A Theory of Affective Communication

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Contents

Abstract

The process of perspective taking is a fundamental feature of any human interaction. Although some scholars acknowledge the decisive role of the felt body in this process, the precise role of the felt body remains unclear. In this paper, a theory of affective communication is developed in order to explain and understand the process of perspective taking in human interaction on a corporeal, pre-reflective and thus affective level. The key assumption of the outlined theory is that any process of perspective taking is essentially based on the two dimensions of the felt body, namely (1) attraction and repulsion, (2) dominance and subdominance. The dimension of attraction and repulsion determines whether individuals (or groups) attractively converge or repulsively diverge in their perspectives (i. e., attitudes, opinions, beliefs). Regarding the dimension of dominance and subdominance, it is assumed that there is always a dominant and a subdominant side in human interaction, although the distribution of dominance may constantly oscillate between the communicating partners. In the case of attraction as a necessary condition for finding common ground, the dominant side serves as the perspective giver (or impulse giver) and the subdominant side serves as the perspective taker (or impulse receiver). The dominant side transfers its perspective (i. e., attitude, opinion, belief) to the subdominant side. In fact, any human interaction can be somehow ascribed to patterns of attraction (and repulsion) and dominance (and subdominance). In this sense, human interaction is always about a conversion, negotiation or clash of perspectives. The outlined theory is phenomenologically based on the works of Schmitz and Rappe.

1. Introduction

Perspective taking is a fundamental human process underlying almost all meaningful communication (Parker et al., 2008). Without some extent of mutual understanding (i. e., being aware of each other's perspectives), social life would be inconceivable. Unfortunately and despite a growing number of studies on perspective taking, our understanding regarding the nature of the perspective taking process is still poor (Davis et al., 1996; Ku et al., 2015). In the literature, perspective taking is mostly seen as an inner mental, rather imaginative and intellectual process which is more or less independent from direct interaction (Davis et al., 1996; Epley et al., 2004; Galinsky et al., 2005; Parker et al., 2008; Maibom, 2013; Ku et al., 2015). For example, Galinsky et al. (2005, p. 110) define "perspective taking as the process of imagining the world from another's vantage point or imagining oneself in another's shoes". On the other hand, it is argued that it is only through direct and embodied interaction that people have access to others feelings, intentions and thoughts (Gallagher, 2008; Zahavi, 2011; Fuchs, 2013; Tanaka, 2015). Works following the latter understanding focus "on the expressive bodily behaviour, inter-bodily resonance, intentions as visible in action and the shared situational context in order to explain social understanding" (Fuchs, 2013, p. 656). However, the genuine role of the (felt) body in the process of perspective taking still remains vague and needs further clarification.

The following paper develops a *theory of affective communication* in which the dynamics of the felt body are exposed as a necessary condition for perspective taking. In this context, perspective taking is understood as a corporeal and affective rather than a pure mental phenomenon. It emerges from bodily encounters with others and in this sense is bound to perspective giving as the counterpart of perspective taking in such encounters. Moreover, perspective taking is conceptualized as a mutual process in which each interaction partner oscillates between the roles of perspective giving and taking, unless a (more or less) common perspective is established. The dynamics of perspective giving and taking is based on the two basal forces or dimensions of the felt body: (1) attraction and repulsion, determining whether perspectives are shared or not, and (2) dominance and sub-

dominance, determining which side is actually giving and which side is receiving perspectives.

The term *affective communication* refers to the way people affectively interact with each other and is rooted in the term of *corporeal communication* from phenomenologist Schmitz. It is important to emphasize that affective communication lies on a different level than verbal or nonverbal communication. It rather refers to the forces that are prior to verbal and nonverbal communication and predetermines *any* (verbal and nonverbal) interaction on a pre-reflective level. In contrast to emotion, affect is often referred to as a phenomenon that is largely pre-reflective and pre-discursive having an impact beyond conscious control (Massumi, 2002; Brennan, 2004; Iedema and Carroll, 2015). The outlined affective communication theory thus states that interaction is primarily driven by corporeal forces, whereas rationality and reason are somehow bound to these affective forces. Accordingly, the basal corporeal forces of attraction and repulsion, dominance and subdominance, may enable rationality and conscious thoughts, but they do not necessarily have to be rational or conscious as such (Julmi, 2015, 2017). The outlined theory is based on the phenomenological works of Schmitz and Rappe. The *new phenomenology* founded by Schmitz is essentially based on a critique of psychologising of experience following a strict separation of a person's interior and exterior world. By relying on this "interior world dogma", "important aspects of non-reflective life experience are concealed, and can be accessed for reflection only with difficulty" (Kazig, 2016). Before presenting the affective communication theory in *chapter 3*, the phenomenological foundations are delineated in *chapter 2*.

