

# Study: Income inequality may boost your ego

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## *The Washington Post:*

A new study finds that countries with more income inequality tend to have more people who believe that they are better than average — a psychological phenomenon known as “self-enhancement.” The study, published in *Psychological Science*, hypothesizes that societies with high levels of inequality are more likely to encourage competition over scarce rewards, and outsized perceptions of the self is simply an outgrowth of that environment.

Income inequality may foster greater self-enhancement through increased competition. Takata (2003) found that when Japanese participants were asked to compete over a limited resource under zero-sum conditions (i.e., the winner receives everything, the loser nothing), they displayed levels of self-enhancement similar to the levels displayed by Americans. That is, when people compete over concentrated rewards, they have a tendency to self-enhance...

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