In social identity theory and identity theory, the self is reflexive in that it can take itself as an object and

can categorize, classify, or name itself in particular ways

in relation to other social categories or classifications. This process is called self-categorization in social identity theory (Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher, and Wetherell 1987); in identity theory it is called identification (McCall and Simmons 1978). Through the process of self-categorization or identification, an identity is formed.

In social identity theory, a social identity is a person’s knowledge that he or she belongs to a social category or group (Hogg and Abrams 1988). A social group is

a set of individuals who hold a common social identification or view themselves as members of the same social category. Through a social comparison process, persons who are similar to the self are categorized with the self and are labeled the in-group; persons who differ from the self are categorized as the out-group. In early work, social identity included the emotional, evaluative, and other psychological correlates of in-group classification (Turner et al. 1987:20).