2. Phenomenological foundations

2.1. Schmitz' new phenomenology

The term *new phenomenology* (or neo-phenomenology) refers to a phenomenological movement developed by German philosopher Hermann Schmitz in order to regain "a sensibility for the nuanced realities of lived experience" (Schmitz et al., 2011, p. 241). Schmitz mainly conceptualized the *new phenomenology* within his 5,163-page strong *System of Philosophy* (*System der Philosophie* in German), published as a book series of ten volumes from 1964 to 1980 (Schmitz, 1964, 1965, 1966, 1967, 1969, 1973, 1977, 1978, 1980a,b). Since then, Schmitz published numerous further elaborations and extensions (e. g., Schmitz, 1990, 1992, 1998, 2003, 2005, 2009, 2010a, 2014). In Germany, "Schmitz has influenced a new generation of philosophers and is becoming more frequently cited by English speaking scholars" (Grant, 2013, p. 16), although English works from Schmitz are still rare (Schmitz et al., 2011; Schmitz, 2016). The concepts of *new phenomenology* have "given new impulses and inspiration to other important theoretical approaches" (Blume, 2010, p. 309), including Böhme's *new aesthetics* (Böhme, 1989, 1993, 1995, 2001, 2003) and Sloterdijk's *spherology* (Sloterdijk, 1998, 1999, 2004). Furthermore, the *new phenomenology* is highly application-oriented, having drawn attention to scholars of numerous diverse disciplines such as sociology (Gugutzer, 2004, 2012, 2013; Uzarewicz, 2011), medicine (Langewitz, 2007, 2009; Fuchs and Koch, 2014), architecture (Hasse, 2002, 2011, 2014, 2016; Löw, 2008, 2016; Grant, 2013; Pallasmaa, 2014), intercultural studies (Müller-Pelzer, 2011, 2014), law (Philippopoulos-Mihalopoulos, 2013, 2015), aesthetics (Griffero, 2014a,b, 2016; Wang, 2015), emotion theory (Slaby, 2014), creativity research (Julmi and Scherm, 2015) or archaeology (Sørensen, 2015).

Schmitz historically acknowledges the philosophical achievements of the "old" phenomenologists such as Husserl, Heidegger or Sartre, but aims to build his "new" phenomenology from the ground up in order to avoid historical biases. According to Schmitz and Brenner (2009), the zero point of Schmitz' system is solely reflected by Minkowski's phrase "moi-ici-maintenant" ("I-here-now"). In

contrast to the *phenomenological reduction* of Husserl, Schmitz develops his system upon his method of *phenomenological revision* which is characterized by a relational understanding of phenomena. For Schmitz, a phenomenon is a state of affairs whose factuality appears to someone at a specific time to be unchangeable even with an arbitrary variation of all possible assumptions, and imposes itself on him in such a way that he is unable to deny its existence seriously. A largely neglected and fundamental phenomenon is, for example, the felt body, because it cannot be denied through the assumption that it does not exist (Schmitz, 1967, 1992, 2009; Schmitz et al., 2011). Although breaking new ground, Schmitz extensively discusses his findings in the light of traditional western philosophy from ancient philosophy and Christian theology to modern natural science, treating traditional western philosophy as burden and responsibility (Schmitz, 2010b, p. 80). The *new phenomenology* seeks to make the forgotten accessible to comprehension and to transparently connect it to existing knowledge (Schmitz, 2003, p. i).

2.2.   Felt body

Within the phenomenology of Schmitz, human interaction is by no means processed through bodiless agents. On the contrary, the basis and prerequisite for any human interaction is the agents' corporeal presence through their felt body. Correspondingly, the felt body reflects a key concept within the *new phenomenology* of Schmitz (Schmitz, 1965). Whereas the physical body (*Körper* in German) can be objectively measured, but not subjectively felt, the felt body (*Leib* in German) always remains subjective and defies any objective measurement. The felt body refers to what someone can feel of himself in the area (but not always within the limits) of his physical body, as belonging to him, without making use of the five senses, namely seeing and feeling, and of the perceptive corporeal schema acquired from experience (the habitual idea of one's own body) (Schmitz, 2009, p. 35).

