

J. L.S.  
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Affiliative Motivation and Group Identity Affect on Social Tuning and Identity

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by  
Troy Alexander  
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Approved:  
Professor, Jeanine L. Skorinko, Project Advisor  
Professor Melissa Sue John, Project Co-Advisor

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## **Abstract**

Previous research has shown that affiliative motivation can influence social tuning (Sinclair, et al., 2005a; Sinclair, et al., 2005b). However, this research has not examined the effects of group identification on social tuning or whether affiliative motivation may increase feelings of identification with a group. This research seeks to examine the effects that both affiliative motivation and group identification have on social tuning and also implicit group identification.

## **Affiliative Motivation and Group Identity Affect on Social Tuning and Identity**

Throughout life individuals are placed in situations that require them to interact with complete strangers. For instance, you typically interact with people you are less familiar with in a classroom, at times in the workplace, during an interview, etc. In each of these situations, different factors could influence not only how well the interaction goes, but could also influence the extent to which an individual adopts their interaction partner's attitudes or beliefs. One factor that has been shown to influence others is the extent to which they identify with a group. In addition, having the desire to get along with someone (affiliative motivation) can also play a role in social interactions. This study seeks to understand how affiliative motivation and sharing a group affiliation with an individual influences the likelihood an individual will engage in social tuning (or aligning their views with an interaction partner) and also their implicit group identification.

It is human nature for people to want to belong to a group (Knowles & Gardner, 2008). This sense of belonging provides a sense of security to the individual and aids with the improvement of the self from the support of the group. One way to satisfy the need to belong with others is to engage in positive interactions with others. One way to foster these types of interactions is by creating a sense of shared reality, or mutual understanding (Hardin & Conley, 2001). To achieve this shared reality, research shows that individuals will engage in social tuning (or adjust the way they behave or alter their beliefs) towards the views of their interaction partner (Sinclair, Huntsinger, Skorinko, & Hardin, 2005; Sinclair, Lowery, CoAngelo, & Hardin, 2005; Lun, Sinclair, Whitchurch, & Glen, 2007). The research on social tuning suggests that one

key component to social tuning is the degree to which an individual wants to get along with another person, or affiliative motivation. If affiliative motivation is high, then individuals will be more inclined to tune to their partners view;- however, if affiliative motivation is low, then it is unlikely that the individual will engage in social tuning (Jost, Ledgerwood, & Hardin, 2007; Sinclair, et al., 2005a; Sinclair, et al., 2005b). For instance, in one study, experimenters found that females who interacted with an ostensible interaction partner would tune towards being more stereotypically female when they believed the confederate held stereotype-consistent beliefs (Sinclair, et al., 2005a; Sinclair, et al., 2005b).

Another factor that can influence the extent to which others achieve a sense of belonging is through their identification with others (or group identification). Research shows that individuals can have many identities and these multiple identities allow individuals to adapt and fit in with various groups depending on what the circumstances require (Pittinsky, Shih, Ambady, 1999). In addition, individuals have the unique ability to change their self-categorizations as self-evaluation is crucial to ones identity (Crawford, 2005). Moreover, it is believed that self-evaluation maintenance is a key component in determining which identity needs to be taken on in a given situation (Tesser, 1988). However, the majority of the past research on group identity focuses on when identities shift in terms of self-presentation, especially when making an upward comparison (e.g., Crawford, 2006; Mussweiler, 2000). For instance, Crawford found that individuals have the ability to change their self-categorization and self-evaluation in picking the identity they want to assume in order to maintain a positive self view. Mussweiler discovered that the identity an individual assumes can be used to eliminate threats to ones self-esteem particularly in upward social comparisons. However, this research

has not investigated whether the identification with a particular identity may also influence attitudes based on the perceived views of an interaction partner.

Thus, past research shows the affiliative motivation influences the extent to which individuals engage in social tuning (Sinclair, et al., 2005a; Sinclair, et al., 2005b). In addition, past research shows that individuals will utilize their multiple group identities to reduce threats to their own self-evaluation (Crawford, 2006; Mussweiler, 2000). However, the past research has not examined how affiliative motivation and group identities influence the transmission of attitudes via social tuning or the amount of identification an individual feels towards their multiple identities. Thus, the current study examines the effects of affiliative motivation and group identity when it comes to social tuning and implicit group identity.

