

HYPO-EGOIC IDENTITY, PREJUDICE, AND INTERGROUP RELATIONS

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People's identities are based primarily on characteristics that distinguish them from other people. However, some people's identities are influenced by their beliefs about their connections with humanity and the world, connections that emphasize similarity or sameness rather than difference. This article examines the implications of possessing such a hypo-egoic identity, focusing on four constructs: the metapersonal self, allo-inclusive identity, identification with all humanity, and the belief in oneness. As would be predicted by research on the effects of having a common ingroup identity, people who endorse a hypo-egoic identity seem to have a more positive, inclusive, and beneficent orientation toward other people and to be less prejudiced.

Key words: Identity; Hypo-egoicism; Prejudice; Allo-inclusive identity; Common ingroup identity model.

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The evolution of self-awareness ushered in a new era in how our prehistoric ancestors related to one another. Before hominids acquired self-awareness, they could not think consciously about the nature of the groups to which they belonged, how their groups differed from other groups, or about the relationships between their own and other groups. Prehistoric humans presumably interacted with members of other groups much like nonhuman primates do today — sometimes with distrust or even antagonism — but those interactions were not mediated by conscious self-relevant thoughts about other groups or their members.

However, once self-awareness emerged to the point that people could think consciously about themselves in abstract and symbolic ways (see Leary & Buttermore, 2003), they could identify themselves as members of a particular group, think consciously about the ways in which their group was similar to and different from other groups, develop beliefs about the members of other groups, and contemplate how they should interact with those individuals. As a result, interactions between groups came to be influenced by these self- and group-focused categorizations and beliefs.

Decades of research have documented the myriad ways in which people's identification with social groups affects their relationships within their own groups as well as the relationships between one group and another (for reviews, see Hogg, 2012; Hornsey, 2008). As has been repeatedly demonstrated, simply identifying oneself as a member of a particular group evokes notable changes in how people perceive and relate both to members of their group and to members of other groups (Diehl, 1990; Tajfel, 1970, 1981). As research using the minimal groups paradigm as shown, such effects involving ingroup favoritism and outgroup distrust and discrimination are obtained even when one's group membership is based on meaningless or random criteria and nothing tangible is at stake. Of course, in real-world groups, these minimal group effects are intensified by conflicts over tangible resources, but merely identifying as members of different groups can start the cycle. These processes have important implications for intergroup relations because identifying with a group increases the likelihood of perceiving and treating other groups in preju-

dicial ways. Put differently, antagonistic attitudes and discriminatory behaviors are often rooted in the ways in which people conceptualize their identities.

Although the tendency to favor one's own groups seems to be universal, people appear to differ in the degree to which they do so. Most research on individual differences in prejudice and discrimination has implicitly assumed that differences in how people perceive and respond to outgroups stem either from the attitudes that people hold toward particular groups (Fiske, 1998) or from a general, dispositional tendency toward prejudice, as reflected in constructs such as authoritarianism and social dominance orientation (Altemeyer, 1996; Pratto, Sidanius, Stallworth, & Malle, 1994). Although such factors clearly play a role in prejudice and intergroup relations, this article focuses on less well-studied constructs that reflect differences in how people construe their identities more generally. Given that outgroup distrust and discrimination are influenced by how people think about themselves and their groups, individual differences in how people construe themselves have implications for understanding intergroup relations.

ASPECTS OF IDENTITY

In the 1950s, researchers began to explore the broad categories of characteristics that constitute people's identities using the Twenty Statements (Who am I?) Test (Kuhn & McPartland, 1954). Over the years, research has consistently shown that people's answers to the question, "Who are you?," generally fall into five broad categories that reflect physical, personal, social, collective, and existential characteristics (Cheek & Cheek, 2018; Kuhn & McPartland, 1954; Sedikides & Brewer, 2001).

