

# Understanding the Social Self

Personal, Relational, and  
Collective Identity

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# The Tripartite Self

(Brewer & Gardner, 1996)

- ▶ Individual (personal) self
  - ▶ Relational (interpersonal) self
  - ▶ Collective (group) self
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# Three Motivational Systems

Self System	Basis of self-evaluation	Locus of motivation
Personal	Interpersonal comparison	Individual self-interest Personal welfare and achievements
Relational	Reflection/assimilation	Relational maintenance Other's welfare and achievements
Collective	Intragroup assimilation Intergroup comparison	Group maintenance Collective welfare and achievements

“I” vs “We”

# “I” vs “We”:

## Activating the extended self

(Gardner, Gabriel, & Lee, 1999)

- ▶ Pronoun circling priming task  
 (“I, me” vs “We, us” versions)
  - ▶ “Who am I” (twenty statement task)  
 individual vs social self-descriptors
  - ▶ Value endorsement  
 individualistic vs collectivist values
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# The Ambiguous “We”

# Gender difference in salience of relational vs collective self

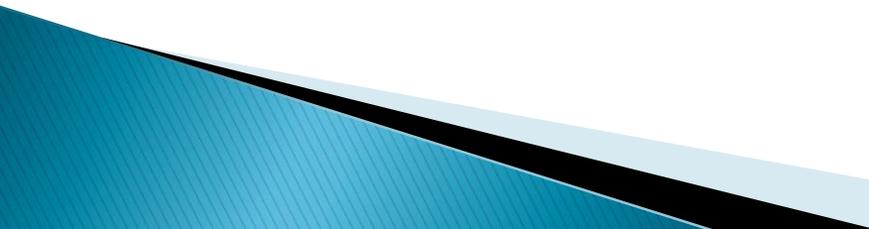
(Gabriel & Gardner, 1999)

- ▶ On TST, females → more relational self-descriptors; males → more group membership descriptors
- ▶ Females recall more relational emotional experiences; males recall more collective emotional experiences (personal memories)
- ▶ Females better memory for relational events; males better memory for group events (in another person's diary)

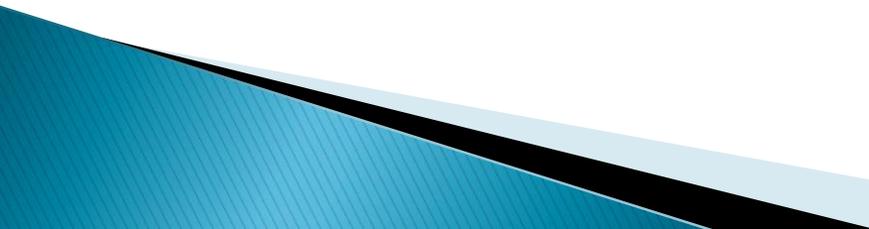
# Gender differences (cont'd)

- ▶ Females → more relationship-based trust; males → more ingroup (collective)-based trust (Brewer & Maddux, 2005)
- ▶ Females → greater willingness to sacrifice own preference for benefit of a close friend; males → greater willingness to sacrifice own benefit for the sake of an ingroup organization (Gabriel & Gardner, 1999)

