A colourful perspective on the workplace: Diversity in work groups

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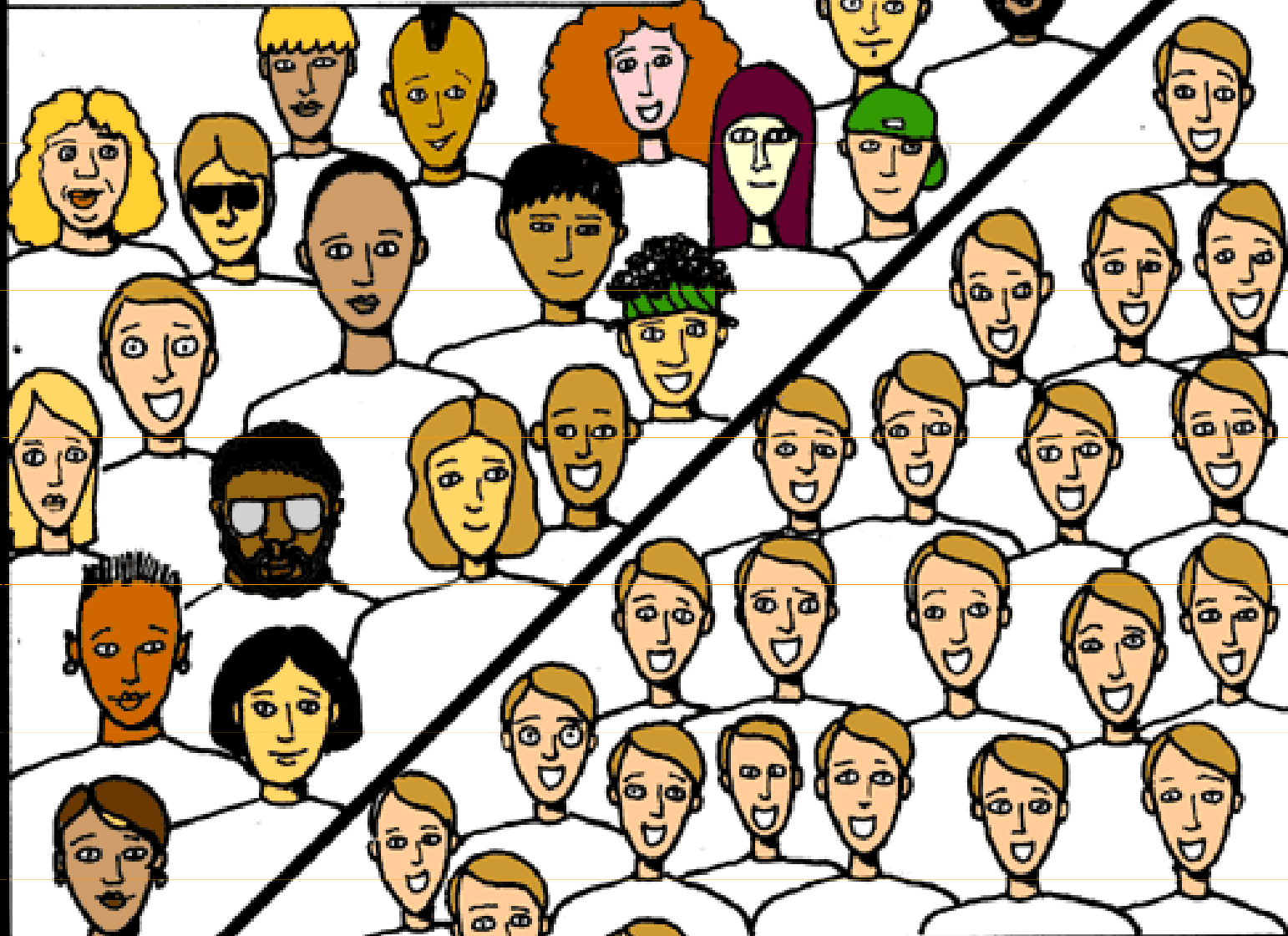
Demographic diversity as a "mixed blessing":

(Van Knippenberg, De Dreu & Homan, 2004; Williams & O'Reilly, 1998)

- Decision Making/Informational perspective:
  Enhanced creativity/productivity (Bantel & Jackson, 1989; Cox, Lobel & McLeod, 1991)

- Social categorization perspective: Lower well-being, communication problems, enhanced conflict (Tsui, Egan, & O'Reilly, 1992)

Positive outcomes

- less "groupthink" (Janis)
- presence of more perspectives in a group enhances active processing (Austin)
- unusual associations (Nakui & Paulus)
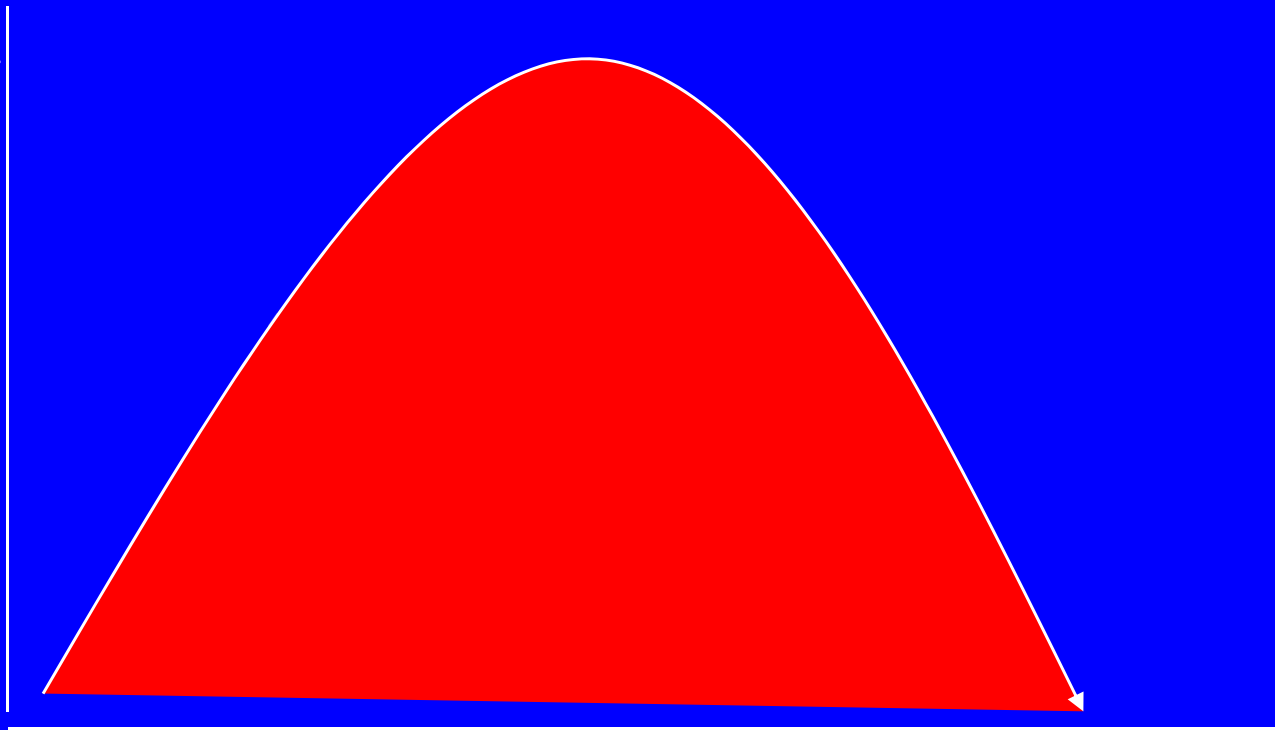- more external communication and broader networks
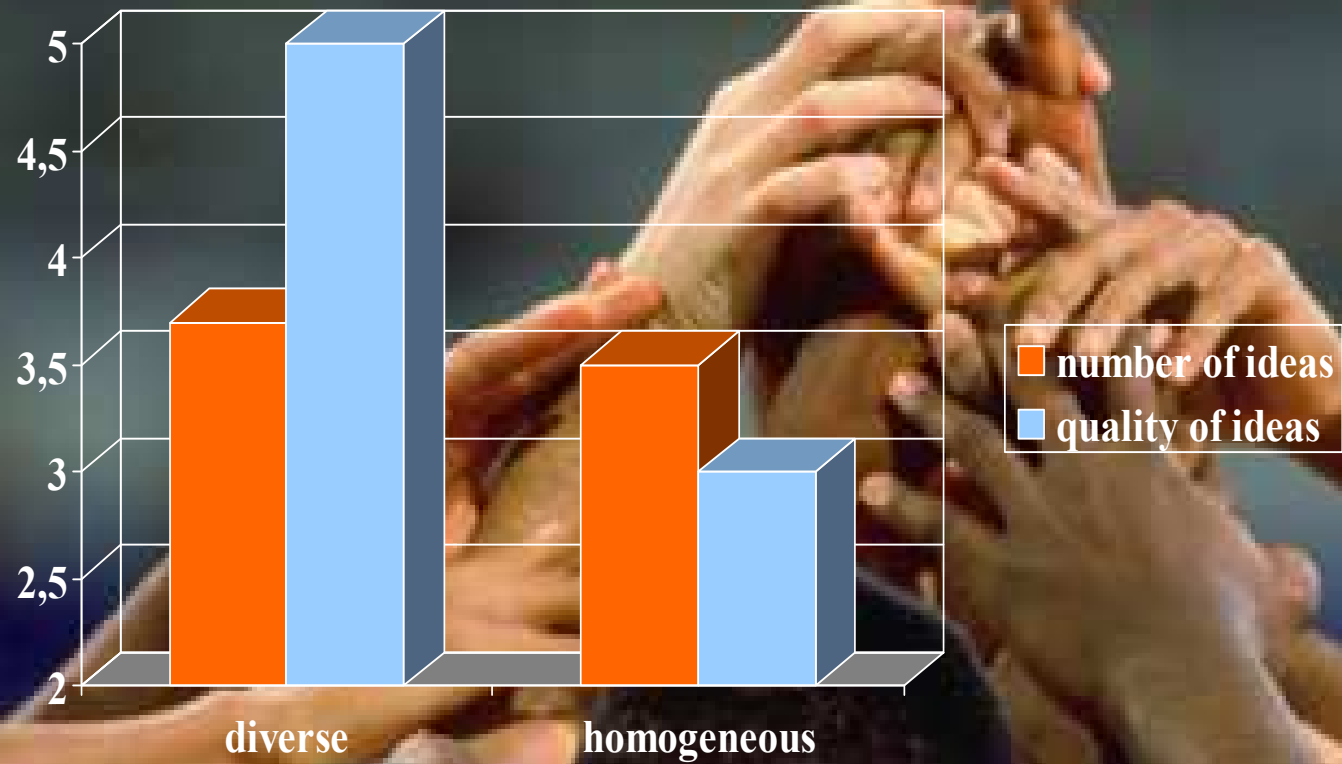
Less groupthink

