



The Psychology of Groups

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Overview

- Why Groups are Important for our psychology?
- When do Groups fight and When do they cooperate? *Robbers Cave Experiment*
- Would we show bias towards our own group even when they are just in our head? *Minimal Group Experiment*
- The concept of Social Identity

ACTIVITY

- 1. Divide yourself into two groups - a group of those who were wearing sports shoes and those who weren't.
- 2. The “sports shoe” group is assigned to list as many reasons as it can think of as to why the members of the other group did not wear sports shoes.
- 3. The non-sports shoe group is assigned to list as many reasons as it can as to why the other group members are wearing sports shoes.
- 4. Choose three neutral observers from each group who will note the positive and negative comments about their own and other group.
- 4. Which group is better than the other? Winner group will get a reward.

Humans intrinsically categorize people into **two social groups**:



INGROUPS:

those like ourselves

OUTGROUPS:

those that differ from ourselves



(Brewer, 2007)

Why won't
they take me along?

INGROUP BIAS

Preferential treatment
is reserved for those
who are considered
a part of the ingroup.



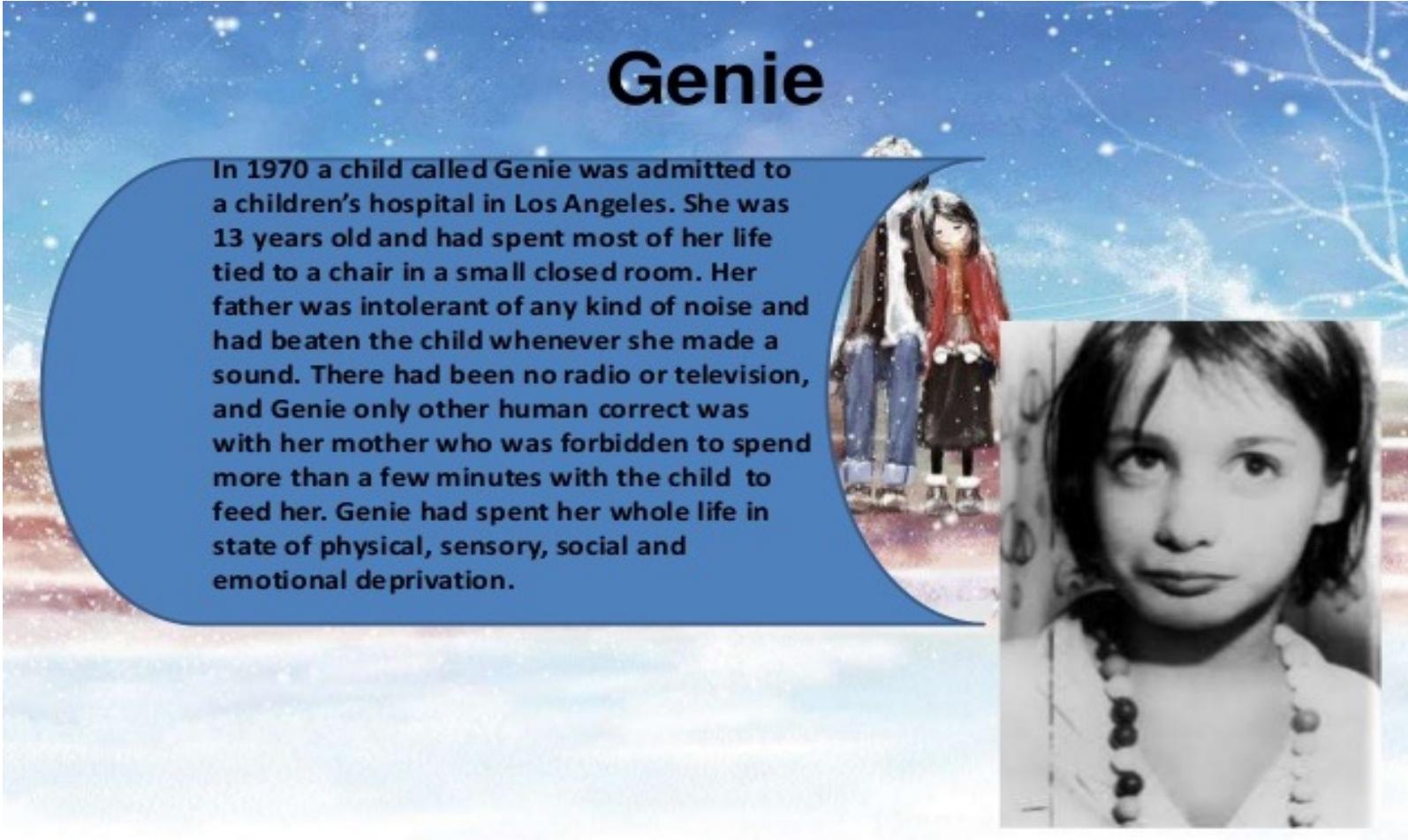


Why Groups are
important for our
psychology?

