

◆ Artigo Original

Atratividade de membros normativos e desviantes em função do status do grupo e da associação ao grupo

Attractiveness of normative and deviant members as function of group status and group membership

Atractivo de los miembros normativos y desviados en función del estado del grupo y la membresía del grupo.

Lisete dos Santos Mendes Mónico¹, Pedro Urbano¹, José Canavarro¹

¹ Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences, University of Coimbra, Coimbra, Portugal

Corresponding Author: lisete.monico@fpce.uc.pt

Resumo

Este artigo discute alguns aspectos da identidade social, papéis sociais e influência do status do grupo nas avaliações de membros normativos e desviantes dentro e fora do grupo. Ele fornece uma breve revisão da literatura sobre construções de identidade social, auto-categorização, papéis sociais, status do grupo, membros dentro do grupo / fora do grupo e membros normativos / desviantes. Discutimos algumas interações prováveis entre status do grupo (dominante versus subordinado), associação ao grupo (dentro do grupo versus grupo externo) e membro-alvo (normativo versus desviante).

Palavras-chave - identidade social; auto-categorização; identificação de grupo; papéis sociais; status do grupo; homogeneidade de grupo.

Abstract

This article discusses some aspects of social identity, social roles, and group status influence in the evaluations of in-group and out-group normative and deviant members. It provides a brief literature review on constructs of social identity, self-categorization, social roles, group status, in-group/out-group and normative/deviant members. We discuss some probable interactions between group status (dominant versus subordinate), group membership (in-group versus out-group), and target-member (normative versus deviant).

Keywords – social identity; self-categorization; group identification; social roles; group status; group homogeneity.

INTRODUÇÃO

As far as we can know, *Homo sapiens* gathered into communities (groups) since its emergence as a distinct species of the hominid family, in order to improve—amongst other things—their chances of survival. In reality, group formation is a quite ubiquitous phenomenon across different animal species (Javarone & Marinazzo, 2017), not only of anatomically modern humans. We shall not dwell on it, as it goes beyond the strict scope of this article, but

in our point of view, “to understand the human mind and the behaviors it produces, we must appreciate that those minds—and the bodies to which they are attached—evolved, developed, and act in the context of their ecological and social environments” (Smaldino, 2019). We shall merely point out that, howsoever, as a highly social species, it is not at all surprising human tendency to cluster together and form communities of diverse size.

Moreover, it seems evident that there can be no easy answer to the question of what constitutes a group. It is therefore no wonder that it was often of central interest to the most influential names in social psychology. Nevertheless, for the simple purpose of the present article, group can be seen as a formation of two or more individuals which are dependent from each other and are in interaction between themselves to achieve certain goals (Aronson, Wilson, & Akert, 2007; Crano, 2000; Forsyth, 2006; Hogg & Tindale, 2001; Roman, 2010). Based on this definition, it can be said — in this same context —that group has two basic features: organization—what is necessary that group could reach goals; dependence and interaction between the members of the group—what makes the members of the group to occupy appropriate social roles or if to say in other words, place in the group (Hogg & Tindale, 2001). Finally, it can also be said, as stated by Brewer (2003), that groups are perception units, which essential functions are to identify and manipulate individuals.

Within this framework, and never forgetting its very complex nature, social behavior is assumed as positioned along a continuum between interpersonal and intergroup behavior (Tajfel, 1981; Tajfel & Turner, 1979, 1986). Furthermore, in accordance to this conception, it is understood that people tend to behave differently while being in groups from the way of acting when they are alone (Crano, 2000).

Last but not the least, it is largely known that group membership is central for a person’s identity (e.g. Reese, Steffens, & Jonas, 2013). According to Social Identity Theory, perhaps Tajfel’s greatest contribution to psychology, each person defines herself somewhat in terms of salient group memberships (Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Tajfel, 1981; Tajfel & Turner, 1986). Identification is related with groups considered distinctive, high-status, and in competition with—or at least aware of—other groups, despite the fact that it can be promoted by a merely random assignment to a certain group. In this paper we discuss some aspects of social identity, self-categorization, social roles, group status and the perception of in-group and out-group homogeneity. Especially, we make some tentative considerations about group status (dominant versus subordinate) influences in the evaluations of in-group and out-group normative and deviant members.

