

Predicting the beliefs and opinions of others

Are people less prone to consider the minds of out-group members?

BRYONY PAYNE¹, GEOFFREY BIRD², & CAROLINE CATMUR¹

¹ Department of Psychology, King's College London

² Department of Experimental Psychology, University of Oxford

Background

Understanding others, such that we can infer their mental states, is an important part of social interaction (Heyes & Frith, 2014). **Societies are becoming ever more polarised** on the basis of political persuasion, religion, ethnicity and social background (Iyengar & Westwood, 2015). This suggests that **individuals are getting worse at understanding those who differ from themselves**.

Previous studies have shown that people attribute **fewer and less sophisticated mental states** to members of out-groups (Demoulin, 2004) and perceive them to experience **less complex emotions** than members of their in-group (Harris & Fiske, 2009).

Are people less prone to consider the minds of out-group members?

Research Questions

Do people **seek more information about in-group minds** than out-group minds when considering their mental states?

Are people **more accurate at inferring the mental state of in-group minds** relative to out-group minds?

Are people **more confident in their ability to predict out-group minds** relative to in-group minds?

Given new information, **are people less prone to update their mental state predictions for out-group minds** relative to in-group minds?

Methods

SELF-VIEW
ON ISSUE 1

What is YOUR view on the statement that:

“Poor people are poor because of bad attitudes.”

Strongly agree

Slightly agree

Neither

Slightly disagree

Strongly disagree

OTHER-VIEW
ON ISSUE 1

Person 62 said that they **slightly disagree** that “Poor people are poor because of bad attitudes.”

Stimuli: Statements and previous responses are from the Survey of Beliefs and Opinions (Saucier, 2018)

PREDICTING OTHER'S
VIEW ON ISSUE 2

Given this, how do you think Person 62 responded to the statement that:

“Only people who know how to read and write should be allowed to vote”

Strongly agree

Slightly agree

Neither

Slightly disagree

Strongly disagree

How confident are you in your answer?

0 (not at all) – 100 (extremely)

CONSIDERING THE
OTHER'S MIND

You can now choose to buy up to 5 cards for this person. Each card contains another view from this person so you have more information.

How many cards do you want to buy?

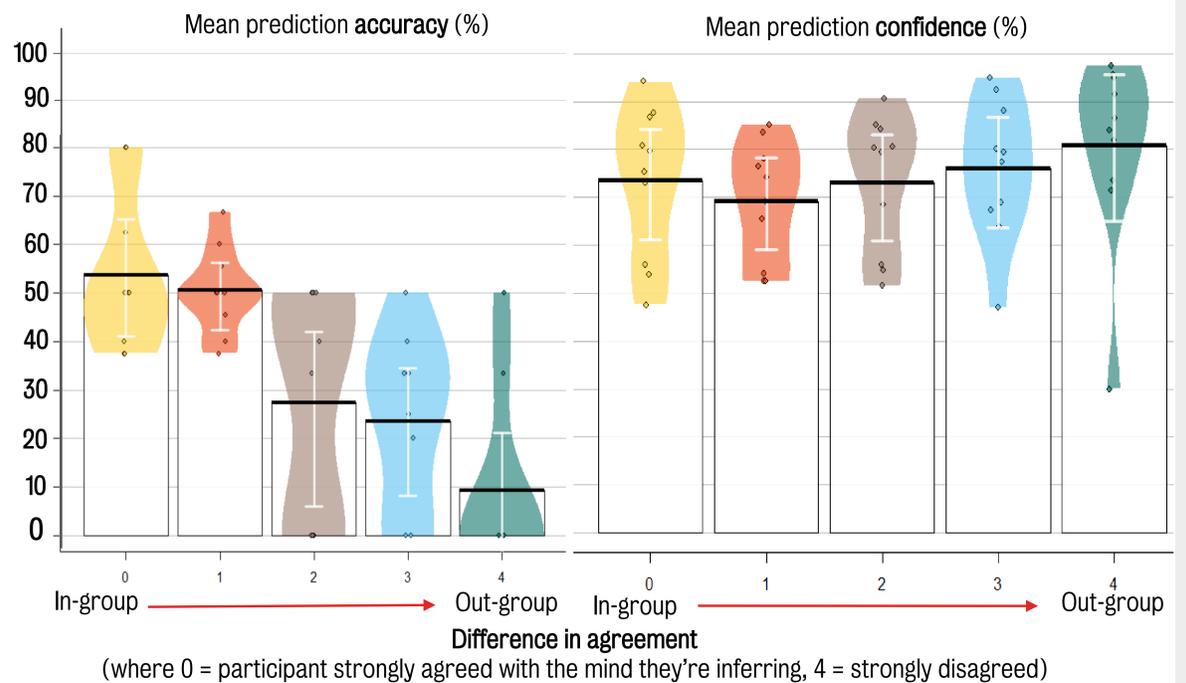
CHANGE TO UPDATE PREDICTION ON ISSUE 2

Measures

- Accuracy on mental state prediction before any further information is bought.
- Participant confidence in their prediction.
- Number of cards (i.e. pieces of information) bought for in-group minds vs out-group minds.
- Accuracy on updated mental state prediction after bought information is revealed.
- Participant confidence in their updated prediction.

Note: In-group vs out-group defined by trial-wise difference in agreement between self and other (in-group = agreement, out-group = disagreement)

Pilot Data (n=10)



Planned Analysis

Mixed effect models to determine whether group status (in- vs out-group) significantly modulates: 1) the amount of information bought about the person's mental states; 2) people's accuracy at inferring their mental states; 3) people's confidence in inferring mental states.

2-way ANOVA to determine whether people are more prone to update their predictions for in-group minds relative to out-group minds after gathering further information. The ANOVA will explore an interaction between Group Status (in-group vs out-group) and Prediction Timepoint (before information vs after information).

Correlation analysis to determine how people's prediction accuracy scores correlate with their confidence in their accuracy. We will explore whether this measure of metacognitive accuracy changes according to whether the person they are inferring the mental state of is in-group or out-group.