

Decision Processes Colloquia

Monday, November 12, 2012

Where: JMHH 340

When: 12:00 noon to 1:20 PM

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The Involuntary Excluder Effect: Those Included by an Excluder Are Seen as Exclusive Themselves

ABSTRACT: People are highly vigilant for and alarmed by social exclusion. Previous research has focused largely on the emotional and motivational consequences of being unambiguously excluded by others. The present research instead examines how people make sense of a more ambiguous dynamic, one-person exclusion—situations in which one person (the excluder) excludes someone (the rejected) while including someone else (the included). Using different methodological paradigms, converging outcome measures, and complementary comparison standards, four studies present evidence for an involuntary excluder effect (IEE): Social perceivers are quick to see included persons as though they are excluders themselves. Included individuals are seen as belonging to an exclusive alliance with the excluder, as liking the excluder more than the rejected, and as likely to perpetuate future exclusion against the rejected. Such inferences of the included as an excluder were drawn by both the rejected themselves and outside observers. These perceptions did not reflect the experience and intentions of included persons or those who simulated one-person exclusion from the vantage point of the included. Behavioral evidence reinforced these findings. When rejected individuals interacted with included persons, they approached and reacted to them as though they were an excluder—showing more caution, less warmth, and a tendency to be upset by an ambiguous slight. The studies distinguished between different explanatory and theoretical accounts for the IEE by identifying key boundary and necessary conditions for the effect. This work opens a qualitatively new direction for social exclusion research and theory.