1. Social identity, self-categorization, and group identification

There is broad consensus that self-concept encompasses personal identity (idiosyncratic characteristics likely psychological traits, bodily attributes, abilities, interests, etc.) and social identity. Social identity is the “part of the individual’s self-concept which derives from the recognition of membership to one (or several) social(s) group(s), along with the emotional significance and value attached to that membership” (Tajfel, 1981, p. 63). Social Identity Theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986) states that people tend to classify themselves and others into several social categories, such as organizational membership, age cohort, religious affiliation, and gender (Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Tajfel & Turner, 1986). Consequently, each person can be classified in several categories, and different persons may use different categorization schemas.

According to the classical work of Turner (1985), categories can be defined by prototypical characteristics abstracted from the group members. Through the process of self-categorization is formed an identity (Turner, 1975, 1985; Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher, & Wetherell, 1987). We can identify two functions of social classification (Ashforth & Mael, 1989). The first one states that social classification cognitively divides and gives guidelines to the social environment, providing each person with a systematic means of defining others. Secondly, social classification enables the person to find or define himself in the social environment. Since we define our in-group positively, and we are more familiar with the diversity of the in-group in comparison to out-group, our in-group are viewed as being positive, differentiated categories of people.

According to Social Identity Theory, intergroup conflict begins with a process of comparison between subjects of in-group and out-group (Turner, 1975, 1985). Indeed, it is largely known that categorization creates the perception of dissimilarity between in-group and out-group and similarity within each group (Fielding & Hogg, 1997). Individuals are more aware of the variety that exists within their group, whereas out-group members are more likely to be perceived as undifferentiated (Brewer, 1979; Devos, Comby, & Deschamps, 1996; Judd & Park, 1988). This tendency, to see in-group members as relatively more differentiated as out-group members (Judd & Park, 1988), is named the out-group homogeneity effect, sometimes referred to as “outgroup homogeneity bias”. Empirical research on the out-group homogeneity effect indicates that the perception of higher homogeneity in out-group in comparison to in-group is due to greater knowledge about in-group than out-group occurrences (Marques, Robalo, & Rocha, 1992). Individuals also remember in a more detailed and positive way information about the in-group, and in more negative way information about out-group (Gaertner, Dovidio, Banker, Houlette, Johnson, & McGlynn, 2000).

We mention identification as the perception of oneness with or belongingness to a group, comprising straight or vicarious experience of its achievements and failures. Ashforth and Mael (1989), after reviewing the literature on group identification, draw attention to four principles:

First, identification is viewed as a perceptual cognitive construct that is not necessarily associated with any specific behaviors or affective states (...). Second, social/group identification is seen as personally experiencing the successes and failures of the group (...). Third, although not clearly addressed in the literature, social identification is distinguishable from internalization (...). Whereas identification refers to self in terms of social categories (I am), internalization refers to the incorporation of values, attitudes, and so forth within the self as guiding principles (I believe) (...). Finally, identification with a group is similar to identification with a person (e.g., one's father, football hero) or a reciprocal role relationship (e.g., husband-wife, doctor-patient) inasmuch as one partly defines oneself in terms of a social referent (pp. 21-22).

According to the classic work of Tajfel and Turner (1979), the comparisons between groups are likely to be made between in-group and out-group as a whole, whereas comparisons within the in-group are made among individuals. This factor, according to Social Identity Theory, contributes to the perception of out-group homogeneity.

2. Social roles

The idea of the self as composed by several identities has a very distinctive history stretching back a long way, at least to William James (1811/1890). Role Theory highlights the congruence between the self and the social environment, such that role identities replicate individuals' positions in the social structure (Moen, Erickson, & Dempster-McClain, 2000).

The essence of groups is an ability to work efficiently by performing appropriate roles. According to Role Theory (Biddle, 1979), role refers to those behaviors characteristic of one or more persons in a context. This means that role is a limited set of behaviours which are characteristic of a set of persons and a context (Echabe, 2010). Loebe (2003) distinguishes three kinds of roles: Relational, processual, and social roles. Our interest is oriented only to social roles.