Case studies of wild/feral children

Genie

In 1970 a child called Genie was admitted to a children's hospital in Los Angeles. She was 13 years old and had spent most of her life tied to a chair in a small closed room. Her father was intolerant of any kind of noise and had beaten the child whenever she made a sound. There had been no radio or television, and Genie only other human contact was with her mother who was forbidden to spend more than a few minutes with the child to feed her. Genie had spent her whole life in state of physical, sensory, social and emotional deprivation.



Lack of social contact can hamper cognitive growth

Evidence from Animal Behavior Research/Primate Psychology

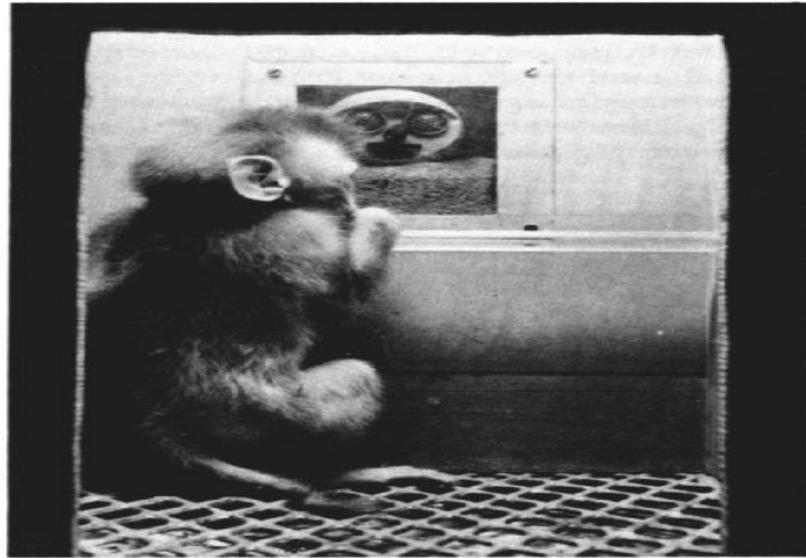


Figure 21. Visual exploration apparatus.

Harlow's Monkeys :

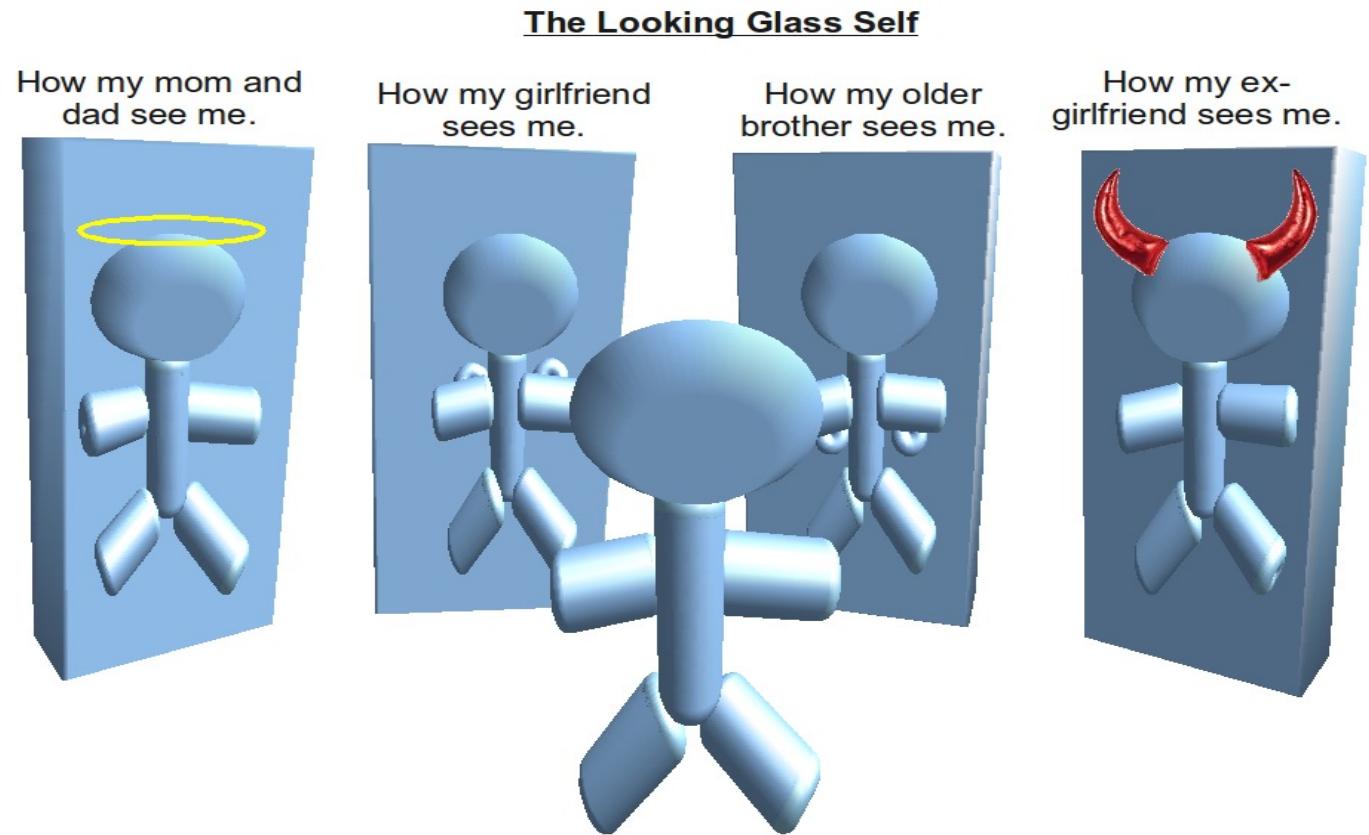
Chimps and apes brought up in isolation cannot recognise themselves in a mirror.

