
Social Influence Network Theory: A Sociological Examination of Small Group Dynamics, by **Noah E. Friedkin** and **Eugene C. Johnsen**. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2011. 367pp. \$92.00 cloth. ISBN: 9781107002463.

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What causes people to change their minds? How do groups influence people to fall in line? What makes a group come to a consensus, and what makes some individual group members stay with their initial opinions without consensus? These are but a few of the questions addressed in the comprehensively focused book by Noah E. Friedkin and Eugene C. Johnsen entitled *Social Influence Network Theory: A Sociological Examination of Small Group Dynamics*.

Friedkin and Johnsen begin with an informative history of the field of "group dynamics." They point out that the field is a purview of both psychological and sociological social psychologies. They expertly outline several decades of research in both fields, and then introduce a mathematical model for "endogenous interpersonal influences" that integrates the field. The goal of the social influence network theory (SINT) model is the prediction and explanation of attitude change within small groups. It uses an individual's *initial* attitude and the attitudes of other members of a small group to predict the attitudes of group members at the outcome of interaction. The model takes into account the network connections of group members, the strength of the members' initial opinions, and the susceptibility to influence that the members display. This model is introduced early in the book, then elaborated upon, tested, and used to explain the empirical and

theoretical developments of a large number of group processes researchers.

The second half of the book addresses the usefulness of the model for a wide range of topics. The authors apply their model to social comparison theory, minority and majority splits, expectation states theory, affect control theory, and work on models for decision-making. Although the authors' claims to explanatory power for their model are grand, it is important to note that this book is the culmination of more than two and a half decades of theorizing and research.

More than being solely a theoretical monograph, beginning in Chapter Four the authors introduce an impressive series of experiments that test the model and lead to several innovations to the model throughout the rest of the book. The experimental tasks require members, in groups of two, three, or four people, to communicate their opinions across a series of network structures and come to a consensus group opinion (or a deadlock if consensus cannot be achieved) on one of five hypothetical choice issues. In addition, the experiments measure changes from initial to final opinions for each member, as well as a subjective assessment of each other member's relative influence, compared to self, on the final opinion.

Predictably the model explains the data from the experiments quite well. However, the results of the experiments are not without anomalous findings, and these lead the authors to one of the more fascinating chapters (Chapter Six) on the unique features of dyads. In a small but substantial subset of the dyads the authors studied, the group members violated one of the initial assumptions of the authors—the final opinions of the dyad members were outside the range (or as they put it, the convex hull) of their initial opinions. Rather than eliminate these groups, as is commonly the practice in experimental work, the authors delve into the reasons these dyads came to these conclusions. The resulting discussion and analysis of pairwise interactions in Chapter Six "The Smallest Group" is worth the price of the book. This reflects a characteristic strength of the book; Friedkin and Johnsen are competent, methodical, and transparent in their exposition of SINT.

Having said this, the authors do seem to overestimate the applicability of their theory

for the expectation states research program. They replace performance expectations with opinions or attitudes about other individuals, while simultaneously downplaying the task orientation scope condition of the theory. In the task situations studied in expectation states research, group members are working on a "valued task"—one that has right or wrong answers, or at least clearly better or worse solutions, such as earning a high score on a test of competence. Group members are motivated to do well rather than just to complete the task, persuade someone, or come to an agreement. This is different from an opinion agreement situation like those highlighted in the book. That is one reason why in expectation states research, behavioral outcomes such as stay responses rather than personal opinions, are the dependent variables. The subjective estimates of influence measured by Friedkin and Johnsen, though innovative, are not an adequate substitute for the expectation states that operate in the standardized experimental setting.

In contrast, the application of social influence network theory to affect control theory seems quite promising. In both, the evaluation (and in ACT the potency, and activity) dimensions can be equally applied to attitudes about topics like fair compensation awards, and to people, including other group members. Similarly, the applications of SINT to minority/majority factions research, and to social comparison theory are theoretically sound and useful.