It is important to note here that Schmitz conceptualizes subjectivity and objectivity in a non-dualistic manner. Subjectivity and objectivity do not refer to subjects and objects, but rather to subjective and objective facts (or, more broadly,

to subjective and objective state of affairs, programmes and problems). The fact of a specific person being sad is objective in the sense that anyone possessing sufficient information can state. In contrast, the fact that "I" am this specific person who is actually sad is a subjective fact only I can state. Subjective facts are phenomenologically richer than objective facts, because they refer to a nuance of subjectivity or mineness objective facts lack (Schmitz, 1969, 1992, 2009, 2011; Schmitz et al., 2011). In this sense, the felt body is inextricably connected with subjectivity, reflecting "the absolute place one can only access in the first person" (Griffero, 2014a, p. 17). Thus, the felt body is the locus of being spatially present and affectively involved with the things someone is concerned with.

Schmitz (1965, 1992, 1998, 2003, 2009, 2011) describes and systematises the felt body in a nuanced and rich manner of what he calls the *alphabet of corporeality*. Although this comprehensive alphabet cannot be outlined here in detail, the most fundamental and important category of the felt body is built by the opposite poles of spatial narrowness and wideness, accompanied by the dual tendencies of corporeal contraction (towards the spatial narrowness) and expansion (towards the spatial wideness):

> Corporeal expansion is a marked widening of the felt space in the region of one's body, most notably occurring in states of relaxation. Characteristic examples of corporeal expansion are the experience of beholding of a wide, beautiful landscape, the first breaths outside in fresh air after having been locked inside a cramped and stuffy room, or the pleasant relaxing of the felt body when gently gliding into a hot bathtub. The opposite pole of corporeal contraction is a marked narrowing of the felt body, often in states of sudden, unexpected change to one's bodily orientation—such contraction occurs in states of shock, in panic or moments of great focus and concentration. (Schmitz et al., 2011, p. 245)

The tendencies of contraction and expansion are intertwined and related to each other in a highly dynamic manner, albeit the relationship between them is conceptualized as antagonistic: As soon as one side is about to gain the upper hand,

the other side is incited to regain the upper hand itself, resulting in a constant oscillation between contraction and expansion. Instancing, felt pain is not only characterized by narrowness and contraction. The intense and unpleasant tendency of contraction also gives rise for the impulse of expansion counterbalancing the contraction (the impulse to escape the pain), whereas at the same time this impulse is hindered to unfold itself by the inescapability of the felt pain. This is why people scream when they feel pain: They try to find a widening counterbalance by fleeing symbolically. It has been shown, for example, that swearing increases pain tolerance (Stephens et al., 2009).

2.3.   Affective communication

Through the antagonistic opponents of contraction and expansion, the nature of the felt body becomes reflexive and dialogical. Through this dialogical structure, the corporeal dynamics are also prerequisite for the affective (or corporeal) communication (*Leibliche Kommunikation* in German) with other people. When two partners get in contact with each other on a corporeal level (i. e., they affectively get involved or enmeshed in each other), they jointly build an overarching felt body in which one partner forms the pole of narrowness and the other the pole of wideness. Schmitz speaks about antagonistic incorporation (*Antagonistische Einleibung* in German) in this context. Antagonistic incorporation is an asymmetric relationship where the pole of narrowness forms the dominant side and the pole of wideness forms the dominated or subdominant side. Antagonistic incorporation can be bidirectional or unidirectional. In the former, usual case, there is "a sort of ping-pong-play between initiative and reaction including the struggle for the dominant role" (Müller-Pelzer, 2011, p. 59), for example in a tennis match, when fencing or within a battle of glances. There is a constant oscillating of the poles, with the dominance on one side stimulating the other side to regain the upper hand and vice versa.

Bidirectional antagonistic incorporation "underlies all human communication: Before any communication by speech has taken place, the glance between partners is one of the channels of corporeal communication which opens the

space of direction" (Müller-Pelzer, 2011, p. 59). If antagonistic incorporation is unidirectional, however, one side permanently owes the pole of narrowness, having the opposed side at command. This is the case, for example, when someone is extremely charismatic or fascinating causing the opposite being fatally attracted to him. Hypnosis is also characterized by unidirectional antagonistic incorporation. Antagonistic incorporation does not limit each side to one person. It is also possible that one or both sides consist of several persons or even an uncountable crowd standing in solidary, symmetric relationship to each other. Schmitz speaks about solidary incorporation (*Solidarische Einleibung* in German) when several persons share the same pole in antagonistic incorporation with others. Such constellations of antagonistic and solidary incorporations can frequently be found in sports events when the opposing audiences try to prevail each other through "the exchange of chants between bleachers on opposite sides of the stadium" (Uhrich and Benkenstein, 2010, p. 226).