Physical identity includes a person's distinguishing physical features, such as *I am tall*, *I am overweight*, or *I am disabled*. Individual, or personal, identity involves aspects of a person's identity that are composed of psychological characteristics that distinguish a person from others without reference to the person's social relationships, including their interests, activities, goals, attitudes, and self-attributed personality characteristics. For example, attributes such as *pianist*, *avid reader*, *mathematician*, *conscientious*, and *politically liberal* reflect personal aspects of identity. Relational (or social) identity involves aspects of the person's identity that involve his or her social roles and relationships. For example, including in one's identity the fact that one is someone's spouse, parent, or friend reflects relational/social aspects of identity. Collective identity is based on one's memberships in groups and collectives, both small groups such as clubs, teams, and work groups as well as larger collectives defined in terms of racial, ethnic, national, and religious categories. Finally, although not everyone includes existential aspects of identity as part of who they are, existential aspects go beyond people's physical, personal, relational, and collective attributes to responses such as *I am a child of God* or *I am part of the universe*.

Everyone's identity includes physical, personal, social, and collective elements, but people differ in the aspects of identity that are most salient or important. Furthermore, people's thoughts, motivations, emotions, and reactions to events are moderated by the degree to which their identities are composed of physical, personal, social, and collective elements (Cheek & Cheek, 2018; Cross, Hardin, & Swing, 2009). Thus, the characteristics and categories that comprise the salient aspects of people's identities have a bearing on their relations with other people and groups.

HYPO-EGOIC IDENTITIES

Most of the salient aspects of people's identities reflect ways in which they differ from others. Indeed, the *APA Dictionary of Psychology* explicitly states that the physical, psychological, and interperson-

al characteristics that comprise identity are “not wholly shared with any other person.” Along these lines, research on identity development shows that children are most likely to emphasize aspects of identity on which they differ from others (McGuire, McGuire, Child, & Fujioka, 1978). So, when people invoke a personal aspect of identity — for example, identifying themselves as a marathon runner or piano player or avid reader — that identity inherently reflects a difference from certain other people who are not runners, piano players, or avid readers. Likewise, most relational or social identities are, if not unique, at least highly distinctive. No one else can claim to be my sons’ father (at least I hope not), and I have only one wife and a few good friends. Similarly, even as they specify one’s membership in various groups, collective identities always reflect differences from others. For example, including one’s nationality, race, or membership in a particular organization as an aspect of one’s identity inherently contrasts oneself from people of other nationalities, races, or group affiliations.

In this sense, most personal, social, and collective identities are inherently egoic in that they refer to *I*, *me*, and *mine*, highlighting ways in which the individual differs from at least some other people (Damasio, 2010). Yet, some aspects of people’s identities may involve characteristics that minimize, if not eliminate, differences between the person and others. Some people think of themselves in ways that would also apply to all other people or that are even broader than humanity, including as well other animals, nature, or the entire universe. Indeed, many of the existential attributes identified in work with the Twenty Statements Test (e.g., child of God, part of the universe) reflect such characteristics.

I refer to these as *hypo-egoic identities* because they do not involve the typical level of egoic self-focus reflected in most identity attributes and do not highlight differences between oneself and others. For example, people who answer the question, “Who are you?,” with descriptors such as *human being*, *citizen of the Earth*, or *child of God* are expressing aspects of identity that do not distinguish them from other people. These kinds of identities that extend beyond individual, social, and collective features have been discussed in the literature of humanistic and transpersonal psychology (see Maslow, 1968; Pappas & Friedman, 2007; Vaughan, 1985; Walsh & Vaughan, 1993) but have not, until recently, found their way into mainstream social or personality psychology.

We can get insights into the features of hypo-egoic identities by considering the cognitive processes that underlie hypo-egoicism more generally. Hypo-egoic mindsets are characterized by four features that involve how people think about themselves (Leary, Diebels, Jongman-Sereno, & Hawkins, 2016). First, when operating in a hypo-egoic mindset, people’s thoughts and feelings primarily involve the immediate situation rather than the past or future. Second, people who are being hypo-egoic introspect less than usual, without extensively thinking about, evaluating, or talking to themselves about their ongoing experiences. Third, people in a hypo-egoic mindset tend to think about themselves in relatively concrete ways, focusing on their objective attributes, behaviors, and outcomes rather than symbolic or socially-constructed characteristics. And, fourth, when in a hypo-egoic mindset, people tend to think less about how they are being perceived and evaluated by other people than they normally do. Considering these four features of hypo-egoic processing suggests that hypo-egoic identities should be fostered when people’s self-relevant thoughts involve who they are at this moment rather than identities that are extended into the past or future, they are introspecting minimally (if at all), their self-relevant thoughts are concrete, and they are less attuned to others’ judgments of them.

