

Lecture 16: social identity

Political Psychology

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Where have we been recently . . .

- Looked at the power of (arbitrarily assigned) identity to shape (evil) behavior.
- Examined the difficulty in measuring attitudes about other groups.
- Looked at situations can prime the salience of an outgroup.

Theories of identity are also theories of behavior!

judgment exercise

Matrix 1

19	18	17	16	15	14	13	12	11	10	9	8	7
1	3	5	7	9	11	13	15	17	19	21	23	25

Matrix 2

23	22	21	20	19	18	17	16	15	14	13	12	11
5	7	9	11	13	15	17	19	21	23	25	27	29

Matrix 3

7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
1	3	5	7	9	11	13	15	17	19	21	23	25

Matrix 4

11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23
5	7	9	11	13	15	17	19	21	23	25	27	29

Now look back ...

For each matrix, consider which column maximizes each of the following (each might be different columns):

- 1** In-Group Profit (MIP)
- 2** Joint Profit (MJP)
- 3** Difference (between groups) (MD)

minimal group experiments (Tajfel, et al (1971))

Matrix 1

Left Side	19	18	17	16	15	14	13	12	11	10	9	8	7
Left Side	1	3	5	7	9	11	13	15	17	19	21	23	25

Matrix 2

Left Side	23	22	21	20	19	18	17	16	15	14	13	12	11
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Matrix 3

Left Side	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
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Right Side	19	18	17	16	15	14	13	12	11	10	9	8	7
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MJP
MD

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MJP
MJP
MIP
MD

B

Matrix 3

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The key ...

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Depend on whether the *ingroup* or *outgroup* is rewarded by the top row.

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If the ingroup is rewarded by the bottom rows and outgroup by the top rows, which columns do ingroup members choose?

minimal group experiments (Tajfel, et al (1971))

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Depend on whether the *ingroup* or *outgroup* is rewarded by the top row.

If the ingroup is rewarded by the *top* rows and outgroup by the *bottom* rows, which columns do ingroup members choose?

Goals of lecture today:

You will ...

- be able to describe the Social Identity Theory paradigm.
- be able to describe and critique the minimal group and social categorization paradigm.
- place Social Identity Theory in the ranking of causal proximity of identity.
- connect social identity with political phenomenon.

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- two cognitive processes:
 - 1 motivated cognition:** motivated for positive group (self) image relative to other groups
 - 2 cold cognition:** group classifications used as a shortcut in determining how to behave
- illustrated by:
 - 1** social categorization processes
 - 2** minimal group paradigm

Tajfel, et al (1971)

- arbitrarily divide groups
- present with a task that gives option of *either* maximizing benefit or maximizing group difference.

minimal group experiments (Tajfel, et al (1971))

Which do you prefer?

Kandisky



Klee



What are the implications of groups being *minimal*?



If intergroup discrimination is present in minimal groups what does this suggest about:

- 1** the pervasiveness of intergroup discrimination?
- 2** the causes of intergroup discrimination?

What are the implications of groups being *minimal*?



With minimal groups what becomes (relatively) unimportant?

- 1** history and socialization
- 2** power and status inequalities (e.g. Blumer (1958))

social categorization (Tajfel and Wilkes (1963))

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

Write down the length of the following 8 lines.

—



|

1

|

1

1

|

Pretend you didn't see any of that.

B



A



B
|

B



A



A



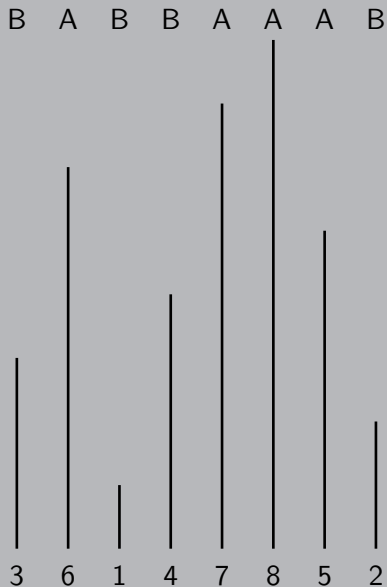
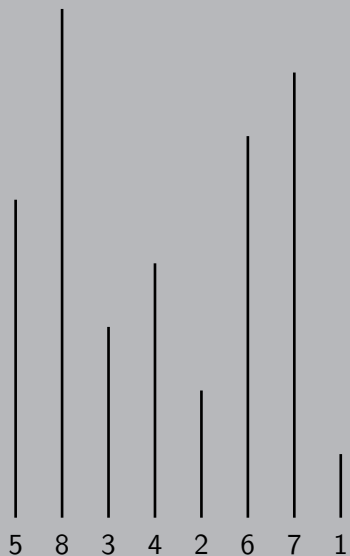
A



B



social categorization (Tajfel and Wilkes (1963))



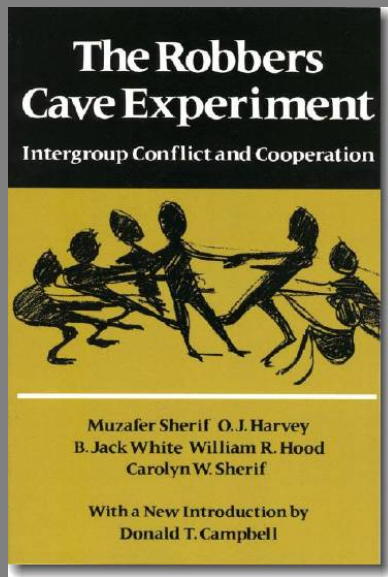
social categorization (Tajfel and Wilkes (1963))

- Have subjects estimate the length of lines that appear in random order.
- Compare differences between estimates when categorized and differences between estimates when not categorized
 - e.g. line 5 and 4 when categorized and line 5 and 4 when not categorized.
 - this is called a “difference in difference”.
- Accentuated difference when categorized is interpreted as stereotyping.

social categorization and the power of stereotypes?



