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Influence of Emotional Induction and free or forced Affiliation on in-group and out-group Trust Attitude

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Abstract
This paper intends to revisit the studies on social affiliation understood as a determinant of in-group favouritism and out-group discrimination (Tajfel, 1982) arriving at the estimate of effect represented by a *priming* emotional stimulus on implicit attitudes of trust toward in-group and to the out-group. 574 college students participated in the study. They were all administered two scales taken from the *MPP-Multidimensional Personality Profile* (Caprara, et al., 2006) to assess empathy, pro-sociality, sociability, interpersonal trust, self-esteem, social desirability, cynicism, management of self image. The participants were divided into three experimental groups and randomly submitted to one out of six experimental conditions. Results: the type of social affiliation, voluntary or forced, influences the trust towards in-group and out-group members; a negative emotional stimulus is capable of reinforcing the polarized distributions of leadership (totally internal or totally external); eliciting subjective preferences neutralizes the effects of forced affiliation; forced affiliation, when activated, influences the distribution of leadership in favour of the in-group.

Keywords:
Trust, reliability, social affiliation, emotional induction, group psychology

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Introduction

In a study conducted by Tajfel et al. in 1971 it was found that the mere affiliation of subjects into groups based on an arbitrary task was enough to cause discrimination in favour of their own group and against the members of the other group (out-group). When commenting the results of the research, Tajfel claimed that the mere affiliation of subjects into groups activated a social norm of discrimination, i.e, a norm specifying that "you must act in favour of your in-group". An alternative interpretation is given in terms of the theory of similarity of beliefs (Rokeach, Smith & Evans, 1960), which states that it is the difference between presumed similarities in beliefs among the members of the in-group and the out-group rather than the social norm of favouritism towards the in-group that mediates the discriminatory behaviour observed by Tajfel. Billig and Tajfel (1973), did, however, consider the possibility that the subjects had assumed that the members of their in-group held the same beliefs. In their study the subjects were told that affiliation was either linked to their preferences in art or was random. Discrimination occurred in both cases but was greater when the subjects were affiliated according to their preferences. Tajfel's study was partially replicated by Allen and Wilder (1973), who found that the subjects attributed greater similarity in belief to members of their in-group rather than to members of the out-group. The mere affiliation into groups based on an arbitrary task had encouraged the attribution of a greater similarity of beliefs to the in-group rather than to the out-group. Going on to analyse the trust aspect, literature has underlined that the essentially social nature of trust makes it an evaluation of the influence that the interaction between trustor, target and context has on one's own results and not an evaluation of individual factors that contribute to this influence (Rotter, 1980). McAllister (1995) distinguishes two types of trust: one based on cognition (which manifests itself usually in task orientated formal situations) and one based on affection (which manifests itself in personal and informal situations). An interesting definition, that includes both the possibility of calculating the results of the effects of the situation and the emotional-propensity aspect of trusting others, has been put forward by Denise Rousseau et al. (1998), who point out that trust is a psychological state that includes the intention to accept one's own vulnerability based on positive expectations towards the intentions or the behaviour of others. Interpersonal trust derives from a belief in the reliability of the partner/s and from the importance they give to the interests of the group. In this case trust is different from other relational variables such as cohesion, attraction of the group towards certain members, friendship, pre-existing relationships between members, familiarity, specific knowledge concerning others (Goodman and Leyden 1991). Considering these distinctions, we can hypothesize that the variables operate on group performance through different mechanisms and that each one has a different predictive value. For example, believing in the reliability of a partner could influence group performance in a way that is different from the desire to remain part of the group. From a practical point of view, different interventions will be needed to stimulate or influence these variables. For example, forcing people to work together for a long time and creating familiarity in this way will not necessarily produce friendship, pleasure, trust or cohesion (Golembiewski and McConkie, 1988).

Objectives of the study

This contribution intends to revisit studies on social affiliation seen as a determinant in favouritism towards in-groups and discrimination towards out-groups (Diehl, 1988;

Tajfel, 1978; Billig and Tajfel, 1973; Allen and Wilder, 1975), evaluating mainly the aspects linked to trust and reliability ratings. It also intends to consider the effects of positive/negative emotional induction and the influence of personality traits on the processes of attribution and social affiliation.