Importantly, possessing a hypo-egoic identity should lead people to perceive more commonalities and fewer differences between themselves and others. In essence, people whose identities include salient hypo-egoic elements should perceive and treat other people more-or-less like members of their own group. Given that ingroup favoritism, prejudice, and conflict between groups arise, at least in part, because people

identify themselves as members of different groups, people who have hypo-egoic identities should be less inclined to display intergroup biases because they tend to perceive everyone to be members of one large group.

This conjecture is indirectly supported by over 25 years of research showing that leading members of different groups to view themselves as members of a larger, superordinate unit reduces intergroup distrust, prejudice, and discrimination (Dovidio et al., 1997; Gaertner & Dovidio, 2009; Gaertner, Dovidio, Anastasio, Bachman, & Rust, 1993). In some experiments, White and Black participants have interacted after being led to view the two of them as either members of the same group or as separate individuals. Other studies have led Black and White participants to categorize themselves as members of the same group by stressing their shared university affiliation or nationality. By capitalizing on people's natural tendency to regard members of their group favorably, leading Blacks and Whites to think about their common group identity leads to more positive attitudes, increases trust and openness, and leads former rivals to treat each other more equally and fairly. Instead of "us" versus "them," members of both groups begin to see themselves as "we."

This common ingroup identity effect is the basis of the common suggestion that everyone on Earth would likely unite as a single, cooperative group if we suddenly faced an alien invasion. As U. S. President Ronald Reagan famously observed in an address to the United Nations in 1987, "Perhaps we need some outside universal threat to make us recognize this common bond. I occasionally think how quickly our differences worldwide would vanish if we were facing an alien threat from outside this world." Interestingly, however, people with certain hypo-egoic identities might not regard extraterrestrials as members of an outgroup.

Although little research has focused explicitly on hypo-egoic identities that go beyond the typical identity attributes based on physical, personal, relational, and collective attributes, a few constructs seem to possess features of a hypo-egoic identity. Although differing in specifics, these variables reflect differences in the degree to which people view themselves in ways that minimize their personal distinctiveness and imply that they are part of the same group as everyone else. The remainder of this article examines four such constructs — metapersonal identity, allo-inclusive identity, identification with all humanity, and the belief in oneness — all of which reflect a tendency to think about one's identity in hypo-egoic ways that highlight one's membership in groups that include all other people.

The primary hypothesis to be considered here is that people who show evidence of having a hypo-egoic identity demonstrate a more prosocial orientation, including greater acceptance and concern for other people in general and lower tendencies toward prejudice and the rejection of outgroups. Most of these variables were conceptualized, measured, and studied in contexts that did not involve research on intergroup relations per se, so the discussion is necessarily speculative. But, as noted, work on the Common Ingroup Identity Model (Gaertner & Dovidio, 2009) would lead us to predict that having a hypo-egoic identity should be associated with a greater concern for other people, greater acceptance of others, and less prejudice.

Metapersonal Self-Construal

DeCicco and Stroink (2007) described the metapersonal self as a sense of identity "that extends beyond the individual or personal to encompass wider aspects of humankind, life, psyche, or the cosmos" (p. 84). The term, metapersonal, was intended to describe a self-construal that extends beyond (*meta*) the personal characteristics, relationships, and group memberships that typically constitute the bulk of people's identities. To assess metapersonal self-construal, DeCicco and Stroink designed a scale to measure both a sense of connection to the world (e.g., "I feel a sense of kinship with all living things," "My sense of identity is based on something that unites me with all other people," "I feel a sense of responsibility and be-

longing to the universe”) and existential perspectives that often accompany such perceptions (e.g., “My personal existence is very purposeful and meaningful,” “My sense of inner peace is one of the most important things to me”).

