

An fMRI study of violations of social expectations: When people are not who we expect them to be

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ABSTRACT

The current study examines the effect of violations of social expectancies on the neural substrates of person perception. In an event-related fMRI experiment, participants were presented with the photographs of either Republican or Democrat politicians paired with either typical Republican or Democrat political views (e.g., “wants a smaller government” or “wants liberal supreme court judges”). Subjects were asked to form an impression of the targets using information about both their political affiliation and their political views. Of interest was the contrast between stereotypically congruent trials and stereotypically incongruent trials. The results reveal that brain regions previously involved in mentalizing (i.e., temporoparietal junction and medial prefrontal cortex) are preferentially recruited when viewing incongruent social targets.

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The ubiquitous use of social expectations when perceiving others is well established. Social cognitive investigations have repeatedly demonstrated how impression formation based on categories and stereotypes (i.e., information that is expected to describe social targets belonging to a specific social group) often takes precedence over construal based on individuating information (i.e., information that is specific to a social target) (Devine, 1989; Macrae and Bodenhausen, 2000). Nevertheless, social expectations are often violated during impression formation (Hamilton et al., 1989; Hastie and Kumar, 1979; Macrae et al., 1999; Sherman et al., 1998). As a consequence, we routinely are required to override our social expectations and instead create individuated impressions of others.

The implementation of such individuation processes following the violations of social expectations has been extensively documented (Brewer, 1988; Fiske and Neuberg, 1990; Macrae et al., 1999; Hastie and Kumar, 1979; Srull and Wyer, 1989). When individuated, social targets are construed as complex social agents with their personal constellation of beliefs, personality characteristics and intentions, as opposed to stereotypical members of a particular social group. Individuation, therefore, requires the attribution of unique characteristics, such as intentions and mental states, to social targets.

From a social cognitive perspective, studying violations of social expectations during impression formation has revealed many of the

requirements and consequences of flexibly construing others (Macrae and Bodenhausen, 2000; Smith, 1998). However, although fMRI has been utilized to explore the brain regions supporting categorical or stereotype-based responses (Mitchell et al., 2009; Wheeler and Fiske, 2005; Quadflieg et al., 2009; Richeson et al., 2003), few studies have investigated the perception of violations of social expectations using the same method.

Previous fMRI studies have examined the congruency of affective associations towards social targets (Harris and Fiske, 2009; Knutson et al., 2006; Westen et al., 2006) and, using electroencephalography (EEG), both regulation of racial bias and perceived violations of social expectations have been investigated (Amodio et al., 2004; Amodio et al., 2006). Furthermore, with the help of EEG, the neural operations underlying the processing of words or sentences that are either congruent or incongruent in terms of gender stereotypes have been studied (Osterhout et al., 1997; White et al., 2009). Nevertheless, the neural correlates of social cognitive processes recruited when pre-existing social expectations are violated during impression formation have yet to be investigated using fMRI (see Amodio and Lieberman, 2009; for a recent review of the literature). Accordingly, the current study aims to identify brain regions recruited by fundamental social cognitive processes during the perception of targets violating social expectation.

The medial prefrontal cortex (MPFC) and temporoparietal junction (TPJ) appear to be the central components of a constellation of brain regions supporting social cognition (Adolphs, 2009; Amodio and Frith, 2006; Decety and Lamm, 2007; Spreng et al., 2009). In particular, multiple lines of investigations suggest that these regions support

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processes enabling perceivers to perform, in one way or another, mental inferences about encountered individuals (Adolphs, 2009; Frith and Frith, 2006; Mitchell et al., 2006a; Saxe and Wexler, 2005; Spreng et al., 2009). Of particular relevance to the current investigation, tasks requiring the attribution of specific mental states or access to person-knowledge about social targets have been shown to recruit these brain regions (Cloutier et al., 2011; Frith and Frith, 2006; Spreng et al., 2009; Todorov et al., 2007). Following social cognitive theorization, such processes should be extremely useful when forming an impression tailored to an individual for which pre-existing expectations are not applicable (Brewer, 1988; Fiske and Neuberg, 1990; Macrae et al., 1999).

