THE INFLUENCE OF INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS ON THE CHARACTERISTICS OF SMALL GROUPS

WILLIAM HAYTHORN 1953

There has been increased emphasis in social psychology recently on the description and measurement of group characteristics. Hemphill and Westie (10) and Cattell and Wispe" (6) have been particularly concerned with isolating dimensions along which groups vary. However, little has been done to relate these group characteristics to the behavior of group members, Cattell (4) has suggested that leadership be defined in terms of the effect the individual has on group "syntality," and has further hypothesized that each member of a group contributes something to the characteristics of the group. Redl (14) has discussed leadership in terms of the "central person" around whom group formative processes occur, the implication being that the central person is the primary factor in determining the nature of the group. Other writers (12, 13, 15) in the area of group dynamics have theorized that group characteristics grow out of social interaction in the group, but to the author's knowledge there have been no experimental studies specifically focused on the relationships between the behavior of individual group members and the characteristics of the group. The present study attempts to explore some of these relationships.

Social influence in the crowd: Attitudinal and behavioural effects of de-individuation in conditions of high and low group salience

S. D. Reicher

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The study described here uses the social identity framework suggested by Tajfel and Turner to argue that de-individuation works by altering the salience of personal vs. social identity. Seventy students from science and 38 students from social science faculties were shown a film presenting arguments for and against vivisection, at the end of which they were told that science students had a pro- and social science students an anti-vivisection norm. Subjects were then told that they were being examined either as members of their faculty group or as individual students. They were either de-individuated or individuated. They were required to fill in an attitude questionnaire and to complete three quasi-behavioural measures. It was predicted that the group condition should increase salience of social identity and adherence to the group norm. It

was also predicted that de-individuation in the group condition would further increase salience and hence normative behaviour, while in the individual condition de-individuation would decrease salience and hence normative behaviour. The first prediction was upheld on all the measures, and the second was partially confirmed.

Experimental Tests of Normative Group Influence and Representation Effects in Computer-Mediated Communication

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Two experiments addressed the questions of if and how normative social influence operates in anonymous computer-mediated communication (CMC) and human-computer interaction (HCI). In Experiment 1, a 2 (public response vs. private response) × 2 (one interactant vs. four interactants) × 3 (textbox vs. stick figure vs. animated character) mixed-design experiment (N = 72), we investigated how conformity pressure operates in a simulated CMC setting. Each participant was asked to make a decision in hypothetical social dilemmas after being presented with a unanimous opinion by other (ostensible) participants. The experiment examined how the visual representation of interaction partners on the screen moderates this social influence process. Group conformity effects were shown to be more salient when the participant's responses were allegedly seen by others, compared to when the responses were given in private. In addition, participants attributed greater competence, social attractiveness, and trustworthiness to partners represented by anthropomorphic characters than those represented by textboxes or stick figures. Experiment 2 replicated Experiment 1, replacing interaction with a computer(s) rather than (ostensible) people, to create an interaction setting in which no normative pressure was expected to occur. The perception of interaction partner (human vs. computer) moderated the group conformity effect such that people expressed greater public agreement with human partners than with computers. No such difference was found for the private expression of opinion. As expected, the number of computer agents did not affect participants' opinions whether the responses were given in private or in public, while visual representation had a significant impact on both conformity measures and source perception variables.

Social Influence Modulates the Neural Computation of Value

Jamil Zaki 2010

Two studies examined hypotheses derived from a Social Identity model of Deindividuation Effects (SIDE) as applied to social influence in computer-mediated communication (CMC) in groups. This model predicts that anonymity can increase social influence if a common group identity is salient. In a first study, group members were primed with a certain type of social behavior (efficiency vs. prosocial norms). Consistent with the model, anonymous groups displayed prime-consistent behavior in their task solutions, whereas identifiable groups did not. This suggests that the primed norm took root in anonymous groups to a greater extent than in identifiable groups. A second study replicated this effect and showed that nonprimed group members conformed to the behavior of primed members, but only when anonymous, suggesting that the primed norm was socially transmitted within the group. Implications for social influence in small groups are discussed

Social Influence in Computer-Mediated Communication: The Effects of Anonymity on Group Behavior

Tom Postmes

October 2001

Social influence—individuals' tendency to conform to the beliefs and attitudes of others—has interested psychologists for decades. However, it has traditionally been difficult to distinguish true modification of attitudes from mere public compliance with social norms; this study addressed this challenge using functional neuroimaging. Participants rated the attractiveness of faces and subsequently learned how their peers ostensibly rated each face. Participants were then scanned using functional MRI while they rated each face a second time. The second ratings were influenced by social norms: Participants changed their ratings to conform to those of their peers. This social influence was accompanied by modulated engagement of two brain regions associated with coding subjective value—the nucleus accumbens and orbitofrontal cortex—a finding suggesting that exposure to social norms affected participants' neural representations of value assigned to stimuli. These findings document the utility of neuroimaging to demonstrate the private acceptance of social norms.

