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Centro de Ciências Cognitivas e Cerebrais
Centre for Cognitive and Brain Sciences



社會科學學院
FACULDADE DE CIÊNCIAS SOCIAIS
FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

***Social
cognition
seminar***

SOCIAL COGNITION:

From brains to culture

Part Two Understanding Individual Selves and Others

Self in Social Cognition (Ch. 5)

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1. The Self is a Mental Representation

1.1 Self-Concept

Self-concept is the collection of beliefs we hold about ourselves.

Person–situation interaction describes the combination of individual and contextual contributions, including different impressions of someone in particular contexts.

Working self-concept is the currently active aspect of the self-concept that influences ongoing thought and behaviour depending on which aspect of the self is accessible.

Relational self links the self-concept to mental representations of significant others. Relational selves provide both stability in the self-concept and variability.

Transference occurs when activation of the mental representations of a significant other evokes the relational self with that significant other, including expectations that a person resembling the significant other will be similar and evoke similar emotions and behavior.

1. The Self is a Mental Representation

1.1 Self-Concept

Self-concept clarity (SCC).

All these general implications of the overall self-concept include cognition (e.g., self-descriptors), affect (self-esteem), and behavior (close relationships).

Research Focus: Self-expansion reignites desire and increases satisfaction – or how a three-legged race can improve your relationship



APA PsycArticles: Journal Article

Broadening your horizons: Self-expanding activities promote desire and satisfaction in established romantic relationships.

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Muise, A., Harasymchuk, C., Day, L. C., Bacev-Giles, C., Gere, J., & Impett, E. A. (2019). Broadening your horizons: Self-expanding activities promote desire and satisfaction in established romantic relationships. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 116(2), 237–258. <https://doi.org/10.1037/pspi0000148>

Self-expanding activities promoted sexual desire, which increased both sexual and relationship satisfaction.