Apart from humans only chimps and apes will recognise their reflection in a mirror. But NOT when they had been raised in isolation – no recognition, no sense of self....

However after 3 months of social experience and physical contact with other chimpanzees – they will start to recognise themselves in a mirror. This demonstrates the vital important of others in the development of self-consciousness (Zazzo, 1975).

Who do you think you are?

- Charles Cooley (1902).
- Looking glass self – the idea that people learn about themselves by imagining how they appear to other.
- Reflected Appraisals – people come to think of themselves in the way they believe others think of them



Psychological Significance of Groups

- **The Need to Belong:** Humans have a need to belong and to satisfy this need they join groups, live with other people, or interact socially. People respond negatively when the need to belong is not fulfilled.
- **Ostracism:** Excluding one or more individuals from a group by reducing or eliminating contact with the person usually by ignoring, shunning, or explicitly banishing them.
- Can you think of a time when you were ostracized from a group? What happened & how did you feel?



social factors (e.g., social support, social integration) are far more important in predicting mortality than behavioral risk factors (e.g., smoking, high alcohol consumption and lack of exercise).

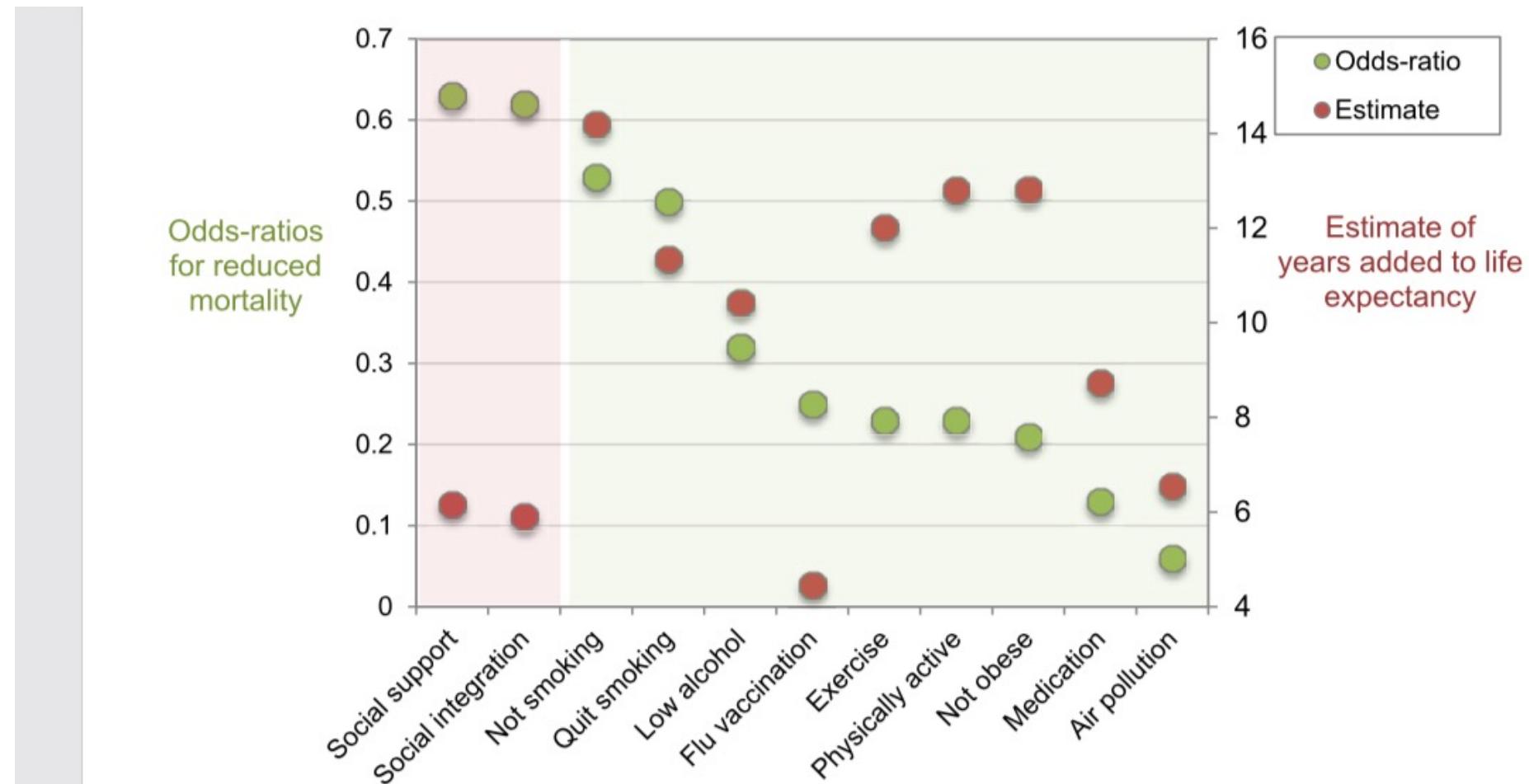


Fig. 3. Plot of mean estimates of the contribution of social and behavioural risk factors to life expectancy and odds ratios of reduced mortality associated with these factors as reported by Holt-Lunstad et al. (2010).

When do Groups fight and When do they
cooperate? *Robbers Cave Experiment*

Groups can lead to both good and bad



The Psychology of Intergroup Conflict