PVDA and Wim Kok?

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Cognitive processing model

Quality of brainstorming
(Nakui & Paulus, 2007)

Negative outcomes

- **similarity attraction hypothesis (Byrne, 1971)**

- **ASA-framework (Schneider e.a., 1995)**

- **social identity- and social categorisation theory (SCT: Taifel, 1978)**

- **misfit acculturation attitudes**

Sociale identity theory

- subgroup identification

    (Abrams & Hogg, 1990; Tajfel & Turner, 1997; Tajfel, 1982; Van der Zee, Atsma, & Brodbeck, 2004)

- identification with overarching category

    (Common Ingroup Identity Model, Gaertner et al, 1993)

Identification-patterns in diverse teams
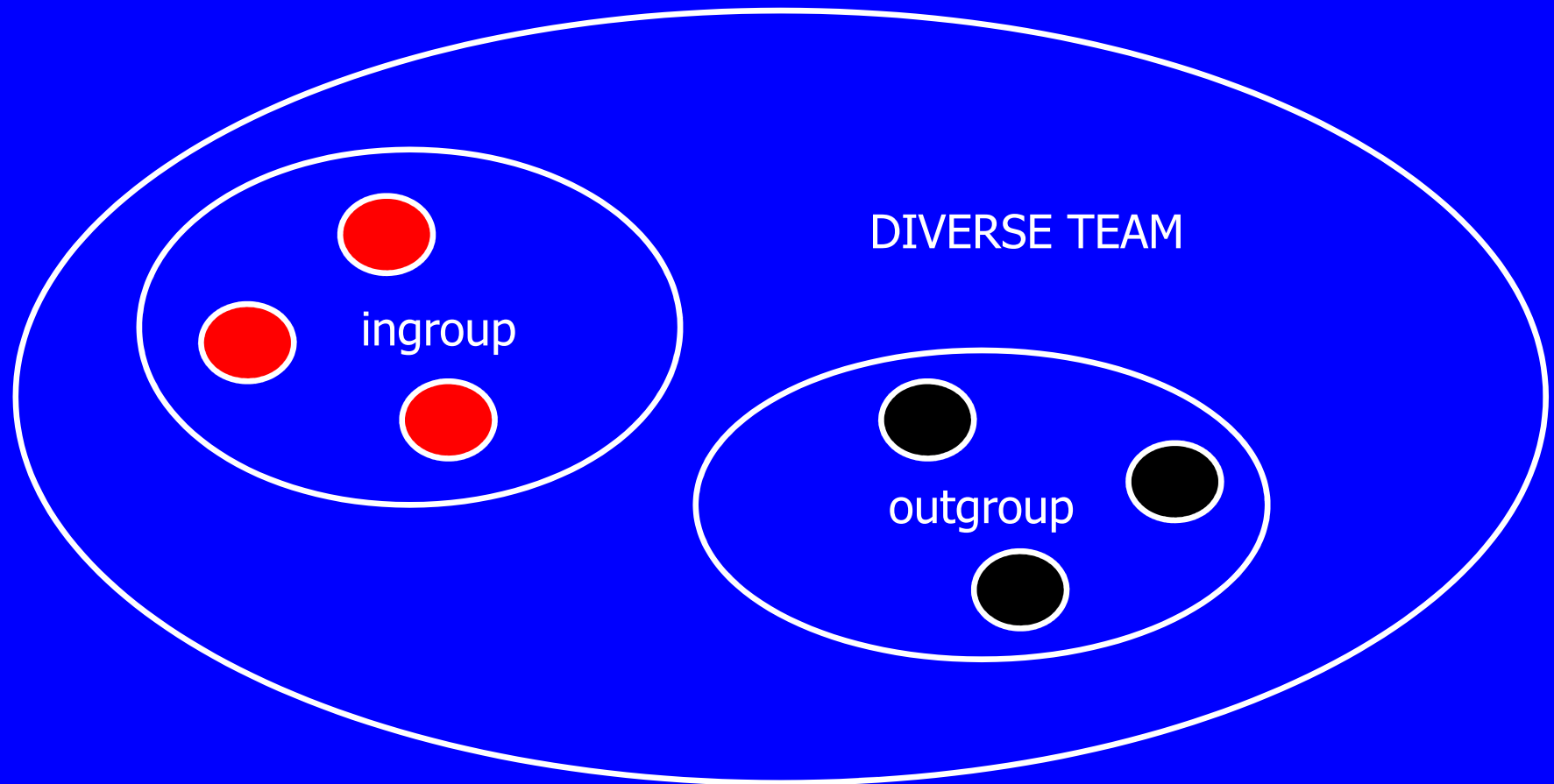
Cultural identification and well-being as a function of diversity

(Van der Zee, Atsma, & Brodbeck, JCCP, 2004)
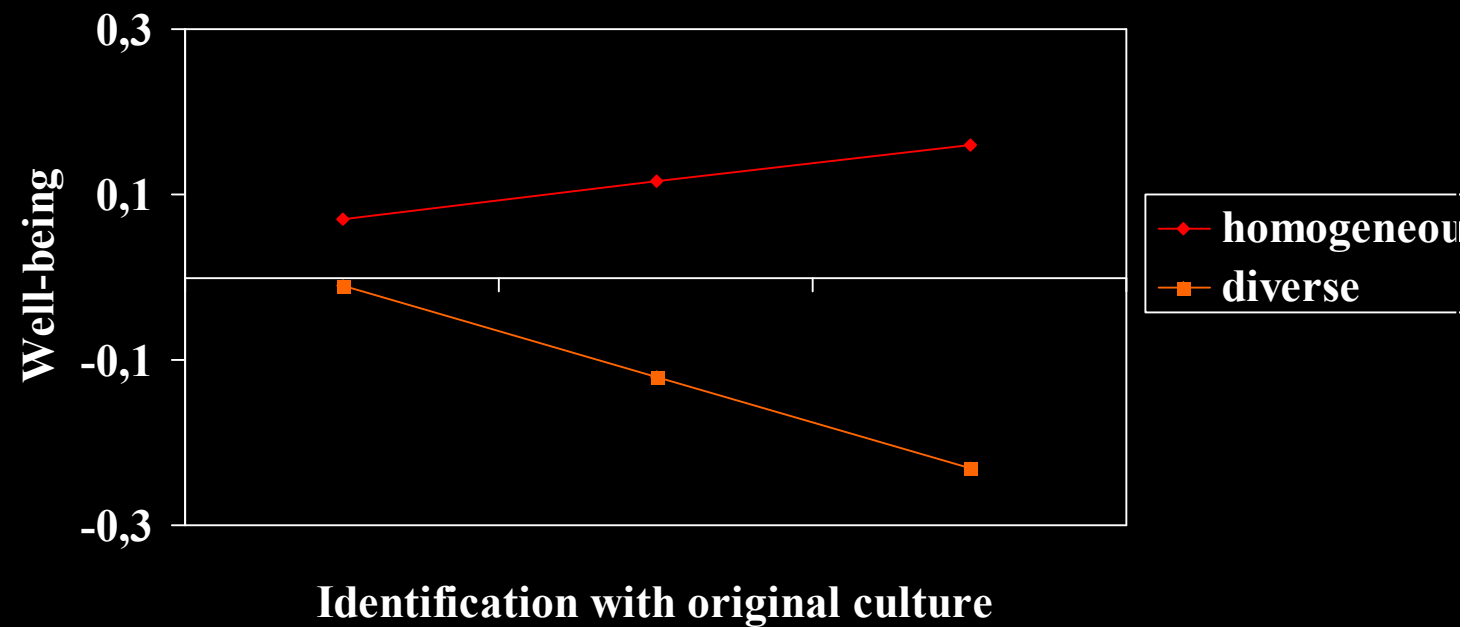
Well-being and performance as a function of team identification

(Van der Zee & Vos, 2005)

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Was Minister Verdonk right?