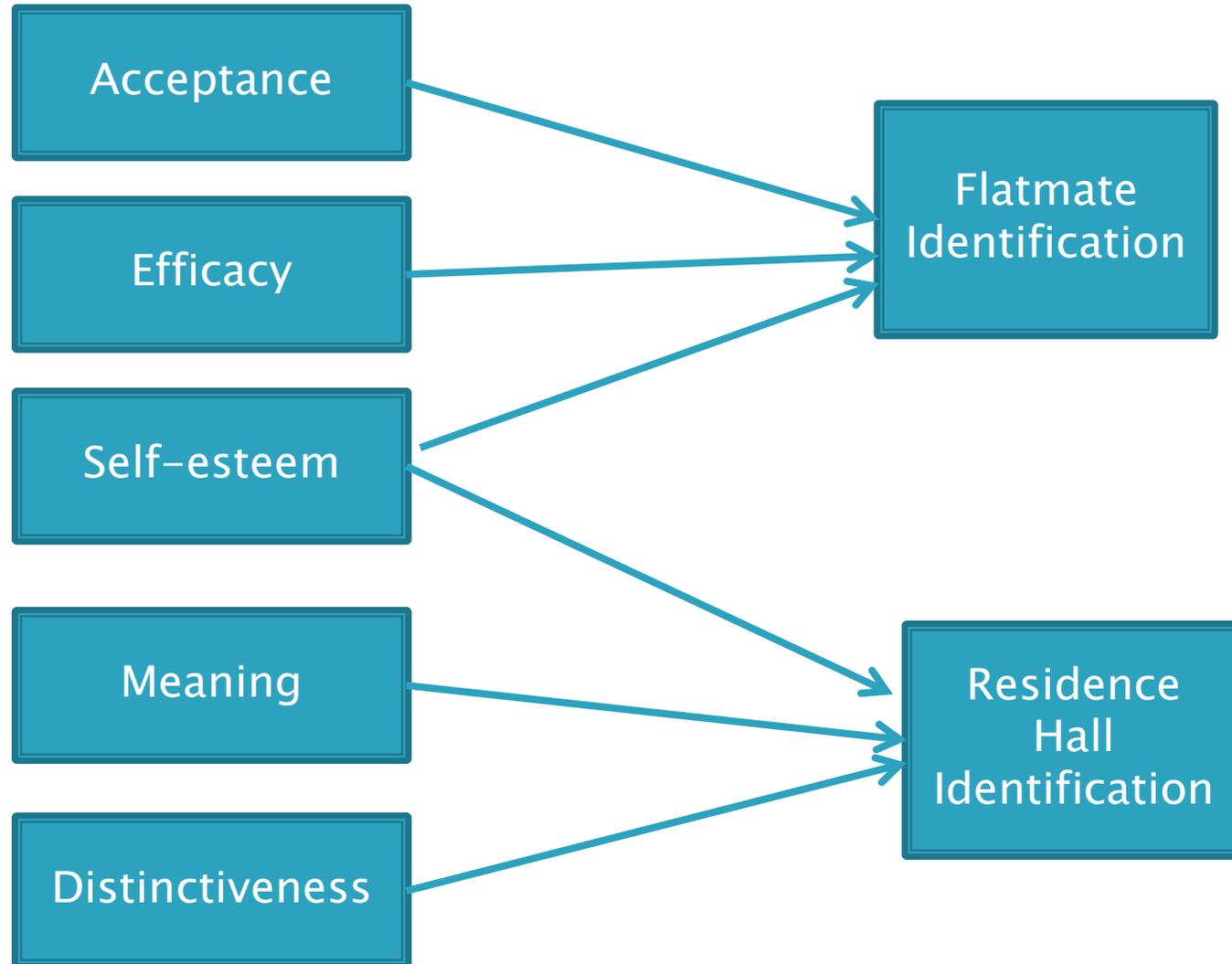
# Relational vs Collective Self: Need to Belong

- ▶ Two types of loneliness  
(Hawkley, Browne, & Cacioppo, 2005)
  - ▶ – Deprivation of relational connectedness  
(individuals to turn to; feel close to)
  - ▶ – Deprivation of collective connectedness  
(sense of community; inclusion in groups)
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# Relational vs Collective Self: Two types of ingroups

- ▶ Common bond groups (social networks)  
vs  
Common identity groups (collective identities)
  - ▶ Attachment predicted by different identity needs (Easterbrook & Vignoles, 2012)
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# Identity Needs



# Relational vs Collective Self: Cultural differences

- ▶ Two types of collectivism  
(Brewer & Chen, 2007)
  - ▶ – relational collectivism
  - ▶ – group-based collectivism
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# Competing group loyalties

(Lee et al., 2012)

- ▶ Nested groups:  
Local subgroup vs Superordinate
  - ▶ TST individual vs social descriptions
  - ▶ Priming relational self → greater subgroup loyalty, intergroup bias
  - ▶ Priming collective self → greater superordinate identity, less intergroup bias
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# Reprise: Three Motivational Systems

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# Effects of Upward and Downward Social Comparison

- ▶ Self-evaluation outcome contrast vs assimilation?
  - ▶ Personal vs social (collective) identity salience
  - ▶ Minimal group paradigm (overestimators vs underestimators)
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# Experimental Design

- ▶ Low ingroup identification (low distinctiveness)  
vs  
High ingroup identification (distinctive ingroup)
- ▶ Videotaped interview (same sex)
  - highly accomplished vs mediocre student
  - member of own group or outgroup
- ▶ DV = self-evaluation on SAQ (academic ability, social competence, attractiveness)

# Self-Evaluation Results

Ingroup Member

Outgroup Member

Identity Cond	Upward (Positive)	Downward (Negative)	Upward (Positive)	Downward (Negative)
Low identif. (Individual)	5.9	7.5	6.9	6.7

# Self-Evaluation Results

Ingroup Member

Outgroup Member

Identity Cond	Upward (Positive)	Downward (Negative)	Upward (Positive)	Downward (Negative)
Low identif. (Individual)	5.9	7.5	6.9	6.7
High identif. (Collective)	7.3	6.4	6.2	7.4

# Implications for School Learning and Achievement Motivation

- ▶ Capitalizing on COLLECTIVE identities
  - ▶ – motivational value of contributing to group outcomes
  - ▶ – shared learning motivation

