Human Emotion
Psychology 3131
Professor June Gruber
Human Emotion

Emotion and the Unconscious

Can feelings be unconscious?
The Psychological Unconscious

Conscious experience, thought, and action is influenced by percepts, memories, and other mental states which are inaccessible to phenomenal awareness and somehow independent of voluntary control.

Can emotion... be unconscious?
Roadmap

Course Logistics

Origins

Evidence

Take-Away Qs & Expert Interview
Course Logistics

Course Emails

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Evidence

Take-Away Qs & Expert Interview
The Unconscious Emotional Life
Sigmund Freud & Carl Jung
“Our right to assume the existence of something mental that is unconscious and to employ that assumption for the purposes of scientific work is disputed in many quarters, To this we can reply that our assumption of the unconscious is necessary and legitimate, and that we possess numerous proofs of its existence.”

Sigmund Freud (1891)
“Until you make the unconscious conscious, it will direct your life and you will call it fate.”

Carl Jung
“In addition to our immediate consciousness, which is of a thoroughly personal nature and which we believe to be the only empirical psyche (even if we tack on the personal unconscious as an appendix), there exists a second psychic system of a collective, universal, and impersonal nature which is identical in all individuals. This collective unconscious does not develop individually but is inherited. It consists of pre-existent forms, the archetypes, which can only become conscious secondarily and which give definite form to certain psychic contents.”

Carl Jung
Korsakoff Syndrome
Claparede (1911/1951)
Roadmap

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Emotion Priming Studies

Experiencing Physical Warmth Promotes Social Warmth
Experiencing Physical Warmth Promotes Interpersonal Warmth

Lawrence E. Williams and John A. Bargh

“Warmth” is the most powerful personality trait in social judgment, and attachment theorists have stressed the importance of warm physical contact with caregivers during infancy for healthy relationships in adulthood. Intriguingly, recent research in humans points to the involvement of the insula in the processing of both physical temperature and interpersonal warmth (trust) information. Accordingly, we hypothesized that experiences of physical warmth (or coldness) would increase feelings of interpersonal warmth (or coldness), without the person’s awareness of this influence. In study 1, participants who briefly held a cup of hot (versus iced) coffee judged a target person as having a “warmer” personality (generous, caring); in study 2, participants holding a hot (versus cold) therapeutic pad were more likely to choose a gift for a friend instead of for themselves.

Ever since Solomon Asch’s (1) original demonstration of the transformational power of “warm” and “cold” as personality traits in first impressions of individuals, the concept of interpersonal warmth and coldness has been a powerful tool in social psychology. However, the specific physiological mechanisms underlying these effects have been less clear. Recent research has suggested that the insula, a brain region involved in the processing of temperature and social signals, plays a critical role in these effects. In this study, we aimed to investigate the relationship between physical warmth and interpersonal warmth by manipulating temperature in two experiments.

In the first experiment, participants were asked to hold a warm (hot coffee) or cold (iced coffee) drink and then judge the personality of a target person. Participants who held the warm drink rated the target person as more “warm” (i.e., generous, caring, and trustworthy) compared to those who held the cold drink. This effect was observed even when the participants were not aware that their task was related to the temperature of the drink. In the second experiment, participants were asked to hold a warm (hot pad) or cold (cold pad) therapeutic pad and then choose a gift for a friend. Participants who held the warm pad were more likely to choose a gift that was more personal and meaningful to the friend, often indicating a more “warm” choice (e.g., a book or a photo album). These findings support the idea that physical warmth can influence interpersonal warmth, even when the individual is not aware of the temperature manipulation.

These findings have implications for our understanding of social interactions and the role of physical contact in shaping social judgments. They also offer insights into the physiological mechanisms underlying social perception and the potential therapeutic applications of manipulating temperature in social settings.

References


Supporting Online Material

www.sciencemag.org/cgi/content/full/322/5901/602/DC1

Materials and Methods

Figs. S1 to S5

Tables S1 and S2

References

31 July 2008; accepted 18 September 2008
10.1126/science.1164029
Mere Exposure Effect: Early Studies

Robert Zajonc
“Preferences need no inferences”
Emotion Priming Studies
Subliminal Emotional Faces
Unconscious Emotions?
Subliminal Face Priming

Primed with negative face pictures
- Graduate students rate their own research more negatively.
- Evaluate even neutral stimuli more negatively.