## **Method**

### **Participants**

Ninety-two participants (62 male, 26 female, 4 unreported) from a small private northeastern institution voluntarily participated in the experiment. Each participant gave informed consent and all participants received partial course credit in exchange for their participation.

### **Design and Materials**

This study used a 2 (Affiliative Motivation: Low vs. High) x 2 (Group Identification: Same School vs. Same Gender) between-participants design to examine the effects of affiliative motivation and group identification on social tuning and implicit group identification.

**Affiliative Motivation Manipulation.** To manipulate affiliative motivation, participants learned they would be interacting with an ostensible partner for either 5 minutes (Low Affiliative Motivation) or 30 minutes (High Affiliative Motivation) on a task (adapted from Sinclair, Huntsinger, Skorinko, & Hardin, 2005).

**Group Identification Manipulation.** When participants come into the lab, they learned that they would be interacting with a partner for part of the experiment. They were informed that their partner was either a) the same gender but attended a different school, or b) different in gender but attended the same school.

**Perceived Views of the Ostensible Partner.** Participants learned that the computer would randomly select a personality or attitude assessment for them to complete and that their ostensible partner would also be completing a randomly selected personality or attitude assessment. After the assessment was completed, participants learned that the computer would generate the scores of the completed assessments and that they would get to see the scale their partner completed and their partner's score. The participant always completed the Needs for Closure Scale (Webster & Kruglanski, 1994, See Appendix D). The ostensible partner always "completed" a Racial Attitudes scale and their score always portrayed the ostensible partner as being more egalitarian towards different racial groups than the average person who completed the scale. This allowed participants to see their partner's views as being more egalitarian than their larger social group.

**Implicit Group Identification Measure.** We measured implicit group identification with participants' gender and their school using two Implicit Association Tests (IAT; adapted from Greenwald, Banaji & Nosek, 2005; Greenwald, McGhee, & Schwartz, 1998; Nosek, Banaji & Greenwald, 2006). Participants were presented with an interface that required them to identify a

word as belonging to one category or the other. For example, if the two categories were ‘male’ and ‘female’ and the participant was presented with the word ‘son’, the participant would identify the word as belonging to the ‘male’ category.

In the implicit gender identification task, participants categorized words that related to being male/female (e.g., “guy”, “daughter”) or self/other (e.g., “me”, “them”). Similarly, in the implicit school identification task, participants categorized words that related their school (e.g., school colors, mascots, and buildings) or a different school in the same town along with words that signified the self or the other (e.g., “me”, “them”). If participants have a stronger implicit identification with a concept, then they should have faster reaction times categorizing that concept (e.g., their gender) with the self-related words.

**Social Tuning.** To measure social tuning, participants completed explicit measures of their attitudes towards Blacks by completing the Modern Racism Scale (McConahay, 1986) and the Pro-Black and Anti-Black Scales (Katz and Hass, 1988). If participants engaged in social tuning with their ostensible partner, then they should express more egalitarian views towards Blacks than those not engaging in social tuning because they are led to believe that their ostensible partner endorses egalitarian views towards racial groups. See Appendix A for the Modern Racism Scale and Appendix B for the Pro-Black and Anti-Black Scales.

**Final Questionnaire.** Participants also completed a series of questions assessing their perceptions of their ostensible interaction partner. For example, on a 5-Point Likert-type scale (1=Strongly Disagree; 5=Strongly Agree) participants determined, “How well do you think the interaction with your partner will go?” See Appendix C for these questions. In addition, demographic information (e.g., gender, ethnicity) was collected.