De-individuation and group polarization in computer-mediated communication

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A computer-mediated communication system (CMCS) was used to explore the effects of de-individuation on group polarization. Reicher (1984) argued that de-individuating members of a group should increase the salience of group identity and hence normative behaviour, while de-individuating subjects treated as individuals should have the reverse effect. We extended this idea to the group polarization paradigm and in addition independently manipulated group salience and de-individuation, which were confounded factors in Reicher's study. It was reasoned that the visual anonymity created by isolating discussants in separate rooms would be de-individuating compared to seating them together in the same room. At the same time either the subject's group or individual identity was made salient. A computer-mediated communication system provided text-based communication for discussants in all four conditions. Assuming that group polarization reflects conformity to a group norm (Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher & Wetherell, 1987), we predicted an interaction between the de-individuation and group salience factors, such that greatest polarization in the direction of a pre-established group norm would be obtained in the de-individuated—group condition and least in the de-individuated—individual condition. This prediction was confirmed. Explanations of the findings in terms of Reicher's earlier study and in terms of self-attention processes are considered within the general framework of social identity theory. Finally, the relevance of this research to the realm of human communication via computer networks is evaluated.

Computer-mediated communication, de-individuation and group decision-making

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Volume 34, Issue 2, February 1991, Pages 283-301
Special Issue: Computer-supported Cooperative Work and Groupware. Part 1
This paper discusses social psychological processes in computer-mediated communication (CMC) and group decision-making, in relation to findings that groups communicating via computer produce more polarized decisions than face-to-face groups. A wide range of possible explanations for such differences have been advanced, in which a lack of social cues, disinhibition, “de-individuation” and a consequent tendency to antinormative behaviour are central themes. In these explanations, both disinhibition and greater equality of participation are thought to facilitate the exchange of extreme persuasive arguments, resulting in polarization. These accounts are briefly reviewed and attention is drawn to various problematic issues. We provide an alternative model and explanation based on social identity (SI) theory and a re-conceptualization of de-individuation, which takes into account the social and normative factors associated with group polarization. Predictions from both sets of explanations are explored empirically by means of an experiment manipulating the salience of the discussion group, and de-individuation operationalized as the isolation and anonymity of the participants. In this experiment we were able to partial out the effects of the CMC technology which have confounded comparisons with face-to-face interaction in previous research. The results challenge the explanations based on persuasive arguments, while being consistent with our SI model. We discuss our approach in relation to other very recent research in group computer-mediated communication and offer a reinterpretation of previous findings.

The impact of a biased starting position in a single negotiation text type mediation
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Group Decision and Negotiation
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This article examines whether a biased starting position impacts the outcome of negotiations using a Single Negotiating Text (SNT) (Raiffa 1982) type, two-party mediation. Two separate experiments were conducted, one in Helsinki and one in New Mexico, that systematically tested this issue and related questions. The article argues that, if a biased starting point is not compensated for by the path taken in subsequent steps, the bias will have considerable impact on the final outcome of the negotiations. In both experiments, the mediator played a very insignificant role, since the bias was incorporated into the text prior to the initiation of the exercise. In actuality, the experimenter played the role of the mediator, but only facilitated an exchange of information between the parties. The results of our experiments strongly support the hypothesis that such bias has a significant impact on the outcome of the negotiations. The article concludes by presenting suggestions for developing starting SNTs.

Salience, individual, group, influence
http://scholar.google.com/scholar?start=10&q=salience+individual+group+influence&hl=en&as_sdt=0,5

Also “group polarization”
http://scholar.google.com/scholar?hl=en&q=group+polarization&btnG=Search&as_sdt=0%2C5&as_ylo=&as_vis=0

Groupthink
http://scholar.google.com/scholar?hl=en&q=groupthink&btnG=Search&as_sdt=0%2C5&as_ylo=&as_vis=0

Primacy and persuasion
http://scholar.google.com/scholar?hl=en&as_sdt=0,5&q=primacy+persuasion

Anchoring, persuasion, and first mover
http://scholar.google.com/scholar?hl=en&as_sdt=0,5&q=primacy+persuasion

Agenda influence
http://scholar.google.com/scholar?hl=en&q=agenda+influence&btnG=Search&as_sdt=0%2C5&as_ylo=&as_vis=0

“Initial proposal” and anchoring
http://scholar.google.com/scholar?hl=en&q=%22initial+proposal%22+anchoring&btnG=

Search&as_sdt=0%2C5&as_ylo=&as_vis=0