# MULTIPLE MEANINGS OF COMMUNICATIVE ACTS IN THE REDUCTION OF VICARIOUS COGNITIVE DISSONANCE

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The tradition of social cognition has focused on the way in which people perceive and think about their social world. One of the hallmarks of perceivers' social cognitive schemas is a preference for consistency among cognitions. To extend an example of Leon Festinger's (1957), if we find ourselves standing in the rain, we prefer being wet to being dry. Getting wet may be physically uncomfortable; viewing the world as inconsistent is psychologically intolerable. Our drive to perceive consistency among our cognitions spawned the research tradition of cognitive dissonance and gave rise to more than 50 years of research to understand the ramifications and limits of our consistency need.

Inconsistency, rather than consistency, lies at the heart of research in cognitive dissonance. The latter is the state we seek; the former is the condition that gives rise to an unpleasant motivational state that can be satisfied when the inconsistency is resolved. The signal that alerts us to possible inconsistency usually arises from a communication. We may occasionally say something we do not believe; we may urge others to act in a way that is discrepant from our own behaviors; we may state a preference for a choice alternative that is inconsistent with elements of our attitudes; we may communicate attitudes that compromise our own sense of self-esteem. In these and myriad other ways, social actors often find that their communicative acts have jeopardized their cognitive

consistency and placed them in a motivational quandary.   Research over the past several decades has made it clear that people respond to this quandary with cognitive changes designed to restore consistency.

In a typical research study, people are asked to make a statement that is at variance with their privately held attitude.  The state of uncomfortable arousal that results from such an act (Croyle and Cooper, 1983; Elliot and Devine, 1994) motivates people to change the cognitive representation of their attitude to restore consistency with their behavior (Festinger and Carlsmith, 1959; Cooper, 2007).  By changing their private attitude, discrepancy with their public communication is eliminated and the aversive motivational state is reduced.

It has become apparent that people's need for consistency extends to their social groups.  Matz and Wood (2005) showed that the anticipation that members of one's social group hold inconsistent attitude positions on a topic induces the discomfort of cognitive dissonance and subsequent efforts to reduce it.  Similarly, Glasford, Dovidio and Pratto (2009) showed that intragroup inconsistency led to efforts to reduce the dissonance through the enhancement of social identity.  They further showed that when dissonance is aroused though intragroup inconsistency, only group-based strategies can effectively reduce the discomfort.  McKimmie, Terry and Hogg (2009) showed that dissonance in a group can be exarcerbated by the knowledge that other group members are generally consistent in their behaviors and attitudes and can be reduced by knowledge that other group members act inconsistently.

Recently, our program of research has examined a potent extension of cognitive dissonance, one that is explicitly based on group membership.  Cooper and Hogg (2007)

proposed that people can experience cognitive dissonance vicariously on behalf of in-group members. If a person were to be merely a witness to the counterattitudinal advocacy of another person, the witness may also experience an unpleasant tension state and be motivated to change his or her own attitude to bring it in line with the speaker's communication. This phenomenon of *vicarious cognitive dissonance* occurs when the witness and the communicator share membership in a meaningful social group.

In dissonance research, whether at the individual or group level, a process is set in motion by a public communication of a position or a decision. At the group level, the process becomes more complex because the cognitive elements include cognitions at multiple levels of analysis. Consistency of individual cognitions co-exists with cognitions at the group level. The motivation for cognitive consistency requires attention to the individual's own positions and attitudes as well as positions adopted by the group and the members that comprise the group.

Although communication is central to the dissonance process, its role has rarely been examined. Most particularly in the group context, a communication is a statement of a position and is also a statement about the essential meaning of the group. It is both an act and a higher order communication about the essence of one's group. In the current chapter, we will focus on the meaning of dissonant communications, especially at the group level. We will examine the current state of research on group-based vicarious cognitive dissonance and then present new research on the effects of communications that simultaneously express group members' attitudinal positions and serve as multi-level communications that threaten the essence of the social group. We will show that the

typical impact of dissonance motivation on attitudes will be overridden when the communication questions the essential nature of the social group.