Baldwin et al (1990)
Research Article

Keeping One’s Distance
The Influence of Spatial Distance Cues on Affect and Evaluation

Lawrence E. Williams and John A. Bargh

Yale University

ABSTRACT—Current conceptualizations of psychological distance (e.g., construal-level theory) refer to the degree of overlap between the self and some other person, place, or point in time. We propose a complementary view in which perceptual and motor representations of physical distance influence people’s thoughts and feelings without reference to the self, extending research and theory on the effects of distance into domains where construal-level theory is silent. Across four experiments, participants were primed with either spatial closeness or spatial distance by plotting

inently affect people’s judgments and feelings? Informed by theories of embodiment and conceptual development, the present research examined the power of physical-distance cues to moderate people’s emotional experiences.

A NEW LOOK AT PSYCHOLOGICAL DISTANCE

The main framework of current theorizing about the nature of psychological distance is construal-level theory (CLT; Trope & Liberman, 2003). This framework states that as distance increases, people distance from their personal goals and focus on a more general, abstract level of the world. The CLT provides a powerful account of how distance can influence judgment. For example, in one study, people who were primed with physical distance in a lab focused less on their own goals and more on the goals of the experimenter (Eagly & Chaiken, 1979). Similarly, people who were primed with large physical distance between themselves and someone else (e.g., the distance between the United States and China) were more likely to attribute the goals of that person or group to be less aligned with their own goals (Lee & Hong, 2005). Furthermore, researchers have shown that people who perceive physical distance as large are more likely to report feeling anxious and depressed when they anticipate interacting with others (Ward, Nell, & Beiger, 1984). These findings indicate that distance can affect people’s thoughts and feelings in ways that may be independent of their relationship with the other person.
The Substitutability of Physical and Social Warmth in Daily Life

John A. Bargh and Idit Shalev
Yale University

Classic and contemporary research on person perception has demonstrated the paramount importance of interpersonal warmth. Recent research on embodied cognition has shown that feelings of social warmth or coldness can be induced by experiences of physical warmth or coldness, and vice versa. Here we show that people tend to self-regulate their feelings of social warmth through applications of physical warmth, apparently without explicit awareness of doing so. In Study 1, higher scores on a measure of chronic loneliness (social coldness) were associated with an increased tendency to take warm baths or showers. In Study 2, a physical coldness manipulation significantly increased feelings of loneliness. In Study 3, needs for social affiliation and for emotion regulation, triggered by recall of a past rejection experience, were subsequently eliminated by an interpolated physical warmth experience. Study 4 provided evidence that people are not explicitly aware of the relationship between physical and social warmth (coldness), as they do not consider a target person who often bathes to be any lonelier than one who does not, with all else being equal. Together, these findings suggest that physical and social warmth are to some extent substitutable in daily life and that this substitution reflects an unconscious self-regulatory mechanism.
Feeling Lonely? Take a Warm Bath

Our brain registers our psychological states as physical ones.

Published on January 25, 2012 by Sian Beilock, Ph.D. in Choke

We often talk about personality in physical terms. Whether it's someone giving us the "cold shoulder" or being a "warm" individual, it's not uncommon to reference, say, temperature when describing the people we know. The idea is that we deal with abstract psychological states the best way we know how — we take them literally. This linking of the mental and physical can lead us to act in some surprising ways.

Take loneliness as an example. Through early experiences with caretakers whose trust and comfort often goes hand-in-hand with physical warmth, physical temperature seems to have become indistinguishable, on some level, from psychological feelings of connectedness. Indeed, some of the same brain areas that register physical temperature are also sensitive to feelings of loneliness and social rejection. With these connections in mind, psychologists at Yale University recently tested whether people might use physical warmth as a way to feel better about themselves. Researchers Idit Shalev and John Bargh asked people to fill out a bunch of questionnaires about their "personal habits." Included in these questionnaires were inquiries about how often, in the last three months...
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Take-Away Qs & Expert Interview
Experts In Emotion

*EXTRA CREDIT OPPORTUNITY*
Experts In Emotion
Interview

Dr. John Bargh
Professor of Psychology
Yale University

Unconscious Emotion
Thank You!

Psychology 3131
Professor June Gruber