People with a metapersonal identity appear to have a more positive orientation toward other people, both people they know personally and people in general. Scores on the Metapersonal Self Scale correlated with the degree to which people value benevolence, which Schwartz (1994) defined as preserving and enhancing the welfare of people with whom one is in frequent contact. Perhaps more importantly, scores also correlated with the value people placed on universalism — understanding, appreciating, tolerating, and protecting the welfare of all people, as well as nature (Stroink & DeCicco, 2011).

Clearly, such an orientation should be associated with lower prejudice and more positive intergroup relations. Consistent with this notion, scores on the Metapersonal Self Scale correlated negatively with racism, as measured by the Modern Racism Scale (DeCicco & Stroink, 2000; Lalonde, Doan, & Patterson, 2000).

The Metapersonal Self Scale has not received widespread use, possibly because the items on the scale measure more than simply the degree to which people endorse transpersonal aspects of identity or view themselves as connected to other people and the world. As noted, some of the scale items involve characteristics other than how people construe their identity, such as “My sense of inner peace is one of the most important things to me,” and “I take the time each day to be peaceful and quiet, to empty my mind of everyday thoughts.” Although these responses may be associated with having a metapersonal identity, the presence of such items on the scale complicates the interpretation of the findings. Do the relationships between metapersonal self-construal and other variables arise from construals of oneself as inherently connected to humanity, life, and the universe or to the emotional or motivational concomitants of these self-construals? In any case, metapersonal identity, broadly conceptualized and measured, clearly relates to a beneficent, inclusive, and concerned orientation toward other people and to a lower degree of prejudice.

Allo-Inclusive Identity

Our own efforts to study the degree to which people’s identities include their connections to entities outside themselves began with the development of the Allo-inclusive Identity Scale (Leary, Tipsord, & Tate, 2008). As we conceptualized it, allo-inclusive identity involves aspects of identity that go beyond a person’s personal (individual), social (relational), and collective identities to include broad categories of people as well as nature (we opted not to use the terms metapersonal or transpersonal because of the conceptual baggage associated with those constructs). Early discussions of allo-inclusive identity can be traced to ancient philosophical and spiritual traditions, such as Taoism, Vedanta, Buddhism, Hinduism, and many indigenous religions, and, as noted, psychologists have also acknowledged that people sometimes construe themselves in terms of their connections to people and things beyond themselves (DeCicco & Stroink, 2000; James, 1902/1961; Maslow, 1971; Pappas & Friedman, 2007; Vaughan, 1985).

The Allo-inclusive Identity Scale was based on the format of the Inclusion of Others in the Self Scale (IOS Scale; Aron, Aron, & Smollen, 1992), which has been used extensively to study close relationships (Aron, Aron, Tudor, & Nelson, 1991; Aron & Fraley, 1999; Smith & Henry, 1996; Tropp & Wright, 2001). The original IOS Scale asks respondents to describe their relationship with a particular other person using seven Venn diagrams that display seven degrees of overlap between “self” and “other.” In our adaptation of the IOS Scale, we asked respondents to indicate which of the seven diagrams “best expresses your relationship” with each of 16 targets that were chosen to reflect four categories of targets. Two of the categories involved other people: those with whom the person has a personal relationship (the person with

whom you feel closest, your family, your best friend of your own sex, your best friend of the other sex) and those with whom the person does not have a relationship (the average American, a stranger on a bus, a person of another race, a homeless person on the street). The other two categories of targets involved animals (an eagle, a dog, a wild animal, all living creatures) and inanimate features of nature (the moon, a tree, the Earth, the universe).