## Vicarious Dissonance: The experience of dissonance as a function of shared social identity.

The concept of vicarious cognitive dissonance is based on the observation, frequently overlooked in early work in attitude research, that people's identity are rooted in the social groups to which they belong. The theory of social identity offers a wide ranging perspective on the relationship between collective self-conception and both group and intergroup processes (for contemporary statements see Hogg, 2005a, 2006). It incorporates Tajfel and Turner's (1979) original emphasis on intergroup relations, social comparison and self-esteem motivation, as well as Turner and colleagues' later analysis of self-categorization and prototype–based depersonalization (Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher, & Wetherell, 1987). During the past twenty years, social identity theory has had a significant impact in areas that include stereotyping (Oakes, Haslam & Turner, 1994), social Influence (Turner, 1991), group solidarity (Hogg, 1993), social cognition (Abrams & Hogg, 1999), depersonalization (Reicher, Spears & Postmes, 1995), leadership (Hogg, 2001; Hogg & van Knippenberg, 2003) and extremism (Hogg, 2007).

According to social identity theory, people cognitively represent groups in terms of prototypes – that is, fuzzy sets of attributes that simultaneously capture in-group similarities and intergroup differences. These attributes include beliefs, attitudes, perceptions, feelings, intentions and behaviors – in short any and all dimensions that can be used to segment the social world into discrete categories that are distinctive and high

in entitativity (Hamilton & Sherman, 1996). Prototypes describe, evaluate and prescribe group attributes.

The process of social categorization perceptually depersonalizes other people. It transforms perceptions of other people from unique individuals into embodiments of the relevant in-group or out-group prototype. Categorization-based depersonalization underpins stereotyping and valenced perceptions of other people.

Social categorization of self operates in exactly the same way. It depersonalizes self-conception and transforms one's own perceptions, beliefs, attitudes, feelings and behaviors to conform to the in-group prototype. Self-categorization transforms individuals into group members, individual and interpersonal self-concept into collective self-concept, personal identity into social identity and individual behavior into group and intergroup behavior. Self-categorization generates such well-defined and heavily researched phenomena as in-group bias, intergroup discrimination, ethnocentrism, in-group cohesion and solidarity, in-group loyalty and attraction and in-group normative attitudes, feelings and behaviors.

Depersonalization involves assimilation of self and others to relevant prototypes. Thus, within a contextually salient group, self-categorization replaces self-other differences with in-group prototypical similarity or interchangeability. The self-other distinction is blurred into a single, collective self: Self and other are *fused* into a single entity. This fusion gives rise to *intersubjectivity*, where one experiences the other as oneself. Working from different theoretical orientations, Wright, Aron and Tropp (2002) have also argued that self-categorization extends the self-concept to include others in the self, and research by Mackie and associates (Mackie, Maitner & Smith, 2007) shows that

self-categorization may facilitate a process whereby in-group members experience the emotions of fellow group members.

The fusing of the self with one's group and with prototypical group members requires that identification with the group be strong. The more strongly a person feels about her or his membership in the group, the more central the group is to a person's self-definition and self-concept. Fusing of self and other is heightened when the group's prototype is clear and focused and when the observed in-group member is highly prototypical of the group. Research has shown that people in-groups are perceptually attuned to subtle differences among group members in how prototypical they are (e.g., Haslam, Oakes, McGarty, Turner, & Onorato, 1995) - there is a clearly perceived prototypically gradient that engenders both rejection of marginally prototypical members who threaten group integrity and strong endorsement of highly prototypical members (Hogg, 2005b). Thus, the process of fusion of self and other members of one's group will be affected by the degree of perceived prototypicality of a specific other member, and moderated by perceived self-prototypicality.

