

TALK

SEMI-NATURALISTIC TWIN STUDY OF TACIT COORDINATION: NEW FINDINGS AND THEORETICAL IMPLICATIONS

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ABSTRACT

Thomas Schelling (1960) is known for his research on tacit coordination (TC). He defined TC as circumstances in which “two parties have identical interests and face the problem not of reconciling interests but only of coordinating their actions for their mutual benefit when communication is impossible.” Reasoning from Hamilton’s (1964) inclusive fitness theory, it was hypothesized that: Coordinated actions should be displayed more often between individuals sharing relatively higher proportion of genes than those sharing fewer. Support for this prediction comes from twin studies showing greater cooperation between genetically identical (monozygotic or MZ) than non-identical twins (dizygotic or DZ). However, coordination is distinct from cooperation in that coordination involves behavior on the part of both interactants, whereas cooperation involves behavior by one actor leading to benefits for both partners. New findings from the Twin Studies at CSU Fullerton will be presented. The sample include 78 MZ twin pairs and 54 DZ twin pairs, ranging in age from 11-72 years. Zygosity was assessed by a standard physical resemblance questionnaire and/or DNA analysis. Modeled after Mehta (1994), individual twins independently answered questions (e.g., name a book, name a color), then repeated this task but were instructed to produce the same answer as their co-twin. Previous analyses found significant effects from zygosity (twin type) and condition (individual vs. twin), a pattern that continues. MZ twins outscored DZ twins, and greater coordination was expressed in the coordination vs. individual condition. These findings promise to refine theories concerning genetic contributions to coordination and collaboration.