- Conflicts among human groups have occurred throughout our modern history and still continue today
- *Why do groups fight with each other?*
 - Aggressive Instinct
 - Personality
 - Prejudice and Stereotypes
 - Individual Frustration

Robbers Cave Experiment



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8PRuxMprSDQ&t=1s>

Robbers Cave Experiment (Sherifs, 1961)

- A field study attempting to better understand the causes and consequences of intergroup conflict.
 - Subjects:
 - Normal boys of the same age, educational level, similar sociocultural backgrounds
 - Group formation:
 - Arrived in 2 separate groups (Rattlers and the Eagles). Remained apart for one week.

Robbers Cave Experiment (Sherifs, 1961)

- Ingroup/outgroup rivalry:
 - Occurred spontaneously when each group realized the other boys were there. It was spurred by the Sherifs who set up competitive tournament.
- Tournament conflict escalation:
 - Rejection, verbal insults, name calling and physical violence

Robbers Cave Experiment (Sherifs, 1961)



Two groups shooting fireworks. Rattlers
in foreground; Eagles in background.



Mess Hall after one of the "garbage
fights" between groups eating together.

(Above) Two pictures of effects of intergroup contact without superordinate goals.



rs adopt the Eagle strategy: B
dig in sitting down.



Rattlers and Eagles sizing up each other
prior to first contest. Note team captains



ated
Rattler skits at the Stone Corral during
one of their evening campfires.



One of the Eag

The Robbers Cave Experiment (1954)

by Muzafer Sherif

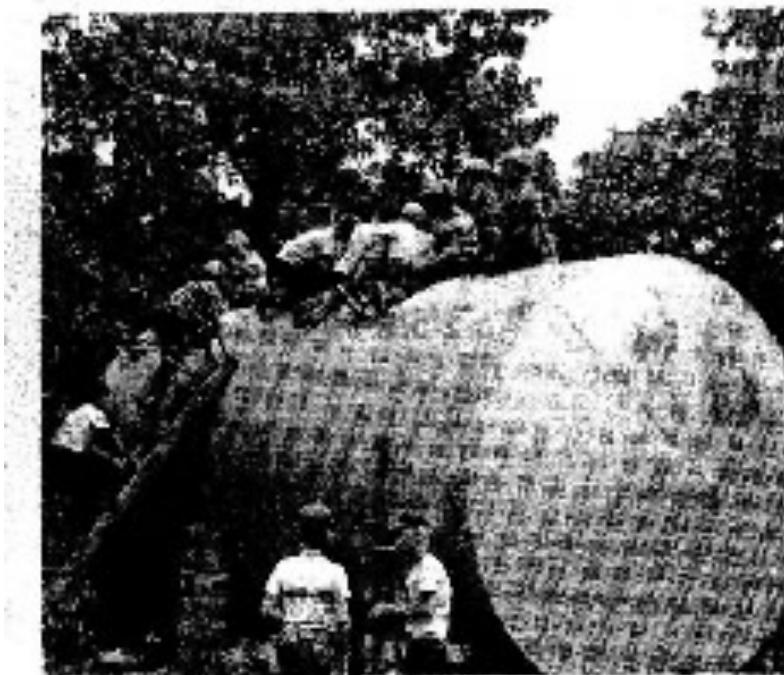
- “If an outside observer had entered the situation at this point, with no information about the preceding events, he could only have concluded on the basis of their behaviour that these boys (who were the ‘cream of the crop’ in their communities) were wicked disturbed and vicious bunches of youngsters”

