

Social Identity Theory. in Politics

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WHAT is social identity?

It involves a sense of belonging to a group, resulting in different identities for each individual person. It results in in-group bias (preferring people similar to us, rather than “outsiders”.)

WHAT is social identity theory?

The need, among group members, to differentiate their own groups positively from others to achieve a positive social identity.

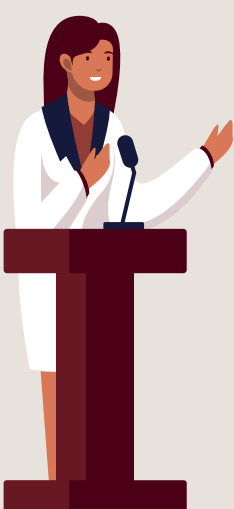


WHAT contributes to social identity?

Race, ethnicity, gender, and class are a few of the many factors that make individuals who they are. In politics, different social groups share certain characteristics. For example, in the US, black, secular, liberal, and Democratic have a lot of overlap. This also applies to Evangelical, conservative, and Republican.

HOW does this apply to politics?

Individuals with similar characteristics, that are strongly tied to a political party, try to take action in order to defend or elevate the party. When people strongly tie themselves to a party, the failures and victories become more personal.



WHY is this important?

This theory helps shed light on how elite members of a political party shape how the party is viewed. For example, group leaders communicate using “we” in order to bring together their group and separate them from their opponents. Especially in the US, where there is a candidate focused electoral system, leaders of the party have a strong influence on how their party is perceived.

Summary

Understanding how individual identities come together in politics is important to recognize. There are many factors that shape an individual’s political identity, and different people share similar characteristics within their personal identities. Knowing how these identities can be perceived and portrayed can be important to helping understanding individuals within political parties and the party as a whole.