Accordingly, processes supported by the TPJ and MPFC are often mentioned as prime candidates to support the individuation of social targets (Amodio and Lieberman, 2009; Freeman et al., 2010; Harris and Fiske, 2007). It is therefore surprising that little research has been done to test this possibility. Motivating the current study is the hypothesis that these brain regions will be preferentially engaged during the perception of incongruent social targets. When perceiving violations of social expectations, both the MPFC and TPJ are expected to support mental inferences necessary to form individuated impressions of the social targets.

To explore this possibility, the current study used an event-related fMRI design to identify brain regions underlying the processing of socially incongruent social targets. To this end, participants were presented with photographs of unknown politicians, assigned to either the Democrat or Republican parties, who endorsed either typically Democrat or Republican views (Fig. 1). Of particular interest were the brain regions preferentially engaged when perceivers were presented with incongruent trials (i.e., Democrats endorsing typical Republican views and Republicans endorsing typical Democrat views). Crucially, because the congruent Republican views were also incongruent Democrat views and vice-versa, all the information conferred by the faces and sentences (i.e., the political views) contributed equally to congruent and incongruent trials across participants.

Methods

Participants

Twenty participants were recruited from the local MIT community. Of these twenty participants, two were excluded from subsequent analyses (the first subject excluded reported discomfort during the scan and difficulty performing the task, while the second subject was the only one to report identification with the Republican party). The remaining eighteen were between the ages of 19 and 30 years (9 male, mean age = 20.7 years), reported no significant abnormal neurological history and had normal or corrected-to-normal visual

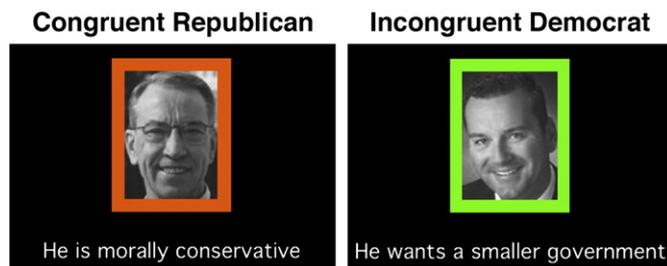


Fig. 1. Figures displaying an example of a stereotypically congruent trial (left) and an example of a stereotypically incongruent trial (right). In these trials, orange was predetermined to signify that a target was a Republican and green to signify that the target was a Democrat.

acuity. Sixteen participants were right-handed as measured by the Edinburgh Handedness Inventory (Oldfield, 1971). Participants were paid for their participation and gave informed consent in accordance with the guidelines set by the Committee on the Use of Humans as Experimental Subjects at MIT.

Material and pre-rating task

In a pilot study, participants ($N=24$) rated a list of sentences created to represent either typical Democrat (i.e., *prioritizes environmental policies*) or Republican views (i.e., *wants to privatize Social Security*). As a group, the participants considered themselves affiliated with the Democrat party ($M=2.7$; $s.d.=1$: on a 7 point scale with 1 = “Extremely Democrat” to 7 = “Extremely Republican”) and as having liberal views ($M=2.8$; $s.d.=1$: on a 7 point scale with 1 = “Extremely liberal” to 7 = “Extremely conservative”). Their task was to rate how “stereotypically Democrat or Republican” they believed the views described by sentences were on 7 point scale, 1 = “Very stereotypically Democrat” to 7 = “Very stereotypically Republican”. From this pilot study, we identified two lists of sentences (typical Democrat views: mean ($s.d.$) = 2.25 (0.39); typical Republican views: mean ($s.d.$) = 4.33 (0.30)) that were subsequently used in the functional imaging task. Because the sentences were created and rated by individuals identifying themselves mostly as Democrats, the resulting sentences can be construed to represent typical Democrat or Republican views from the perspective of Democrat individuals.