Another aspect of social identity theory that is relevant to the theory of vicarious cognitive dissonance is its perspective on attitude change. The social influence process associated with social identity is referent informational influence (Abrams & Hogg, 1990; Turner & Oakes, 1989). When people identify with a group, they learn the group's normative attitudes primarily from the behaviors of highly prototypical in-group members. It is therefore not surprising that we tend to assimilate our attitudes to group standards (Turner, 1991) or that our attitudes polarize toward positions expressed by group members (Mackie, 1986; Mackie & Cooper. 1984). In short, the behavior and

attitudes of in-group members have their greatest impact on those who are highly identified with the group and it is they who are more likely to be influenced by group norms (Terry & Hogg, 1996). As we shall see shortly, a clear derivation of this fact is that people who are highly identified with their group are the ones who are most likely to experience vicarious cognitive dissonance, especially based on the behavior of prototypical group members.

Attitude change as a function of group membership has primarily been viewed as coldly cognitive. The intriguing possibility suggested by the theory of vicarious dissonance, is that self-categorization based attitude change may occur by a more affectively-toned dissonance process. It is an idea especially consistent with Hogg's uncertainty-identity theory – a motivational extension of social identity theory that argues that people are motivated to identify with groups, particularly high entitativity groups (Hamilton & Sherman, 1996), in order to reduce feelings of uncertainty about themselves and things that relate to or reflect on self (Hogg, 2000, 2007). Vicarious dissonance presumably involves vicarious uncertainty pivoting on conflict between self-relevant behaviors and beliefs.

The important idea drawn from social identity theory is that where common group membership is psychologically salient, social categorization of self and in-group others generates prototype-based depersonalization. Self and others are "fused" because they are viewed in terms of a common in-group prototype – others' attitudes, feelings, experiences and behaviors can become one's own, particularly when the other is a highly prototypical member of a group with which we identify strongly. There emerges an empathic bond, an intersubjectivity, which enables one to experience the other as oneself. Not only may this

protect against harming the other (cf. Galinsky & Moskowitz, 2000) – after all, the other *is* the self—but it may also allow one to vicariously experience others' thoughts and feelings, and to take the role of another in constructing a sense of who one is (see Mead, 1934).

**Dissonance following from shared social identity**.  Intrigued by the possibility of a theoretical marriage between dissonance and social identity, we predicted that people's shared social identity would automatically activate a shared dissonance process if a fellow group member were observed communicating an attitude-discrepant position. At the core of vicarious dissonance is the notion that dissonance brought about the actions of a prototypical member of a social group will lead observers, as fellow group members to change their own attitude even though they have no direct responsibility for the dissonance-inducing act.

This possibility was first tested by Norton, Monin, Cooper and Hogg (2003).  In a series of three experiments, Norton et al assessed the consequences of observing a fellow group member communicate an attitudinal position that was contrary to the speaker's and the participants' private attitude.  In one study, students at the University of Queensland observed another UQ student agree to make a speech favoring an increase in university fees, a position that was contrary to the participant's and the fellow group member's private attitude.  The participant witnessed the fellow UQ student agree to make the speech favoring fee increases and also witnessed the speechmaker indicate that he/she was privately against that position.  From decades of research on cognitive dissonance, we would predict that the speechmaker would have experienced dissonance and changed his attitude about tuition fees as a consequence of agreeing to make the speech.  We also

could predict that the speechmaker would experience dissonance if and only if he had been given free choice to decline the request to make the speech (Linder, Cooper and Jones, 1967) and believed that the speech might have a potentially aversive consequence (Cooper and Fazio, 1984). However, in the Norton et al. (2003) studies, the speechmaker was a confederate and not the real participant. The real participant was the observer. Would the observer experience dissonance?

The results of the Norton et al study showed that observers changed their attitudes in the direction of the group member's counterattitudinal speech, but only in the conditions in which the speech maker would have been expected to experience dissonance: under conditions of free choice and a potentially aversive consequence arising from the speech. In the absence of those two variables, the observer participant showed no attitude change.

