Psicologia dei Gruppi e delle Relazioni Sociali

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Psicologia dei Gruppi e delle Relazioni Sociali

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Course Outline

Theoretical Lessons (Part 1):

1- An *introduction to the group dynamics (1)*
2- An *introduction to the group dynamics (2)*
3- *Studying Groups*
4- *Inclusion and Identity*
5- *Formation*
6- *Cohesion and Development*
7- *Structure*
8- *Influence*
9- *Power*
10- *Leadership*
11- *Performance*
12- *Decision Making*
13- *Teams*
14- *Conflict*
15- *Intergroup Relations*
16- *Groups in Context*
17- *Groups and Change*

Experimental activity (Part 2):

18- *From cognition to social simulation*
19- *Research in group dynamics*
20- *Community detection*
21- *Epidemic Modeling*
22- *The virtual settings*
23- *Reputation dynamics*
24- *Collective Intelligence*
25- *Group reasoning*
26- *Crowd dynamics*
27- *Social influence: new perspectives*
28- *Personality, Self and Identity (I)*
29- *Personality, Self and Identity (II)*
30- *Constructing the Self in a Digital World*
31- *Self Disclosure, Privacy and the Internet*
32- *Understanding the On-line behaviour*

Lesson: 31 – (1/4)

Title: Self Disclosure, Privacy and the Internet

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Self Disclosure, Privacy and the Internet

Privacy

While concern about the privacy implications of new technology are nothing new (Home Office 1972), the development and linking of databases with biometrics, and the tension between the need for identification, protection of privacy and full participation in the e-society (Raab et al. 1996) makes an understanding of the relations between privacy and the disclosure and use of personal information critical.

Reference: **Joinson, A. (2007). Oxford handbook of internet psychology. Oxford University Press.**

Self Disclosure, Privacy and the Internet

Privacy

Privacy

There have been many attempts at definitions of privacy.

- In a legal context, privacy is largely synonymous with a '**right to be let alone**' (Warren and Brandeis 1890).
- However, others have argued that privacy is only t***he right to prevent the disclosure of personal information***.
- Many researchers have referred to the difficulties involved in trying to produce a definition (e.g. Burgoon et al. 1989) and despite various attempts to create a synthesis of existing literature (e.g. Parent 1983; Schoeman 1984) a unified and simple account of privacy has yet to emerge.

Despite there being no unitary concept of privacy it is clear that ***both individuals, and society, attach a level of importance to privacy***.

For example, Ingham states that '***man, we are repeatedly told is a social animal, and yet he constantly seeks to achieve a state of privacy***' (1978: 45).

Reference: ***Joinson, A. (2007). Oxford handbook of internet psychology. Oxford University Press.***

Self Disclosure, Privacy and the Internet

Privacy Psychology Model (Westlin)

Within psychological literature both Westin's and Altman's theories figure prominently in the major reviews of privacy in the 1970s.

- Westin provides **a link between secrecy and privacy and defines privacy as 'the claim of individuals, groups, or institutions to determine for themselves when, how and to what extent information about them is communicated to others'** (1967).

- At the psychological level, Westin states that **privacy provides opportunities for self-assessment and experimentation and therefore the development of individuality**. Specifically, Westin (1967) proposes four main functions of privacy.

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Self Disclosure, Privacy and the Internet

Privacy Psychology Model (Westlin)

Westin (1967) proposes four main functions of privacy:

1. **Personal autonomy** applies to the need for the development of individuality and the avoidance of manipulation by others;

2. **Emotional release** refers to the need for opportunities to relax and escape from the tensions of everyday life in order to support healthy functioning;

3. **Self-evaluation** is the application of individuality onto events and the integration of experience into meaningful patterns,

4. **Limited and protected communication** refers to both the sharing of personal information with trusted others and the setting of interpersonal boundaries.

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Self Disclosure, Privacy and the Internet

Privacy Psychology Model (Altman)

Altman (1975) incorporates both social and environmental psychology in understanding the nature of privacy.

He defines privacy as

… 'the selective control of access to the self'

and believes privacy is achieved through the regulation of social interaction, which can in turn provide us with feedback on our ability to deal with the world, and ultimately affect our definition of self.

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Lesson: 31 – (2/4)

Title: Self Disclosure, Privacy and the Internet

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Self Disclosure, Privacy and the Internet

Privacy Psychology Model (Burgoon)

Since these earlier definitions, the highly complex nature of privacy has resulted in an alternative way of defining it – through its various dimensions.

Burgoon et al. (1989) distinguish four dimensions of privacy and define it using these dimensions as 'the ability to control and limit physical, interactional, psychological and informational access to the self or one's group' (Burgoon et al. 1989: 132).