2.4. Social situations

Another fundamental concept within the philosophy of Schmitz is the concept of situation. According to Schmitz (1980b, 2003, 2005, 2009, 2010a), human interaction is always embedded in situations. In this sense, people always and necessarily interact within a specific context. For Schmitz, situations are the home, source and partner of all human and animal behaviour (Schmitz, 2003, p. 91). Besides the personal situation of each person, people are embedded in numerous social situations (e. g., the social situation at work or within one's family) giving the personal situation a social background. Schmitz defines situations through three attributes. Firstly, situations are uniform, that is, they are characterized by coherence in themselves and by external detachment. Secondly, situations cohere through a meaningfulness that consists of significances. Significances are state of affairs, programmes or problems. A state of affairs indicates that something is (e. g., the price segment of a store or brand); a programme means that something should be or is desired (e. g., the customers' needs); a problem refers to the question of whether something is (e. g., whether something is affordable).

Significances may be objective or subjective facts. Thirdly, the meaningfulness of a situation is internally diffuse. Individual significances have therefore to be neither individually countable nor separable from each other. Individual significances may stand in contradiction to each other without threatening the wholeness of the situation.

Schmitz distinguishes between two types of social situations: actual and conventional situations. Whereas actual situations are formed by the actual moment and can easily be tracked from moment to moment (e. g., the shared situation of a conversation), conventional situations consist of more segmented conventions (e. g., the shared situation within a family). Conventions mainly consist of programmes and determine what is expected to be done or not to be done (norms), what someone is allowed to do without receiving a sanction and what someone is expected to wish. It is only due to the fact that the conventions are given as an internally diffuse meaningfulness that its participants are able to rely on them in a naïve, pre-reflective way. Conventional situations are, for example, the common language (Schmitz, 1980a), research paradigms (Waschkies, 1993), national culture (Rappe, 2004) or organizational culture (Julmi, 2015). Conventional situations can themselves be grounded in more general conventional situations. The conventional situation of an organizational culture, for example, depends upon the shared language and national culture, although this influence is by no means deterministic. Conventions reflect specific perspectives shared within a social situation.

2.5.   The attraction/repulsion dimension by Rappe

Whereas narrowness and wideness reflect the spatial dimension of the felt body, it is, according to Rappe (2005, 2006, 2012) in critical response to Schmitz, pleasure and displeasure that open up its temporal dimension. Corporeal pleasure serves as an intentional motive giving medium, seeking to achieve states of pleasure and to avoid states of displeasure. This corporeal intentionality is based upon a rhythm of deficiency and fullness which is evident, for example, with hunger and thirst. Whereas deficiency causes displeasure and motivates its reversal, full-

ness is the desired reversal of deficiency causing pleasure. The temporal aspect of the resulting rhythm is reflected through repetition. The experience of pleasure encourages the repetition of certain events and actions in the future, manifesting itself in a *tendency towards something*. This tendency is called attraction. The experience of displeasure, on the other hand, encourages the avoidance of certain events and actions in the future, manifesting itself in a *tendency away from something*. This tendency is called repulsion.

The repeated experiences of pleasure and displeasure in the past predefine what people seek to achieve or avoid in the future. By occupying certain events, actions, people, things, places, state of affairs, situations etc. with attraction and repulsion, people are corporeally directed from the past into the future. Consequently, the repeated experiences of pleasure and displeasure are the basis for human socialization. They not only determine specific behaviour patterns (e g., individual approach and avoidance strategies), but also patterns of perception. The way the environment is sensed, scanned and arranged depends on previous experiences of pleasure and displeasure. If someone repeatedly has a bad experience within a certain place, he may literally perceive this place as repulsive (or as attractive in the opposite case).

As the outlined dimension of attraction and repulsion reflects basal corporeal forces, it has to be considered in the emergence of affective communication and the formation of social situations as well. Although Rappe himself did not explicitly apply the dimension of attraction and repulsion to Schmitz' concepts of affective communication and social situations, Julmi (2015, 2017) showed that the work of Rappe significantly enriches these concepts in a sociological manner and that both affective communication and social situations can only be fully understood by taking the temporal dimension of attraction and repulsion into account.

3.   Affective communication and perspective sharing

3.1.   Positive reciprocity as a prerequisite for social situations

The main idea of the *affective communication theory* outlined here is that, regardless of the concrete content or circumstances, any human interaction and relationship takes place within the two corporeal dimensions of (1) attraction and repulsion and of (2) dominance and subdominance. With regard to the phenomenological foundations, human interaction is processed through the agent's corporeal presence. Whereas it was Schmitz who showed that corporeal interaction is always full of nuances of dominance and subdominance, Rappe emphasized that there is also always attraction or repulsion. Both dimensions reflect the basal categories of affective communication.