The impact of the empathic bond, or intersubjectivity between the group members, was shown in two ways. First, the effect held only if the observer and the speechmaker were from the same social group. If the speechmaker was from a different university and thus did not share a common social identity with the observer, there was no attitude change. Second, even when the observer and the speechmaker were members of the same social group, the impact of the speech on the participant's attitude was a function of the strength of identification that the participant felt for his group. In the absence of strong group identification, there was no vicarious dissonance and no attitude change. In a subsequent study, Monin, Norton, Cooper and Hogg (2004) found that the vicarious dissonance effect was correlated with participants' degree of empathy.

Vicarious dissonance, then, seems to be an empathic bonding between people sharing a common and important social identity.

The data from the Norton et al (2003) and Monin et al (2004) studies also revealed that the attitude change effect was accompanied by the experience of vicarious discomfort, similar to the way personal discomfort accompanies personal dissonance (Cooper & Coyle, 1983; Elliot & Devine, 1989; Loch & Jacopo, 1990). When asked, "How would you feel if you were in the shoes of the person giving the speech?" participants in the high vicarious dissonance conditions responded with high levels of discomfort. On the basis of these data, we concluded that people indeed can experience dissonance vicariously on behalf of another person, provided they feel an empathic bond as a function of their shared social identity. Moreover, the experience of vicarious dissonance results in attitude change in the direction of the fellow group member's communication.

### Discrepant behavior as a multi-level communication.

### The Dilemma of Counterattitudinal Communication.

Other research traditions have examined the impact of a group member acting in ways that are discrepant from the group's position. A comparison of the phenomenological status of the situation we have studied and ostensibly similar situations in prior research reveals some interesting differences. In Schachter's (1951) seminal work on deviation and rejection, confederates serving as group members espoused positions that were at variance with the positions held by most group members. Despite the common in-group bond, group members did not show change in the direction of the deviate's position but rejected the deviant instead.

In more recent studies, Marques and colleagues presented evidence for a black sheep effect (Marques, 1990; Marques, Yzerbyt & Leyens, 1988). In this research, as in Schachter's (1951), people whose opinions deviated from a normative group position were derogated and rejected following the expression of their positions. However, the black sheep effect added the further observation that counter normative deviants from one's own in-group were derogated more than were deviants from an out-group. Marques, Abrams and Serodio (2001), for example, showed university students the opinions of in-group and out-group members concerning student initiation practices at their university. It was normative for students to support initiation practices. However, the opinions of the alleged other students varied in their degree of support for the normative position. When Marques et al asked the participants how they felt about the students whose opinions they had been shown, they rated those students who had expressed deviant opinions as less attractive than those who had expressed attitudes consistent with the group's position. In addition, being exposed to counternormative attitudes from in-group members caused participants to narrow the range of attitudes that they found to be acceptable.

Our studies appear to show a different effect. When our participants learned that an in-group member had publicly communicated a position in favor of increased tuition fees -- a clearly counter-normative position -- the participants rallied around, rather than rejected, the speaker. Why was there neither rejection nor derogation? The apparent difference in findings is testimony to what is special about vicarious dissonance. The in-group member simultaneously violated the group norm and the speaker's own position. At one level, the explicit communication was in favor of a position that was contrary to

the group's norm.   At a more subtle level, it communicated the dissonance dilemma –

i.e., acquiescing to the will of the experimenter who requested the pro-fee statement.  For

in-group members, the social pain caused by the dissonance dilemma was clearly

understood.  They vicariously felt her or his discomfort and expressed their attitudinal

support for their fellow-in-group member.   In the wake of dissonance, the tendency to

reject and derogate an in-group member was trumped by the experience of vicarious

dissonance.

### Counterattitudinal Communications that Threaten the Group.

The act of attitude change is not an easy one.  It may require a good deal of

psychological work and reorganization.   A changed attitude implies downstream changes

in the cognitive architecture that supported one's original attitude.  If a person formerly

believed that it was wrong to raise university fees, it is likely that myriad other cognitions

accompanied that attitude.  There are beliefs about the role of fees in university

governance, knowledge of alternate sources of income, and attitudes about egalitarianism

among many other possible cognitions into which an anti-fee increase attitude

comfortably fit.  To change that attitude implies a change in other beliefs, values or

behaviors in order to accommodate the newly changed attitude.

