

The Social Dimension of Agency: How the Shared Sense of Agency shapes Moral and Intergroup Decision-Making

Thursday, September 11, 2025 11:40 AM (15 minutes)

This contribution explores how the social dimension of the Sense of Agency—specifically the shared Sense of Agency (s-SoA)—influences moral behavior and intergroup decision-making. Through two experimental studies, I examined how interpersonal coordination shapes the experience of agency and responsibility, and how these processes, in turn, affect conformity to immoral actions and intergroup dishonesty. Both implicit and explicit measures of agency and responsibility were employed to capture the nuances of individual experience within social contexts.

Study 1 –Sense of Agency in Moral Conformity: Dyads were asked to decide sequentially whether to administer painful shocks to a third party in exchange for a shared reward. The results showed a robust conformity effect: the first agent's choice strongly influenced the second's. Antisocial conformity was associated with reduced explicit responsibility and diminished implicit agency. In contrast, prosocial conformity was linked to enhanced shared responsibility and increased SoA. These findings reveal that the moral valence of a joint action modulates agency experience and support the distinction between diffusion of responsibility and shared responsibility.

Study 2 –Shared Agency and Group Dishonesty: Participants completed a motor coordination task with a partner whose behavior was either predictable or unpredictable, manipulating perceived s-SoA. They then performed a deception task where lying could benefit their ingroup. Higher s-SoA predicted greater dishonesty for the group's benefit, only in individual providing stronger "binding" moral ratings. This suggests that the experience of agency within group contexts can morally shift behavior depending on one's moral framework.

If you're submitting a symposium talk, what's the symposium title?

Senso di responsabilità: quando l'azione si fa coscienza

If you're submitting a symposium, or a talk that is part of a symposium, is this a junior symposium?

Yes

Primary author: PIPERNO, Giulio (Sapienza Università di Roma)

Presenter: PIPERNO, Giulio (Sapienza Università di Roma)

Session Classification: Senso di responsabilità: quando l'azione si fa coscienza