The way in which people corporeally come into contact with each other describes and essentially defines their mutual relationship. In particular, encounters characterized by bidirectional antagonistic incorporation are of decisive importance for the formation of corporeal relationships. Otherwise, it would neither be possible to make contact with the other person as a fellow player or as an opponent, nor to develop a (corporeal) relationship with him. In this sense, being affectively involved with someone in interaction is the basis for any "real" communication. As long as no one is affectively involved, nobody will strive to act or even notice anything. Being affectively involved can therefore be described as the opposite of being detached (Ahmed, 2010; Vachhani, 2013). As a relationship is formed by two persons at minimum, antagonistic incorporation is a prerequisite for any (social) relationship to evolve. People get to know each other by testing each other, approaching each other, or distinguishing themselves from each other in bidirectional antagonistic incorporation.

Interaction in bidirectional antagonistic incorporation can be primarily differentiated regarding the two dimensions of the felt body (i. e., attraction and repulsion, dominance and subdominance). The dimension of attraction and repulsion reflects whether the interaction is approaching (attraction) or dissociating (repulsion). The dimension of dominance and subdominance is concerned

with the distribution of dominance between the interacting partners. Regarding the dimension of attraction and repulsion, interaction is normally characterized by reciprocity as an unconditional, aligned reaction to an experienced behaviour, whereby two forms of reciprocity are possible: positive and negative reciprocity (Gouldner, 1960). With positive reciprocity, attracting behaviour is reciprocated. Respectively, dissociating behaviour is reciprocated with negative reciprocity. Friendly behaviour usually pre-reflectively provokes a friendly response in the same way that unfriendly behaviour leads to an unfriendly response.

Along with reciprocal behaviour, it is just as possible that attracting behaviour leads to a distancing response and vice versa. This is the case, for example, if inviting eye contact is honoured with a nasty look or an attempt is made to cushion a nasty look with inviting eye contact. Displays of boredom and a lack of interest are examples of distancing responses with which one person lets the approaching behaviour of the other person come to nothing. Boredom can be signalled by feigned yawning or looking glassy-eyed into the distance. A lack of interest can be signalled, for example, "by slightly reducing the intensity of the expected friendly reactions; by nodding and smiling less during conversation; by averting the eyes more than usual; or by deliberately and obviously turning away the head" (Morris, 1977, p. 186). However, it is questionable whether affective communication in the full sense can be referred to in these cases, or whether this is rather to be inhibited, or established in the first place, or, if neither the one nor the other is successful, must be described as impaired. Instead, social situations emerge along those sharing an attractive bond in positive reciprocity.

3.2. Sharing perspectives in social situations

As defined, social situations are characterized by internal cohesion and external detachment. Social situations therefore refer equally to connectedness between those who share them and dissociation from those who are not part of the social situation. Connectedness (inwards) is based on attraction, dissociation (outwards) on repulsion. Accordingly, social situations are formed both "from within" through attracting behaviour, as well as "from the outside" through dissociating

behaviour regarding affective communication. The connectedness of the participants in a social situation is based on aligning behaviour amongst themselves and dissociating behaviour towards outsiders. Human groups acquire their social identity through dissociation towards the outside and stabilization inwards. Those social situations with the strongest bonds of members amongst themselves are frequently also those to which outsiders have the greatest difficulty in gaining entry: "As we use up most of what's available on insiders, our bonds with them get stronger, while our desire to connect with outsiders wanes" (Waytz, 2016, p. 71). Nevertheless, tendencies of alignment and dissociation in social situations can be weighted differently, so that here a difference can be made between "positive" and "negative" social situations. In positive social situations the focus is on the alignment of the participants. Aspects such as coordination, social identity and togetherness are then in the foreground. In contrast, negative social situations with a focus on dissociation towards outsiders tend to aim at domination and subjection ("us against them").

Within social situations, people do not only possess a shared social identity, they also share a common perspective on reality. In fact, sharing a social situation is essentially the same as sharing a perspective. This core feature of social situations can be derived from the second feature of situations, namely that participants in social situations share a meaningfulness regarding reality, and thus a common perspective. In a social situation there is a common understanding regarding which circumstances are regarded as applicable, or which behaviour is desired, while there is frequently disunity between different social groups regarding the applicable circumstances (Großheim et al., 2015). A person who does not accept the circumstances within a social situation and rebels against them, (partly) excludes himself from the social situation as well. Each repelling tendency with regard to the meaningfulness of a social situation represents a repelling tendency with regard to the social situation itself. In affective communication characterized by repulsion, an exchange of perspectives does not take place, but the perspectives are dissociated from each other, whereby it is a matter of which perspective can dominate with regard to the others. Whereas aligning behaviour

within the social situation is about creating a common basis of understanding, dissociating behaviour towards other social groups is more about victory and defeat: "An adversarial mind-set not only prevents us from understanding and responding to the other party but also makes us feel as though we've "lost" when we don't get our way" (Waytz, 2016, p. 72).

