



# 'The Nature of Pride: The Emotional Origins of Social Rank'

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**Room 968, Henry Angus Building, 2053 Main Mall**

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## Abstract

Why do people respond to their most impressive and apparent successes by engaging in verbal and nonverbal displays of self-celebration, superiority, and even arrogance? I will present a series of studies demonstrating that humans may have an evolved tendency to respond to success by showing pride, a distinct and universally recognized emotion expression. I will further argue that this expression evolved to serve a fundamental social function: communicating to others an individual's deservedness of high status or social rank. As I will show, the pride expression is a powerful status signal, sending a message that is distinct from other emotions, implicitly perceived, and strong enough to counteract contradictory contextual information in shaping status-based decision-making. Furthermore, findings from a separate line of research on the psychological structure of pride support this functionalist account. Individuals subjectively experience and think about pride in two distinct ways, consistent with a theoretical distinction between a confident and effort-based "authentic" pride, and a more grandiose and self-aggrandizing "hubristic" pride. These findings explain how the experience of pride may serve a complementary function to its expression. Specifically, each form of pride is linked to a distinct rank-attainment strategy (i.e., "dominance" vs. "prestige"), suggesting that each motivates a divergent set of behaviors needed to attain each of these two forms of rank. Overall, this research suggests that pride is a complex and multifaceted social emotion that is closely linked to self-esteem, narcissism, achievement, and status, and may be an evolved part of human nature.