Factor analyses of the 16 targets have revealed two solutions on different samples. In the first solution, the items loaded cleanly onto two factors of targets that reflected people (both those that the respondent does and does not know personally) versus the natural world (both animals and inanimate features of the nature; Leary et al., 2008). In the second factor solution, three factors emerged that reflected people the respondent knows personally, people the respondent does not know, and both animate and inanimate aspects of the natural world (Diebels & Leary, 2019). Interestingly — and perhaps troublingly — in the three-factor solution, the target, *person of another race*, loaded on the same factor as animals and inanimate aspects of nature, suggesting dehumanization of people of another race (Haslam, 2006).

Consistent with the hypothesis that allo-inclusive identity should be associated with how people perceive and relate to other people, including members of other groups, scores on the Allo-inclusive Identity Scale correlated with self-rated kindness, compassion, forgiveness, and agreeableness (Leary et al., 2008). In addition, like metapersonal self-construal, allo-inclusive identity correlated positively with respondents' endorsement of values involving beneficence and universalism, and negatively with their endorsement of values related to power. People whose identities include a broad swath of other people may have more egalitarian relationships and are thus less motivated to influence and dominate other people. They also place a lower value on security, which may reflect a lower fear of other people.

Furthermore, unpublished data (collected as part of Diebels, 2016) showed that allo-inclusive identity with respect to people correlates with compassion ($r = .46$), forgiveness ($r = .29$), and gratitude to others ($r = .24$). People scoring higher in allo-inclusive identity also report feeling more distressed in response to other people's suffering ($r = .39$). Together, these findings suggest that people who score higher in allo-inclusive identity display a globally more positive interpersonal orientation, including a more benevolent orientation toward other people.

Allo-inclusive identity also correlates with higher life satisfaction, optimism, and self-esteem, as well as with lower depression. In providing a sense of connection or kinship to the rest of the world, an allo-inclusive identity may foster more positive relations and stronger social connections with other people, which promote psychological well-being (Huppert, 2009).

No research thus far has explicitly examined the relationship between allo-inclusive identity and people's reactions to members of other social groups, but the patterns suggest that people with a greater allo-inclusive identity should feel a greater connection with and acceptance of outgroups. One piece of evidence in support of this hypothesis is that ratings of one's connection with "a person of another race" correlates .70 with the sum of perceived connections with the seven other human targets on the Allo-inclusive Identity Scale (Diebels, 2016, unpublished data).

Interestingly, although allo-inclusive identity with respect to people is associated with a positive interpersonal orientation, allo-inclusive identity with respect to animals and the natural world is not. Rather, allo-inclusive identity with respect to the natural world relates strongly to social/ecological concerns. These patterns not only support the discriminant validity of the allo-inclusive identity subscales, but they also suggest that identifying broadly with other people has different implications than identifying with the natural world.

Identification with All Humanity

As noted, people's collective identities include their memberships in a variety of groups and collectives (Cheek & Cheek, 2018). Some people, however, identify not only with the specific groups of which they are a member but also with people in general, with all of humanity. These individuals essentially regard everyone as members of a very large ingroup and, as one would expect, they perceive and treat ingroup and outgroup members more similarly than people who identify with humanity less strongly.

The Identification with all Humanity (IWAH) Scale assesses this perspective by measuring the degree to which respondents express concern for all human beings everywhere relative to the degree to which they express concern for people in their own community and in their own country (McFarland, Webb, & Brown, 2012). For example, Item 1 on the IWAH Scale asks "How much do you identify with (that is, feel a part of, feel love toward, have concern for) each of the following?" Respondents then rate their identification with (a) people in my community, (b) Americans [or whatever the respondent's nationality may be], and (c) people all over the world. Other items ask how much respondents want to help people in these three groups, care when bad things happen to them, think of the groups of people as "family," and so on.

Importantly, identification with all humanity is not merely the inverse of ethnocentrism, although they are negatively correlated (McFarland, 2010; Reysen & Hackett, 2016). People can be free of ethnocentrism and yet not identify with or care about people in general. Identification with humanity goes beyond low ethnocentrism to a concern for people everywhere.