Functional imaging task and procedure

During the fMRI experiment, participants formed impressions of either Democrat or Republican politicians (80 unique targets were created using photographs of unknown politicians paired with background colors ascribed to each political party) paired with either typical Democrat or Republican political views (40 sentences of each type of view were paired with politicians of each political affiliation) (Fig. 1). Each face was presented twice with two unique sentences of the same condition. This resulted in 40 unique congruent-Democrat trials, 40 unique incongruent-Democrat trials, 40 unique congruent-Republican trials and 40 unique incongruent-Republican trials. Each trial consisted of a photograph of an unknown politician with a colored background (indicating a political affiliation) paired with a sentence describing a political view and was presented for 3500 ms. Following each stimulus presentation, a fixation cross was presented for 500 ms. Null events consisting of a fixation cross for 2000 ms were pseudorandomly interspersed to introduce jitter into the fMRI time-series to create ITIs of either 500 ms, 2500 ms, 4500 ms or 6500 ms. Participants were instructed to form impressions of the politicians based on the information available to them (i.e., the portrait, the party affiliation associated with the background color and the political views represented by the sentence). The pictures were gray-scaled photographs of unfamiliar politicians used in a previous study. These pictures were presented in the center of the screen at a size of 100–128 pixels wide by 150 pixels tall. The photographs and the color backgrounds were counterbalanced across participants to ensure that they would be equally represented in each trial type. Participants took part in practice trials prior to the fMRI session to ensure that they would efficiently associate the background color with the appropriate political affiliations.

Following previous fMRI investigations using impression formation instructions, participants were simply asked to press response buttons held in both hands once they felt they completed the task. The behavioral response was requested mainly to ensure that participants were paying attention to the task and participants were therefore not asked to perform their response as quickly as possible.

Importantly, the information communicated by the faces and the sentences was counterbalanced across participants to ensure they

would not create confounds when comparing trials based either on congruency or party affiliation. Indeed, across participants, the sentences contributed equally to the congruent and incongruent conditions as well as to the Democrat and Republican conditions. This ensured that factors such as sentence content, difficulty or length would not affect the results. Similarly, counterbalancing across participants ensured that the perceptual information afforded by the faces did not impact comparison across conditions.

Following the functional imaging session, participants were presented with the photographs once again and were asked if they recognized any of the politicians. This was done to verify that the individuals in photographs were indeed unfamiliar to the participants.

Functional imaging acquisition

Anatomical and functional whole-brain imaging was performed on a Siemens 3T Tim Trio Scanner using a phase-array 32-channel head coil (Siemens Medical, Erlangen, Germany). An Apple Macbook Pro running the Psychophysics Toolbox extensions in Matlab (The Mathworks, Natick, MA) was used to present stimuli to the participants. Anatomical images were acquired using a high-resolution MPRAGE sequence (128 sagittal slices, TE = 3 ms, TR = 2500 ms, flip angle = 7°, 1 × 1 × 1 mm voxels). Functional images were collected in 4 functional runs of 146 time points each, using a gradient echo, echo planar sequence sensitive to BOLD contrast (T2*) (32 axial slices per whole-brain volume, 2 mm in-plane resolution, 4 mm thickness, 0.8 mm skip, TR = 2000 ms, TE = 30 ms, flip angle = 90°).