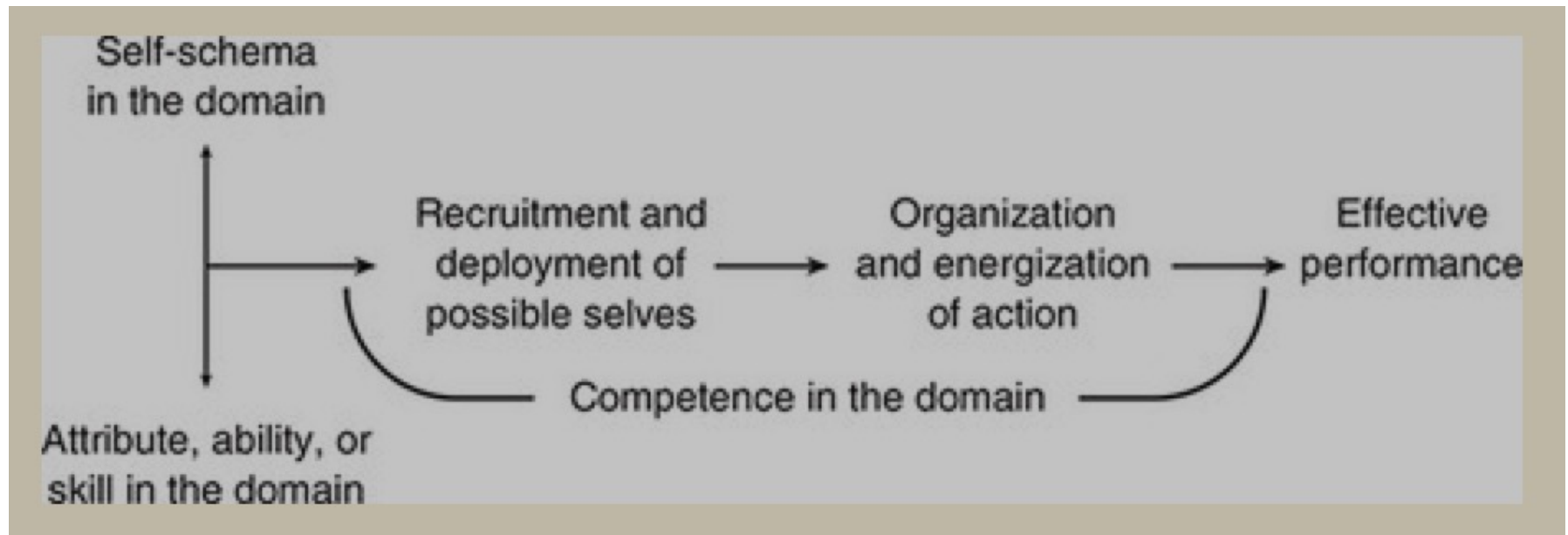
1. The Self is a Mental Representation

1.2 Self-Schemas

Self-schemas are cognitive-affective structures that represent the self's qualities in a given domain with clarity and certainty.

Possible selves represent whom we could become, especially whom we would like to be.

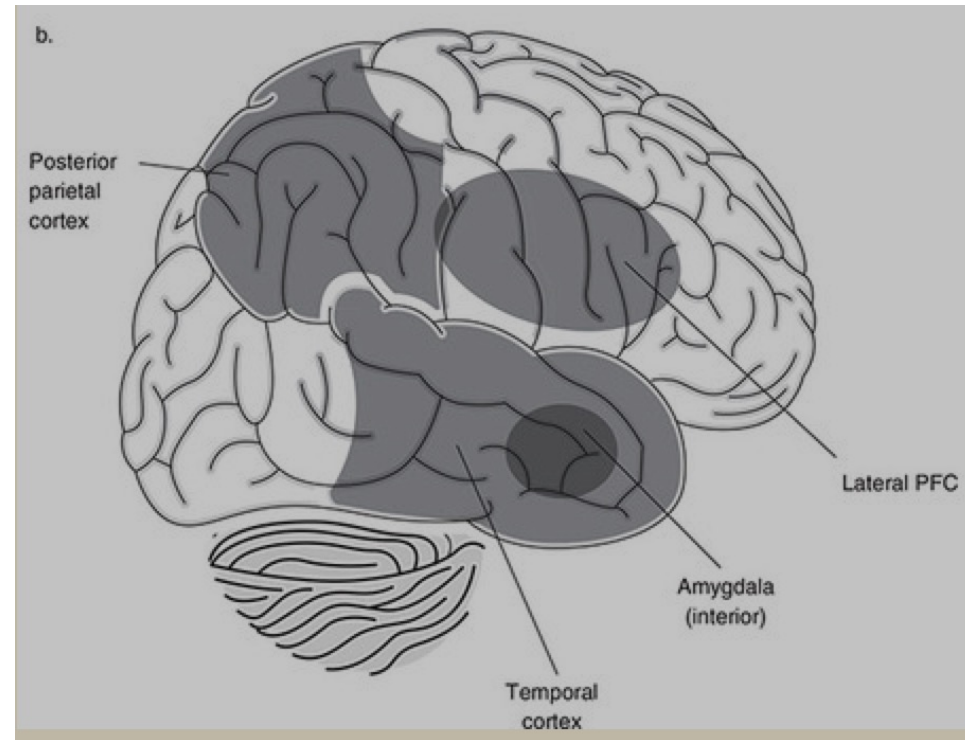
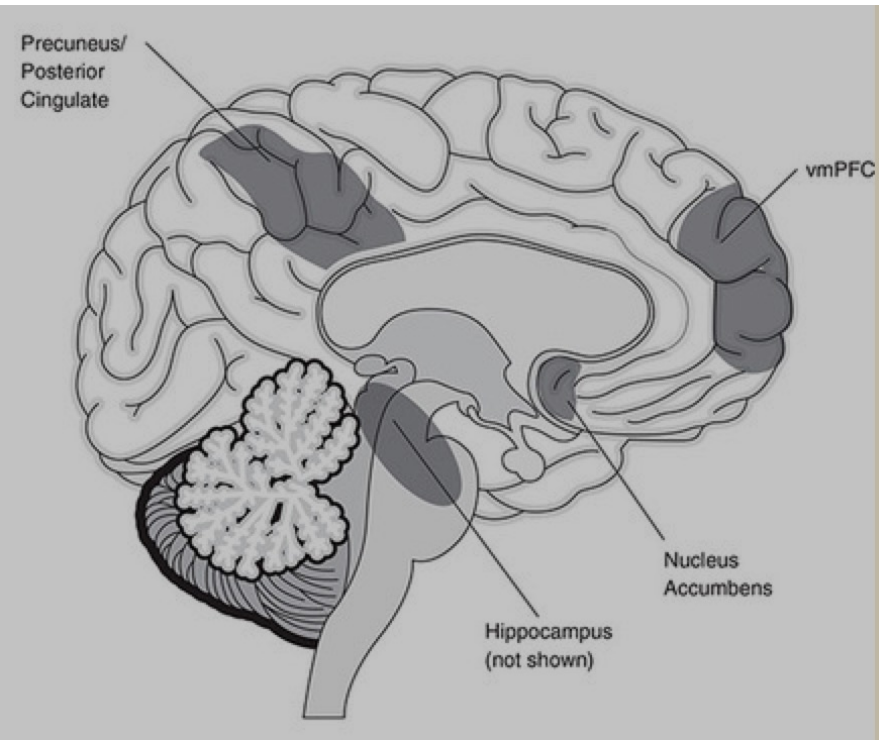
Feared selves are selves we are afraid of becoming.