Tools

The Multidimensional Personality Profile (MPP) (Caprara et al., 2006) was used to analyze personality traits, and more specifically the social-emotional scale (which includes the sub-dimensions of empathy, pro-sociality, sociability and interpersonal trust) and the self-presentation scale (which includes the sub-dimensions of self-esteem, social desirability, Machiavellianism / cynicism and self-image management). A translated version of the textual sceneries for sadness and happiness used in the protocol of Mayer, Allen, Beauregard (1995) was used for positive and negative emotional induction. For the evaluation of the elicited emotional state we used the Self-Assessment Manikin scale (Bradley & Lang, 1980). For Test 1 we used a chart containing the following text: "Now imagine you are about to leave for a high altitude climbing expedition. You can choose the members of your team from the two groups, namely the Sweet group and the Savoury group. Make up your line of climbers choosing three climbers from each group and putting the number of your chosen climbers in the little mans in the centre of the chart under the respective roles. The roles are ordered in degree of importance". In the centre of the chart there was a square containing the descriptions of the various roles with their relative prerogatives: (line leader: the most important person and the expert who leads the group; equipment manager: the person who is responsible for the equipment and food; the person who sets up base camp: he is the person responsible for setting up camp; the tent carrier: he is the person who transports the tents; food carrier: the person who transports the food; support worker: a marginal role of support for anyone needing it). At the sides of the central square there were two oval shapes that enclosed respectively stylized little men representing the Savoury Climbers and the Sweet Climbers, with a picture representing the food for the different categories (spaghetti for the Savoury group and cake for the Sweet group). The position of the two groups (on the right or left of the central square) varied in accordance with the balancing function. Every little man was randomly assigned a number from 1 to 26. For Test 2 we used a second chart on which was written: "Very good. Your line has reached the top first establishing a new climbing record" for the condition of success and "Unfortunately your expedition has failed and you have lost a lot of your men" for the condition of failure. For both conditions the subjects were asked: "Now we would like you to indicate which of your team members were the most reliable during the expedition. Write a number from 1 to 5 inside each little man according to the following criteria: 1 for total unreliability; 2 for minimum reliability; 3 for an average reliability; 4 for high reliability; 5 for maximum reliability". In the centre of the chart there were 2 oval shapes, one for the Sweet group and one for the Savoury group each containing the respective graphic element (spaghetti and cake), the textual reference of the corresponding group (Sweet and Savoury) and three little mans inside which the subject had to insert the value of his reliability rating. The following charts were distributed for affiliation: chart A which said: "Please indicate your food preferences choosing between Sweet and Savoury dishes. Write only your first name under your chosen preference (all the information will be statistically elaborated in complete anonymity)". In the centre of the sheet there were two oval shapes containing the

graphic element (cake and spaghetti) and a textual reference of the group (the Sweet group and the Savoury group). Chart B carried the following text: "Even though you have expressed your preference you have been arbitrarily included in the group of people with the opposite preference to your own. So you must write your name in the circle belonging to the group you have been assigned to inverting the preference you previously indicated". In the centre of the sheet there were two oval shapes containing the graphic element (cake and spaghetti) and the textual reference to the group (Sweet and Savoury). Chart C read: "For this test you must be part of the Sweet group (C1) Savoury group (C2). So please write your name in the circle representing the group that has been assigned to you". Chart C was divided into Chart C1 per forced affiliation to the Sweet group and Chart C2 for the forced affiliation to the Savoury group. In the centre of the sheet there was only one oval with the cake and the words 'The Sweet' for Chart C1 and spaghetti and the words 'The Savoury' for Chart C2. Chart D read: "Could you please indicate your culinary preferences, choosing between sweet and savoury dishes. Write your name under the chosen preference". In the centre of the sheet there were two oval shapes containing the graphic element (cake and spaghetti) and the textual reference to the group (sweet and savoury).

