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## **Individual and Large-Group Identity: Parallels in Development and Characteristics in Stability and Crisis**

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A comprehensive understanding of international and interethnic conflict must include a psychological dimension. This paper explores concepts of individual and large-group identity, their inherent connection, and some essential large-group rituals that aim to repair and maintain them. Human psychological development not only involves dynamics associated with one's parents, family, and intimate environment, but also those of one's ethnic, religious or national group. Although this may simply be called "acculturation", the evolution of large-group identity involves specific psychological processes. When a large group perceives that its identity is threatened, the group and its individual members typically experience anxiety which is then expressed in certain ritualistic behaviors that can range from benign to highly malignant. Social scientists, diplomats and others who seek to analyze social and political phenomena and formulate policies related to them could benefit from a better understanding of these aspects of human interaction.

Key words: defense mechanisms; ethnic groups; group therapy; identification (psychology); narcissism; object relations; psychoanalytic therapy; psychology, clinical; social psychology; war