Not surprisingly, few respondents express as much identification with and concern about all of humanity as they do with people in their own communities and countries. Yet, the degree to which people identify with humanity predicts a variety of variables that are related to prejudice and relationships with members of outgroups more broadly. For example, scores on the IWAH Scale correlate negatively with right-wing authoritarianism (Altemeyer, 1996), which includes the tendency to be prejudiced toward outgroups, whether those groups are defined by national, racial, ethnic, and religious differences or by differences in attitudes and lifestyles (Dunwoody & McFarland, 2018; McFarland, 2010; McFarland & Brown, 2008; McFarland et al., 2012; Reysen & Hackett, 2016).

Identifying with all of humanity is also inversely correlated with social dominance orientation (SDO), which reflects the degree to which people prefer intergroup relations to be hierarchical as opposed to equal (Pratto et al., 1994; Sidanius & Pratto, 1999). In essence, SDO is the degree to which people desire that their own groups dominate other groups. People who score higher in SDO tend to favor ideologies and policies that enforce hierarchies in which their group is superior. Studies show that higher scores on the IWAH Scale are associated with lower SDO (Dunwoody & McFarland, 2018; McFarland, 2010; McFarland & Brown, 2008; Reysen & Hackett, 2016).

Identification with all humanity also correlates negatively with measures of ethnocentrism (McFarland, 2010; Reysen & Hackett, 2016) but positively with the degree to which people value diversity (Reysen & Hackett, 2016). It also predicts the degree to which people value the lives of outgroup members as highly as the lives of ingroup members (McFarland et al., 2012). In a study specifically on prejudice toward Muslims, Dunwoody and McFarland (2018) found that participants who scored higher on the IWAH Scale rated the threat of Muslims lower and expressed less support for anti-Muslim policies than participants who scored lower on the IWAH.

Identification with all humanity is associated not only with lower prejudice but also with a greater support for universal human rights. For example, IWAH scores predicted concern for global human rights

and humanitarian needs, knowledge of humanitarian problems around the world, and greater willingness to donate to humanitarian relief programs (McFarland, 2010; McFarland & Mathews, 2005).

Overall, identifying with all of humanity reflects an important individual difference variable that relates to prejudice and intergroup relations. Identifying with all people everywhere reflects a hypo-egoic orientation in which people devote nearly as much concern to people in other groups as to those in their own.

Believing in Oneness

Perhaps the most expansive hypo-egoic construal of identity is based on the belief that everything that exists is a part or manifestation of some basic “one thing” that underlies everything else. For thousands of years, a variety of philosophers and spiritual teachers have suggested that people share a deep connection with everything that exists — including other people and nature — by virtue of being part of a single universal entity (Flanagan & Ivanhoe, 2016). Although many such beliefs refer to some intangible universal or spiritual essence, others are based on being part of some material or energetic entity. For example, Erwin Schrodinger, the Nobel prize-winning physicist, observed that “quantum physics thus reveals a basic oneness of the universe” (see Capra, 1975). People who believe in the oneness of all things may conceptualize the universal one thing in a variety of ways, such as God, the Tao, Brahman, Buddha Nature, cosmic consciousness, energy, spirit, life force, matter, the unified quantum field, and even love (Diebels, 2016).

In some cases, people come to believe that everything is one as the result of a personal mystical experience in which they perceive that everything, including themselves, is fundamentally connected, if not of one nature (Hood, 2016). Such experiences often result in a shift in identity in which people begin to construe themselves in terms of their connection to all-that-is. Certain psychedelic drugs, including psilocybin and LSD, can also induce such perceptions, changing the way that people construe themselves (Pollen, 2018). More often, people may believe at a conceptual level that everything is one even without a full-blown mystical experience.

However it arises, the belief in oneness can change how people conceptualize themselves and behave toward others. James (1902/1961) was the first psychologist to describe this shift in identity, suggesting that mystical experiences lead people to sense that they are connected to dimensions of existence that are deeper than the visible world. Similarly, Maslow (1971) suggested that transcendence involves experiencing a sense of unity with the cosmos, leading him to designate this state as cosmic consciousness. Cloninger, Svrakic, and Przybeck (1993) similarly described self-transcendence as regarding oneself as an integral part of the universe and interdependent with everything that exists. Whether people’s perceptions of oneness are veridical, believing in integral oneness has implications for the ways in which people conceptualize themselves.