Methodology

In the first phase of the research all the 574 students performed an evaluation, using the MPP instrument, of their personality traits related to the areas of social-emotional intelligence (empathy, pro-sociality, sociability and interpersonal trust) and of self-presentation (self-esteem, social desirability, Machiavellianism / cynicism and self-image management). Next, students were randomly assigned to one of the three experimental groups (Group 1: free affiliation; group 2: affiliation after being forced to express a preference; group 3: forced affiliation prior to the manifestation of preference) and one of the six experimental conditions (1: positive emotional induction and mission success; 2: positive emotional induction and mission failure; 3: negative emotional induction and mission success; 4: negative emotional induction and mission failure; 5: no emotional induction and mission success; 6: no emotional induction and mission failure). The experimenter gave instructions for compilation at the moment of handing out the material to each individual. The student was then invited, where required by the assigned experimental conditions, to read and empathize with the situations textually described and aimed at emotional induction, and to then express a rating of their emotional state (Self-Assessment Manikin) elicited by the stimuli presented therein. Subsequently, those assigned to Group 1 were asked to choose their food preference (sweet / savoury), writing their name inside the circle containing the graphic element relevant to the chosen food category (cake for sweet and spaghetti for savoury)(Chart A). Those assigned to group 2, however, after expressing their food preference (chart A), were forced to write their names in the opposite group (chart B). Those belonging to group 3 were arbitrarily assigned to one of the two groups (sweet / savoury; chart C1/2) and only afterwards were asked about their food preferences (chart D). All three groups then went on to do the first test, which consisted in forming a team of climbers choosing six participants (three sweet ones and three savoury ones) and subsequently, for the second test, to give a mark from 1 to 5 for the reliability of the six participants based on the results obtained (success / failure of the ascent carried out by the chosen team of climbers.

Statistic analysis and results

Taking into the consideration the subjects who freely chose their group affiliation in accordance with their food preferences (group 1) we started by verifying if the trust accorded to the members of the in-group was higher than that of the out-group. The results showed that the trust accorded to the members of the in-group was significantly higher (Sig. ,001; with an average of 11,89 for the members of the in-group and 9,00 for those of the out-group). If we then go on to evaluate the influence of the emotional stimulus on the degree of trust (Test 1) we find no significance inside the chosen group. Going on to analyse the results of Test 2, which was aimed at establishing an evaluation of reliability of the members of the climbing team in both the cases of success and failure of the mission, we can see that in both cases the degree of trust accorded was significantly higher for the members of the in-group than for the out-group (Sig.: ,02). Comparing the evaluations of reliability made in the cases of success and failure, we could observe that while the trust accorded to the members of the in-group remained stable, trust accorded to the members of the out-group dropped significantly in the case of failure (mission success, average rating 9,63; mission failure, average rating 8,49; Sig.: ,006). However, if we differentiate by gender, we can see that for females trust remained stable also for the members of the out-group. In the case of mission failure a significant difference emerged between the averages of the trust ratings towards the in-group for subjects who had undergone emotional induction. The negative emotional stimulus appeared when failure was significantly associated to a lowering of trust accorded to the in-group (Sig.: ,05). In the case of success the emotional induction was not associated with any variation of the trust rating. We then proceeded to verify the correlations between the MPP personal scales and the trust rating (Test 2) of those subjected to the negative emotional induction and mission failure. The following correlations emerged: growing empathy produced growing trust towards the out-group (,35**); Machiavellianism was negatively correlated to trust towards the in-group (-,30*). In the condition of mission success and when the emotional stimulus was positive, a negative correlation emerged between social desirability and trust accorded to the in-group (-,42** ,005) and a positive correlation between trust accorded to the out-group and pro-sociality (,32*). In the condition of success and negative emotional stimulus, a significant positive correlation emerged between interpersonal trust and trust accorded to the out-group (,44**). Finally, in the condition of failure and positive emotional induction, no significant correlations emerged. As regards the forced affiliation subsequent to the manifestation of the subject's preference (group 2), we found that in Test 1 trust accorded to the in-group (average 8,72) was lower than trust accorded to the out-group (average 12,17). While when the affiliation was forced before manifestation of the subject's preference (group 3), trust accorded to the in-group (average 12,09) was significantly (Sig. ,001) higher than trust accorded to the out-group (average 8,92), the same as the results for the free affiliation group. Going on to analyse the results of Test 2 both for conditions of success and failure, the ratings for trust attributed to the in-group registered a significant difference (Sig.: ,001) between group 2 (average 8,74 towards the in-group) and group 3 (average 10,50 towards the in-group); a further significant difference emerged in the trust ratings towards the out-group: group 3 (average 9,49), group 2 (average 10,56). The emotional stimulus had no effect. The analysis of the personal traits of group 1 and 3 showed a significant difference (Sig.: ,04) on the scale of self-confidence in the case of success among those who considered the members of the in-group to be more reliable, registering higher trust levels in the presence of lower self-confidence (more