1. The Self is a Mental Representation

1.3 Neural Bases of Self-Views

Interpreter is a hypothetical neural module that integrates diverse self-relevant processing in different parts of the brain to create that sense of self that most of us experience subjectively; it appears to emerge from the functions of the left hemisphere.



1. The Self is a Mental Representation

1.3 Neural Bases of Self-Views

Non-self-schematic information (e.g., athletes processing words related to acting) implicates brain regions involved in effortful and intentional processing and the retrieval of episodic memories: lateral prefrontal cortex, hippocampus, and posterior parietal cortex (Figure 5.2).

By contrast, processing **self-schematic information** (e.g., athletes responding to words reflecting sports) activates brain regions involved in automatic, motivational, and affective processing: ventromedial prefrontal cortex, nucleus accumbens, and amygdala.

As self-schemas develop within a domain, their neural representation apparently moves to regions of the brain that are more affective, motivational, and automatic.

1. The Self is a Mental Representation

1.4 Self-Esteem

Self-esteem is the evaluation we make of ourselves.

Sociometer describes self-esteem as a general indicator of how one is doing in the eyes of others.

Implicit self-esteem is measured by indirect indicators of self-value.

Contingencies of self-worth describe people being selective about the domains on which they base their self-esteem.

Although thinking well of oneself has benefits, obsessive pursuit of self-esteem can be costly.

1. The Self is a Mental Representation

1.5 Culture and the Self

Independent self sees the self as a unique, autonomous, agentic (originator of action), bounded, coherent whole, contrasting with other individuals and with the context; this view occurs most clearly in Western settings.

Interdependent self sees oneself as part of encompassing social relationships and adjusts one's behavior to what one perceives to be the thoughts, feelings, and actions of others in the relationship; this occurs most clearly in Asian, Southern European, and Latin American cultures.

1. The Self is a Mental Representation

1.6 Culture, Cognition, and Emotion

Table 5.3 Summary of key differences between an independent and an interdependent perception of self

Feature compared	Independent	Interdependent
Definition	Separate from social context	Connected with social context
Structure	Bounded, unitary, stable	Flexible, variable
Important features	Internal, private (abilities, thoughts, feelings)	External, public (statuses, roles, relationships)
Tasks	Be unique	Belong, fit in
	Express self	Occupy one's proper place
	Realize internal attributes	Engage in appropriate action
	Promote own goals	Promote others' goals
Role of others	Be direct: say what's on your mind	Be indirect: read other's mind
	Self-evaluation: others important for social comparison, reflected appraisal	Self-definition: self defined by relationships with others in specific contexts
Basis of self-esteem ^a	Ability to express self; validate internal attributes	Ability to adjust, restrain self: maintain harmony with social context

2. The Self Provides Information to Guide Self-Regulation

2.1 Sources of Influence on Self-Regulation

Self-regulation refers to the ways people control and direct their own actions, emotions, and thoughts, especially how people formulate and pursue goals; it includes higher-order executive control of lower-order processes responsible for the planning and execution of behaviour.