Data analysis

Functional MRI data was analyzed using SPM5 (Wellcome Department of Cognitive Neurology, London, UK). Prior to the statistical analysis, images were preprocessed to remove sources of noise and artifacts. Functional data were realigned within and across runs to correct for head movement and transformed into a standard anatomical space (3 mm isotropic voxels) based on the ICBM 152 brain template (Montreal Neurological Institute). Normalized data were then spatially smoothed (8 mm full width at half maximum) using a Gaussian kernel. Finally, using in-house artifact detection software, individual runs were analyzed (on a subject-by-subject basis) to find outlier timepoints as measured by two criteria: we excluded from further analysis volumes during which subject head motion exceeded 1 mm or .75°, and volumes in which the overall signal for that timepoint fell more than three standard deviations outside the mean global signal for the entire run. Outlier time-points were excluded from the GLM analysis via the use of subject-specific regressors of no interest. Each subject's data were high-pass filtered at 128 s. Analyses took place at two levels: formation of statistical images and regional analysis of hemodynamic responses. In the first analysis, a GLM incorporating task effects for the 4 trial types of interest (congruent-Democrat, incongruent-Democrat, congruent-Republican, incongruent-Republican) and covariates of no interest (a session mean, six movement parameters derived from realignment corrections, and regressors to deweight individual outlier volumes) was used to compute parameter estimates (β) and t-contrasts images (containing weighted parameter estimates) for each comparison at each voxel and for each subject.

To determine which brain regions showed preferential activation to incongruent trials, we conducted a random effect analysis in which individuals' first-level contrast images for incongruent vs. congruent conditions were submitted separately to the second-level, one-sample t-tests. This analysis produced a group-level t-contrast with minimum clusters of 10 voxels and only brain regions surviving FDR corrections for multiple comparisons are reported. Bilateral TPJ (Left: -54, -54, 18); (Right: 54, -49, 19) and MPFC (-3, 52, 20) spherical regions of interest (ROI) of 6 mm were defined based on Talairach

coordinates taken from a recent meta-analysis of Theory of Mind studies (Spreng et al., 2009). Parameter estimates from contrast images comparing each of the 4 trial types (congruent-Democrat, incongruent-Democrat, congruent-Republican, incongruent-Republican) to the baseline control (fixation) were extracted from the ROIs, submitted to statistical analysis and plotted to further characterize the activations for all trial types in these brain regions.

Results

Behavioral results

There were no significant differences in response time for the 4 trial types [congruent-Democrat, mean (s.d.) = 2134 ms (434 ms); incongruent-Democrat, mean (s.d.) = 2104 ms (422 ms); congruent-Republican, mean (s.d.) = 2130 ms (438 ms); incongruent-Republican, mean (s.d.) = 2089 ms (405 ms)]. This lack of behavioral difference is not surprising considering that the participants were not instructed to answer as quickly as possible and simply pressed buttons held in both hands after forming impressions of the targets. A behavioral test following the scan confirmed that participants were not familiar with any of the politicians presented during the fMRI task.

fMRI results

The first analysis identified brain regions preferentially activated when forming impressions of incongruent compared to congruent targets. Greater activation was found for brain regions associated with social cognition (e.g., TPJ bilaterally, MPFC and precuneus) and for a number of lateral prefrontal regions ostensibly involved in some forms of cognitive control (Aron et al., 2004; Braver et al., 2004; Cools et al., 2002; Ochsner and Gross, 2005) (Table 1 and Fig. 2). There were no activations greater for congruent compared to incongruent trials and no differences between Democrat and Republican targets.

Based on coordinates obtained from a recent meta-analysis of Theory of Mind studies (Spreng et al., 2009), ROI analyses were

Table 1
Identification of BOLD signal differences between Congruent and Incongruent conditions.

Brain Region	Incongruent > Congruent	P FDR-corr	T	X	Y	Z
BA 9	R superior frontal gyrus	0.038	6.51	6	52	44
BA 6	L middle frontal gyrus	0.098	5.75	-48	2	54
BA 9	Medial prefrontal cortex	0.038	5.71	2	54	30
BA 39	L temporoparietal junction	0.038	5.55	-44	-58	32
BA 45	L Inferior Frontal Gyrus	0.038	5.52	-52	22	8
BA 40	R temporoparietal junction	0.038	5.50	50	-60	34
BA 7	Precuneus	0.038	5.45	0	-60	36
BA 10	L ventromedial prefrontal cortex	0.038	5.40	2	60	-2
BA 9	R middle frontal gyrus	0.038	5.35	36	10	32
BA 41	R superior temporal sulcus	0.038	4.89	44	-36	8
BA 47	L ventrolateral prefrontal cortex	0.038	4.87	-44	30	-16
BA 19	R lingual gyrus	0.038	4.85	30	-62	2
BA 21	L superior temporal sulcus	0.038	4.35	-52	-12	-16
BA 21	R middle temporal gyrus	0.039	4.22	54	2	-32
BA 11	R ventrolateral prefrontal cortex	0.039	4.18	38	36	-16
BA 38	L temporal pole	0.039	4.16	-28	20	-26
BA 8	L middle frontal gyrus	0.039	4.15	-32	16	40
BA 21	R superior temporal sulcus	0.043	3.97	54	-10	-20
BA 9	R middle frontal gyrus	0.045	3.87	46	26	30