## Procedure

After giving informed consent, participants learned that we were interested in understanding what happens when people interact with others after having different information about them. To do this, they were informed that they would first complete some initial tasks alone and then they would pair up with a partner to work on a task with that individual. Participants then learned they would be working with this ostensible partner on a task for either 5 minutes or 30 minutes. This served as our affiliative motivation manipulation (adopted from Sinclair et al., 2005). In addition, participants learned that their partner was either similar to them in terms of the school they attended (i.e., same school) or their gender (i.e., same gender). This served as our group identification manipulation. Thus, participants were randomly assigned to one of four conditions (Same School/Different Gender and-Low Affiliative Motivation;-Same School/Different Gender and-High Affiliative Motivation; Different School/Same Gender and-Low Affiliative Motivation; and Different School/Same Gender and/High Affiliative Motivation).

After learning the cover story, participants were informed that the computer would randomly select a personality or attitude assessment for them to complete, and that their partner would also be completing a personality or attitude assessment that would be randomly assigned to them by the computer. In actuality, participants always completed the Needs for Closure Scale (Webster & Kruglanski, 1994), and they always learned that their partner completed a Racial Attitudes scale. After completing the assessment, the participant viewed their ostensible partner's racial attitudes, and always learned that their partner was more egalitarian than the average person who had taken the scale. After viewing their ostensible partner's egalitarian racial attitudes, participants are led to believe they will be completing several cognitive tasks.

Participants actually complete two Implicit Association Tests (IATs; Greenwald et al., 2005) that measured their implicit identification with their school and their implicit identification with their gender. In the IAT, participants categorized different words and stimuli to a group. In the gender identification IAT, participants categorized a word as being male or female and words as being self-related or other-related. In the school identification IAT, participants categorized words as signifying their school or a different school and words as being self-related or other-related. The faster the reaction time when categorizing the word as belonging to their gender or their school with self-related words, then the stronger their implicit identification with either their gender or school. In each of the IATs, there was a practice round given before the actual test results were recorded.

After completion of the IATs, participants completed the Modern Racism Scale (McConahay, 1986) and the Pro-Black and Anti-Black Scales (Katz and Hass, 1988). By measuring participants' explicit racial attitudes, we can see the extent to which they engaged in social tuning (i.e., by how similar their explicit attitudes are to the attitudes of their partner). Finally, participants completed a questionnaire that assessed their perceptions of how the interaction with their partner would go, "How much do you think you will get along with your partner?", and their demographic information. Participants were then thanked and debriefed.

## Results

The data were assessed for statistical significance at  $\alpha = .05$  and were analyzed using an Analysis of Variance or ANOVA. Affiliative Motivation and Group Identity were the between-participants factors and implicit group identification and social tuning were the dependent factors. We predicted that affiliative motivation and group identification (e.g., sharing a group in

common with a partner) would influence the likelihood to engage in social tuning (i.e., by endorsing egalitarian views towards Blacks as indicated by the partners' score on a racial attitudes measure). We also predicted these two factors would influence implicit group identification (i.e., stronger identification with the group shared between two people)

**Social Tuning.** Based on past research (Sinclair, et al., 2005a; Sinclair, et al., 2005b), we predicted that participants who had high affiliative motivation would be more likely to engage in social tuning by endorsing more egalitarian attitudes towards Blacks. Contrary to our prediction, there was no main effect for affiliative motivation on egalitarian views towards Blacks,  $F(1,84)=.05, p=.82$ . In addition, there was no main effect for group identity on egalitarian views towards Blacks,  $F(1,84)=.13, p=.72$ . There was also no interaction between affiliative motivation and group identity on egalitarian views,  $F(1,84)=.44, p=.51$ .

**Implicit Group Identification.** In addition, we examined whether affiliative motivation and the group identity manipulated (i.e., same school or same gender) would influence the extent to which individuals identified with a group they belonged to. To do this, we conducted three separate ANOVAs: one looking at implicit identification with one's school, one looking at male's identification with their gender, and one looking at female's identification with their gender. First, we examined whether affiliative motivation and group identity influenced implicit identification with one's school. The results showed no main effect for affiliative motivation  $F(1,84) = .02, p = .88$ . There was also no main effect for the group identity manipulation,  $F(1,84) = .63, p = .43$ . In addition, there was no interaction between affiliative motivation and group identity on implicit identification with one's school,  $F(1,84) = .01, p = .94$ .