What is in the working self-concept: Situational cues, social roles, values, and strongly held self-conceptions influence which aspects of the self predominate in the working self-concept

2. The Self Provides Information to Guide Self-Regulation

2.2 Behavioural Approach and Avoidance

Behavioural activation system (BAS) is an appetitive system, promoting approach-oriented rewarding goals.

Behavioural inhibition system (BIS) is an aversive system, preventing negative outcomes by avoiding action.

BAS and BIS also reflect reliable individual differences. Some people have a stronger behavioural activation system, focused on rewards, whereas others have a stronger behavioural inhibition system, focused on punishments. BAS-oriented people experience more positive events and positive affect, whereas BIS-dominated people tend to experience more negative affect.

Table 5.4 Summary of Behavioral Activation System (BAS) and Behavioral Inhibition System (BIS) Self-Reports

Behavioral Activation System	Behavioral Inhibition System
Excited by going after something wanted	Worry about mistakes
Good things affect strongly	Concern with criticism
Go all-out to get things	Frequently nervous
Do fun things for their own sake	Worked up over possible unpleasantness

2. The Self Provides Information to Guide Self-Regulation

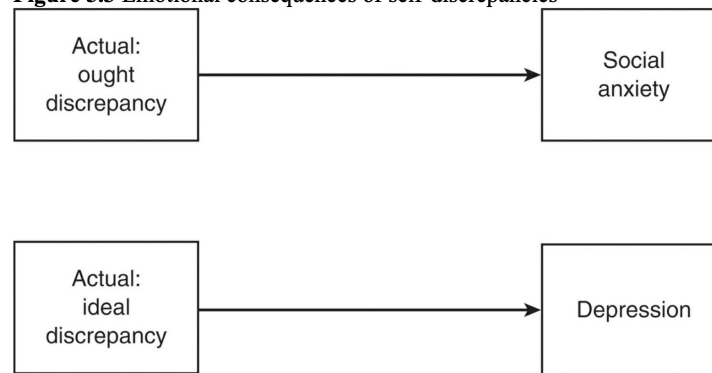
2.3 Self-Discrepancy Theory

Self-guides influence gaps that result from a shortfall between one's current self and one's ideal self, or one's ought self.

Ideal self is who one wants to be (goals, hopes, and dreams).

Ought self is who one thinks one should be (obligations and duties).

Figure 5.3 Emotional consequences of self-discrepancies



Promotion focus follows goals and involves behavioral activation.

Prevention focus avoids negative outcomes and inhibits behavior.

Regulatory fit describes a match between the goals pursued (activation/inhibition) and regulatory orientation (promotion/prevention).

2. The Self Provides Information to Guide Self-Regulation

2.4 Self-Efficacy and Personal Control

Self-efficacy beliefs refer to specific expectations about one's own abilities to accomplish specific tasks.

Personal control or a sense of general mastery enables people to plan, cope with setbacks, and pursue self-regulatory activities.

2. The Self Provides Information to Guide Self-Regulation

2.5 Self-Focus

Self-awareness describes the state of being focused on self, thereby evaluating behaviour against a standard and subsequently adjusting to meet the standard.

Cybernetic theory of self-regulation describes the feedback process by which people try to conform to a salient standard, evaluate own behaviour against it, decide that the behaviour either matches the standard or does not, and continue adjusting and comparing until meeting the standard or giving up.

Self-focus is often experienced as aversive and that people find ways not only to adjust their behaviour or personal qualities, but also to direct attention away from themselves.

2. The Self Provides Information to Guide Self-Regulation

2.5 Self-Focus

ORIGINAL RESEARCH article

Front. Psychol., 17 February 2022 | <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2021.791835>



Mentalizing During Social Interaction: The Development and Validation of the Interactive Mentalizing Questionnaire