The term social role refers to the sum of individual's ways of behaviour which are specific to appropriate activity, a set of communal expectations and realities that are associated with a particular social position (Biddle, 1979). These ways are the standards of what behaviour is expected from individual of an appropriate social role (Dweck, 2000). Social roles are

connected with appropriate social groups and requirements stated to the members of those groups. These bonds show how individual should behave in one or other group and which social roles he should perform.

Social roles have great influence on human behaviour, especially in nowadays society, when individual faces and have to perform many different social roles. The social position of an individual can result from his/her group membership in broad social categories, such as gender, nationality, ethnicity, religion affiliation, or it can be more narrowly focused, such as social roles associated with family or career (Diekman & Steiberg, 2013). Social role demands individual to demonstrate behaviours which are related to appropriate social group and requirements steaming from that group. Thus, individual cannot occupy social roles without belonging to appropriate social groups.

Every individual belongs to appropriate part of society, because of this people cannot act independently from others. Nowadays it is common for people to behave according to the norms and rules dictated by the society (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Having in mind that different parts of society (groups) have different norms and requirements, it is logical to say that individuals differ in their used behaviour models.

Probably, the main explanation of social roles and their characteristics is the Role Theory proposed by Biddle (1979). It states that individuals are performers of social roles and have expectations towards the behaviour of themselves and others (Biddle, 1986). This means that expectations determine social roles. According to this theory, the most important characteristic of social behaviour is a fact that people act differently from each other depending on social identity and situation individuals is involved in.

Role theory is made of three elements: social behavior (social role); identity, which individual creates while performing social role (social position); and expectations of behavior understandable for everyone (Biddle, 1979, 1986). Biddle (1986) divides expectations in: norms, which are dictated by nature; beliefs, which show subjective perception; and priorities of individuals. According to Echabe (2010), "The distribution of roles has been structured around categorical criteria. As stated by the Social Dominance Theory (...), all human societies are systems of group-based hierarchy. Roles are behaviors expected to be implemented by those who occupy different positions (status)" (p. 30). "Social role identities are important components of self-concept, perceptions locating persons in the larger atmosphere of social relationships. These identities, the "internalized positional designations" (Stryker, 1980, p. 60), reproduce the system of social positions held by a person (Moen et al., 2000). Identities reflect currently held roles, but also can reflect past roles or roles aspired.

3. Group status and the perception of in-group and out-group homogeneity

Simply put, in any given social hierarchy, there are people who have both high power and status, and other individuals who have neither (Fragale, Overbeck, & Neale, 2011). Social hierarchy, defined as the unequal distribution of power and status among persons, is a major aspect of many task and social collectives.

According to Fragale et al. (2011), status is defined “as the extent to which an individual is respected, admired, and highly regarded by others” (p. 767). Being a member of a high-status group will engender support for social inequality (Morrison, Fast, & Ybarra, 2009). According to literature comparing with low status group members, high status group members generally demonstrate higher in-group favoritism (in-group bias) and out-group prejudice, even when status is randomly assigned (Guimond, Dif, & Aupy, 2002; Morrison et al., 2009; Turner & Reynolds, 2008).

Lorenzi-Cioldi (1998) attended at the role of the group status in the perception of in-group and out-group homogeneity. This variable, group status, acts by moderating the perceptions of homogeneity. When the in-group has a low status (subordinate), it is judged as more homogeneous than out-group that has a high status (dominant). This may be due to processes suggested by Social Identity Theory, such that due to the subordinate status, group members have a need to see themselves as unified and strong in the face of the out-group (Simon, 1992).

Insecure social identity conducts subordinate in-groups to look for homogeneity (Turner et al., 1987). According to this reasoning, we predict that the emergence of deviants, socially undesirable in-group members, contributes negatively to the overall value assigned and desired for the in-group (Hewstone, 1996; Marques & Paéz, 2000). According to Simmel (1858/1918, *cit in* Marques, Abrams & Serôdio, 2001, p. 437), deviant members generate a sort of hostility, whose intensification is grounded in a feeling of belonging together, of unity. We suppose that this reaction will be strong in the low status groups, in comparison with high status groups, because the low status group’s social identity is undermined.