Second, we examined whether affiliative motivation and group identification influenced male's implicit identification with their gender. The results showed no main effect for affiliative

motivation  $F(1,58) = .96, p = .33$ . There was also no main effect for the group identity manipulation,  $F(1,58) = .13, p = .72$ . There was a significant interaction between affiliative motivation and group identity,  $F(1,58) = 7.27, p = .01$ . Simple effects analysis showed that, contrary to our predictions, male participants that experienced high affiliative motivation did not experience more implicit identification with their gender when they learned their partner was of the same gender ( $M = -.37, SD = .50$ ) versus from the same school ( $M = -.58, SD = .30$ ),  $F(1,58) = 2.83, p = .1$ . However, male participants that had low affiliative showed more implicit identification with their gender when they learned their partner was of the same gender ( $M = -.70, SD = .27$ ) than from the same school ( $M = -.43, SD = .29$ ),  $F(1,58) = 4.50, p = .04$ . Similarly, of the participants that learned that their partner was also male, those who had low affiliative motivation ( $M = -.70, SD = .27$ ) showed more implicit identification with their gender than those who had high affiliative motivation ( $M = -.37, SD = .50$ ),  $F(1,58) = 7.26, p = .01$ . However, when participants learned that their partner was from the same school, there were no difference in implicit gender identification for those who had low affiliative motivation ( $M = -.43, SD = .29$ ) versus high affiliative motivation ( $M = -.58, SD = .30$ ),  $F(1,58) = 1.38, p = .25$ . Finally, we examined whether affiliative motivation and group identification influenced female's implicit identification with their gender. The results showed no main effect for affiliative motivation  $F(1,22) = .01, p = .91$ . There was also no main effect for the group identity manipulation,  $F(1,22) = .61, p = .44$ . In addition, there was an interaction between affiliative motivation and group identity on male's implicit identification with their gender,  $F(1,22) = .521, p = .48$ .

## General Discussion

In this study we sought to examine how affiliative motivation and group identity affect social tuning and feelings towards one's in-group. Previous research has established that affiliative motivation plays a role in the social tuning process (Jost, Ledgerwood, & Hardin, 2007; Sinclair, et al., 2005a; Sinclair, et al., 2005b). Previous research also shows that group identity influences social tuning (Sinclair, et al., 2005a; Sinclair, et al., 2005b). However, this study sought to examine the effects of both affiliative motivation and group identity during the transmission of attitudes towards others and one's group. We hypothesized that high affiliative motivation as well as being sharing something in common with a partner would heighten social tuning and identity with that specific group. However, we predicted that low affiliative motivation should limit the extent to which individual's engaged in social tuning and identified with an in-group. Contrary to our hypotheses and contrary to the findings from previous research, there was no significant main effect of affiliative motivation on social tuning or implicit group identification. Likewise, there was no main effect for sharing something in common with an ostensible interaction partner on social tuning or implicit group identification. Finally, there was also no interaction between affiliative motivation and having something in common with a partner on social tuning or implicit group identification. The only exception to this finding was that male participants who experienced low affiliative motivation reported more implicit gender identification when they learned their partner shared their gender rather than their school.

As is the case when conducting research, there a few limitations that could have played a role in the lack of significant findings in this research experiment. One limitation is that we realized during data analysis that there was no manipulation check for the affiliative motivation

manipulation. While the manipulation was taken from past research (Sinclair, et al., 2005a), we do not have evidence from the current study that the manipulation of interacting with a partner for five or thirty minutes was effective. This should be addressed in future research. Another limitation in the current experiment is that we only measured implicit group identification and did not measure explicit group identification. It is possible that this research could have generated results showing explicit group identification, however we only aimed to measure implicit group identification. Future research should consider measuring both implicit and explicit group identification to better understand the effects that affiliative motivation and sharing something in common with a partner may have on the transmission of attitudes and feelings towards an in-group. Some participants may be sensitive towards racial attitudes and therefore self-present in order not to offend the ostensible partner.