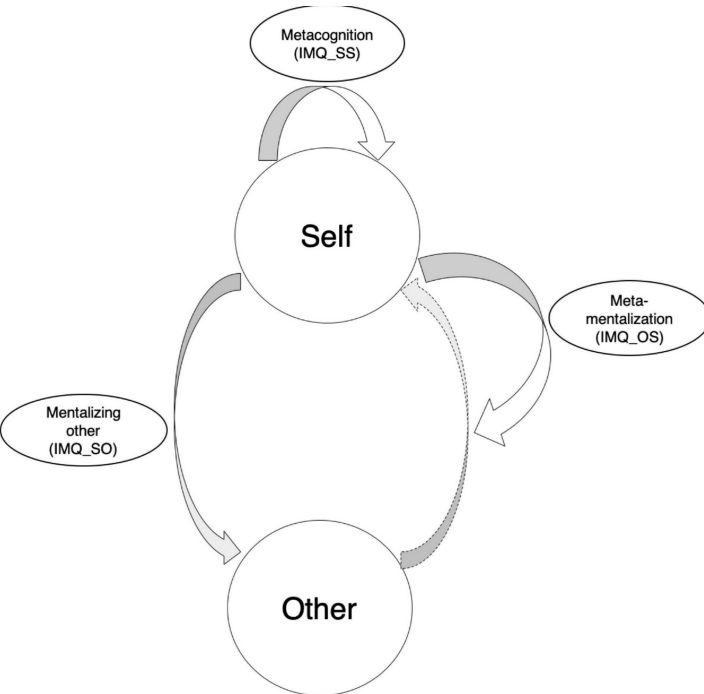
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Studies have shown that during social interaction a shared system underlies inferring one's own mental state, and the mental states of others – processes often referred to as mentalization. However, no validated assessment has been developed to measure second order mentalization (one's beliefs about how transparent one's thoughts are to others), or whether this capacity plays a significant role in social interaction. The current work presents a interactive mentalization theory, which divides these directional and second order aspects of mentalization, and investigates whether these constructs are measurable, stable, and meaningful in social interactions. We developed a 20-item, self-report interactive mentalization questionnaire (IMQ) in order to assess the different sub-components of mentalization: self–self, self–other, and other–self mentalization (Study 1). We then tested this scale on a large, online sample, and report convergent and discriminant validity in the form of correlations with other measures (Study 2), as well as correlations with social deception behaviors in real online interaction with Mturk studies (Study 3 and Study 4). These results validate the IMQ, and support the idea that these three factors can predict mentalization in social interaction.



<https://github.com/andlab-um/IMQ>

2. The Self Provides Information to Guide Self-Regulation

2.6 Threats to Self-Regulation

Some circumstances reliably compromise the ability to self-regulate. One such condition is social exclusion.

Self-conscious emotions reflect on the long-term concerns of the self (as in guilt).

Self-regulation apparently depends on both rational responses and self-conscious emotional responses.

2. The Self Provides Information to Guide Self-Regulation

2.7 Neural Bases of Self-Regulation

The **dIPFC** has been tied to planning, behavioral self-regulation, specifically selecting and initiating actions.

The **vmPFC** is connected to limbic structures that are involved in emotional processing and is especially implicated in controlling behavior, emotional output, and interaction with others.

The **OFC**, a portion of the vmPFC, activates under emotional processing, reward, inhibition, decision making, self-awareness, and strategic regulation

The **ACC** interacts with the PFC in monitoring and guiding behavior.

The **ACC** also plays a role in processing conflicting information and has been conceptualized as a region that may trigger a shift from automatic to controlled processing.

3. The Self has Varied Motivations for Self-Regulation

表 1.1 社会认知研究中的社会思考者模型

社会思考者模型	年代	动机的主要角色	认知的主要角色	理论举例 (相关章节)
一致性寻求者	1950—1960s	减少认知不一致引发的不适的驱力	对行为和信念的认知	态度的失调理论 (第 9 章)
朴素科学家	1970s	预测与控制, 合格的理性	基本的、理性的分析	归因共变模型 (第 6 章)
认知吝啬者	1980s	迅速的、充分的理解	走捷径以节约有限的容量	启发式决策 (第 7 章)
有动机的策略家	1990s	思考是为了在社会情境中行动	互动目标组织认知策略	双重加工模型 (第 2 章), 尤其是刻板印象 (第 11 章)
被激活的行动者	2000s	社会生存与发展	自动化的情感与行为	内隐联想 (第 3~4 章, 第 12~15 章)

3. The Self has Varied Motivations for Self-Regulation

3.1 Need for Accuracy

Accurate self-assessments enable us to anticipate circumstances and control our future behaviour.