Disadvantages

- **cultural identity as central aspect self (Berry)**

- **optimal distinctiveness theory (Brewer)**

- **reduced positive outcomes**

Acculturation

(Berry, 1997)

Maintenance of own culture

	no	yes
Need to belong to the host culture yes	**Assimilation**	**Integration**
no	**Marginalisation**	**Separation**

acceptance of contact

Need for contact

Need to belong

Need to express cultural identity

Need to be unique

acceptance cultural maintenance

■ **conflict**
■ **passive resistance**
■ **exit behavior**
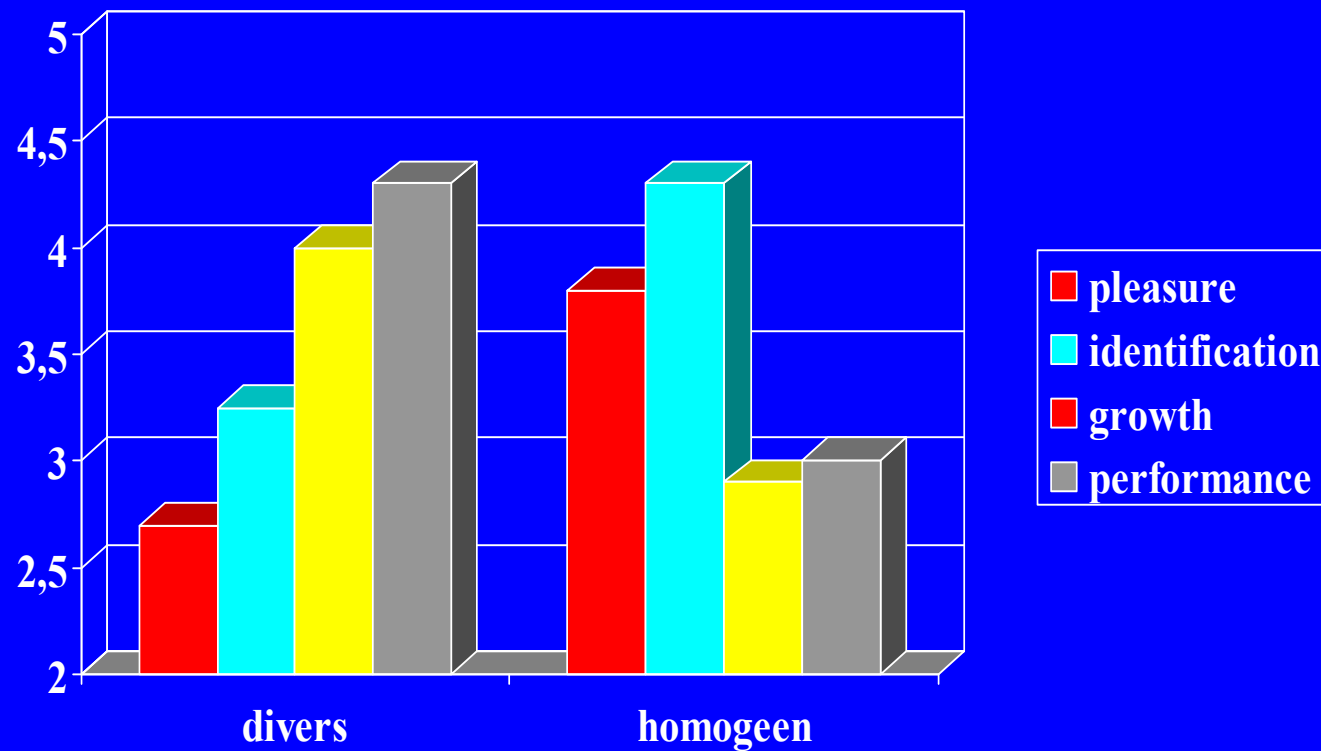
■**creativity**
■**well-being**
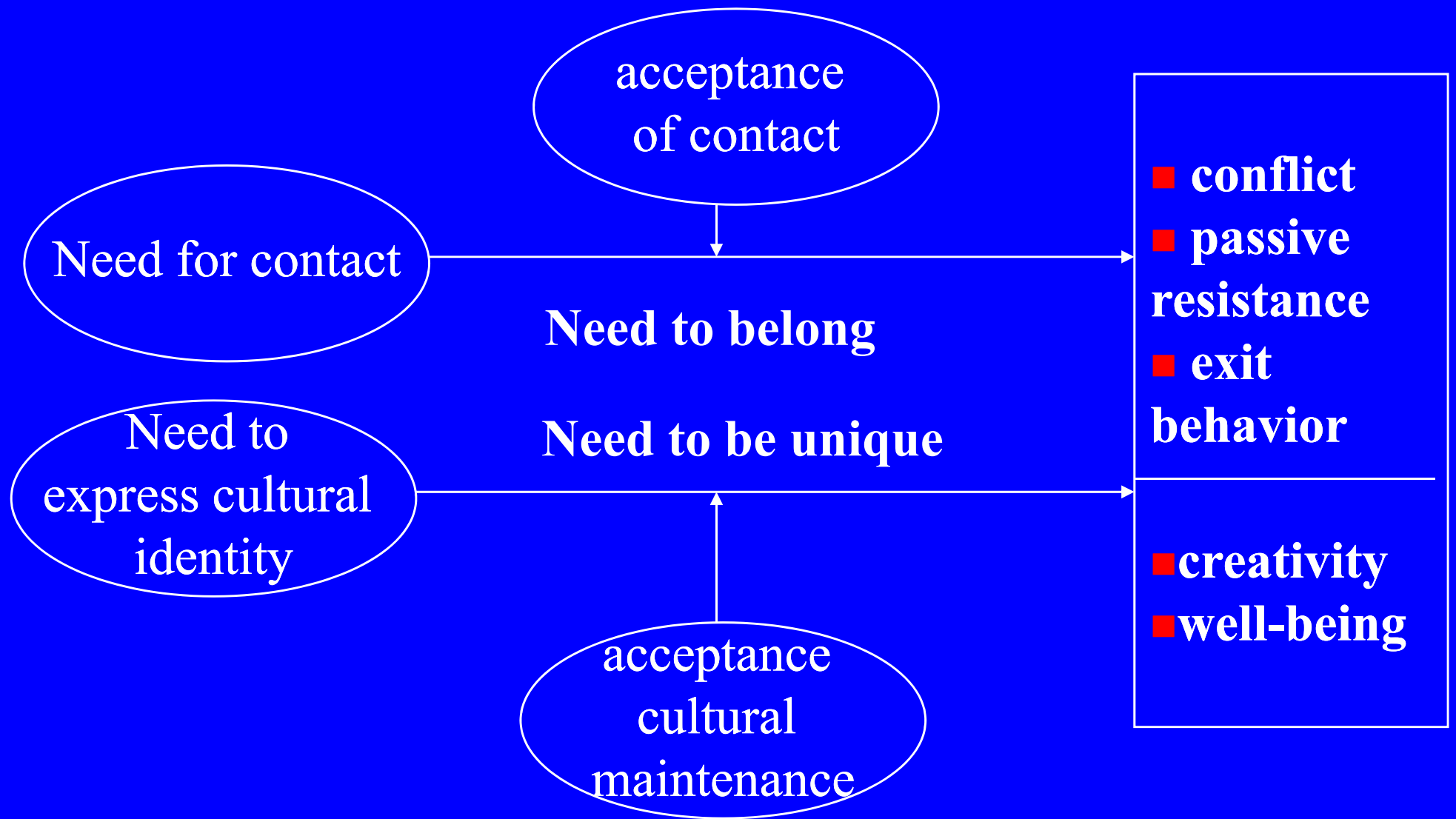
Needs   Policy   Outcome

Value of diversity as a function of outcome variable
(Ufkes, Van der Zee, Paulus, & Parthasaraty 2006)