Attraction and repulsion are decisive corporeal forces determining whether perspectives are shared between people, or whether the contrast between two perspectives is aggravated. Attraction is very often expressed in sympathy. Sympathy goes along with a power of attraction which causes us to establish and share social situations with others. Antipathy, on the other hand, leads to the separation of the situations and the corresponding closure of the free exchange flow in relation to the respective perspectives. Antipathy cannot be the basis for creating a social situation in the given sense. Antipathy leads to an irreconcilable juxtaposition of different perspectives, whereas at the same time irreconcilable perspectives (for example in politics) can cause antipathy. In sociology, the phenomenon that we prefer to have contact with people who are similar to us is known as *homophily*. Homophily in general creates not only divides between dissimilar but also unifications among similar people (McPherson et al., 2001). Commonalities generate forces of attraction and forces of attraction generate commonalities. The more different (or alien) perspectives are, the more difficult it is to establish a social situation with a common perspective. Perspectives can only be shared if there already exists some common ground from the start. Mutual understanding always presupposes previous understanding. People who were socialized differently in different cultures have more difficulty in forming a social situation than people with similar mind-sets and preferences.

3.3.   Perspective giving and taking in social situations

The dimension of attraction and repulsion determines whether perspectives are shared and a social situation can be developed. Mutual attraction is therefore a precondition for an exchange of perspectives taking place. However, sharing perspectives due to reciprocal alignment is not necessarily evenly distributed in

the sense that in the end the result is something like a "fair mixture" of all involved perspectives. In most cases, some participants contribute their perspective stronger than others. Here, dominance plays the decisive role. Owing to the asymmetrical dominance relationship, the essential characteristic of antagonistic incorporation is leading (by the dominant part) and being led (the dominated part). The person who has the pole of narrowness (i. e., dominance) on his side in affective communication is also the person who contributes his perspective directly. In this sense, the dominant part serves as the provider of perspectives (perspective giver), whereas the dominated part serves as the receiver of perspectives (perspective taker). During (attractive) bidirectional antagonistic incorporation, perspectives are exchanged and balanced until a common view of the reality with regard to the connecting social situation emerges. Who has a share in the formation of social situations, and what this share is, is basically due to dominance.

Interpersonal encounters are generally full of nuances of dominance and subdominance. These nuances are frequently created through corporeal automatisms (e.g. when shaking hands) and do not require a specific motivation (Schmitz, 2009). In this sense, even the most mundane human encounters cannot be conceived without dominance, whereby the role of dominance changes constantly. In a conversation, the interacting partners often try to maintain a balanced distribution of dominance. Such a balanced distribution of dominance is achieved by the speaker averting his eyes, while the listener looks at his conversation partner (Tischer, 1994). A description of such a situation is given by Morris:

> The speaker starts his statement with a glance at his companion. Then, as he gains momentum of thought and word, he looks away. As he is coming to the end of his comment, he glances back to check the impact of what he has said. While he has been doing this, his companion has been watching him, but now, as the listener takes over the talk and becomes the speaker, he, in turn, looks away, glancing back only to check the effect of his words. (Morris, 1977, p. 75)

Due to the great dynamism of a conversation, skilful conversation is closely

linked to an intuition for the current balance of dominance relationships between the conversation partners. In attraction, subdominance is by no means connoted negatively. Instead, subdominance refers to a state of openness in order to be led. It is a necessary requirement for any understanding, since the dominated part is initially open to the dominance of the other, who wants to express something. Subdominance is reflected, for example, in empathy as the understanding of another's emotions and cognitions through perspective taking (Cuff et al., 2016). When Batson et al. (1997, p. 751) state that adopting "the perspective of another perceived to be in need evokes empathy for that person", this certainly is correct, but a subdominant state like being already empathic is also necessary to adopt any perspective. Again, any understanding presupposes previous understanding.

On the other hand, a person who tends to be dominant will be less open to other's perspectives. In states of dominance, the perspectives, opinions and contributions of others are generally less noticed (Georgesen and Harris, 1998). That doesn't mean, however, that dominance is connoted negatively in any sort. In attraction, dominance refers to the ability of giving insights, security, coordination or identity to the counterpart. Because perspectives can only be shared if there is a (dominant) perspective giver as well as a (subdominant) perspective taker, any process of social construction is essentially based on attraction as well as on a dyad of dominance and subdominance.