What does the social categorization paradigm tell us about the effect and power of classifying humans?



What can Social Identity Theory do for us?



Can Social Identity Theory explain any political phenomenon?

What can Social Identity Theory do for us?



the paradox of voting

voting is sometimes considered individually irrational:

$$U_{vote} = p(B) - C + D$$

What can Social Identity Theory do for us?



the paradox of voting

voting is sometimes considered individually irrational:

$$U_{vote} = p(B) - C + D$$

Since individual utility is determined by group utility, B can become very large and p might not matter.

What can Social Identity Theory do for us?



collective action

- The larger the group, the less incentive for an individual to act.
- *Unless* individual utility is determined by group utility.

What can Social Identity Theory do for us?



party identification

Does a person vote for a party because of the expected benefits?

$$E(U_{t+1}^A) - E(U_{t+1}^B)$$

What can Social Identity Theory do for us?



party identification

Does a person vote for a party because of the expected benefits?

$$E(U_{t+1}^A) - E(U_{t+1}^B)$$

Or because that party is a *social identity*?

What are the implications if party ID is a social identity?



other political phenomena?



Are all identities equally powerful?



example: racial identities in the United States

Are all racial identities equally predictive of the political behavior of the group members?

Are all identities equally powerful?

Michael C. Dawson *Behind the Mule*,
1994

“... the key to the historical origins of
of African-American social identity can
be found ‘behind the mule’. It is this
legacy of social identity in which racial
and economic oppression have been
intertwined for generations that has
been the critical component in
understanding ... African-American
politics .

It has been shaped by historical forces
that produced a different pattern of
political behavior from the pattern
found among white citizens.”

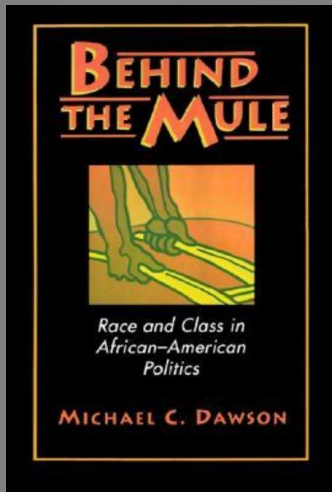


FIGURE 3. Chewas and Tumbukas in Zambia and Malawi



Posner (2004)

minimal groups and causal proximity



What do the minimal groups and social categorization paradigms suggest about the causal proximity (i.e. situational, social, or biological) of intergroup conflict?

Zimbardo and Tajfel both arbitrarily assigned groups ...



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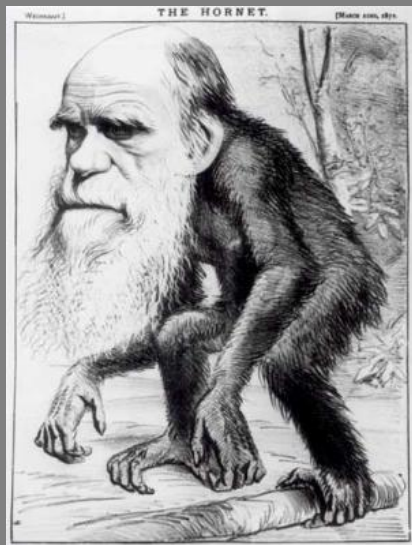
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social categorization and human evolution



Why might social categorization have been selected as a strategy in humans?



infants and group recognition

Infants less than a year old have been shown repeatedly to recognize different gender and racial groups (e.g. Katz (1976)).

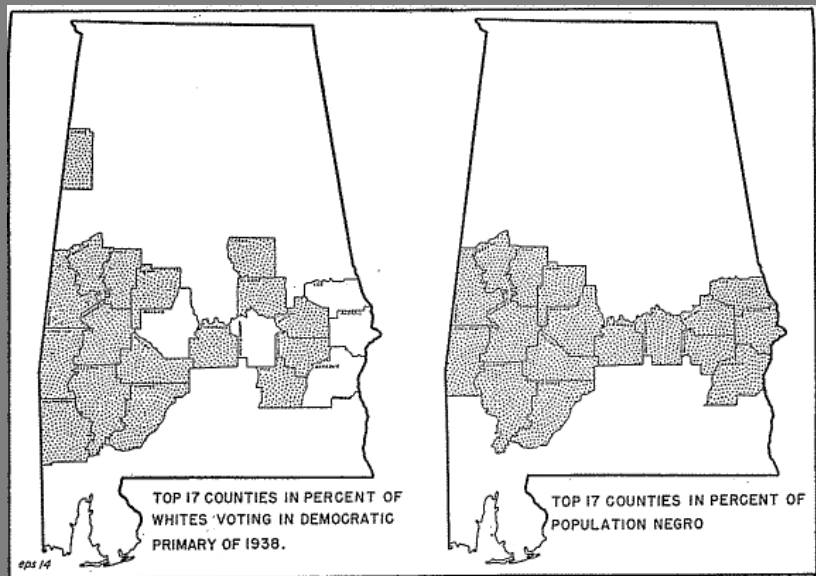
but the interaction of politics and identity

FIGURE 3. Chewas and Tumbukas in Zambia and Malawi



Posner (2004)

but the interaction of politics and identity



V.O. Key, 1949

What happens when social categories and power converge?