Imagine that you are in a restaurant with this group

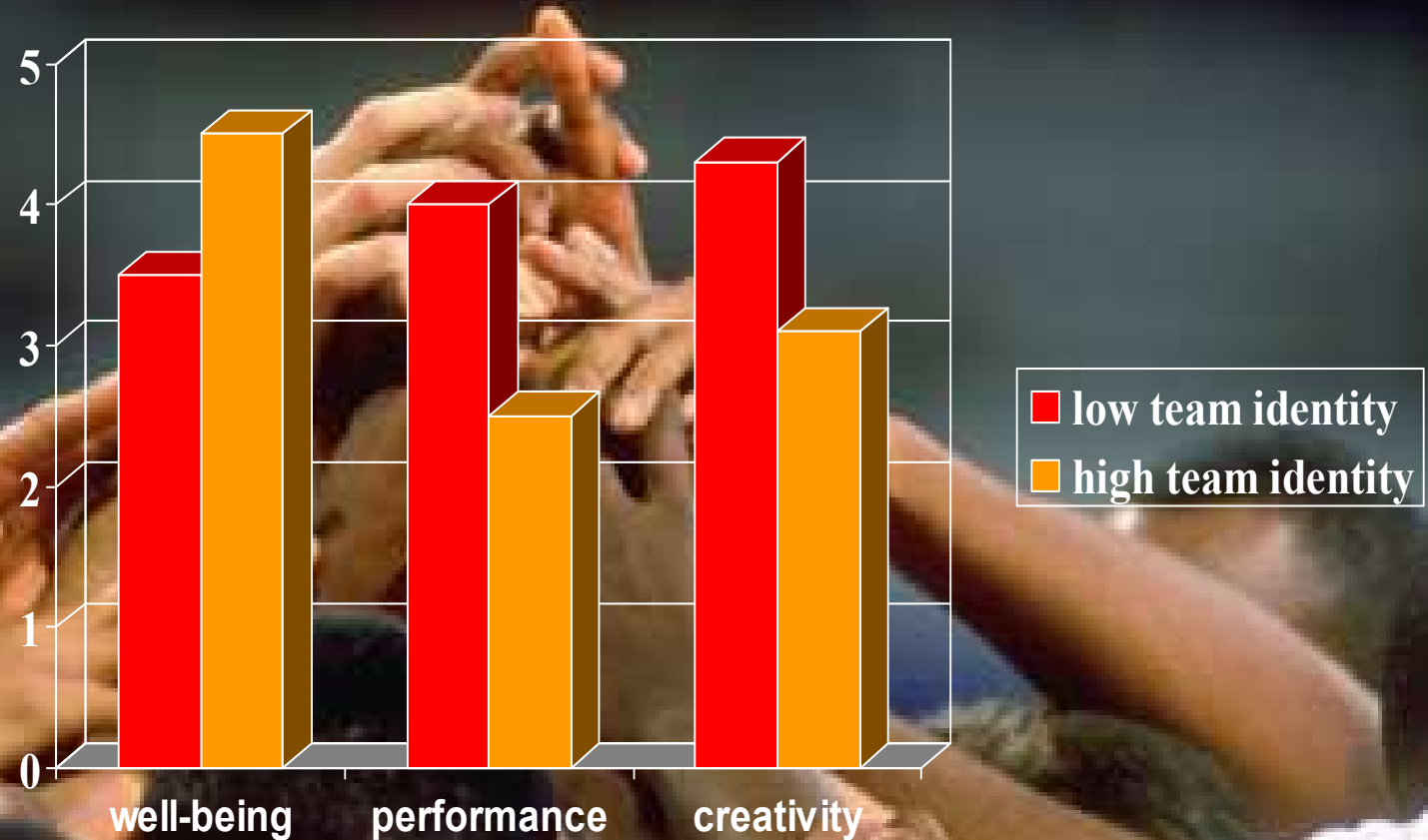**18. How much would you enjoy/prefer socializing with this group?**

Imagine that you are in a restaurant with this group

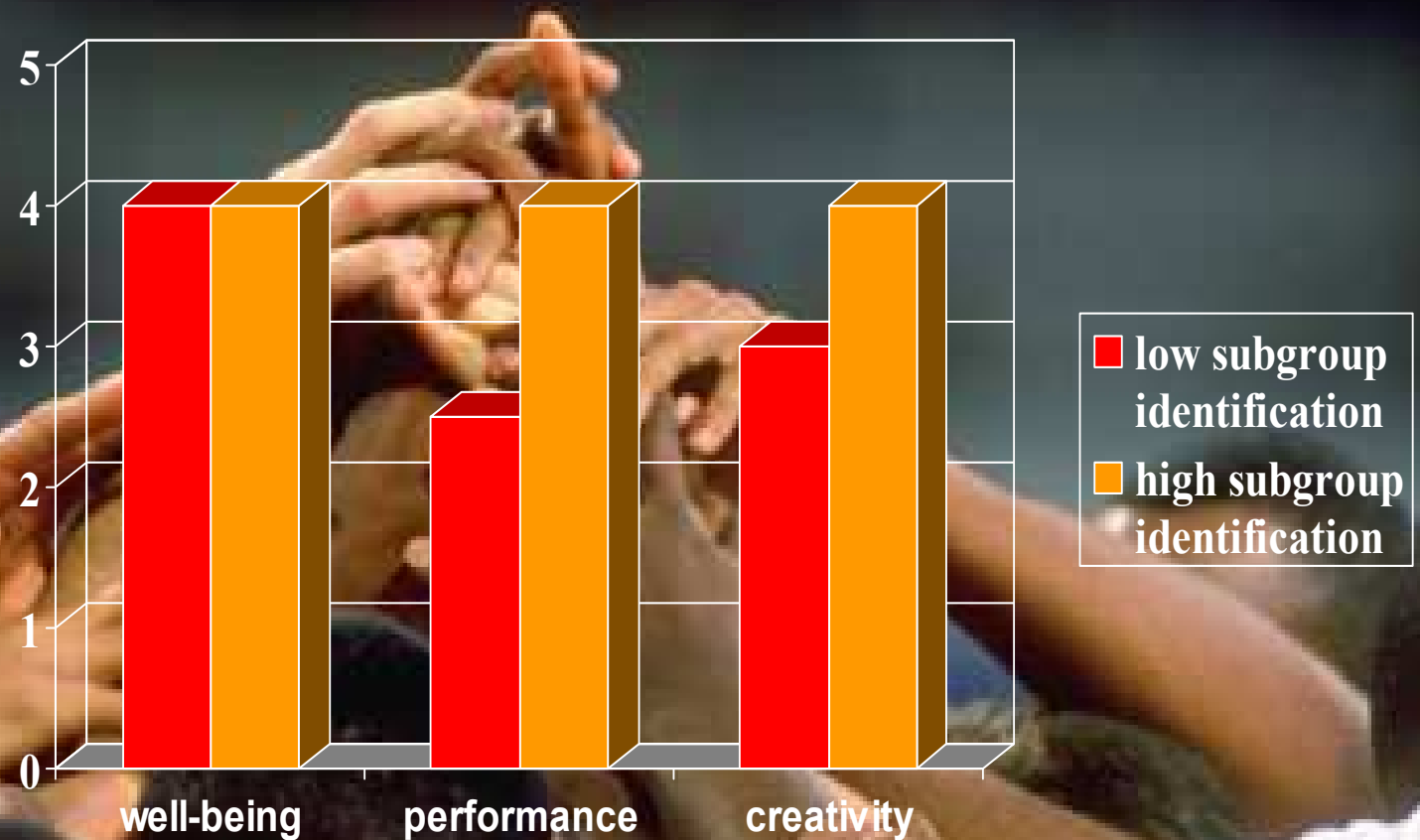**19. How much would you benefit (grow, develop or better yourself) from socializing with this group?**

Well-being and performance as a function of team identification

(Van der Zee & Vos, 2005)

Well-being and performance as a function of subgroup identification

(Van der Zee & Vos, 2005)

Balance between cohesion & locomotion (Lewin, 1953)

• **cohesion: activities aimed at group development and maintenance (served by sense of communalities)**

• **locomotion: activities aimed at attaining group goals (served by unique input)**
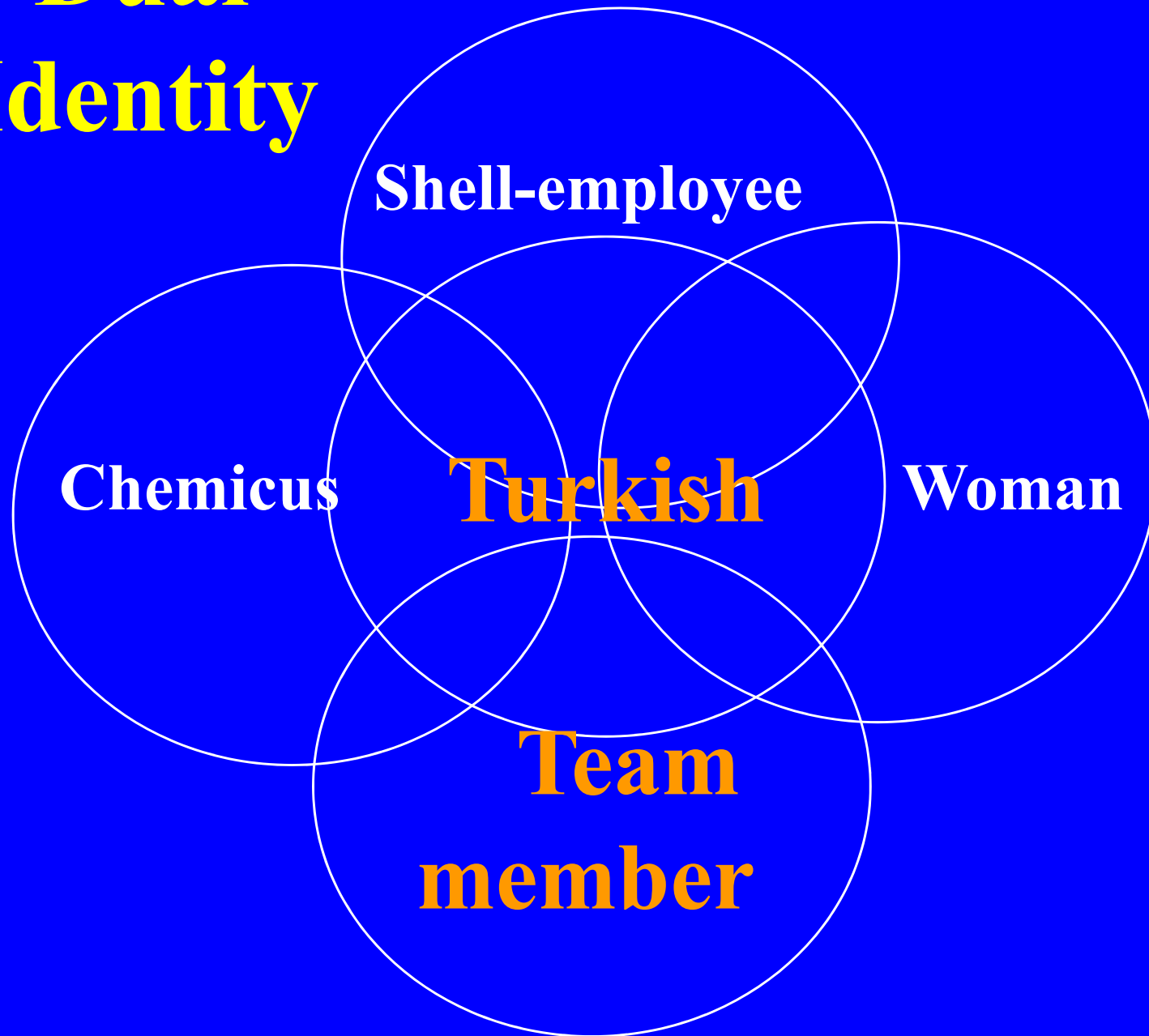
Disadvantage?