We believe that the cognitive work in which people engage is based on the

premise that the social in-group is an important source of reward and esteem for

individuals.  They will engage in the psychological work for either of two reasons.   First,

its effect is to offer support to a group member who has been placed in the dissonance

dilemma.  Knowing that the group member is likely to change his or her attitude

following an attitude discrepant remark, people change their own position to offer the

support that buttresses the esteem of the group.  Second, knowing that the group member is likely to change his or her attitude provides statistical evidence that the group norm will change, albeit slightly, following the speechmaker's change.   Thus, to support the in-group member and to adapt to a new in-group norm, people change their attitude.

People take a different stance when the communication suggests something more draconian.   When a group member's communication indicates that an essential aspect of the group may be threatened, we suggest that group members will not support the communication or the communicator.  Consider a value that lies at the heart of group identity, such as being egalitarian and non-racist.  A group member who delivers a racist statement threatens the anti-racist core value of the group.  It is illustrative of our premise that a statement can have multiple levels of communication.  At the basic level, a racist statement may be a communication about a group member's position on racial equality. At a more complex level, understanding that the group member may have acceded to a request to make a statement contrary to his attitudes may lead to intersubjectivity and empathy, leading to increased support for the group member.  However, there is still a more complex level in which a statement that strikes at the group's core values ceases to produce empathy despite the group member's assertion that he does not believe the position advocated in the statement.

We believe that when communications challenge important group identity values, group members must make an important initial judgment in order to determine whether vicarious dissonance will lead to attitude change supportive of the group member or to rejection of the member from the group.  We noted earlier that group members who understand that a counternormative message is also counterattitudinal tend to experience

intersubjectivity and empathy with the communicator. However, the importance of the threatened value makes this judgment all the more difficult. How credible is the protestation of a group member that he does not really believe what he has been asked to communicate when it is antithetical to a core value? We believe this a 'hard sell' and we predict that in situations in which counterattitudinal messages strike at the group's core value, the less it will be perceived as counterattitudinal and the less likely it will be for group members to offer their empathy and attitudinal support to a group member. Derogation and rejection from the group are more likely. Moreover, derogation and rejection will also be a function of group identity with those group members who feel more strongly identified with their group showing the greatest amount of rejection and derogation.

**Perceptions of Racism and Vicarious Dissonance: Some new evidence**

In order to conduct research on reactions to counter-attitudinal behaviors that communicate social identity threat, we first had to find a value that was perceived as important to our sample – Princeton University undergraduates. Pilot testing indicated that Princeton students view being nonracist as an important part of their Princeton identity. Thus, we set the counter-attitudinal behavior used in our studies such that it could be viewed as communicating aspects of the counter-attitudinal actor's racial prejudice. Specifically, the domain we chose for our racialized counter-attitudinal behavior was that of budget cuts to minority student organizations on campus. Our pilot tested the attitudes of Princeton students regarding cutting the budget of minority student organizations. A vast majority of Princeton students reported that they are against cutting the budget of minority student organizations and when asked to suggest a percentage to

be cut to minority student organizations individuals suggested an average of 20%. We also asked participants to provide a percentage to be cut that they imagine someone who is racially motivated would suggest, to which they responded with 60%.