trust towards the in-group members, average 23,35; more trust towards out-group members, average 25.21). In the case of failure, a significant difference was registered (Sig.: .05) on the scale of self-image management and on the scale of pro-sociality among those who considered the in-group members to be more reliable. More trust was associated to higher marks in the management of self-image: average 26.13 for more trust accorded to in-group members; average 24.20 for more trust accorded to out-group members. As regards pro-sociality values an average of 21.67 was registered for higher trust accorded to in-group members and an average of 20.01 for higher trust accorded to out-group members (Sig.: .05). we then went on to analyse how the subjects distributed the roles of leadership in the team. More specifically, we evaluated the attribution of the position of head of the line and the person responsible for the equipment. As regards group 1 we found that 40.0% attributed both these high responsibility roles to in-group members; 24.4% assigned the position of head of the line to the in-group and the equipment management to and out-group member; 20.0% gave the line leadership to an out-group member and equipment management to an in-group member; 15.6% gave both roles to out-group members. In total 64.4% assigned the most important roles to in-group members. Comparing the groups, a significant difference emerged on the MPP scale for empathy between those who assigned the responsible positions to in-group members (average 20.44) compared to the opposite case (those who assigned everything to out-group members, average 18.14) (T-test Sig. .021). Finally, a significant difference emerged on the Machiavellianism / cynicism scale between the group who assigned the role of line leader to an out-group member, reserving the role of equipment management for an in-group member (average 25.0) and the group who delegated both positions of leadership to out-group members (average 20.71) (T-test Sig. .05). We then went on to evaluate the influence of the positive emotional stimulus on the distribution of the positions. In situations of positive emotional stimulus we could note that the more important roles were assigned to in-group members, while in conditions of negative emotional stimulus , the tendency was to attribute the role of line leader to an in-group member and that of equipment management to an out-group member. For group 2 we observed that 18.2% attributed both roles of high responsibility to in-group members; 9.1% assigned the role of line leader to an in-group member and equipment management to an out-group member; 30.3% assigned the position of line leader to an out-group member and equipment management to an in-group member; 42.2% assigned both primary roles to out-group members. In total 27.3% assigned the more important roles to in-group members. Comparing the groups in function of the attribution of positions of responsibility, no significant differences emerged on the MPP scale. Finally, for group 3 we observed that 56.6% of the subjects gave both primary roles to in-group members; 19.7% assigned the primary role to an in-group member and the secondary role to an out-group member; 13.2% assigned both roles to out-group members; 10.5% assigned the more important role to an out-group member and the secondary role to an in-group member. In total 76.3% assigned the more important role to an in-group member. Comparing the groups a significant difference emerged on the MPP scale for pro-sociality among those who assigned both positions of responsibility to in-group members (average 20.49) as compared to the opposite case (those who assigned everything to out-group members, average 22.90) (T-test Sig. .032). A significant difference on the MPP scale for social-emotional intelligence emerged between the group who took on all the leadership roles and the group who assigned all the highest position of responsibility to an out-group member and the secondary position to an in-group member. In the first case we registered an average of 78.09

while in the second case 66.38 (T-test Sig. 042). Finally, a significant difference emerged on the pro-sociality scale between the group who assigned the role of line leader to an out-group member, reserving the role of equipment management for an in-group member (average 20.13) and the group who delegated all the positions of leadership to out-group members (average 22.9) (T-test Sig. .03). we then went on to evaluate the influence of the emotional stimulus on the distribution of the positions. In situations of negative emotional stimulus we registered a tendency towards polarization of the positions (a reinforcement of internal leadership or a reinforcement of external leadership). Both averages increased with a propensity for leadership sharing.