1. **The physical dimension** Physical privacy is ***the degree to which a person is physically accessible to others***. This dimension is grounded within the human biological need for personal space. Examples of violations to physical privacy include: surveillance, entry into personal space and physical contact.
2. **The interactional dimension** Interactional (or social/communicational) privacy is an ***individual's ability and effort to control social contacts*** (Altman 1975). Burgoon et al. (1989) summarize the elements of this dimension as ***control*** of the participants of, the ***frequency*** of, the ***length*** of and the ***content*** of an interaction. Non-verbal examples of violations to social privacy include close conversational distance and public displays of affection. Verbal examples include violations of conversational norms (e.g. commenting on mood or appearance) and initiating unwanted conversation.

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Self Disclosure, Privacy and the Internet

Privacy Psychology Model (Burgoon)

3. **The psychological dimension** Psychological privacy concerns ***the ability of human beings to control cognitive and affective inputs and outputs***, to ***form values***, and the right to determine with whom and under what circumstances thoughts will be shared or intimate information revealed. As such, psychological privacy can either develop or limit human growth. Examples of violations to psychological privacy include psychological assaults through name-calling and persuasion.
4. **The informational dimension** Informational privacy relates to an ***individual's right to determine how, when, and to what extent information about the self will be released to another person*** (Westin 1967) or to an organization. According to Burgoon et al. (1989), this dimension is closely related to psychological privacy: however, the control differs from the individual self-disclosure associated with psychological privacy because it is partly governed by law/custom and as it often extends beyond personal control. Examples of violations to informational privacy include going through another person's mail and sharing personal information with others.

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Self Disclosure, Privacy and the Internet

Privacy Psychology Model (DeCew)

DeCew (1997) also reflects the multidimensional nature of privacy in her definition: however, she distinguishes only three dimensions:

1. **The informational dimension** Informational privacy covers personal information such as finances, medical details and so on that an individual can decide who has access to and for what purposes. If disclosed, this information should be protected by any recipients of it. By protecting informational privacy individuals avoid invasions (or potential invasions) to their privacy.

2. **The accessibility dimension** Accessibility privacy refers to physical or sensory access to a person. It 'allows individuals to control decisions about who has physical access to their persons through sense perception, observation, or bodily contact' (DeCew 1997: 76–7).

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Self Disclosure, Privacy and the Internet

Privacy Psychology Model (DeCew)

DeCew (1997) also reflects the multidimensional nature of privacy in her definition: however, she distinguishes only three dimensions:

3*. The expressive dimension** Expressive privacy 'protects a realm for expressing one's self-identity or personhood through speech or activity. It protects the ability to decide to continue or to modify ones behaviour when the activity in question helps define one-self as a person, shielded from interference, pressure and coercion from government or from other individuals' (DeCew 1997: 77). ***As such, internal control over self-expression and the ability to build interpersonal relationships improves, while external social control over lifestyle choices and so on are restricted (Schoeman 1992).

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Lesson: 31 – (3/4)

Title: Self Disclosure, Privacy and the Internet

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Self Disclosure, Privacy and the Internet

Privacy and the Internet

There are a number of specific threats to online privacy. For example, the impact of 'ubiquitous' computing (Weiser 1988) means that we leave data footprints in many areas of our lives that were previously considered 'offline'.

Sparck-Jones (2003) labels a number of specific properties of the information collected which have consequences for privacy: •

1. **Permanence** – once recorded, ***information rarely disappears***. As such, fine-grained, searchable, persistent data exists on individuals and there are sophisticated, cheap, data-mining devices can also be used to analyse this information;
2. **Volume** – the ease with which information is now recorded using technology results in ***huge data sets***. Furthermore, storage is cheap, therefore large volumes of information sets can exist indefinitely;
3. **Invisibility** – all information collected seems to exist within an ***opaque system and so any information collected may not be 'visible' to whom it relates***. Even if information collected is available to a person they may not be able to interpret it due to the use of incomprehensible coding;

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Self Disclosure, Privacy and the Internet

Privacy and the Internet

4. **Neutrality** – the ease with which information can be collected means that any qualifying information may be lost. So information may be absorbed regardless of its metadata. i.e. ***there are no distinctions between intimate, sensitive information and non-sensitive information***;
5. **Accessibility** – there are a number of tools for accessing information meaning that ***any information collected can possibly be read by any number of people***. The ease with which information can be copied, transferred, integrated and multiplied electronically further increases this accessibility;
6. **Assembly** – there are many effective tools for ***searching for and assembling and reorganizing information*** from many quite separate sources;
7. **Remoteness** – information collected is usually both physically and logically away from the users to whom it refers. However, this ***information can be accessed and used by people who the user does not know***