"ingroup projection": projection of characteristics of the own subgroup on the team identity (e.g., white male characteristics as the core of topmanagement team identity)

(Waldzus, Mummendey & Wenzel, 2005)

Solution

Relational identity orientation

(Brewer & Brickson, 1996)

me as a "person"

me as a "group member"

me as a "relationship partner"

- Mutual understanding, empathy, care
- Extends group boundaries

Dominant Identity Orientation and Solidarity in Work Groups

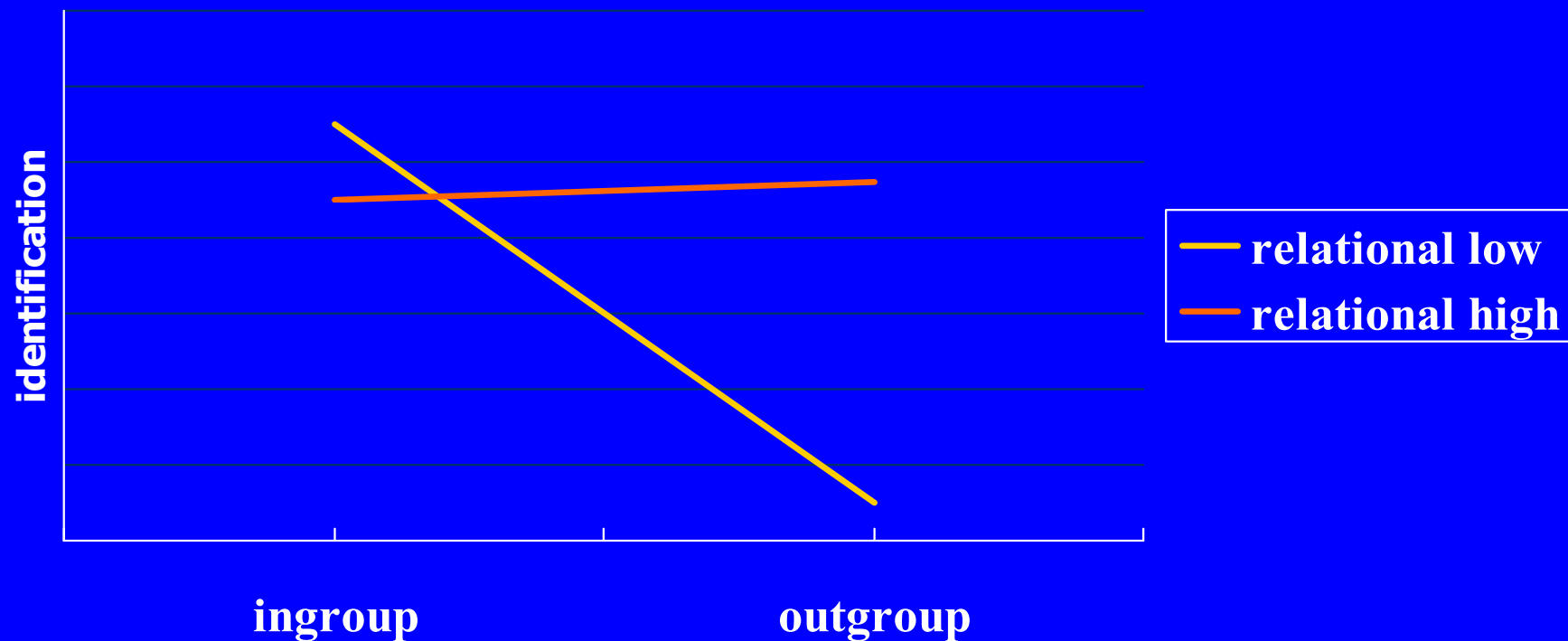(Brewer & Gardner, 1996; Vos & Van der Zee, 2007)

	Own cultural group	*Other* cultural group
Individual	-	-
Collective	+	-
Relations	+	+

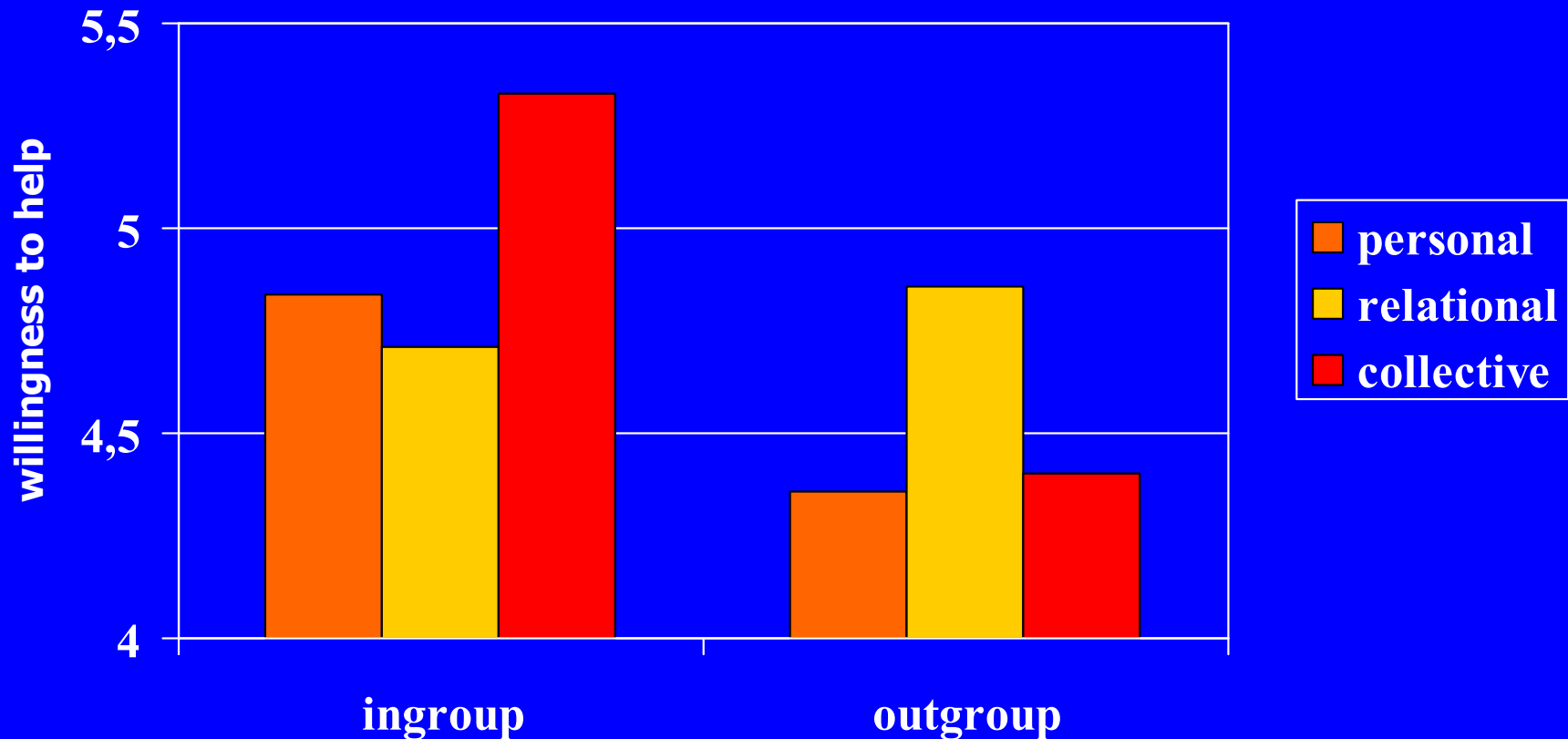**Requires mentorships, small-scale project work, informal gatherings & networks**

Identification patterns as a function of relational oriëntation

Interaction group membership x orientation:
F(2,78) = 5.04, p < .05 (ŋ^2=.06)

Willingness to help as a function of identity oriëntation condition

Interaction group membership target x identity orientation: $F(2,163) = 4.08$, $p < .05$ ($\eta^2 = .04$)

