

## When two (or more) become one: The Psychology of Groups

### Homework assignment

We'll explore how we recognize groups. Before we meet, do a brief field observation in a supermarket: Who seems "together"? Your task is to notice *nonverbal* signs that suggest people belong together or not. Nonverbal means that they should not be talking with each other – that would be too obvious. You can use this file.

#### Safety and ethics

- Observe only – no photos/recordings.
- Don't approach or follow anyone.
- Avoid focusing on minors.
- Don't block aisles.
- Leave if staff ask you to.
- Don't write identifying details.

#### **What to do** (15–20 minutes total)

1) Before you go, write down:

- 2–3 signs you think will tell if people are together.
- 1–2 signs you think will tell if people are NOT together.

2) Observe on site (10–15 minutes)

- Choose a fixed spot in (the vicinity of) a supermarket or similar store.
- Skip pairs/groups who are talking; rely only on nonverbal behavior.
- Jot 8 quick cases:
  - 3 "together" cases
  - 2 "not together" cases
  - 2 "unsure" cases
  - 1 "false alarm" case: people that initially seemed to belong together but turned out not to (and why you revised your judgment).
- For each case, note:
  - What you saw that made you think "together," "not together," or "unsure" (use your own words)
  - How sure you felt: guess / probably / sure
  - One way you could be wrong in your conclusion (an alternative explanation).
    - For example, you may have thought two people belonged together because they parked their bikes at the same time. Yet, this may be because they both had to wait for the same traffic light around the corner, causing them to arrive at the supermarket at the same time.

3) After (2–3 minutes)

- Put a star next to the two signs you used most often for "together"
- Put a star next to one sign you used for "not together."
- Bring your notes to class

**Before you go:**

What signs do you think will tell if people are together or not together?

	Together	Not together
Sign 1		
Sign 2		
Sign 3		

**On-site observations:**

	What did you see that made you think they do (not) belong together?	Possible relationship (e.g., family, friends, coworkers, strangers)	How sure do you feel?	Alternative explanation? (Or for false alarm: why did you revise your judgment?)
Together			Maybe Probably Certainly	
Together			Maybe Probably Certainly	
Together			Maybe Probably Certainly	
Not together			Maybe Probably Certainly	
Not together			Maybe Probably Certainly	
Unsure			Maybe Probably Certainly	
Unsure			Maybe Probably Certainly	
False alarm			Maybe Probably Certainly	