In affective communication, dominance is closely related to power. The person who is affectively dominant possesses the power to effectively give perspectives. The aspect of power in affective communication can be understood as the ability of the leader to induce followers in affective communication to a behaviour that the latter would not otherwise have displayed. In this sense, the power of shaping truth in a social context depends on (1) positive reciprocity as a prerequisite for sharing perspectives, and (2) the other side being in a (subdominant) state of openness as a prerequisite for taking perspectives. This understanding of power is consistent with the one from Northhouse, according to whom power refers to "the capacity or potential to influence. People have power when they have the ability to affect other's beliefs, attitudes, and courses of action"

(Northouse, 2015, p. 10). In case of attraction, "the use of power to encourage perspective-taking should not be seen as negative and repressive but rather as potentially enabling and socially rewarding for individuals (by encouraging mutual understanding and collaboration)" (Litchfield and Gentry, 2010, p. 199).

If, in contrast, interaction is repulsive, people do not seek to converge in their perspectives, but to expose the other's perspective as the inferior perspective against the own, superior perspective. In this case, dominance is not about giving perspectives, but to come out as winner from the clash of perspectives. In a political debate, for instance, participants will hardly end up with a shared perspective on the discussed problems. Instead, each participant tries to bring the opposed perspective into subjection.

3.4.   The case of charisma

Corporeal interaction is normally characterized by bidirectional antagonistic incorporation, in which the dominant role oscillates between the dominating partners, while the distribution of dominance may be (and often is) asymmetrical. However, it is also possible that the interaction between two partners is based on unidirectional antagonistic incorporation. If, in addition, the interaction is based on (mutual) attraction, this describes the case of *charisma.*

Charisma reflects the case when a fascinating, suggestive power emanates from a person. Charisma indicates a quality regarded as beyond the everyday of a personality from whom such a power of suggestion or fascination emanates that the attention of the follower is literally captivated by the leader (Weber, 1980). The charismatic person forms the pole of narrowness of the common, overlapping felt body, which is experienced as something that extends and goes beyond the limits of the own felt body, and is held together, so to speak, through the perceived charisma. The attraction inherent in charisma can be tied up to the pulling effect towards the charismatic person that is emitted by this person. According to Harding et al. (2011), a charismatic person seduces the others through his charisma, which causes them to lose their powers of resistance. But even if charisma is understood as a force that a person cannot escape at will, this force is still based

essentially on trust (i. e., attraction). The follower trusts the charismatic leader, whereby an unusually high level of even blind trust is frequently involved (House, 1977; House and Singh, 1987). A trust relationship is destroyed, or at least severely impaired, if it is let down and because of this a leader can lose his charisma on a letting down of this nature (Weber, 1980; Bryman, 1992).

In charismatic interaction, dominance is distributed unidirectionally to one side. This means that only the perspective of the charismatic person is contributed, while the other side unconditionally takes this perspective without having any influence on the emerging perspective shared. In this sense, a charismatic person owes a "perspective monopoly" within a social situation the others voluntarily adapt to, because they are literally attracted by the absorbing dominance of the charismatic person. Take for example the charismatic leader of a faith group who exercises such a suggestive force that his disciples submissively hang on his every word and let him impose their perspective on reality. If there is a second faith group with another charismatic leader, the latter is to a certain extent in competition with the former charismatic leader regarding the perspective on reality accepted as factual. The result would be a complex interplay of attractive and repulsive, and dominant and dominated tendencies within and between the two social situations.

3.5.   The stabilisation of social situations

When the formation of social relationships and social identities are based on the corporeal forces of attraction and repulsion, dominance and subdominance, it is important to emphasize that such formation processes cannot be simply reverted. They are, at least in part, irreversible. Building on the first encounter, an expectation—which is bound to the emergence of a mutual perspective—is formed from the variety of impressions that people gain from each other. These impressions determine which behaviour can be expected from the other party in each case, and which behaviour towards the other is appropriate. Such a socially shared expectation is the result of many individual, intersecting reactions in affective communication, for example in the form: he expects that they expect

that he expects, etc. The reactions in affective communication induce a specific response behaviour in each case. In this way, reciprocity spirals of anticipatory expectations are created from countless reactions, which are amalgamated in the end into a holistic, shared understanding. A social situation of conventional character is formed between the communicating partners from a certain regularity of the impressions, which stabilizes and aligns social behaviour in future encounters (Schmitz, 1980b; Frijda et al., 1991), and gives rise to specific roles (Graen, 1976), altogether shaping social identities.