Activations determined to be significant (p < 0.001, uncorrected; clusters ≥ 10 voxels) following FDR-correction are listed along with the best estimate of their location. BA = approximate Brodmann's area location. X,Y,Z values represent MNI coordinates. Locations of the activations are determined based on the functional responses superimposed on averaged anatomical MRI images.

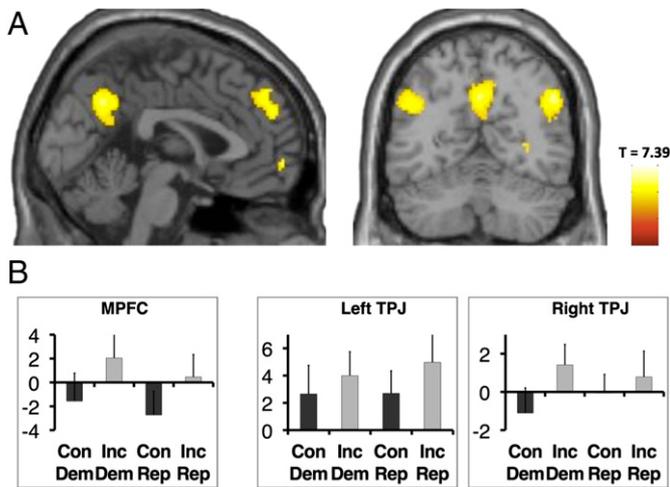


Fig. 2. Sagittal section (top left) and coronal section (top right) illustrating regions believed to be involved in mentalizing displaying increased activation to socially incongruent trials [bilateral TPJ and MPFC]. Graphs at the bottom of the image display signal change (parameter estimates extracted from spherical ROIs identified from a meta-analysis by Spreng et al., 2009) for each trial type (congruent-Democrat, incongruent-Democrat, congruent-Republican, incongruent-Republican) for each of these brain regions. Inspection of these figures confirms that preferential activation was obtained for both socially incongruent conditions.

employed to characterize activations for all trial types in brain regions hypothesized to be preferentially involved in the perception of socially incongruent targets (i.e., MPFC and bilateral TPJ). For each subject, signal intensities for the ROIs were calculated separately for the 4 trial types and examined statistically to directly compare activation to the congruent and incongruent targets affiliated with each political party (Fig. 2).

These analyses confirmed that areas of the MPFC and TPJ previously shown to be involved in mentalizing about others (Spreng et al., 2009) were preferentially recruited when participants formed impressions of socially incongruent targets, irrespective of their political party of affiliation. Indeed, the results revealed a main effect of social congruence [MPFC: $F(17) = 8.95$, $p = .008$; Right TPJ: $F(17) = 11.44$, $p = .004$; and Left TPJ: $F(17) = 11.87$, $p = .003$] but no difference in activation based on party affiliation [MPFC: $F < 1$; Right TPJ: $F < 1$; and Left TPJ: $F < 1$] and no interaction between social congruence and party affiliation [MPFC: $F < 1$; Right TPJ: $F < 1$; and Left TPJ: $F(17) = 1.55$, $p = .23$].