Discussion

The data shows that when the subjects choose their affiliation group freely (group 1), they tend to manifest more trust towards in-group members. Therefore, the data shows that the simple manifestation of a food preference can determine a propensity for trust towards people with the same characteristic. This does not happen when the subjects were arbitrarily forced into a group affiliation and only successively were they allowed to indicate their food preferences for sweet or savoury (group 3). In this case they accorded more trust to in-group members (imposed) independently of their food preferences. Here the variable which determined the propensity to trust was the forced affiliation into that group rather than another. In group 2 the subjects were asked to express their food preferences beforehand and they were then categorized in the opposite group. In this experimental condition the propensity to accord more trust to subjects with similar food preferences was highlighted, rather than the propensity to trust the members of the assigned group (in-group). This atypical tendency shown by group 2 could be caused by a cognitive dissonance between an individual preference and the forced affiliation into a group with opposite preferences. More specifically, it seems to be the preliminary request of the preference that annuls the effect of the minimum group. When the subject in full awareness recalls a personal trait (even if this trait is not a central element of identity), and the affiliation occurs after the recall, the effects of the minimum group are annulled. The reminder of certain aspects of Himself prior to the forced affiliation produces effects that go in the opposite direction to the theory of the minimum group, also in regard to the rating of trust attributed the in-group and out-group members, both in the case of success and failure of the test. When people are allowed to freely choose their group and experience failure, they tend to lower even further the trust rating accorded to the out-group, showing in this was that they significantly attribute the cause of failure to the out-group. In this condition we can presume that a subjective attribution of cause has been activated. The negative emotional stimulus together with the condition of failure determines a significant lowering of the trust rating accorded to the in-group suggesting that a negative emotion combined with failure determines a greater internal attribution of cause. Frustration due to failure alone did not register this kind of tendency. Neither did the positive emotional predisposition or success in the test determine significant variations in the ratings. The personal characteristics played different roles of mediation dependant on the different conditions. For subjects who experienced both negative conditions (failure and negative emotional stimulus), an increase in empathy caused an increase in trust accorded to the out-group, blaming the others less. This would lead us to believe that an empathetic person, more incline to identify himself with others, tends to protect others more than himself or his own