In addition to the above suggestions, future research endeavors could examine what factors the partners are similar on to see if there are any different ways that group identity may be formed, heightened, or diminished. This is particularly important in order to better understand why male participants, who had low affiliative motivation, experienced heightened implicit gender identification when their partner was also a male rather than another student from their school. Future research can better understand if cues for similarity may serve as affiliative cues. For instance, past research shows that there is a difference between surface-level and deep-level characteristics (Ensher, Vallone, Marelich, 2002). Surface-level characteristics are observable characteristics (e.g., race, gender); whereas, deep-level characteristics are related to an individual's values and attitudes. Future research could examine whether these two types of characteristics influence social tuning and feelings of group identity differently. For instance,

maybe sharing a deep-level characteristic is more influential than a surface-level characteristic—which is the type of characteristic used in the current study.

Another potential direction for future research could deal with perspective taking, or the ability to understand another person's viewpoint, and how that interplays with implicit group identification. Perspective taking often results in empathy and this empathy can potentially heighten one's group identification (Batson, Early, Salvarani, 1997). If an individual perspective takes with another individual and as a result the individual empathizes with the other individual than there may be an increased likelihood to pick up on their attitudes and social tune towards this individual.

In this particular study we were unable to show that group identity and affiliative motivation effect social tuning and implicit group identification. However, this research question still remains important among the psychological community as it will provide more insight into when and how attitudes are transmitted and when individuals feel an identity with their group.

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**Appendix A:**  
**Modern Racism Scale (McConahay, 1986)**

1. Over the past few years, the government and news media have shown more respect for blacks than they deserve.

1                      2                      3                      4                      5                      6                      7

Strongly Disagree

Strongly Agree

2. It is easy to understand the anger of black people in America.

1                      2                      3                      4                      5                      6                      7

Strongly Disagree

Strongly Agree

3. Many black people miss out on good housing because white owners won't rent or sell to them.

1                      2                      3                      4                      5                      6                      7

Strongly Disagree

Strongly Agree

4. Blacks are getting too demanding in their push for equal rights.

1                      2                      3                      4                      5                      6                      7

Strongly Disagree

Strongly Agree

5. It would bothersome to you if a black family with about the same income and education moved next door.

1                      2                      3                      4                      5                      6                      7

Strongly Disagree

Strongly Agree

6. It is objectionable for a member of your family to have a friendship with a black person.

1                      2                      3                      4                      5                      6                      7

Strongly Disagree

Strongly Agree

7. Open housing laws, which allow more racial integration of neighborhoods, are good.

1                      2                      3                      4                      5                      6                      7

Strongly Disagree

Strongly Agree

8. Generally, full racial integration is favorable.

1                      2                      3                      4                      5                      6                      7

Strongly Disagree

Strongly Agree

9. It is a good idea for children to go to schools that have about the same proportion of blacks and whites as generally exists in your area.

1                      2                      3                      4                      5                      6                      7

Strongly Disagree

Strongly Agree

10. Generally, blacks are of the same intelligence as whites.

1                      2                      3                      4                      5                      6                      7

Strongly Disagree

Strongly Agree

11. Laws that permit a black person to rent or purchase housing, even when the person offering the property for sell or rent does not wish to rent or sell it to blacks, are favorable.



Strongly Disagree

Strongly Agree

17. How much of the racial tension that exists in the United States today do you think blacks are responsible for creating?

1                      2                      3                      4                      5                      6                      7

Strongly Disagree

Strongly Agree

18. How much discrimination against blacks do you feel there is in the United States today, limiting their chances to get ahead?

1                      2                      3                      4                      5                      6                      7

Strongly Disagree

Strongly Agree

19. Generations of slavery and discrimination have created conditions that make it difficult for blacks to work their way out of the lower class.