Faultlines
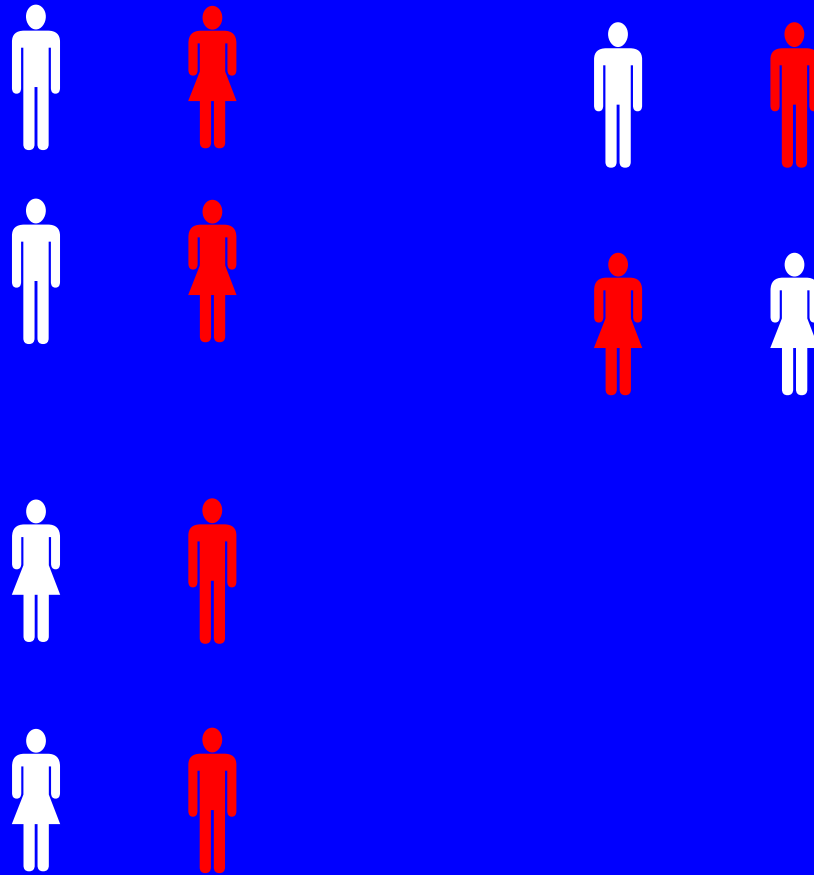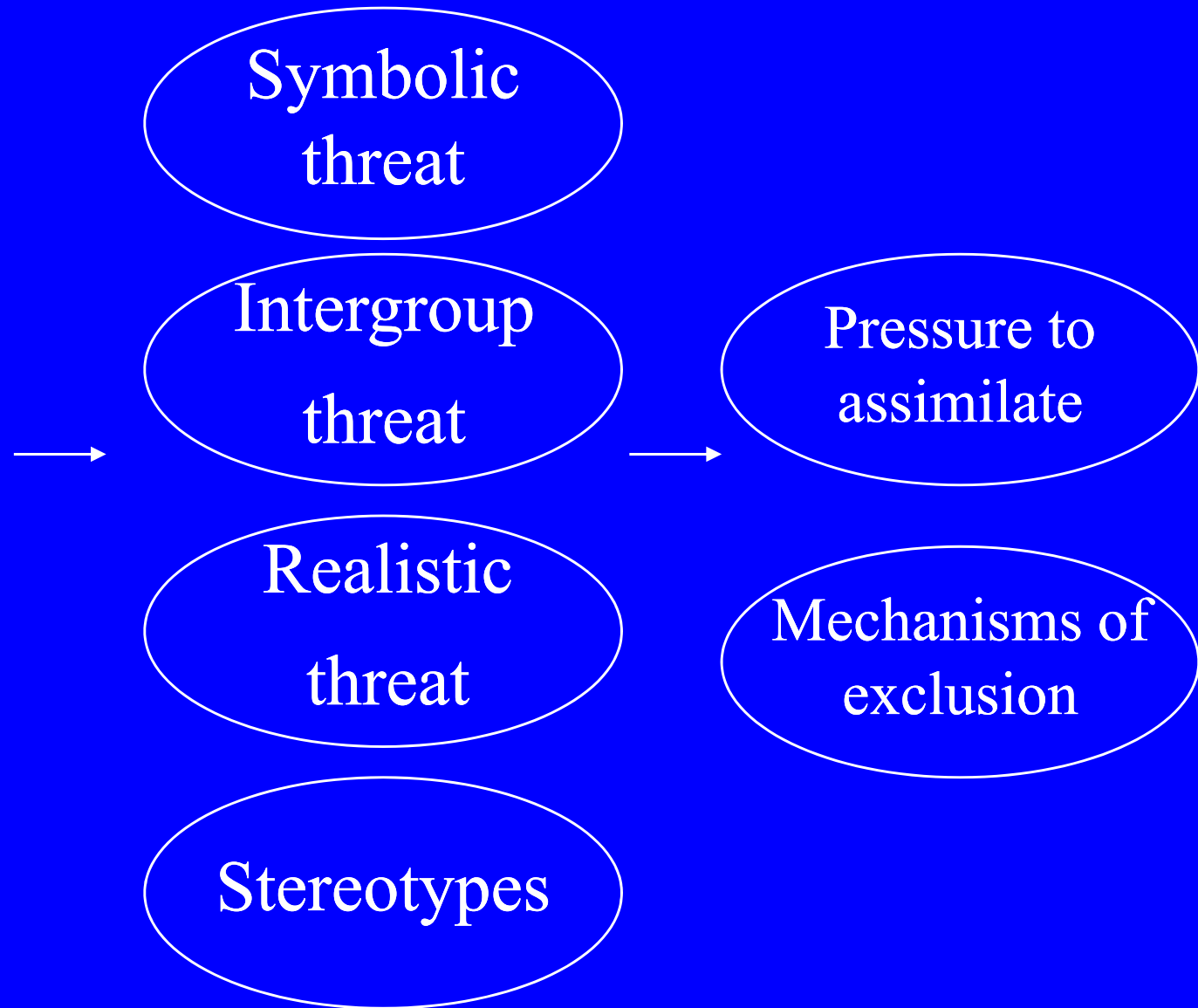
Terror Management Theory
(Greenberg, Pyszczynski & Solomon, 1990)

- Human consciousness of mortality evokes extreme feelings of anxiety

- Culture protects against terror by providing a sense of belonging and self-esteem

- Mortality salience heightens attachment to the own culture as a protective mechanism

"Too many migrants do not adjust themselves to Dutch culture.."
(Motivaction, 2007)
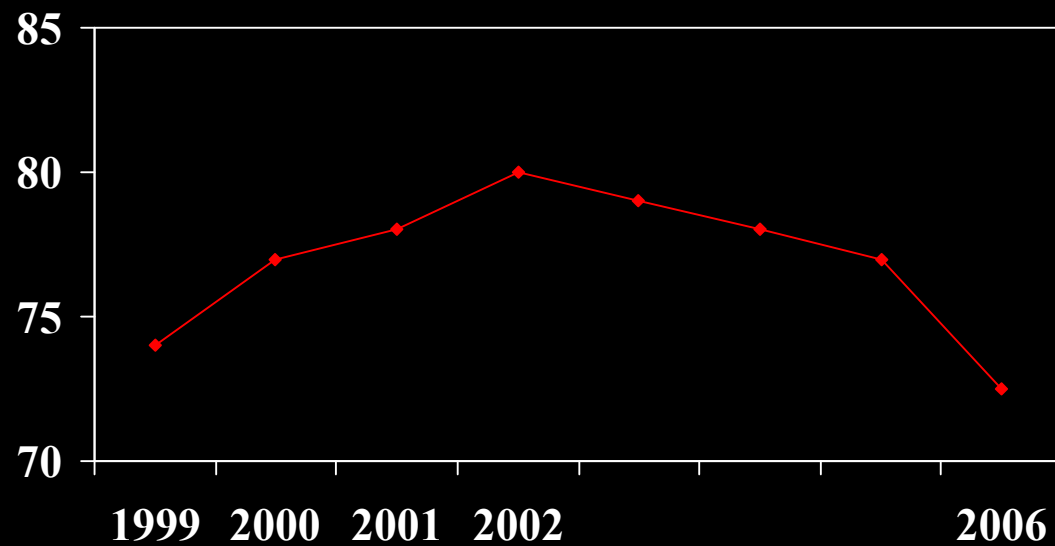
"There is not enough emphasis on norms and values.."

(Motivaction, 2007)

"Migrants contribute to Dutch culture.."
(Motivaction, 2007)
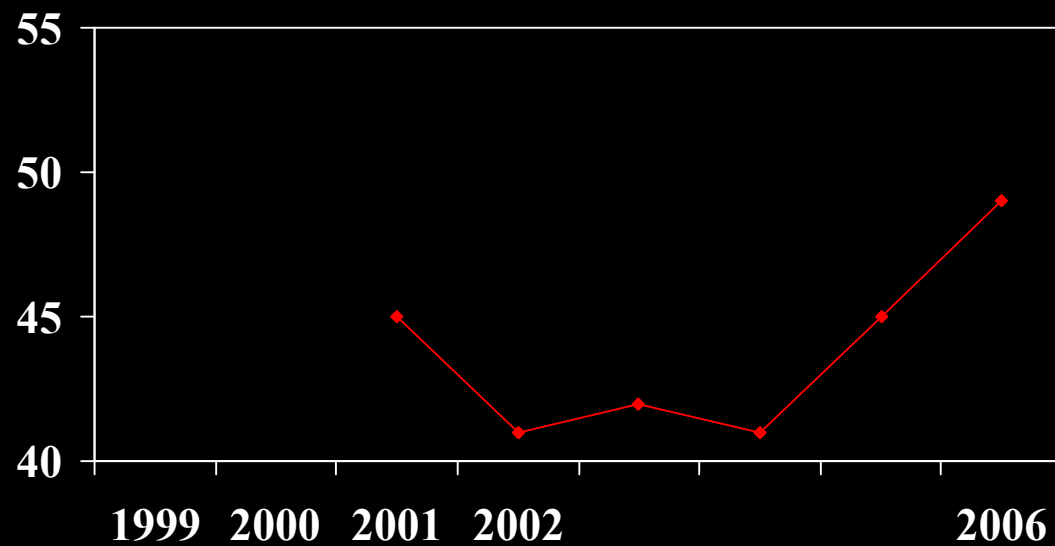
Intercultural traits
(Van der Zee & Van Oudenhoven 2000, 2001)