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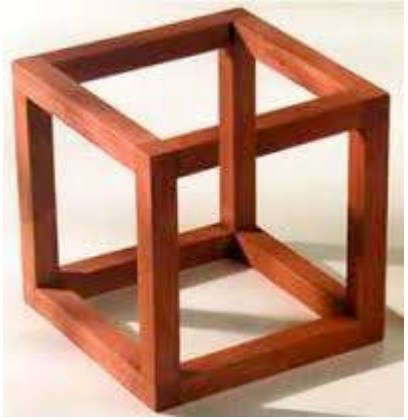
Self Disclosure, Privacy and the Internet

The Privacy-Self Disclosure Paradox



Privacy is particularly important for understanding self-disclosure, since the relationship between privacy and self-disclosure is somewhat paradoxical.

- Privacy is a prerequisite for disclosure, and yet, the process of disclosure serves to reduce privacy.

The Internet may, in some instances, serve to solve this paradox – disclosure and intimacy can be achieved without concurrent increases in vulnerability or losses of privacy (see Ben-Ze'ev 2003).

But this introduces a further paradox – the Internet, and new media in general, have tended to erode privacy through, amongst others, the processes we outline above.

Reference: ***Joinson, A. (2007). Oxford handbook of internet psychology. Oxford University Press.***

Computer Mediated Communication and Social Identity

Early evidence from Matheson and colleagues (e.g., Matheson and Zanna 1989) showed that people actually become more (privately) self-aware in CMC.

The basic model describing the cognitive component of SIDE can be summarized in three steps

1. which identity is salient?
2. the influence of anonymity, and
3. the (psychological and behavioural) outcomes.

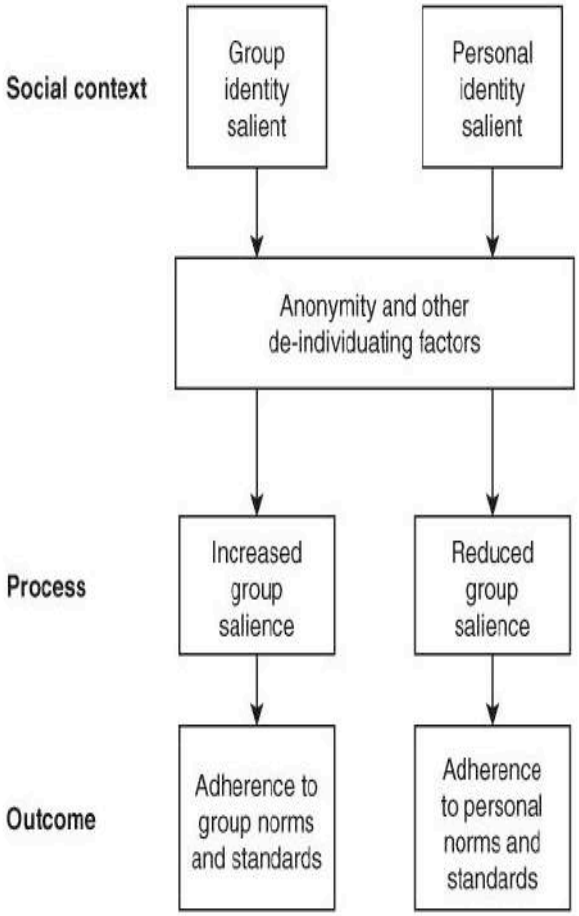


Figure 17.1 The Social Identity Model of De-individuation Effects (SIDE): the cognitive dimension.

Reference: ***Joinson, A. (2007). Oxford handbook of internet psychology. Oxford University Press.***

Computer Mediated Communication and Social Identity

Intragroup Context

When group identity is salient the depersonalizing effects of anonymity are likely to lead to a range of group-related outcomes including heightened group salience, self-stereotyping in group terms, group cohesiveness and conformity to group norms (i.e., group-based social influence).

In intergroup contexts, classic correlates of intergroup behaviours are also likely to manifest themselves (differentiation, competition, in-group bias and so forth).

- **Group polarization in the normative direction was greatest in the anonymous-group identity condition** (depersonalization).
- In the ***anonymous individual identity condition we actually found evidence of reliable depolarization***.

This can be explained as people defining their individuality in contrast to the group norm. Additional measures and analyses also ruled out a range of alternative explanations for group polarization (Lea and Spears 1991).

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Computer Mediated Communication and Social Identity

Intragroup Context

In intergroup contexts, classic correlates of intergroup behaviours are also likely to manifest themselves (differentiation, competition, in-group bias and so forth).