In the first study, we brought participants into the lab ostensibly for a study on "speech patterns." The study followed the procedures used in previous vicarious dissonance research (Norton, Monin, Cooper, & Hogg, 2003), where participants listened to a speech supposedly provided by another participant. The speech consisted of the other participants stating that they are against cutting the budget of minority student organizations yet later freely making arguments for such action. We instantiated aversive consequences by claiming that the Dean's office would see the arguments made for cutting the budget and use them to determine if actual budget cuts should be made to the organizations. Two days prior to entering the lab, we recorded the strength of the participants' Princeton identity and their support for cutting the budget of minority student organizations. We also measured participants' level of self-discomfort, other-discomfort, vicarious-discomfort, and degree of attitude change in support of cutting the budget of minority student organizations. Moreover, we measured how typical the participants viewed the speech-givers to be as Princeton students and how racially motivated the participants perceived the speech to be. Consistent with previous research on vicarious dissonance, we expected participants who did not (vs. did) perceive the speech as racially motivated to express greater attitude change. Alternatively, we expected participants who did (vs. did not) perceive the speech as racially motivated to perceive the speech-giver as less typical. Both of these effects should be stronger for high identifiers compared to low identifiers.

Indeed, findings from the study were in support of our predictions. There was a significant positive relationship between Princeton identity and attitude change. There was a significant negative relationship, however, between perceptions of racial motivation and attitude change. These findings were qualified by an identity by perceptions of racial motivation interaction such that there was a significant positive relationship between identity and attitude change for participants who did not perceive the speech as racially motivated -- but , as predicted, this was not the case for participants who perceived the speech as racially motivated (see Figure 1). There was also a significant identity by perceptions of racial motivation interaction for speech-giver typicality such that there was a positive relationship between identity and speech-givers' typicality for participants who did not perceive the speech as racially motivated yet a negative relationship between identity and speech-givers' typicality for participants who did perceive the speech as racially motivated. The opposite pattern of results occurred for self-discomfort with identity positively predicting self-discomfort for participants who perceived the speech as racially motivated and identity negatively predicting self-discomfort for participants who did not perceive the speech as racially motivated.

Findings from this first study suggests that reactions to witnessing counter-attitudinal behavior from an in-group member varies as a function of what one perceives that behavior as communicating. When the counter-attitudinal behavior is perceived as threatening to the social identity, in this case as racially motivated, individuals respond by casting out the actor rather than changing their attitude to be in agreement with the behavior as seen in previous vicarious dissonance work.

While the first study provided good initial support for our predictions, we ran a second study to address some limitations. The results from the first study are correlational in nature so we were unable to make causal claims regarding our findings. Secondly, it is important that we determine that our effects were not simply due to the fact that the counter-attitudinal behavior was also counter-normative. In the second study, we adapted a distinction suggested by Efron and Monin (2010) in a study on moral licensing. Efron and Monin showed that people will be forgiven their trespasses, even on racist policies, if they had previously acted in a non-racist way *and* their racist communication was ambiguous. If the statement was unambiguously racist, then no amount of prior good deeds could save them from derogation by social perceivers. In our second study, we systematically manipulated the degree of budget cuts that the speech writer proposed to bring down upon minority organizations, ranging from those that could be considered ambiguously racist to those that were unambiguously racist.

Pilot data had indicated that the normative view of the degree to which budgets should be cut for minority organizations, in the wake of the university's fiscal shortfall, was 20%. We told our participants that the speech writer was aware that most in-group members (Princeton University students) had suggested 20% reductions. In all conditions, the speech maker indicated that he or she was personally against cutting the budget. At this point, the conditions varied. In the *normative control* condition, the participant heard the speech member agree to advocate for budget cuts and suggested a 20% reduction. In the *ambiguously racist* condition the speech maker agreed to write a budget cutting speech but chose to advocate a 30% reduction. In the *unambiguously racist* condition, the speech maker chose to advocate a 60% reduction in funds. We

predicted that vicarious dissonance would cause participants in the 30% condition to support cutting the budget more than participants in the other two conditions while participants in the 60% condition would derogate the speech-givers by rating them as less worthy and typical group members than participants in the other two conditions. We expected that both of these effects would be moderated by the participants' degree of social identity with their group.

Findings were in support of our predictions. Participants who listened to the 30% speech changed their attitude to be in greater support of cutting the budget of minority student organizations more than participants in the other two conditions. Moreover, there was a positive relationship between identity with Princeton and attitude change for participants who heard the 30% condition but not the other two conditions. Participants who listened to the 60% speech perceived the speech-givers as less typical compared to participants in the other two conditions. Furthermore, there was a significant negative relationship between identity with Princeton and perceptions of speech-givers typicality but not for the other two conditions (see Figure 2).

