Discreet Indiscretions: The Social Organization Of Gossip

Jorg R Bergmann
Three hypotheses about the effects of different informal social network structures on gossip behavior are developed and tested. Gossip is defined as...
The social comparison function of gossip has been suggested by others (Fine & Rosnow, 1978; Suls, 1977). Much of our understanding about the world in general, not just the social world, comes from making comparisons. We. SPECIAL ISSUE: SOCIAL COMPARISON ACCOUNT OF GOSSIP 123 This document is copyrighted by the American Psychological Association or one of its allied publishers.Â According to Bergmann (1993, p. 134), â€œ[Gossipers] turn a private accusation into a publicly relevant flaw and thereby legitimize the indiscretionâ€--of talking badly about someone behind his or her back. Either way, the expression of contempt seems common in negative gossip. Downward comparisons are inherently unflattering.