Measuring Dyadic/Tribal Affiliation

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Introduction

Many researchers have asserted or implied that individual differences in gender can be widely accounted for by differences in self-construal. In this vein, Cross and Madson (1997) argued that the male self-schema was innately characterized by a need for independence and, in contradiction, the female self-schema was characterized by a need for interdependence. Cross and Madson (1997) defined the male's need for independence as a journey towards separateness and, in the extreme, isolation from others. In a recent commentary, Baumeister and Sommer (1997) argued that differences in gender might alternately be explained as a difference in the need to belong. They argued that male behavior could be characterized as tribal (i.e., seeking relations within the

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larger sphere or constellation of people). In contrast, women sought dyadic relationships within the smaller sphere, which were inherently more intimate in nature. Recent literature on gender differences in self-construal has offered empirical support for the differences in belongingness (Gabriel & Garnder, 1999). However, no current research has attempted to empirically quantify the degree to which male and female behavior differ with regard to the two sphere's hypothesis put forth by Baumeister and Sommer (1997).

Gender differences in belongingness provide fecund ground for the study of intrapsychic and interpersonal behavior. As such, the development of a scale measuring large versus small sphere orientation can provide a measure of predictive validity for many psychosocial processes (e.g., interpersonal rejection, self-esteem, and aggression). For example, within the two-sphere framework, interpersonal rejection would be far more injurious to the male ego when in the presence of a group because such acts are perceived as threats to establishing a broader social network. Threats to self-esteem would likewise be more damaging to the male when in the company of a group because of the fear of being perceived as weak by others; a characteristic that would also hamper the need for broader, social spheres. We would also predict that aggression in domestic violence may, in fact, be moderated by the two-sphere typology: males who are abusive within the family unit would also generalize this abuse to a larger sphere; whereas females would tend to localize aggression within the confines of the family unit-the smaller sphere. Currently this assumption is partly supported by research on domestic violence (Strauss, 1980; Breslin, Riggs, O'leary & Arias, 1990; O'leary et al., 1989, cited in Baumeister & Sommer, 1997, p. 40). We expect that the development and validation of a scale that adequately taps the constructs within the two-sphere typology will augment and, perhaps, provide alternate means from which to view behavioral differences in gender.

Method

We plan to recruit approximately 500-1000 male and female students enrolled in introductory psychology classes at Baruch College (PSY 1001). Sign up sheets will be placed on the psychology bulletin board on the 8th floor of the Vertical Campus. Participation will fulfill a course research requirement. The text of the sign-up sheet will read: "Research questionnaire on social affiliation motives."

Participants will complete informed consent forms. They will then receive an 84-item questionnaire along with some brief oral instructions as to how to complete it. Finally, all participants will be debriefed.

Appendix A reflects the two subscales of the questionnaire: dyadic and tribal affiliation. Appendix B is the actual questionnaire that will be administered. The debriefing form is included in Appendix C. Appendix D reflects the informed consent that will be used in the study. No deception will be used in this study. No adverse effects are anticipated. However, any participant who shows signs of a troubling medical or psychological condition will be referred for professional assistance.

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Appendix A

The questionnaire is composed of several statements with which you may agree or disagree. Using the scale below, indicate your agreement with each item by placing the appropriate number on the line preceding that item. Please be open and honest in your responding; choose the one answer that is most true of your feelings. Do not skip any items.

The 7-point scale is as follows:

1 = strongly disagree

2 = disagree

3 = slightly disagree

4 = neither agree nor disagree

5 = slightly agree

6 = agree

7 = strongly agree

Dyadic

1) I prefer a small number of intimate relation-
   ships to a large number of less intimate rela-
   tionships.

2) Enjoyment is spending time with a close
   friend.

3) I prefer work environments that allow fre-
   quent interactions with a small number of
   people.

4) I prefer private conversations to conversa-
   tions in groups.

5) I often wish I had more time to spend with
   my closest relationship partners.

6) The key to a good life is having at least one
   other person with whom to share my ideas.

Tribal

1) I prefer social groups that consist of many rather than fewer people.

2) I try to conceal my failures from people I do not know well.

3) In my experience, having many acquaintances is important.

4) In a workplace setting, I would prefer work partitions that allow me to see more, rather than fewer people.

5) I prefer to dine in large groups.

6) I feel it is important to be connected within a larger social network.