Intergroup Conflict Resolution

- Superordinate goals hypothesis:
 - Situations that encourage groups to work together to achieve a common goal can reduce conflict between these groups.
 - Sheriffs created a series of emergencies that could only be handled by the groups working together
 - After 6 days of this cooperation the tensions were fairly well wiped out!

Superordinate Goals

(Below) Intergroup interaction after the introduction of superordinate goals.



Members of both groups climb up to see if the water tank is empty.



Members of both groups cluster around and take turns trying to clear the faucet.

Happy Ending!



Getting ready to return home: All together.

Competition and Conflict: Us versus them



1. Competition between groups for resources
 - Realistic conflict theory:
 - Intergroup conflict is caused by competition among groups over limited resources.
 - Competition implicated in class struggles, international warfare, racism...

Muzafer Sherif

Competition and Conflict

- 2. Reciprocity of contentious strategies
 - Groups also follow the norm of reciprocity – *we hate them because they hate us.*
 - A spiral model of conflict intensification accurately describes Robbers cave:
 - Verbal abuse
 - Avoidance
 - Discrimination
 - Physical assault

Competition and Conflict

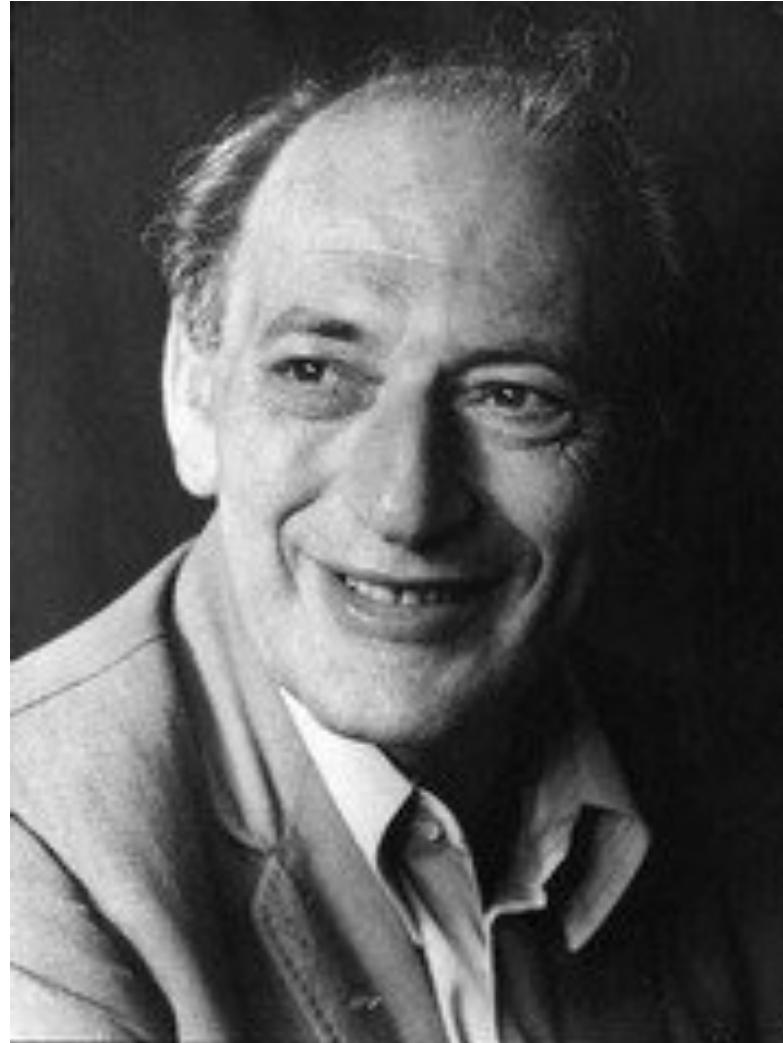
- 3. Scapegoating
 - Hostility caused by frustrating circumstances are sometimes taken out on innocent members of other social groups
 - Explains rise in prejudice when the economy takes a downturn
 - Study showing a significant negative correlation between the number of black men lynched in the US and the price of cotton. (Hovland and Sears, 1940)

Social Categorization: Perceiving Us and Them

- Ingroup/outgroup bias:
 - We favor our own group and derogate the outgroup
 - At Robbers Cave, when asked to name their friends Eagles picked Eagles, Rattlers picked Rattlers
 - Boys used negative characteristics to describe the outgroup, but rated their own group more favorably
- Intergroup competition may be sufficient to create hostility, but is it necessary? A number of studies through the 1960's suggested not.