- Postmes et al. (2001) found that **groups tended to conform to the primed norm**, and this effect grew stronger over time, but only in the anonymous condition.

- The i**mpact of the norm was stronger in the anonymous condition**, and most importantly the effect transferred just as strongly from the efficiency-primed to the neutrally primed group members. This research also provided evidence that **influence was mediated by group identification**, a proxy for group salience (Joinson, 2007).

- Other studies also provide **evidence of anonymity enhancing group-based influence** confirming that the salience of group identity and a group norm are important preconditions for this pattern (see Sassenberg and Boos 2003)

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Lesson: 31 – (4/4)

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Computer Mediated Communication and Social Identity

Intragroup Context

Following self-categorization principles we would expect social attraction (attraction to the group or its prototype) and group cohesiveness to be enhanced under conditions of anonymity.

- This is what was found in a study by Lea et al. (2001).
- As predicted, **anonymous discussion conditions led to greater group attraction and cohesiveness** and these were mediated by self-categorization as a group member and also stereotyping of other group members.
- More recently Lea et al. (in press) have also shown that **self-categorization processes mediate anonymity effects on group attraction under high (but not low) group salience** (see further below).

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Computer Mediated Communication and Social Identity

Intragroup Context

Following self-categorization principles we would expect social attraction (attraction to the group or its prototype) and group cohesiveness to be enhanced under conditions of anonymity.

Similar effects of have now also been demonstrated in a range of contexts, and with a range of outcomes.

- Cress (2005) found that **anonymity increases knowledge sharing within groups**, but only for those whose social identity is salient.
- Tanis and Postmes (2005) found a **comparable effect of anonymity on trust** in an otherwise very different study of sharing in dyads.
- Lea and Spears (1992) found that **recipients' evaluations of paralanguage use** (typographic tricks such as emoticons) in text messages **were negative between anonymous individuals, but positive if they shared a group identity with the anonymous** sender.

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Computer Mediated Communication and Social Identity

Intragroup Context

Following self-categorization principles we would expect social attraction (attraction to the group or its prototype) and group cohesiveness to be enhanced under conditions of anonymity.

- Tanis and Postmes (2003) demonstrated in a series of five studies of dyadic (intragroup) interaction that **anonymous in-group members leave more negative impressions and are considered more ambiguous** characters as individuals, **but they are nonetheless preferred in collaboration**.

- Recent studies have ***linked the latter effect to the enhanced perception of a shared identity in anonymous dyads*** (Postmes and Tanis 2006).

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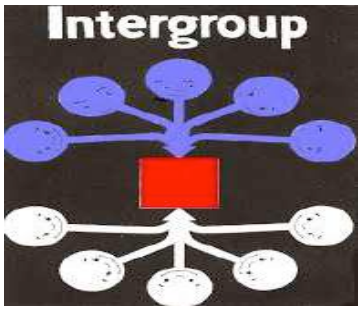
Computer Mediated Communication and Social Identity

Intergroup Context



One process associated with salient social identities is the accentuation of intergroup differences as well as intragroup similarities (Tajfel 1978).

In line with depersonalization principle in the SIDE model these processes will be enhanced by anonymity, so long as the group boundaries remain distinct and group identities salient (Reicher 1984).

- As predicted, **the depersonalized groups tended to diverge** as a result of discussion whereas individuated groups actually converged (depolarization). (Postmes et al. 2002).

- **Groups tended to converge in the individuated conditions but this effect was attenuated** (rather than showing actual differentiation) in the depersonalized conditions.

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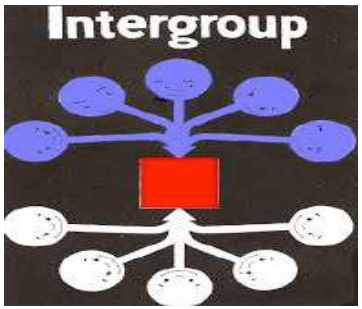
Computer Mediated Communication and Social Identity

Intergroup Context



One process associated with salient social identities is the accentuation of intergroup differences as well as intragroup similarities (Tajfel 1978).

- In the depersonalized conditions **participants identified more with the in-group**, saw the out-group as more homogeneous, held more negative stereotypes of the out-group, and were more likely to see group members as interchangeable by making more within than between group recall errors.

- Lee (2004) showed **greater conformity under depersonalized representations but only in intergroup conditions**, in other words conditions that naturally render group identity salient.

- Lea et al. (2008) related effects were also found for intergroup discussion involving groups from different nationalities in terms of **attraction and group cohesiveness**.

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