Stress-related traits:

Serve cohesion goals

Emotional Stability

Flexibility

Social traits:

Serve locomotion goals

Cultural empathy

Open-mindedness

Social initiative

Two mechanisms

- Stress-related traits work as *anxiety buffer* against threat in a diverse context (Strachan, Pyszcynski, Greenberg & Solomon, 2001) (flexibility & emotional stability)

- Social traits correlate with *seeking challenge and stimulation* in confrontation with a different culture (cultural empathy, openmindedness & social initiative)

Diversity, emotional stability and positive affect

(Van der Zee & Van der Gang, EJP, 2007)

(N = 162)
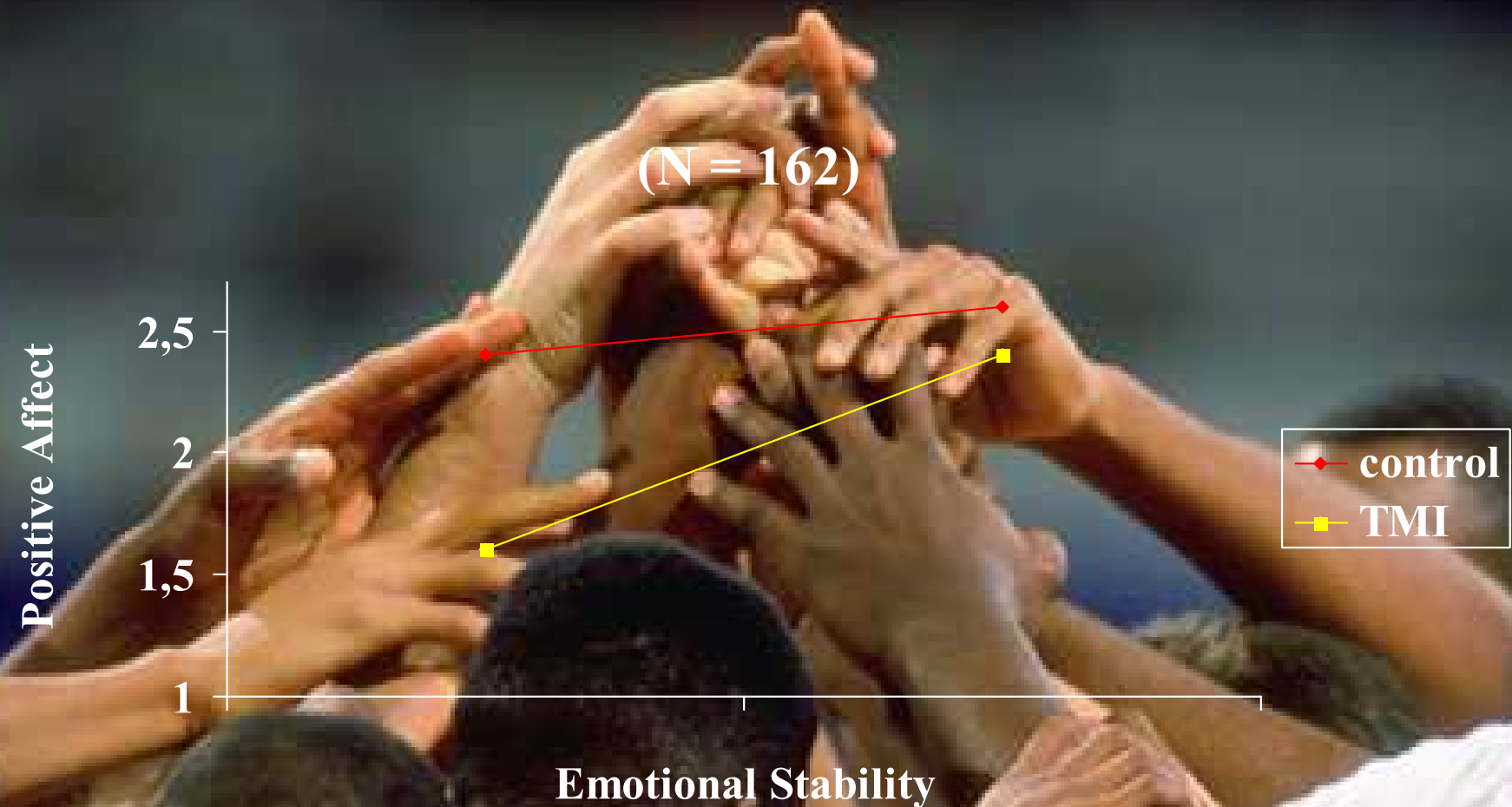
Diversity, social initiative and positive affect

**(Van der Zee & Van der Gang, EJP, 2007, see also
Van der Zee, Van Oudenhoven, & De Grijs, JP, 2004)**

Importance of traits?
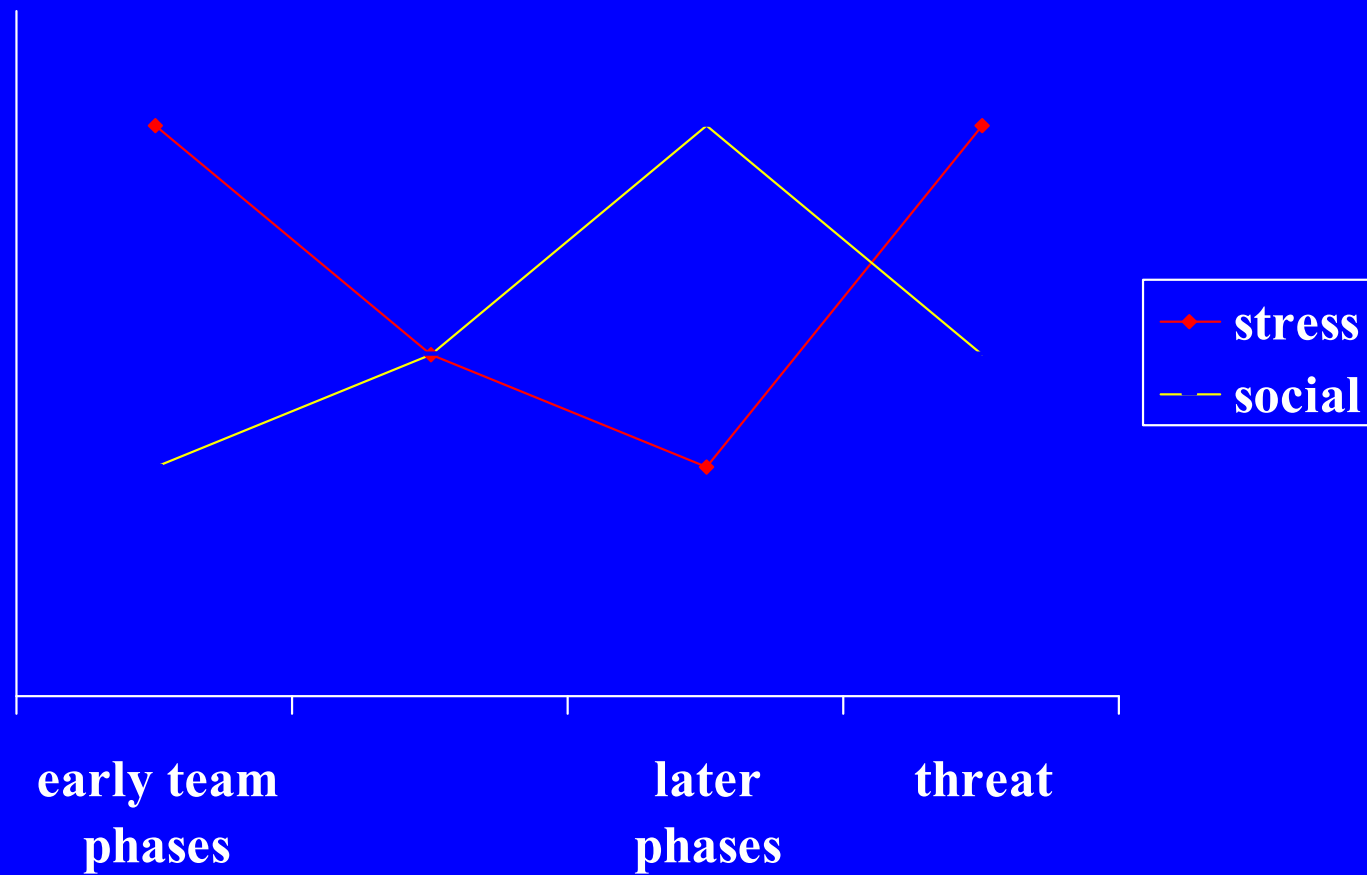
Intercultural group climate: valuing differences

- Harquail & Cox (1993):
  - appreciation of differences
  - uncertainty tolerance
  - low prescriptive of behavior

