Affect Control Theory

Deflection

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Affect Control Theory Overview

1. Measurement of cultural meaning

2. Affective processing of social events

3. Control principle: minimize deflection

1. Measurement of Cultural Meaning

- The vast majority of variation in affective meaning can be captured in 3 dimensions: Evaluation, Potency, and Activity

  - Identities, Emotions, Behaviors, and Settings

  - Compare cultures and test for meaningful sub-cultures

  - Investigate possibilities of cultural change

  - New developments with word-embeddings!

2. Affective Processing of Events

- Social action is affectively processed in terms of Actor-Behavior-Object events

- New impressions of each element of Actor-Behavior-Object events form as a consequence of the event

- ACT has validated equations to predict the new impressions of the elements

- The squared Euclidean distance between the fundamental meaning and transient impression of the 3 elements is called the **deflection** of the event

- It's an indicator of cultural likelihood

3. Control Mechanism

Feedback Mechanisms

- Like a thermostat

  - Have a desired level

  - Movement away from desired level forces a change in behavior

Deflection

- In ACT, the control mechanism is **deflection**

- The desired level is **0**

- the theory hinges on the proposition that people will act in ways to maintain cultural meanings

  - **minimize** deflection

  - Optimization problem

Response to High Deflection?

- Restorative action

  - New behavior that will decrease deflection

- Redefinition of elements

  - Modify actor or object

  - Relabel Actor, Behavior, and/or Object

Boyle and McKinzie

Resolving Negative Affect

- Let's replicate their simulations to see how interact works

Examples from the reading

Table 5. Examples of Simulations in which Respondents "Protect the Self:" Cases 5 and 6

First simulation input		Deflection	Second simulation input		Deflection
Boyfriend coerces Girlfriend		16.3	Boyfriend coerces *Uneasy, Young* Girlfriend		9.3
Girlfriend rebuffs Boyfriend		18.2	*Uneasy, Young* Girlfriend rebuffs Boyfriend		9.5
Girlfriend pushes Boyfriend		24.2	*Uneasy, Young* Girlfriend pushes Boyfriend		13.5
Boyfriend rapes Girlfriend		36.4	Boyfriend rapes *Uneasy, Young* Girlfriend		22.9
Output of final event for female			**Output of final event for female**		
Emotions	No words in range	−1.46, −4.37, 1.07	Emotions	Shocked, Anxious	−.16, −1.27, 1.38
Attributes	Inconsiderate, Mean	−3.88, −1.71, 1.19	Attributes	Inconsiderate, Prejudiced	−3.62, −1.19, .21
Labels	Pornographer, Slut	−2.44, .26, 1.27	Labels	Pornographer, Slut	−2.41, .34, 1.31
Output of final event for male			**Output of final event for male**		
Emotions	Panicked, Angry	−2.50, −.99, 1.97	Emotions	Panicked, Angry	−2.33, −1.19, 2.00
Attributes	Violent, Abusive	−4.25, −.24, 2.52	Attributes	Violent, Abusive	−3.62, −.04, 2.59
Labels	Rapist, Pimp	−3.35, 1.37, 2.15	Labels	Pimp, Rapist	−2.79, 1.39, 2.18

Note: Simulations are conducted from the female's perspective with the female Indiana (2002–2004) dictionary. Attributes or labels chosen to represent respondents' narratives are italicized. Deflection scores that range from 0.0 to 7.9 indicate the female would perceive the event as an "expected" event; scores that range from 8 to 14.9 indicate an "unusual" event; scores that range from 15 to 21.9 indicate a "weird" event; and scores that are higher than 22 indicate an "impossible" event (Heise 2013).