The formation of conventions is essentially bound to the emergence of a common perspective on reality. As soon as conventions are formed in a specific social context (i. e., situation), it is expected that the other behaves in accordance with them. Thus, relationships and social identities are influenced in particular when a social context emerges for the first time. If individuals (or groups) meet on several occasions in the same constellation, development can take place, accompanied by solidifying tendencies of reciprocal expectations (Hackman, 1990; Skilton and Dooley, 2010). What begins with loose expectations (in actual situations), ends in unquestioned facts (in conventional situations), being in potential competition with people believing in different facts as outlined before. In this sense, the formation of social relationships and identities based on affective communication has a recursive and truth shaping character. Because common expectations are founded in a reciprocity spiral, path dependency is formed in the developing expectations, whereas, because of the crisscrossing reactions, it is not possible to trace this process back to a starting point. The more deeply conventions are grounded within a social situation, the stronger the social situation owes the tendency towards self-reinforcement.

4.   Discussion and conclusion

Taken all together, any transmission of perspectives within interaction is based on the corporeal tendencies or forces of attraction and repulsion, dominance and subdominance. Initially, human interaction is either underlaid by the force of attraction or by the force of repulsion. These forces of attraction and repulsion are not only an expression of liking or disliking someone. They additionally determine whether individuals (or groups) attractively converge or repulsively diverge in their perspectives (i. e., attitudes, opinions, beliefs). Attraction leads to a convergence in perspectives, repulsion to a divergence in perspectives. Attractive behaviour refers to the force towards achieving a common perspective as a prerequisite of finding common ground. Repulsive behaviour, on the other hand, seeks to dissociate oneself from the other's perspective leading to a more distinct boundary between the perspectives of the interacting partners. This is consistent with findings in the literature that liking has a positive effect on perspective taking (McPherson Frantz and Janoff-Bulman, 2000).

Regarding the dimension of dominance and subdominance, it is assumed that there is always a dominant and a subdominant side in human interaction, whereas the side of dominance can be constantly distributed to one side or constantly fluctuate between both sides. However, only if interaction is characterised by an attractive relationship, shared perspectives can emerge. The dominant side then serves as the perspective giver (or impulse giver), the subdominant side as the perspective taker (or impulse receiver). Thus, the dominant side transfers its perspective (i. e., attitude, opinion, belief) on the subdominant side. With this, it is also suggested that dominance or power is negatively associated with openness to other's perspectives. Similarly, Galinsky et al. (2006, p. 1068) found that "power was associated with a reduced tendency to comprehend how other people see, think, and feel".

The affective communication theory suggests that, within social situations, sharing perspectives leads to attraction and attraction leads to sharing perspectives; people with similar perspectives attract each other, and attraction leads to sharing perspectives. The well-studied phenomenon of *similarity attraction*

(Byrne et al., 1966; Byrne, 1971) therefore lies at the heart of the theory. It also supports the dissimilarity-repulsion hypothesis, according to which dissimilarity leads to repulsion (Rosenbaum, 1986). Here, homophily is phenomenologically grounded within the dynamics of the felt body and reflects a necessary condition for any social relationship to evolve. If people with different perspectives meet, two routes are possible: mutually adjusting the perspectives in attraction (with the dominant side influencing the subdominant side) or sharpening the line between both perspectives in repulsion. The closer and more compatible perspectives are, the easier they can merge and the likelier attraction occurs (Williams et al., 2007). Notwithstanding, it is also possible to incorporate rather foreign perspectives, but this requires a consequent mode of attractive subdominance as reflected in humbleness (e. g., someone trying to adjust to a foreign culture).

The affective communication theory is also consistent with the theory of cognitive dissonance (Festinger, 1950, 1954, 1957), which assumes that individuals strive toward consonance and try to avoid dissonance. Dissonance occurs when people experience inconsistencies and fail to rationalize them so that the inconsistencies persist. In these cases, people experience psychological discomfort leading to activities in order to reduce cognitive dissonance. Cognitive consonance and cognitive dissonance are both motivational forces, inducing attraction (towards consonance) in the first case and repulsion (away from dissonance) in the latter case.

Through the theory of affective communication it becomes possible to explain and understand human interaction on a corporeal, pre-reflective and thus affective level. Any interaction behaviour can be somehow ascribed to patterns of attraction (and repulsion) and dominance (and subdominance) in a very nuanced manner. If it comes to the crunch, sympathy and power not only trump but shape reason.

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