1                      2                      3                      4                      5                      6                      7

Strongly Disagree

Strongly Agree

20. Over the past few years, blacks have gotten less than they deserve.

1                      2                      3                      4                      5                      6                      7

Strongly Disagree

Strongly Agree

21. Over the past few years, blacks have gotten more economically than they deserve.

1                      2                      3                      4                      5                      6                      7

Strongly Disagree

Strongly Agree











## Appendix C: Questions about Ostensible Partner and Interaction

1. How well do you think the interaction with your partner will go?

1                      2                      3                      4                      5                      6                      7

Not At All

Very Much

2. How well do you think you will do in the cooperative task as a task?

1                      2                      3                      4                      5                      6                      7

Not At All

Very Much

3. How much do you think you will like your partner?

1                      2                      3                      4                      5                      6                      7

Not At All

Very Much

4. How much do you think you will get along with your partner?

1                      2                      3                      4                      5                      6                      7

Not At All

Very Much

5. How much do you look forward to working with your partner?

1                      2                      3                      4                      5                      6                      7

Not At All

Very Much

6. How much would you rather to work alone than with your partner?

1                      2                      3                      4                      5                      6                      7

Not At All

Very Much

7. What assessment did your partner complete? If you do not remember the name of the assessment, please describe the general topics of the assessment.

8. How important is the topic of your partner's assessment to you?

1                      2                      3                      4                      5                      6                      7

Not At All

Very Much

9. How helpful was the information for getting to know your partner?

1                      2                      3                      4                      5                      6                      7

Not At All

Very Much

10. What is the range where your partner's score falls?

11. What is the range where the average students' score falls?

12. How surprised were you when you found out your partner's score?

1                      2                      3                      4                      5                      6                      7

Not At All

Very Much

13. How similar do you think your partner's attitudes are to other WPI students?

1                      2                      3                      4                      5                      6                      7

Not At All

Very Much

14. As of right now, do you think any of the tasks you completed are related to each other? If so, which ones and how they are related?

15. As of right now, did you notice anything unusual about the tasks that you completed so far?

16. Some people are generally suspicious about psychology experiments. Were you suspicious about any aspect of the tasks you completed or information you received so far?

**Appendix D:  
Need for Closure Scale (Webster & Kruglanski, 1994)  
"Random" Scale Completed By All Participants**

1. I don't like situations that are uncertain.

1                      2                      3                      4                      5                      6

Strongly Disagree

Strongly Agree

2. I like to have friends who are unpredictable.

1                      2                      3                      4                      5                      6

Strongly Disagree

Strongly Agree

3. When dining out, I like to go to places where I have been before so that I know what to expect.

1                      2                      3                      4                      5                      6

Strongly Disagree

Strongly Agree

4 . I feel uncomfortable when I don't understand the reason why an event occurred in my life.

1                      2                      3                      4                      5                      6

Strongly Disagree

Strongly Agree

5 . I don't like to go into a situation without knowing what I can expect from it.

1                      2                      3                      4                      5                      6

Strongly Disagree

Strongly Agree

6. When I am confused about an important issue, I feel very upset.

1                      2                      3                      4                      5                      6

Strongly Disagree

Strongly Agree

7. I think it is fun to change my plans at the last moment.

1                      2                      3                      4                      5                      6

Strongly Disagree

Strongly Agree

8. I enjoy the uncertainty of going into a new situation without knowing what might happen.

1                      2                      3                      4                      5                      6

Strongly Disagree

Strongly Agree

9 . In most social conflicts, I can easily see which side is right and which is wrong.

1                      2                      3                      4                      5                      6

Strongly Disagree

Strongly Agree

10 . I don't like to be with people who are capable of unexpected actions.

1                      2                      3                      4                      5                      6

Strongly Disagree

Strongly Agree

11 . I prefer to socialize with familiar friends because I know what to expect from them.

1                      2                      3                      4                      5                      6

Strongly Disagree

Strongly Agree

12 . I like to know what people are thinking all the time.

1                      2                      3                      4                      5                      6

Strongly Disagree

Strongly Agree

13 . I dislike it when a person's statement could mean many different things.

1                      2                      3                      4                      5                      6

Strongly Disagree

Strongly Agree

14. It's annoying to listen to someone who cannot seem to make up his or her mind.

1                      2                      3                      4                      5                      6

Strongly Disagree

Strongly Agree

15 . I feel uncomfortable when someone's meaning or intention is unclear to me.