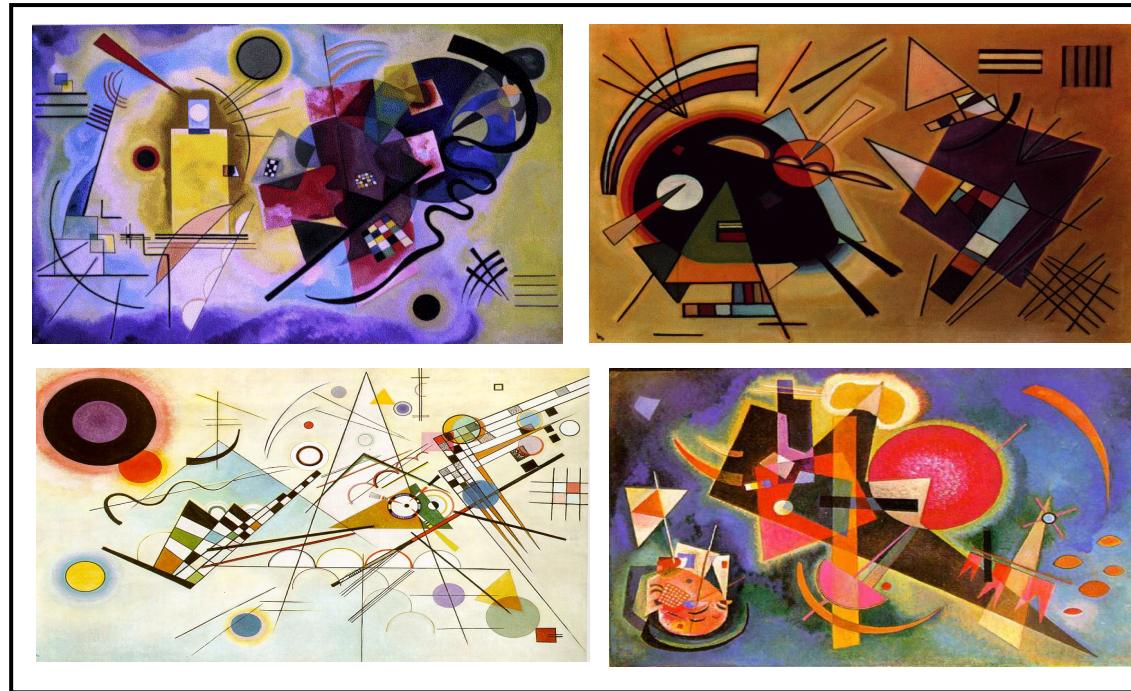
Would we show bias towards our own group even when they are just in our head? *Minimal Group Experiment*

Minimal Group Experiments:



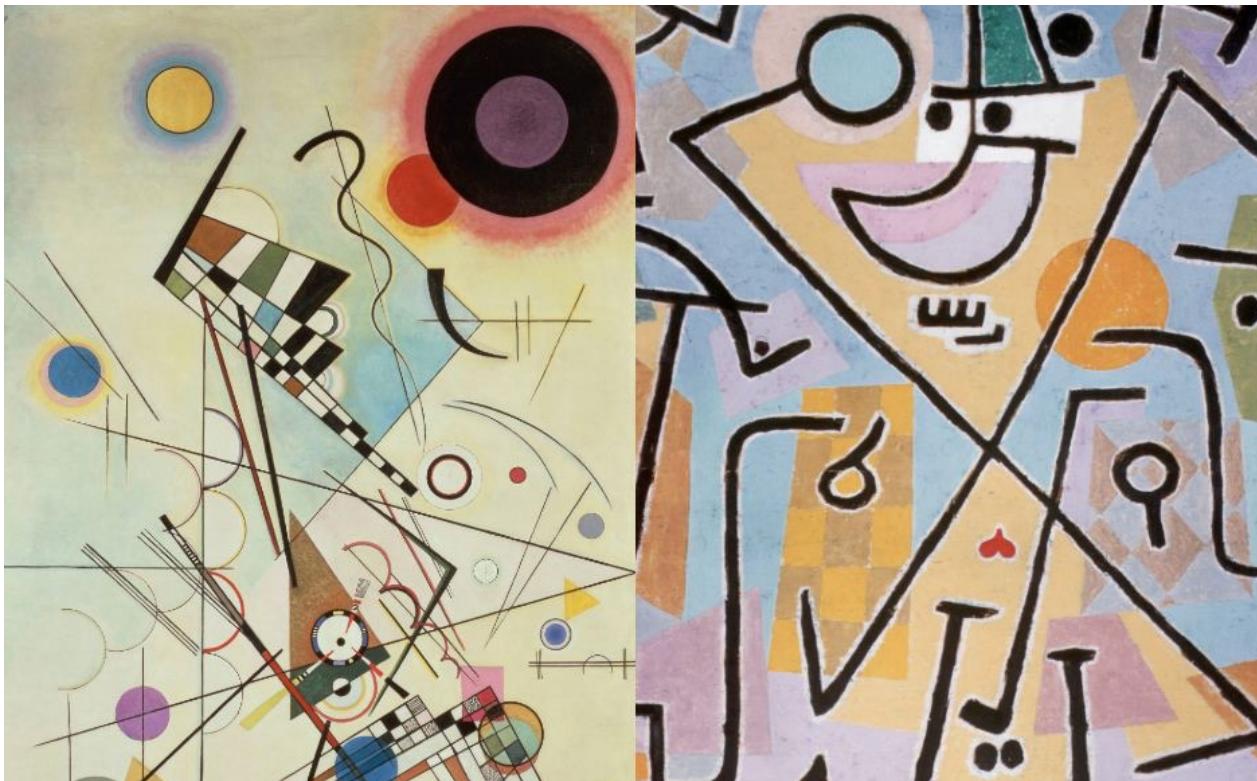
Henri Tajfel

Minimal Group Experiments



No history with the other group
No interaction with the other group
No personal gain from one's actions
Actions are not a criterion of group membership

Minimal Group Experiments



- In the first phase, participants are told that they have been divided into two groups on the basis of either a trivial criterion (preference for Klee or Kandinsky paintings, overestimating or underestimating the number of dots in a pattern) or else on explicitly random grounds - although in fact, allocation to groups is always done randomly.
- **All they know is what group they are in; they have no knowledge of who else is in which group, nor do they have any interaction with members of the ingroup or outgroup.**

Minimal Group Experiments

- They are then given the task of allocating points between two individuals, one of whom is identified solely as a member of the ingroup and the other solely as a member of the outgroup.
- The **allocation task** is performed using specially designed matrices that allow one to distinguish between different allocation strategies used by the subjects.

Booklet for group preferring Klee

These numbers are rewards for:

member no. 74 of Klee group

member no. 44 of Kandinsky group

25	23	21	19	17	15	13	11	9	?	5	3	1
19	18	17	16	15	14	13	12	11	10	9	8	7

Please fill in below details of the box you have just chosen:

Reward for member no. 74 of Klee group

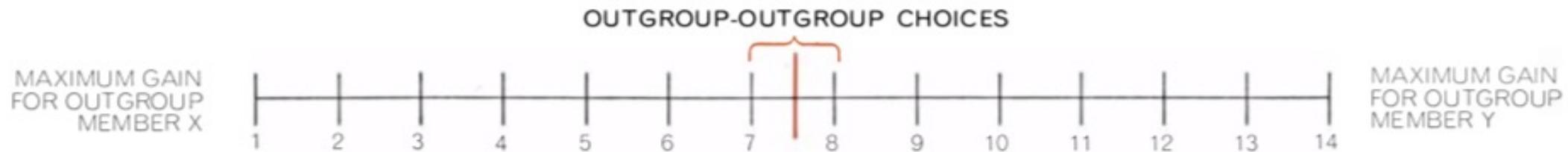
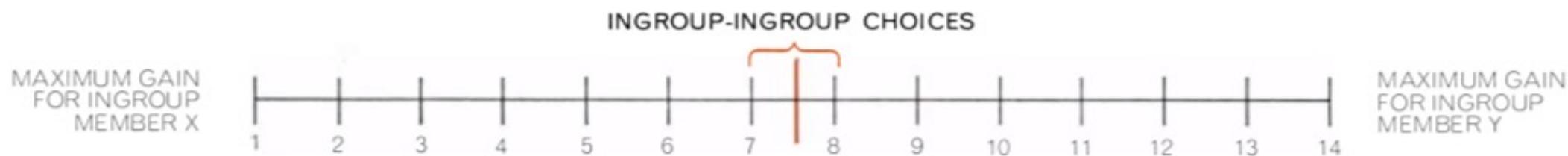
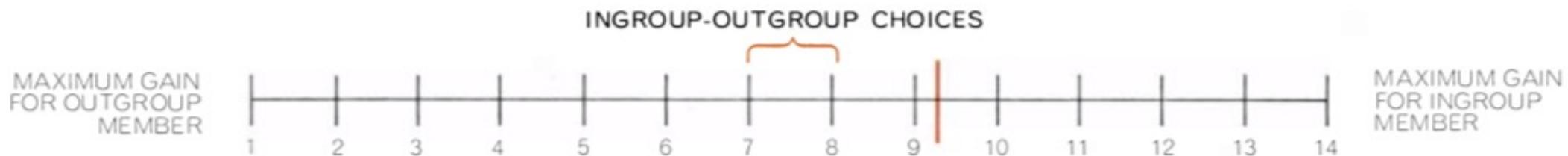
Amount
21