Diebels (2016; Diebels & Leary, 2019) developed a measure of the degree to which people believe that everything that exists is one and explored the psychological and social implications of this belief. Because of concerns that relatively few Americans might have considered the notion that everything is one, the Belief in Oneness Scale asks participants to rate the degree to which they can imagine that certain oneness-related beliefs are true (e.g., “Beyond surface appearances, everything is fundamentally one;” “Although many seemingly separate things exist, they are all part of the same whole”).

Not surprisingly, scores on the Belief in Oneness Scale correlated with scores on the Metapersonal Self and Allo-inclusive Identity Scales discussed previously (Diebels & Leary, 2019). In addition, believing in oneness correlated with people’s endorsement of the notion that one’s personal problems are shared

by everyone (as assessed by the common humanity subscale of the Self-compassion Scale; Neff, 2003). Notably, believing in oneness correlated .35 with ratings of one's connection with a person of another race as assessed by an item from the Allo-inclusive Identity Scale (Diebels, 2016, unpublished data).

Believing that everything that exists is part of a single unitive thing was related to the value that participants placed on both universalism and benevolence. Interestingly, belief in oneness correlated more highly with the value participants placed on universalism than benevolence (Diebels & Leary, 2019). This difference may reflect the fact that most people, whether or not they believe in oneness, are concerned about the welfare of the people they know personally. In contrast, many people may not be universally concerned with all people and nature unless they believe in oneness. Believing in oneness also correlated with the degree to which people express sympathetic and compassionate love for other people. Diebels (2016) also found that belief in oneness correlated with participants' ratings of how much of a financial windfall they would donate to charity.

Belief in oneness is not itself an identity, but it has direct implications for a hypo-egoic identity that minimizes one's sense of having a unique identity (or even a unique existence) by perceiving that one is a manifestation or part of some underlying essence or entity

THE IMPLICATIONS OF HYPO-EGOIC IDENTITY

People's identities structure their perceptions of the social world, typically making differences between themselves and other people salient and influencing their reactions to others who do and do not share their identities. To see the profound effects that people's identities have, imagine for a moment that race or nationality suddenly disappeared as an aspect of people's identities. If everyone suddenly lost the ability to construe themselves as a particular race or nationality, their reactions to other groups and individuals would no longer be influenced by these identities. As a result, among other things, they would no longer favor citizens of their own country or people of their own race over those of other nations and races! Of course, they would likely turn to other ways of categorizing themselves and others; after all, participants in the minimal group studies formed identities based on whether they overestimated or underestimated the number of dots in a random array!

Yet, as we have seen, some people's identities result in less categorization of themselves and others into separate groups than other people's identities do. Each of the constructs that we have examined involve ways of construing or identifying oneself that do not highlight differences between oneself and others. Although differing in specifics, these hypo-egoic constructs may rely, at least in part, on the creation of a common ingroup identity that involves all people or everything that exists. As people's identities expand beyond their own personal characteristics, relationships, and memberships to broader conceptions of who and what they are, they bring people who would normally be considered outsiders within their circle of concern.

Research on these constructs is sparse, and more is certainly needed. In particular, research is needed to explore the behavioral implications of hypo-egoic identities in actual interpersonal interactions and intergroup encounters. Virtually everything that we know about these constructs is based on self-report data. Work is also needed to understand the development of hypo-egoic identities. What processes lead certain people to deemphasize their unique characteristics and view themselves as a member of a superordinate group or a part of everything that exists?

Relatedly, what interventions might lead people to in the direction or more hypo-egoic identities? The common ingroup identity approaches that have been used successfully for lowering prejudice toward specific groups might be applied to include all people or even all of nature. Although much more needs to be done, the research reviewed in this article suggests that such interventions could have an impact on relations between disparate groups and, thus, on a host of social problems that arise from people's tendency to identify with particular groups and collectives.

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