- Van Knippenberg & Haslam (2003)
  - value in diversity

Group climate and diversity outcomes (Luijters, Van der Zee & Otten, 2006)
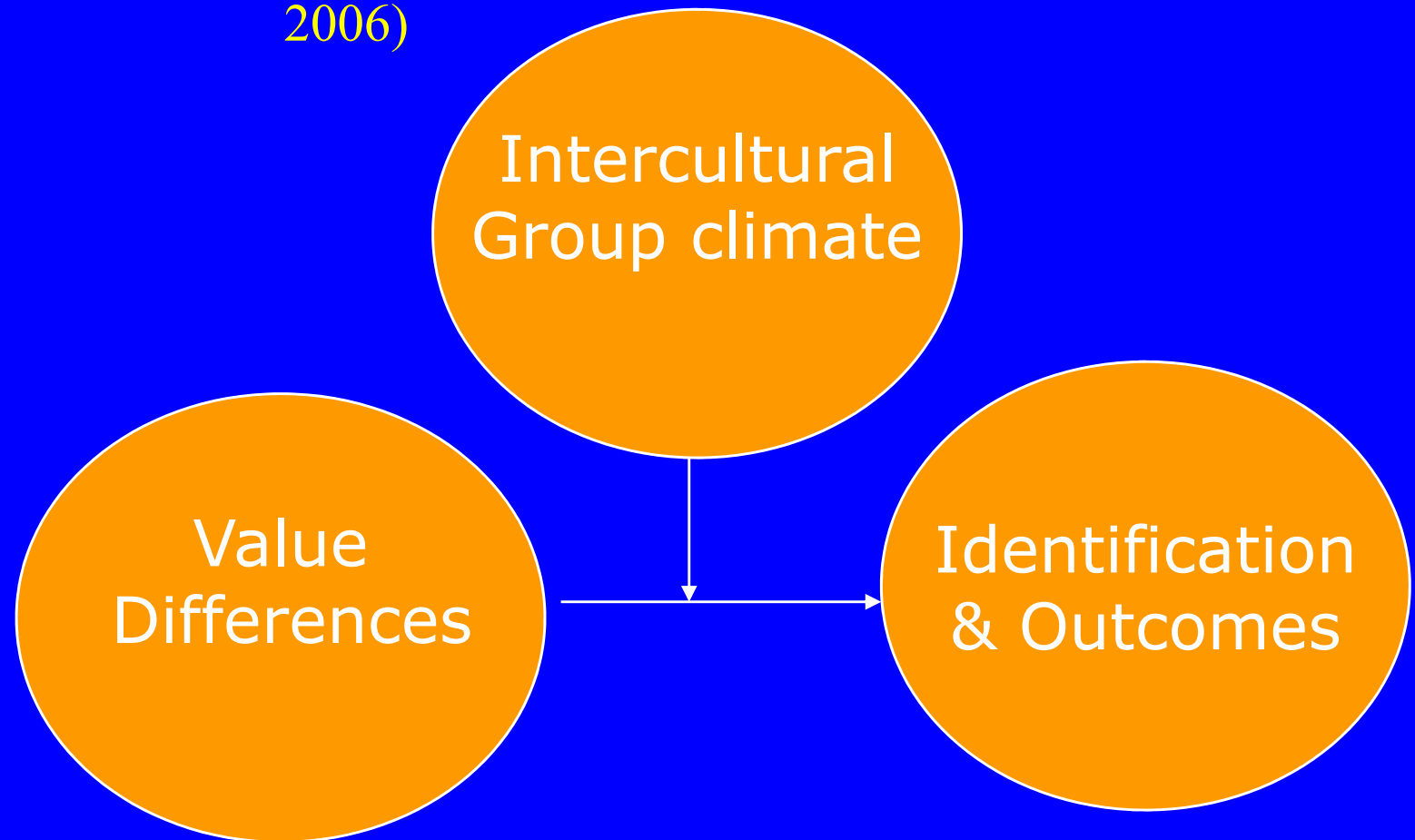
Psychological safety

(Edmondson, 1999)

...a shared belief held by members of a team that the team is safe for interpersonal risk taking. It is a sense of confidence that the team will not embarrass, reject, or punish someone for speaking up. This confidence stems from mutual respect and trust among team members.

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Diversity policy

(Ely & Thomas, 2001; Luijters et al., 2007)

Three perspectives:
- **discrimination and fairness**
- **access and legitimacy**
- **integration and learning**

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Discrimination and fairness

- **target figures (…% minorities)**
- **elimination of discriminating mechanisms (e.g., trusted representatives, bias-free selection training of recruiters)**
- **training aimed at eliminating "deficiencies"**

➡ **Ineffective: strong assimilation pressure**

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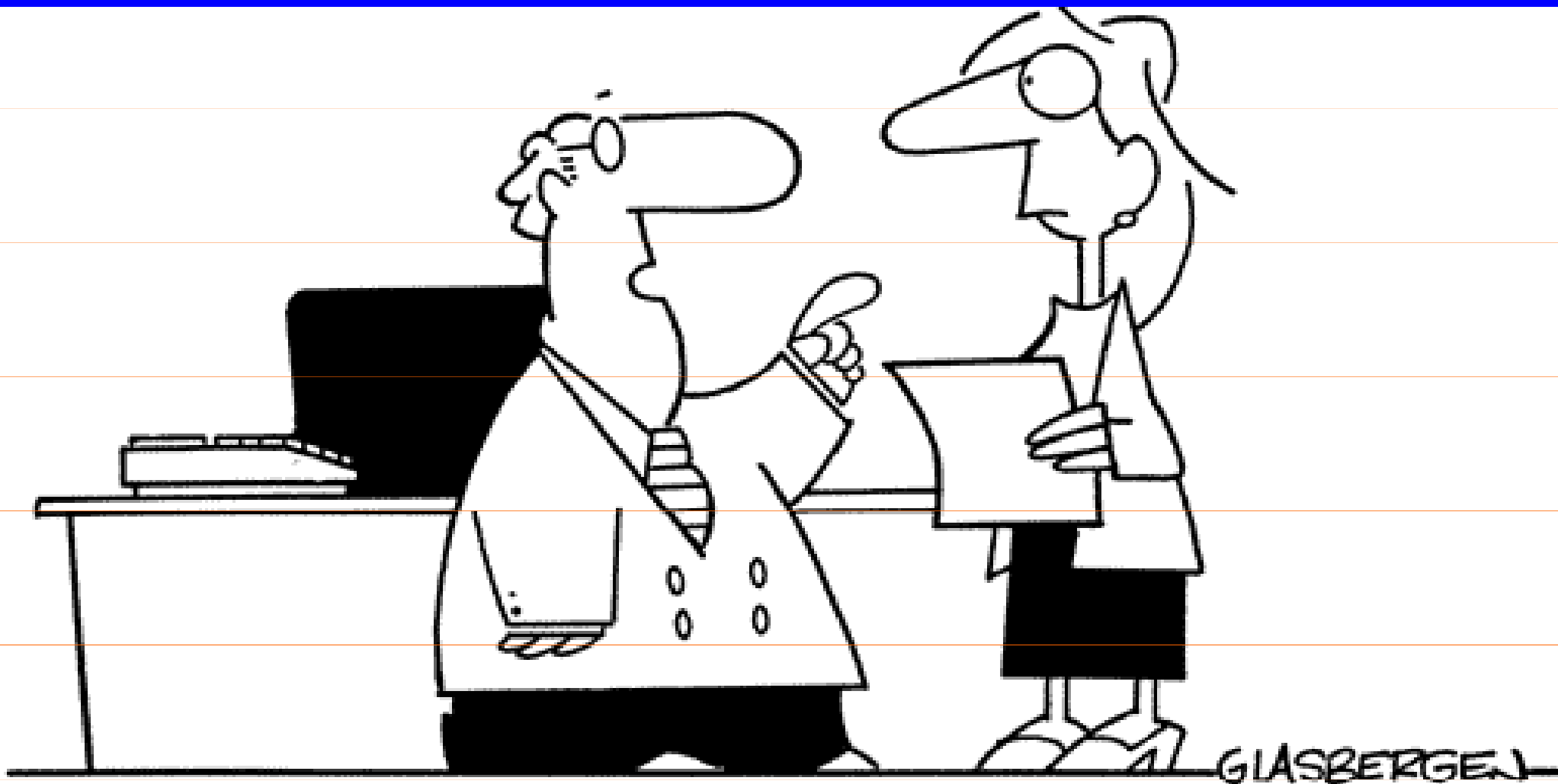
Access and legitimacy

diversity in the organization as a source to gain *access* to a diverse market

"We need to focus on diversity. Your goal is to hire people who all look different, but think just like me."

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Integration and learning

(Ely & Thomas, 2002, Luijters et al, 2007)

Diversity as a resource for learning, change and renewal. Diversity is included in the organizational mission and makes up its identity. Managers stimulate diversity in all the segments of their organization, and truly value and stimulate different approaches to work and different opinions and insights…

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Integration and learning

1. Threat reduction:

- reliability & open communication

- diversity as a competence integrated in selection & assessment, as well as in reward systems

- focus on interpersonal relationships

2. Valuing diversity

3. Integrative approach: Communication of diversity mission and translation into policies that are consistent at all levels of the organization

Conclusions & Interventions

- **diversity is difficult, but potentially has strong gains (flexibility & creativity!)**
- **pressure to assimilate seems to affect creativity in a negative way**
- **diversity asks for new identities that are more complex and that are focused on *relationships* rather than group memberships**
- ***climate* & *competencies* are of central importance to diversity management**