

Theory of Mind:

**You are thinking
What **I** want
That you think !**



THEORY OF MIND AND POLITIC.

I. Introduction

One of the main characteristic of the human is that, it is a social species. Indeed, humans are meant to live in society. Therefore, a society has to be organized by rules, norms, and values to ensure her good operation. But, who decide of those rules, norms and values? Who can have the power of being at the top of the society hierarchy? And how human chose those particular people or how those people do to rise on the top of the society power? Here are all the questions I'll try to answer through the course of theory of mind.

First of all I would like to define what is exactly the political power? The political power is a type of power that a person or a group of people exercise on a society. This is the power to set the rules that apply to the population in a given territory.

So from that definition, which says power, says leadership to influence the society and impose his rules.

Now let me explain the new concept I talk about: the leadership.

II. Leadership

What is a Leadership?

It is a very important political concept; it is someone, or a group of person, whose influence how the society works. So they influence the group.

What are the characteristics of a leadership?

American psychologists had study the characteristics of the leadership and find that, most of the time they are kind of persons with a lot of **ambition**, **self-confident** and **self-esteem**.

In add, the leader is the one who present the main characteristics of his own group.

What are the different types of leader?

The authoritarian leader → Gives order and punish.

The democratic leader → lets you can choose what you want to do but the chose is forced.

The leader "let it go" → He just looks without taking any part and answer to the sollicitations.

→ So they are three ways to lead a group.

In the case of a dangerous manipulation, the first one is the most dangerous because it uses aggressive ways to make people doing things. And if somebody too dangerous knows who to manipulate TOM's people, they can easily influence them and make them acting in the way they want.

Example: Adolf Hitler is one of the most famous examples of a dangerous Leader. He used people and toke the economic crisis of 1933 as a rise on the way of the power by a legal way.

The people of that time were so desperate by the situation that they turned to him and his fast solutions because they thought he could arrange everything around them. Once the Nazi party head Germany, it was too late to turn back.

III. Ways to influence other

Which are the ways that a future leader can use to influence the mind of other?

A. Propaganda

Propaganda is a form of communication with the purpose to influence the attitude of a community by presenting only one side of an argument. It is usually dispersed over a wide variety of media in order to create the chosen result in audience attitudes.

So, the information is present in particular ways,

- 1- Primarily, to influence an audience.
- 2- Secondly, it often presents facts selectively (for example by using lying by omission)

The purpose is to encourage a particular reaction, or uses loaded messages to produce an emotional rather than rational response to the informations presented.

As I said, propaganda tries to be the more dispersed to influence people as more as it can. And so, it plays a direct effect on their mind. That's why in the XX century with the explosion of media, propaganda became really quickly a kind of new arm in a context of war. Why do I want to talk about it in a course of TOM? As I said, we are talking about manipulation and propaganda is totally a good example.

To summary in a few words, propaganda is

- 1- a way to wash your brain
- 2- In a simple sentence: *"I will make you think what I want and direct your mind and behavior by an **implicit** way."* This means without your awareness.
- 3- In a context of war, it's a way to sell the war and get people into a cause with the idea of mobilize their energy.

Different form of media can be used and so propaganda can be found in different ways as radio, pictures, arts, pubs, even cartoons for children, ...



Here is a picture of propaganda, it is called “Vive l’Allemagne” which means “Lived Germany”. This picture had been created in 1930.

What is important here?

At this moment, Hitler wasn’t already on the power, so this picture has a message clear, simple to understand for everybody. It’s just a way for the Nazi part to say to the population that they are coming on the top of the power and Hitler is the only person who can lead it!

Here:

- Hitler is alone which means he is the only one in the power, he looks proud, self-confident, ambitious with his hard eyes, strong fist, he looks determinate to lead his project for Germany. Actually he is taller than in reality, to show clearly his huge power.
- Behind him, people are following this chief. They are little compare to him because he is the only one who can reaper Germany and give her back all her power in the world. So implicitly it means that people have to follow him so Germany can get out of the crisis and all their problems will be solved.
- The landscape behind is dark, sad, because for the moment is the crisis in Germany, it is a metaphor for the economy. In it you can also see an eagle pierce the sky and bring a bright light as a symbol of a protection for the Nazis.

Another phenomena can explain why people can be so easily influenced by a supreme authority.

B. The perils of obedience

Stanley Milgram is a social psychologist’s experiments show that most people will hurt their fellows rather than disobey an authority.

In this task you have two subjects; the volunteer who was given the role of teacher, and the confederate (actor) who was given the role of the student.

At the beginning, they told to the “teacher” that the experiment it’s about memory. He had to give a list of words pairs which the learner had to memory. The “teacher” began by reading the list of word pairs to the learner. “The teacher” would then read the first word of each pair and read four possibilities of answers. “The student” would press a button to indicate his response. If the answer was incorrect, the “teacher” would administer a shock to the “student”, with the voltage increasing in 15-volts for each wrong answer. If it’s correct, the “teacher” would read the next word pair.

So, the “teacher” believed that for each wrong answer, the learner was receiving actual shocks. In reality, there were no shocks. And the “student” was separated from the subject by a wall. After a number of voltage level increases, the “student” started to bang on the wall that separated him from the “teacher”. After several times, the “student” was banging on the wall and complaining about his heart condition.

At this point, many people indicated their desire to stop the experiment and check on the learner. Some subjects paused at 135 volts and began to question the purpose of the experiment. Most continued after being assured that they would not be held responsible.

If at any time the subject indicated his desire to stop, the experimenter says:

1. Please *continue*.
2. The experiment requires that you *continue*.
3. It is absolutely essential that you *continue*.
4. You have no other choice, you *must* go on.

After this 4 sentences if the subject still want to stop, the experiment was stopped. Otherwise, it was stop after the subject had given the maximum 450-volt shock three times in succession.

If the subject asked some questions about the effect on health of the student, the experimenter said: "Although the shocks may be painful, there is no permanent tissue damage, so please go on".

If the teacher said that the learner clearly wants to stop, the experimenter replied, "Whether the learner likes it or not, you must go on until he has learned all the word pairs correctly, so please go on".

Results

62,5% of the subjects (25 on 40) followed the experiment until the end. None had refused the principle of experience, which implied to hurt someone.. None stopped before 135 V and the mean maximum shocks had been used too!

This means, ordinary people are likely to follow orders given by an authority figure, even to the extent of killing an innocent human being. Obedience to authority is a natural fact for the human. For example, obey parents, teachers, anyone in authority etc, ...

To conclude I'll say, let just imagine what can be the consequences of someone dangerous in the top of the power. As I wrote, it can be so easily to make people think what you want or influenced their behaviour when you know how "it works". I think the study of the link between TOM and politic can be so interesting, and I was a pleasure for me to have more information about it.

IV. Conclusion

To conclude, I'll say that I can make a like between politic and Theory Of Mind. As we told since de beginning of the theory of mind course, TOM can be use in term of manipulation. By writing this paper, I really wanted to make you realize what can be the consequences in a society of someone who decide to use TOM in a negative way, especially to assure is rise to power. Because, "*if I can understand how general people use to think, it begging easier for me to use this knowledge to manipulate their mind and influence the way they think and their behavior.*"

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