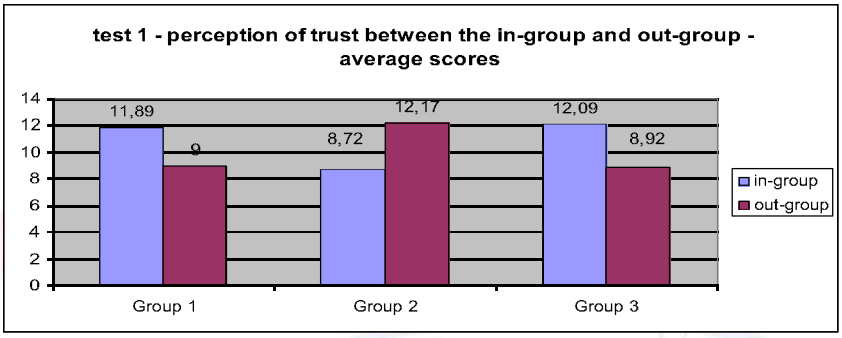
group. An increase in Machiavellianism / cynicism produces a decrease in trust ratings towards in-group members; the Machiavellian subject cynically tends to accuse his own group, holding it responsible for the failure. Rather than protect his own group, in a situation of no advantage, he will despise it, because his bond / participation is only instrumental. For subjects who experienced both the positive conditions (positive stimulus and success), an increase in social desirability produces a decrease in trust ratings towards the in-group. In the case of success, those who aspire to social desirability seem to be more willing to downplay the merits of their own group in order not the irritate the out-group and thus avoid the creation of negative images and opinions towards his person. An increase in pro-sociality produced a higher trust rating towards the out-group, almost as if to share the merits of success. In the conditions of negative emotional stimulus and success in the test, a positive correlation between interpersonal trust and trust accorded to the out-group emerged. As if in conditions of negative emotional predisposition this kind of personal characteristic is more active when subsequently associated with success which modifies (reversing it) the state of the mood. In the passage from a negative state of mood to a positive state of mood the trust rating accorded to the out-group increases. In conditions of success the subject with low self-esteem tends to reinforce his self-esteem through an increase in the trust rating towards members of his own group, distributing internally, from a compensatory viewpoint, the merits of the success. In the case of failure, those who tend to keep the trust ratings high towards their own group also present high values on the scale of self-image management, as if they wish to preserve its value in the eyes of the others in this moment of difficulty for the group and when their self-image might become involved in processes of denigration and discredit. Also in the conditions of failure, more pro-social subjects are orientated to an increase in trust ratings towards the in-group, as if they want to protect their own group in a moment when it is naturally more exposed to tensions and internal conflicts. In reference to the distribution of the positions of leadership and responsibility on the team, we could note that for group 1 and group 3 there was a prevalent tendency to assign the first and second roles to in-group members while for group 2 there was a more prevalent tendency to assign positions of leadership and responsibility to out-group members (72.7% in total as compared with 64.4% accorded to the in-group for group 1 that operated in conditions of free affiliation). As regards personal traits, in group 1 empathy appeared to tend towards an in-group orientation and the subjects characterized for this trait tended to attribute the important roles to the in-group members. The subjects with high Machiavellian / cynicism traits tended to attribute the secondary position to in-group members and the high leadership role to out-group members. Probably, this attitude would allow them to limit the risks of full responsibility while allowing them to exploit a position of power sufficiently enough to maximize its obtainable advantages. In group 3 the subjects with a higher social-emotional intelligence tended to assign the two positions of responsibility to in-group members while the lower levels of social-emotional intelligence showed a tendency to behave in a similar way as the Machiavellians (the highest position to an out-group member and the other position to an in-group member). However, the mistrust and suspicion typical of these subjects could have determined this type of choice, being orientated more to the minimization of risk than to a strategy finalized to achieving subjective advantages. Still inside group 3, the pro-social subjects tended to distribute externally both positions of responsibility. As regards the role of the emotional stimulus, we found that only the negative stimulus was capable of reinforcing the polarized distribution of leadership (totally internal and

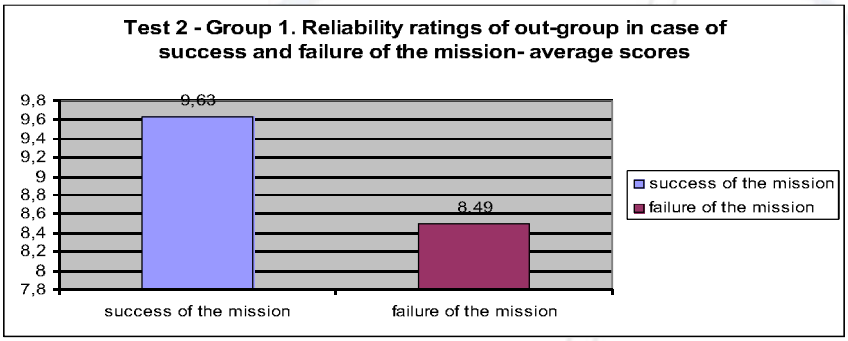
totally external), with a decrease in the intermediate positions characterized by a mixed distribution. All this meant that the group was less flexible and more willing to share the extreme positions of power. For group 2 there were no differences in this sense on the personality scale. This could be due to the particular experimental conditions of the test which required the subject to be forcibly affiliated to a group made up of subjects with food preferences opposite to his. The denial of his manifest preference and the forced integration in an opposing group could probably have generated a conflict and a greater perception of a state of coercion. This did not happen in group 3 where the preference was expressed only after the forced affiliation. The resulting cognitive dissonance and the immediate desire to react to this dissonance could have neutralized the personal traits and their relative subjective inclinations.