Social comparison produces feedback from comparing self with others.

3. The Self has Varied Motivations for Self-Regulation

3.2 Need for Consistency

Following from the need for an accurate self-concept is the idea that we need a consistent self-concept rather than one that varies from situation to situation.

People often seek out situations and interpret their behavior in ways that confirm their preexisting self-concepts; people also **resist** situations and feedback that are **at odds** with their self-concepts.

Self-verification describes people seeking other people, situations, and interpretations that confirm their preexisting self-conceptions.

The need to see oneself accurately and consistently affects behavior.

We selectively interact with people who see us as we see ourselves

3. The Self has Varied Motivations for Self-Regulation

3.3 Need for Improvement

The concept of possible selves, for example, incorporates the visions that people have of themselves in the future.

Self-improvement may also be served by upward social comparisons.

Upward social comparisons judge self against more fortunate others, at best inspiring and at worst, demoralizing.

Self-improvement is also motivated by criticism, whether explicit from other people or implicit in the feedback from one's poor performance.

3. The Self has Varied Motivations for Self-Regulation

3.4 Self-Enhancement

Self-enhancement is the tendency to seek and maintain a favorable or at least improvable self-concept.

Positive illusions are self-perceptions that are falsely positive and somewhat exaggerated with respect to one's actual abilities, talents, and social skills; overestimating control; and unrealistically optimistic about the future.

Downward social comparisons judge self against less-fortunate others, either enhancing the self as superior or threatening the self with a fall.

Self enhancing motivates viewing the self positively or at least sympathetically as improvable.

Self-enhancing perceptions foster evidence of successful life adjustment: a personal sense of well-being, persistence toward goals, and the ability to engage in creative, productive work.

3. The Self has Varied Motivations for Self-Regulation

3.5 Self-Affirmation

Self-affirmation maintains that people cope with threats to their self-worth by endorsing other, unrelated aspects of themselves, thereby addressing self-enhancement needs.

One implication of findings from self-affirmation theory is that self-enhancement is a maintenance motive. People do not strive to have the most positive self-assessment possible, but rather they strive to maintain an adequate level of self-regard.

3. The Self has Varied Motivations for Self-Regulation

3.6 Self-Evaluation Maintenance

Self-evaluation maintenance suggests that people facilitate and maintain their positive self-regard when they deal with the performance of people around them with whom they might compare themselves.

Personal closeness to a target and the target's strong performance – can lead to opposite effects on one's own reactions, depending on whether the person's performance is relevant or irrelevant to one's self-definition.

3. The Self has Varied Motivations for Self-Regulation

3.7 Terror Management Theory

Terror management theory (TMT) addresses how people cope with the dread of death when it comes to mind. TMT holds that people are biologically driven for self-preservation, and the threat of death is managed at both the cultural level, by developing worldviews that provide meaning and purpose, and at the individual level, through self-esteem.

One well-supported prediction is that people suppress death-related thoughts when death is made salient.

3. The Self has Varied Motivations for Self-Regulation

3.8 Culture and Self-Enhancement

East Asians are more self-critical, and self-serving attributions are less common in East Asian cultures.

4. The Self Serves as a Reference Point

4.1 Self-Referencing

Our selves are rich, complex, and nuanced, but those other people seem judgeable without access to all that. In this way, the self becomes the known reference point for deeper self-relevant processing and for making inferences about others' interior states.

Depth of processing accounts maintain that self-relevant information (or any more involving process) leaves a richer, more interconnected, and more enduring memory trace than a simpler more superficial form of processing.

Simulation theory describes people inferring the mental states of others by imagining their own thoughts, emotions, or behaviors in a similar setting.

4. The Self Serves as a Reference Point

4.2 Social Projection

Social projection refers to people estimating their own preferences, traits, problems, activities, and attitudes to be characteristic of others, or at least more characteristic of others than the evidence warrants.

Do we project our own attitudes, characteristics, and values onto others because we have a motivation to see our characteristics as good, or because the self provides a useful set of cognitive heuristics by which people can draw inferences rapidly and confidently? Both appear to be true.

Thanks for your attendance!

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