These findings provide initial support for the notion that group members respond to communications at multiple levels. Unlike other counterattitudinal communications, people respond to witnessing counter-attitudinal behavior that communicates a social identity threat in a manner other than attitude change. Derogation of group members by finding them unworthy to be members of the in-group is a more direct means of dealing with the dissonance of the communication while simultaneously protecting the integrity of the group.

In the two studies presented above individuals alleviated dissonance by perceiving the counter-attitudinal actor as atypical, but there may also be other dissonance reduction strategies that individuals may use. These strategies all serve as a means of protecting the group from the counter-attitudinal actor and include changing the perceptions of group heterogeneity and derogating the counter-attitudinal actor. Surely there is still much work to be done, primarily to ensure that the findings above are indeed dissonance findings. Future studies should test for these effects while also manipulating fundamental antecedents of dissonance such as choice or aversive consequences. We would expect that individuals will protect their social group from an in-group member who is forced to engage in an identity threatening counter-attitudinal behavior or if the behavior does not lead to aversive consequences. An another intriguing line of potential research would be to investigate how various forms of affirmation, including self, group, and other, may impact how individuals respond to witnessing social identity threatening counter-attitudinal behaviors.

## Conclusions

For decades, psychology has been guided, at least in part, by the proposition that people prefer consistency among their cognitions. Although typically conceived as an intrapsychic phenomenon, recent research has made it clear that the preference for consistency exists at the interpersonal and intergroup levels as well. Communication is crucial to the process by which people infer the degree of consistency or dissonance that occurs in a social situation. We have argued in this chapter that communication is a multi-level process that can be used to infer a person's attitude, to experience intersubjectivity and therefore vicarious dissonance, or to feel threatened by the

undermining of group values that lie at the heart of social identity.  Understanding the

level at which a communication will be perceived is key to understanding when group

members will be embraced for their counterattitudinal advocacy or ostracized from their

social group.

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Figure 1. *Degree of attitude change in support of cutting the budget of minority student organizations for participants who perceived the speech-giver as racially motivated, 1 standard deviation above the mean, and participants did not perceive the speech-giver as racially motivated, 1 standard deviation below the mean, as a function of Princeton identity.*
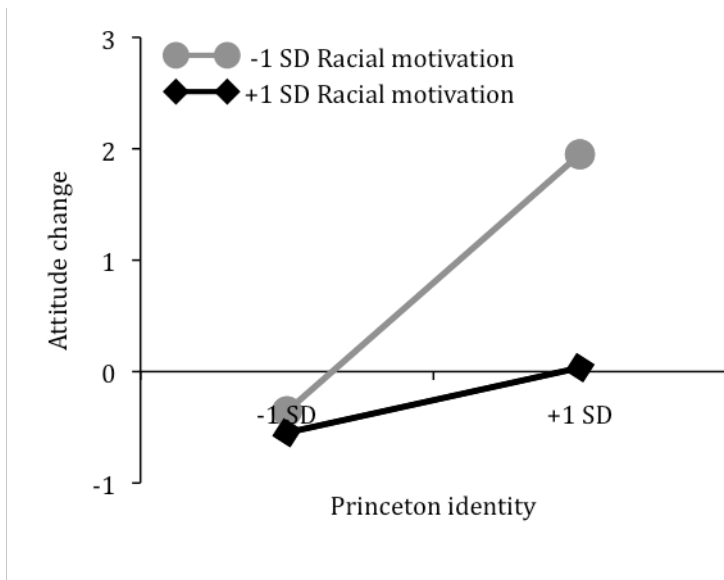
Figure 2. *Degree to which participants perceived the normative (20%), ambiguously racist (30%), and unambiguously racist (60%) speech givers as typical Princeton students as a function of participants' Princeton identity.*