Discussion

Brain regions previously shown to support mentalizing about others (i.e., TPJ and MPFC) were preferentially recruited when participants perceived individuals violating social expectations. These findings further specify the social cognitive processes underlying the individuation of social targets during person perception. In agreement with models of person perception, additional mental inferences were ostensibly required when forming impressions of social targets violating expectations (Brewer, 1988; Fiske and Neuberg, 1990; Macrae et al., 1999). These results suggest that processes supporting the individuation of social targets, as postulated by social cognitive researchers, overlap with processes supported by brain regions involved in mentalizing about others.

Individuation and mental state inferences

In the current experiment, the bilateral TPJ and the MPFC, brain regions involved in mentalizing about others, were preferentially recruited when forming impressions of social targets violating social expectations. Numerous studies now point towards these brain

regions playing central roles in social cognition (Adolph, 2009; Amodio and Frith, 2006; Decety and Lamm, 2007; Frith and Frith, 2006; Mitchell et al., 2006a; Saxe and Wexler, 2005; Spreng et al., 2009). The TPJ, frequently bilaterally, is consistently involved in tasks requiring the attribution of mental states to social targets (Saxe and Wexler, 2005; Saxe, 2006; Spreng et al., 2009) and damage to this brain area has been shown to impair performance on Theory of Mind (ToM) tasks (Samson et al., 2004). The MPFC is also central to many social cognitive processes (Amodio and Frith, 2006), including those supporting impression formation (Mitchell et al., 2004), ToM (Frith and Frith, 2006) and the perception of faces for which person-knowledge is available (Cloutier et al., 2011; Todorov et al., 2007).

Accordingly, preferential involvement of the TPJ and MPFC for incongruent social targets provides additional evidence in support of person perception models positing the frequent necessity to individuate targets violating social expectations (Brewer, 1988; Fiske and Neuberg, 1990; Macrae et al., 1999). Indeed, in light of the social cognitive functions ascribed to the TPJ and MPFC, the current findings suggest that additional attributions of mental states were required to individuate socially incongruent targets. These conclusions are in agreement with recent studies suggesting the involvement of these regions in different contexts requiring the individuation of social targets (Freeman et al., 2010; Harris and Fiske, 2007).

In addition to the TPJ and MPFC, the right superior temporal sulcus and the precuneus, two regions also believed to support social cognitive tasks (Adolphs, 2009), were preferentially recruited during socially incongruent trials. Among other functions, the precuneus is believed to play a role in ToM operations (Saxe et al., 2006) and the right STS is believed to play a role in social perception (Allison et al., 2000; Pelphrey and Morris, 2006). The STS was also shown to be preferentially recruited when perceivers form impressions of social targets paired with meaningful person-knowledge (Mitchell et al., 2006b). It is therefore possible that increased activation in STS to socially incongruent trials was a consequence of the particular relevance of the information provided for the purpose of individuating the social targets.

Additional requirements when perceiving incongruent targets

Although social expectations often guide person perception, flexibility is required when considering the multiple levels at which others can be construed and the great variability of personal characteristics they possess. This cognitive flexibility is believed to involve more effortful and controlled processes (DeVine, 1989; Fiske and Neuberg, 1990; Macrae and Bodenhausen, 2000). In contrast to the previously described mentalizing operations, these processes have typically been ascribed to areas of the prefrontal cortex not believed to be specific to social cognition (Cunningham et al., 2004; Macrae et al., 1999). It was therefore not surprising to uncover various lateral prefrontal brain regions preferentially recruited by the socially incongruent targets. These brain regions may likely support various cognitive control operations (Aron et al., 2004; Braver et al., 2009; Cools et al., 2002; D'Esposito, 2007; Kerns et al., 2004; Koechlin et al., 2003; Kringelbach and Rolls, 2003; Ochsner and Gross, 2005) necessary to create distinct impressions of social targets violating social expectations. For example, such cognitive processes are required to override inconsistencies between existing expectations about a social target's group (i.e., Republican or Democrat party) and the unexpected information available about the same individual (i.e., beliefs that go against the positions typically adopted by the party in question) (Hastie and Kumar, 1979; Srull and Wyer, 1989).