This book is a dense read. The models, though they are not overly complex, require proficiency with algebra, and specifically matrix algebra, in order to be useful to the reader. However, given the relatively small number of parameters a practitioner would need to measure, using the model for applied work would not be onerous. One could envision developing a series of computer programs that would allow researchers to measure features of groups they study and make predictions for attitude change using this model. This would be similar to David Heise's INTERACT program.

The greatest strength and weakness of SINT is its focus on endogenous influences. To predict the outcomes of the group members' attitudes, one is required to know the initial positions of the group members and

the susceptibility of each member to each other member's influence. Then, their final attitudes will be a function of those positions and the endogenous group processes that happen to change them. As the authors point out in Chapter Three, the model can be used the other way around—if given the initial and final attitude values, it can be used to infer from the outcome the relative influence of the group members. This makes SINT promising in its applicability, if not substantively edifying. Either way, *Social Influence Network Theory: A Sociological Examination of Small Group Dynamics* is a "must read" for anyone interested in group dynamics, group processes, structural social psychology, social influence, attitudes, or any of the other subfields under the broader heading "social psychology."

The Jury and Democracy: How Jury Deliberation Promotes Civic Engagement and Political Participation, by **John Gastil, E. Pierre Deess, Philip J. Weiser, and Cindy Simmons**. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2010. 267pp. \$24.95 paper. ISBN: 9780195377316.

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In *The Jury and Democracy*, John Gastil, E. Pierre Deess, Philip J. Weiser, and Cindy Simmons take their cue from Tocqueville and ask an important question: is the U.S. jury system "a quiet engine of democratic public engagement?" (p. 9). They note that jury service is akin to voting as a central feature of democratic societies—both are instances where citizens are asked to make decisions that have real consequences, guiding the movement of state and society and impacting the lives of members of their communities. To explore this question the authors take a dual track. They review the place of the citizen juror, and jury, in democratic theory and in relation to theories of civic engagement and deliberative democracy, arguing that the jury experience and jury system are in many ways a kind of inclusive and deliberative democratic decision-making process that could serve as a model for other realms

of civic life. Second, they undertake an ambitious survey study of jury service, evaluating its impact on individuals' sense of their political selves and their subsequent levels of civic engagement, including voting likelihood and participation in community groups, political action, public talk, and media consumption.

Much of the book seeks to interpret and explain what the authors frame as their central empirical finding: serving on a criminal trial jury that reaches a "conclusive deliberative experience" results in increased post-jury voting rates. A "conclusive" experience is defined as deliberation on a jury that reached a verdict (versus being an alternate juror, or jurors in incomplete trials or hung juries). In a sample of 1,395 jurors in Thurston County, Washington there was a statistically significant 9.6 percent increase in post-trial voting rates among such jurors compared to jurors who did not participate in conclusive juries but who had similar pre-trial voting rates. While seemingly small, the authors point out this increased rate of voting is similar to the 9 percent boost seen in face-to-face get-out-the-vote drives in non-partisan elections, one of the most effective means of voter mobilization.

To further test the jury/voting connection, the authors assembled a national historical sample of 13,000 jurors from eight demographically diverse counties in eight different states. They collected data on the type of trial (civil, criminal, number of charges) and type of jury experience each individual had (verdict, hung, alternate), and for two-thirds of these jurors they were able to collect voting participation data for a roughly 10-year period from the mid-1990s to the mid-2000s including voting in the years before and after jury service. Here they found that for criminal trial jurors, if they had previously been infrequent voters and deliberated on a case to a verdict, this increased their voting rate by 4.3 percent after jury service. Additionally, those who served on hung juries experienced a 6.8 percent increase in voting. There were no significant voting effects for those who previously had high voting rates, or for jurors sitting on civil trials.

What do we make of this small but significant increase in voting participation associated with a deliberative experience on