ostracism causes a number of negative psychological and behavioral reactions, including a loss of self-esteem.

- The *sociometer model of self-esteem* explains the relationship between exclusion and self-esteem by hypothesizing that self-esteem evolved to provide individuals with feedback about their degree of inclusion in groups.

- Individuals also react negatively to exclusion from computer-mediated interaction, or *cyberostracism*, but they tend to respond to such exclusion by increasing communication with others.
3. Individuals who feel that their relationships with others are too few or superficial experience *loneliness*.
 - Groups that create reliable alliances among members, such as work groups or clubs, may reduce feelings of *social loneliness*.
 - Emotionally intimate groups, such as romantic dyads or families, are an antidote to *emotional loneliness*.
 4. Baumeister and Leary suggested that much of human behavior is motivated by a basic *need to belong*. Evolutionary psychology suggests that this instinct resulted from *natural selection* and *kin selection*, as individuals who affiliated in groups were more likely to survive and to contribute to the survival of close relatives.

❖ What are individualism and collectivism?

1. *Individualism* and *collectivism* differ in their relative emphasis on individuals and groups, with individualism stressing the person and collectivism the group. These two orientations differ in a number of ways, including the nature of interpersonal relationships, norms and roles, motivations, and self-conceptions.
 - Collectivism is associated with greater loyalty to the *ingroup* and less concern for the *outgroup*, whereas individualism tends to foster *exchange relationships* rather than *communal relationships*.
 - A collectivistic orientation stresses hierarchy and reacts more negatively to nonconformity.
 - *Self-serving* tendencies are more likely in individualistic settings, in contrast

to the *group-serving* tendencies seen in collectivistic settings. As a result, the *equity norm* often guides the distribution of resources when individualism predominates, whereas *equality norms* hold under collectivism.

- Self-concepts differ in individualistic and collectivistic contexts, with greater emphasis on *personal identity* in the former and greater emphasis on *social identity* (e.g., roles, memberships, relations) in the latter.
2. Cultures, groups, and individuals vary in their relative emphasis on individualism and collectivism.
 - People who live in collectivistic cultures (e.g., Asian, Eastern European, African, and Middle Eastern countries) think of themselves as group members first and individuals second, whereas people who live in individualistic cultures (Western countries) are self-centered rather than group centered.
 - Some ethnic groups, such as Asian Americans and Hispanic Americans, are more collectivistic than individualistic.
 - Individuals in any given culture differ in the emphasis they put on their individuality versus their group membership, with *independents* stressing individualism and *interdependents* putting their groups' goals and needs above their own. In Western cultures, women tend to be more interdependent, men more independent. Individualists stress their superiority over others on attributes that pertain to autonomy and independence, but collectivists think of themselves as more relational and self-sacrificing than others.
 - Brewer's *optimal distinctiveness theory* suggests that individuals strive to maintain an optimal balance between their personal and collective identities.

❖ Does membership in a group change a person's self-concept and social identity?

1. *Social identity theory* traces the development of a collective identity back to two key processes: categorization and identification.
 - Through *social categorization*, individuals automatically classify people, including themselves, into groups.
 - Through *social identification*, individuals come to bond with and take on the characteristics of their groups (*self-stereotyping*). When people identify strongly with a group, their self-descriptions become increasingly depersonalized as they include fewer idiosyncratic elements and more characteristics that are common to the group.
2. Self-esteem is shaped both by individuals' personal qualities and by the value of the groups to which they belong.
 - Those who join prestigious groups often have higher *collective self-esteem* than those who belong to less positively valued groups. However, individuals who are members of stigmatized groups, failing groups, or groups that are derogated by nonmembers often protect their collective self-esteem by rejecting negative information about their groups, stressing the relative superiority of their own groups to other groups (the *ingroup–outgroup bias*), and *social creativity*.
 - Individuals who identify strongly with a group, such as sports fans, experience the group's outcomes as their own.
 - By *basking in reflected glory (BIRGing)*, individuals can stress their association with successful groups. By *cutting off reflected failure (CORFing)*, they minimize their connection to stigmatized or unsuccessful group identities.
 - In some cases, individuals will choose to promote their own personal interests over their group's, minimizing their association with groups that are performing poorly and resigning from the group (*individual mobility*).

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Chapter Case: C.P. Ellis

- “C. P. Ellis,” a chapter in Studs Terkel's book *American Dreams: Lost and Found*, (1980), describes Ellis's transformation from a prejudiced member of a hate group to an advocate of civil rights.

Inclusion, Exclusion, and Belonging

- “The Need to Belong: Desire for Interpersonal Attachments as a Fundamental Human Motivation,” by Roy F. Baumeister and Mark R. Leary (1995), marshals evidence in support of their belonging hypothesis.

- *Ostracism: The Power of Silence* (2001), by Kipling D. Williams, examines the nature and consequences of exclusion for both those who are excluded and those who do the excluding.

Individualism and Collectivism

- *Habits of the Heart: Individualism and Commitment in American Life*, by Robert N. Bellah, Richard Madsen, William M. Sullivan, Ann Swidler, and Steven M. Tipton (1985), is a fascinating analysis of the connection between individuals and their groups.

- *Individualism and Collectivism*, by Harry C. Triandis (1995), examines recent theory and research dealing with the two sides of the self: the collective and the personal.
- “Rethinking Individualism and Collectivism: Evaluation of Theoretical Assumptions and Meta-Analyses,” by Daphna Oyserman, Heather M. Coon, and Markus Kemmelmeier (2002), thoroughly explores the psychological implications of individual and cultural differences in individualism and collectivism, and is followed by a number of fascinating commentaries by experts in this area (M. H. Bond, 2002; A. P. Fiske, 2002; Kitayama, 2002; Joan G. Miller, 2002).

Social Identity

- “From I to We: Social Identity and the Collective Self,” by Michael A. Hogg and Kipling D. Williams (2000), provides a general overview of the basic assumptions of social identity theory.
- “Social Identification,” by Kay Deaux (1996), examines the psychological mechanisms involved in identification and the consequences of such identification for various aspects of the self.
- *Social Identity: Context, Commitment, Content*, edited by Naomi Ellemers, Russell Spears, and Bertjan Doosje (1999), examines many aspects of the way the self is transformed by group memberships.

MEDIA RESOURCES



Blurb to come