By way of example, in an experiment, Marques et al. (2001) realized that participants were less tolerant and derogated in-group deviants more than out-group deviants when normative in-group members lack uniformity. This is because when non-deviant members are highly consensual (that means, the group is perceived like homogeneous), the prescriptive norms (Fiske, 1993) are relatively secure. In that way, the emergence of deviance doesn’t threaten the clarity of those norms. According to the authors, if normative members are more heterogeneous, the emergence of a deviant will insecure the prescriptive norms.

Consequently, efforts will emerge in order to validate these norms, specifically, normative in-group members will derogate the in-group more than the out-group deviants, and over evaluate in-group more than out-group desirable members (Marques, 1990, 1992), the so called Black Sheep Effect: “subjects judge likable ingroup members more positively than similar outgroup members, while judging unlikable ingroup members more negatively than similar outgroup members” (Marques & Paez, 1994, p. 37). According to Marques et al. (1992), this effect “(...) may be a stimulating conceptual bridge between information-processing and social identity approaches to group perception” (p. 350).

If we attend that low status or subordinate groups tend to ascribe more homogeneity to the in-group than to high status or dominant out-group (Lorenzi-Cioldi, 1998), according to Marques et al. (2000), we would expect that subordinate in-group members doesn't derogate more the in-group than the out-group undesirable members, nor over evaluate more the in-group than the out-group desirable (normative) members. This is because the prescriptive norms remain clear, regarding the consensus and cohesion among in-group members (Simon & Pettigrew, 1990).

We can't also forget the perception of homogeneity by the high status or dominant group members: They tend to promote the homogeneity of out-group and the heterogeneity of in-group (Lorenzi-Cioldi, 1998). One reason mentioned for the high status heterogeneity in-group perception is the more use of person logical explanations by dominant than by subordinate members.

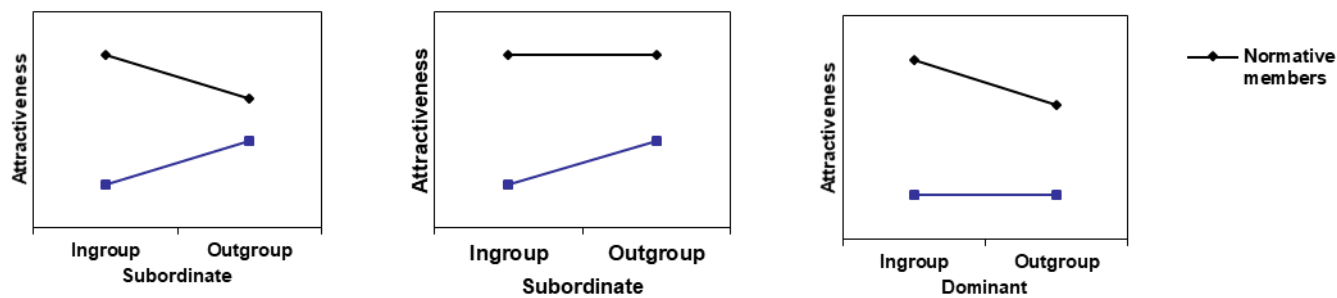
If the perception of homogeneity is largely higher in subordinate than in dominant groups (Lorenzi-Cioldi, 1998), according to Marques et al. (2000), we would expect that the up gradation of likable in-group members and derogation of unlikable in-group members, as compared to similar out-group members, would only occur in groups that perceive themselves like heterogeneous, that means, in dominant groups when compared with subordinate. But, if we look for the group status, we tend to think the opposite.

4. Attractiveness estimation of normative and deviant members as function of group status and group membership

It is well known that Social Identity Theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986) stresses the value attached to being a member of a group of category, asserting that people strive to attain a positive through favorable social comparisons with other groups, as a means of enhancing self-esteem. Each group searches for positive group distinctiveness on important dimensions of comparison (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). If the group is dominant, his social identity is secure,

because the comparisons with relevant out-group are positive (Reese et al., 2013; Tajfel & Turner, 1986). And if so, although the feeling of heterogeneity and the strongly in-group identification, the emergence of a deviant shouldn't undermine the prescriptive norm image of the in-group as a hole. Even in the context of an intergroup comparison, as the group has a high status, in-group deviance shouldn't contribute negatively to the overall value of the in-group. We think that the perceived legitimacy of the positive value assigned to the in-group is not undermined.