Reward for member no. 44 of Kandinsky group

17

PAGE OF BOOKLET, presenting a single matrix, is reproduced as a subject might have marked it. In addition to checking a box, the subject filled in the blanks below it to confirm his choice. The page

heading reminded him which group he was in. The awards were made to persons identified only by number and group; the subject did not know who they were but only their group identification.

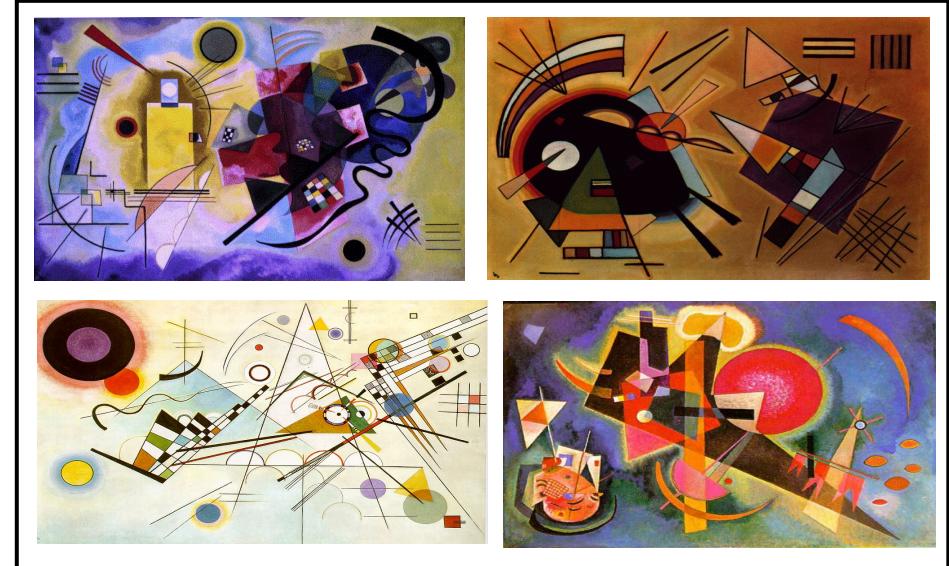


RESULTS WERE SCORED by ranking the choices from 1 to 14 depending on which box was checked. The end of the matrix at which the ingroup member got the minimum number of points (and the outgroup member the maximum) was designated 1; the other end, giving the ingroup member the maximum, was 14. The

mean choices (*colored vertical lines*) are shown here. In the intergroup situation the subjects gave significantly more points to members of their own group than to members of the other group. In the intragroup situations, however, the means of the choices fell at Rank 7.5, between the choices of maximum fairness (*brackets*).

Minimal Group Experiments

- The key finding is that, among the strategies that are used, there is a tendency to sacrifice absolute level of reward to the ingroup in order to increase the difference between the amount allocated to the ingroup and the amount allocated to the outgroup the so-called strategy of maximum differentiation.



The findings were provocative and surprising: *the individuals displayed high levels of **in-group favouritism** - tending to give more points (or money) to unidentified in-group members than to unidentified out-group members, often at the cost of maximising absolute gains to the in-group.*

Social Identity

- Why do we favour ingroup?
- Not because we are all biased or make error in our thinking
- Group membership is meaningful to people





Social Identity:

"the individual's knowledge that he (sic) belongs to certain social groups, together with some emotional and value significance to him of the group membership" (Tajfel, 1972, p. 31)

The diagram illustrates the relationship between Personal Identity and Social Identity. It features a central orange rectangle labeled "SELF-CONCEPT" at the bottom. Above it is a white rectangle containing two opposing concepts: "Personal Identity" on the left and "Social Identity" on the right. A horizontal blue double-headed arrow connects the two, indicating their interconnected nature. Below "Personal Identity" is the phrase "I/Me vs. You", and below "Social Identity" is the phrase "Us vs. Them".

Personal Identity ← → **Social Identity**

I/Me vs. You

Us vs. Them

SELF-CONCEPT

Summing Up

- Groups address some of our fundamental needs of belonging, security, growth. We are social beings!
- Robbers Cave Experiment: Intergroup competition is sufficient to create prejudice and hostility between people.
- Minimal Group Studies: Ingroup bias can exist even on the basis of most trivial categorisations
- Why do we favour ingroup? people value their social identities as much as they value their personal identity. People derive part of their self-esteem from group membership.

End