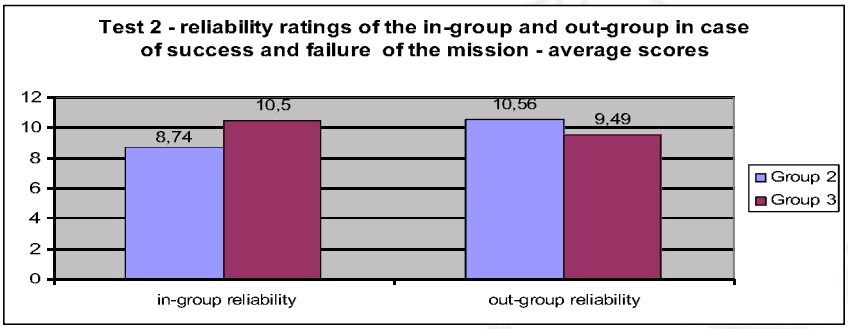
Conclusions

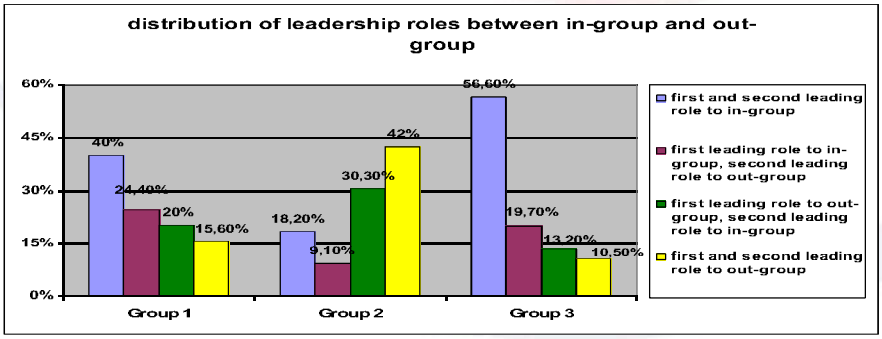
In coherence with the minimum group theory (the conditions of which have been replicated by us in the third experimental condition), our variables object of investigation, that is, the distribution of a feeling of trust and the rating of the level of inter-group and intra-group reliability, undergo the effects of social affiliation exactly in the same way as for the distribution of advantages/disadvantages. Therefore, both the trust accorded and the reliability attributed, both in the case of success and failure of the tests, is greater towards the members of one's own group rather than to the members of an out-group. We can state that the experimental results extend the laws of the theory of the minimum group and the effects of social affiliation also to the feeling of inter-group and intra-group trust and to the evaluation of reliability.
When social affiliation occurs subsequent to the elicitation of the subject's preferences the effects of the minimum group are annulled, and in fact the opposite is noted. Forced affiliation is to all effects impeded by the voluntary recall of the preferences and the person does not see himself in the group he has been arbitrarily assigned to but rather in the group that is similar to his own preferences. From a comparison between groups 2 and 3 we could find that the experimental conditions of group 2 inhibit the effects of the forced affiliation.
From the comparison between groups 1 and 3 a common tendency emerged to give more trust to in-group members (assigning them the more responsible roles). However, in group 3 this tendency was more evident (76.3% as opposed to 64.4% in group 1).
In relation to the role of the emotional stimulus, we found that only the negative stimulus was capable of reinforcing the polarized distribution of leadership (totally internal or totally external), with a decrease in the intermediate positions characterised by a mixed distribution.
When people freely choose their affiliation group and experience failure, they tend to lower their rating of reliability towards the out-group, showing in this way that they significantly blame the out-group for the failure. The negative emotional stimulus, when associated with a condition of failure, determines a significant decrease in reliability ratings of the in-group. This suggests that a negative emotional predisposition, together with a failure, determines a greater attribution to internal causes.
The personal characteristics considered have shown an irrelevant weight on the laws of the minimum group. The only dimension that has shown any influence and can be

considered capable of mediating the effects of the minimum group was the pro-social characteristic.









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