The opposite reasoning applies to groups with low status. If the group has a low status, their social identity is not secure. So, it becomes undermined with the emergence of undesirable in-group members. One strategy to protect or improve their social identity is the higher derogation of in-group than out-group undesirable members, and the over evaluation of in-group than out-group desirable members. As Durkheim (1960) said, the punishment of deviants currently emerges when emerges the need to reinforce individuals' sense of cohesion and commitment to society's norms. We think that subordinates, in comparison with dominants, should be more motivated to rearrange in-group consensus, and one way to do that is evaluate more negatively an in-group than an out-group deviant and more positively an in-group than an out-group desirable member. In this way the subordinate in-group restores their undermined social identity.



Supposition a)

b)

c)

Figure 1. Attractiveness estimation of normative and deviant members as function of group status and group membership: Suppositions a, b, and c.

Following this reasoning, we think that is important to analyze the role of group status, subordinate or dominant, in the evaluations of in-group and out-group normative and deviant members. We suggest a research plan with three variables (2x2x2 design): 1) group status, dominant or subordinate; 2) group membership, in-group or out-group; and 3) target-member,

normative or deviant. The two firsts variables are manipulated in a between-subjects design and the third one in a within subjects design.

Differing from the assumption that the derogation of deviant and the positive evaluation of normative members are higher in the in-group only when normative in-group members lacked uniformity, we think that the influent variable is the group status. So, we suggest that when a group is dominant, although the perception of heterogeneity, the emergency of in-group deviants is less threaten than when the group is subordinate, although these last perceive themselves as homogeneous. So, we consider that are the subordinates that will derogate more the in-group than out-group deviants (see Figure 1, suppositions a and b). In relation to the normative (desirable) subordinate members, we expect verify an in-group favoritism (Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Marques et al., 1992; see supposition a in Figure 1). Attending that in-group bias - “the tendency to favour the ingroup over the outgroup in evaluation and behavior – is a pervasive but not necessarily universal feature of intergroup relations” (Guimond et al., 2002, p. 739), and according to the out-group dominant status, it is also thinkable that there is no differences between evaluation of normative in-group and out-group members (see Figure 1, supposition b).

For the dominants, we expect that the deviant in-group members' evaluations doesn't significantly differ from the out-group members. For the normative members, we expect the occurrence of an in-group favoritism (see supposition c in Figure 1). Classical experimental studies using Social Identity Theory minimal group paradigm have proved that just assigning an individual to a group is enough to generate in-group favoritism (Brewer, 1979, 2003; Marques et al., 1992; Tajfel, 1982).

6. Discussion

A crucial postulation in Social Identity Theory is that individuals are intrinsically motivated to achieve positive distinctiveness, so, they strive to achieve or to preserve positive social identity (Tajfel & Turner, 1979, 1986). Identification to a group prompts the person to take part, and derive gratification from, accomplishments consistent with the identity, to view him or herself as an exemplar of the group (Brewer, 2003; Fielding & Hogg, 1997).

The aim of this paper was to discuss some aspects of social identity, social roles, and status influences in the evaluations of in-group and out-group normative and deviant members. As already mentioned above, the term social role refers to the sum of individual's ways of behavior which are specific to appropriate activity. It is the standards of behavior which are expected from people who occupy different social roles.

Literature shows that high-status group members regularly favor their own group and occasionally derogate out-group, however low-status group members often show the contrary, namely, a bias in favor of the high-status out-group (Bettencourt, Door, Charlton, & Hume, 2001; Guimond et al., 2002). As Abrams, Rutland, Cameron, and Marques (2003) stated, “social exclusion is a serious social problem. Being rejected by one’s peers can cause increases in antisocial behavior, aggression, lowered intellectual performance, self-defeating behavior and a series of other maladaptive responses” (p. 155).

In this paper we discussed a 2x2x2 design, manipulating group status (dominant versus subordinate), group membership (in-group versus out-group), and target-member (normative versus deviant). We expect to verify an in-group favoritism and we consider the possibility of being the subordinates that will derogate more the in-group than out-group deviants. However, according to out-group dominant status, we suppose that is also possible in certain circumstances not have differences between evaluation of normative in-group and out-group members. We suggest further work on this subject, especially further research on status influence in the evaluations of in-group and out-group normative and deviant members.

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