It is noteworthy that the ACC, a region believed to play an important role in conflict detection and cognitive control (Barch et al., 2001; Botvinick et al., 2004; Kerns et al., 2004), was not found to be preferentially responsive to stereotypically incongruent trials.

The ACC has previously been shown to support error-monitoring operations (Carter et al., 1998), with increased activity in the region being at times reported irrespective of the commission of an error from the participants. The tasks used in these studies typically involve the possibility of an incorrect answer and/or require the selection of one among multiple actions (Barch et al., 2001). The impression formation task of the current study did not involve the selection of one among many presented responses. Therefore, absence of preferential ACC activation to socially incongruent trials may suggest that this region is indeed involved in conflict detection at the level of response selection (Kerns et al., 2004). Accordingly, in the context of person perception operations, involvement of the ACC might be indicative of efforts from perceivers to regulate prejudicial responses (Amodio et al., 2004; Amodio et al., 2006), rather than suggestive of the implementation of social cognitive processes required to individuate social targets.

As the stimuli in the congruent and incongruent conditions are the same across participants (i.e., the congruent Democrat statements were also presented as incongruent Republican statements and vice-versa), the observed differences in brain activity cannot be explained by the material presented in each experimental condition. This strongly suggests that the obtained results are truly a consequence of perceived violations of social expectations and are not driven by differences in the visual (i.e., faces) or semantic (i.e., sentences) information provided to the perceivers.

Nevertheless, there are inherent limits to the design used in the current study. Although the behavioral responses required of the participants did not reveal any differences in reaction time across conditions, social cognitive investigations have repeatedly found evidence of increased processing demands required by socially incongruent targets (Fiske and Neuberg, 1990; Macrae and Bodenhausen, 2000; Macrae, et al., 1999; Sherman et al., 1998). As such, investigations incorporating experimental manipulations and/or behavioral responses sensitive to the distinct effortful processes recruited by the perception of socially incongruent targets will be required. These investigations will not only help to further specify the function of various brain regions preferentially recruited by socially incongruent targets, but could also distinguish between the required operations at different stage of processing (Cunningham et al., 2004).

Additionally, the fact that participants in the current study held liberal views may limit the generalizability of our findings. Because conservatism is typically associated with less tolerance of ambiguity, less openness to experience and an increase need for structure and order (Jost et al., 2003), differential brain activations during person perception may also be expected from more conservative perceivers (Amodio et al., 2007; Brosch et al., 2011; Knutson et al., 2006).

Conclusion

As hypothesized, the perception of socially incongruent targets recruited brain regions involved in mentalizing about others. The observed preferential activation of the MPFC and TPJ suggests the occurrence of further mental inferences when forming impressions of socially incongruent targets. These findings once again underscore the importance of the MPFC and TPJ for social cognition. Additionally, they suggest an overlap between the processes underlying the individuation of social targets (Brewer, 1988; Fiske and Neuberg, 1990; Hastie and Kumar, 1979; Macrae and Bodenhausen, 2000; Srull and Wyer, 1989) and the processes involved in mentalizing about others (Adolphs, 2009; Frith and Frith, 2006; Mitchell et al., 2006a; Saxe and Wexler, 2005). More speculatively, the recruitment of additional prefrontal brain regions when perceiving incongruent social targets might index the involvement of cognitive control operations in response to violations of social expectations.

As the number of brain-imaging studies investigating different facets of person perception increase, we should gain a better

understanding of the so-called social brain. The context in which others encountered often dictates how we construe them. For this reason, studying complex social cognitive phenomenon, such as the modulations of social expectations during impression formation, demonstrates the flexibility with which specific brain regions are recruited to make sense of our social environment. Importantly, much of these investigations can benefit from the insights gained by behavioral studies of social cognition. Conversely, through the integration of different research perspectives, brain-imaging studies have the potential not only to increase our understanding of the brain but also to provide new insights into the social-cognitive processes involved in person perception.

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