Deliberating on Thin Slices: The Impact of Jurors' First Impressions and Group Effects on Trial Outcomes

Caroline Titcomb, Stanley L. Brodsky, Jennifer Kelly, and Kerry Johnson
The University of Alabama

RESEARCH AIMS:

- Given the strong influence of subjective factors attributed to witness credibility (Brodsky, Griffin, & Cramer, in press), it is plausible credibility judgments are made early in the testimony, influencing and biasing how jurors weigh the evidence (Koski, 2003).
- People have an innate ability to judge characteristics correctly (e.g., personality, psychopathology, interpersonal styles) of others based on only "thin slices" of exposure to the individual being rated (i.e., 30 seconds to 5 minutes) (Ambady & Rosenthal, 1992, 2003).
- This study: Is the 1st to manipulate time exposed to expert witness testimony using thin slice methodology to gauge the impact of first impressions of experts on credibility, verdict, and deliberations in a criminal case involving a Not Guilty by Reason of Insanity plea.
- Seeks to gain an ecologically valid understanding of the impression formation and its relation to trial outcomes.
- Will assess differences between deliberating and non-deliberating juror ratings of witness credibility and verdict.
- Researchers hypothesize that:
  - The stability of judgments based on thin slice observations will be replicated for non-deliberating jurors;
  - However, deliberation will moderate the effect that time exposed to the witness has on both witness credibility and verdict.

Participants:
- 188 Undergraduate Participants
  - 65% Female, 35% Male
  - 84% White, 14% Black, 0.5% Asian, 0.5% Hispanic, 1% Biracial
  - Mean Age = 18.8; Mean Years of College Education = 1.5
  - 6-person Mock Juries (5 to 8 jurors each)
  - Random Assignment to 1 of 6 conditions:

Time Exposed to Expert Witness Testimony

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<tr>
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<th>Non-Deliberation Deliberation</th>
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<tr>
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<td>30 sec</td>
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<td>Non-Deliberation</td>
<td>30 jurors</td>
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<td>Deliberation</td>
<td>30 jurors</td>
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Stimulus:
- Written Case Description:
  - Charges & plea; juror instructions
  - Role of prosecution, defense, and jurors
  - Standard and Burden of proof
- Testimony Video:
  - Forensic mental health expert
  - All videos included impaired MSO due to MI
- Written Case Fact Sheet:
  - Basic facts for Prosecution & Defense
- Oral Instructions:
  - Highlighted testimony as key evidence
  - Goal = Unanimous Verdict

(Predicted correlation with NGRI)

Design:
- 2 X 2 Between Subjects
  - Independent Variables
    - Non-Deliberation Deliberation
    - 30 Seconds 5 Minutes 10 Minutes
  - Dependent Variables
    - Mock-Juror Moderator Variables
      - Extraversion (+) Need for Cognition (+) Authoritarianism (-) NGRI Bias (-)

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Measures:
- Mini-Market
  - Big Five Mini-Marker
- NFC Scale
  - Need for Cognition
- R-LAQ23
  - Rev. Legal Attitudes Questionnaire
- IDA-R Scale
  - Insanity Defense Attitudes Revised

RESULTS:

1. THIN SLICES – Hypothesis: Significant positive correlation across all three time slices on WC ratings and verdict.
   - Significant Main Effect for Time Slice WC F(2, 25) = 11.16, p < .01, The 30 sec. group yielded significantly lower WC than the other conditions.
   - Significant Main Effect for Time Slice Verdict F(2, 24) = 7.25, p < .01, The 30 sec. group was significantly less likely to yield NGRI verdicts than the 5 min. group, and marginally less likely to do so than was the 10 min. group.

2. DELIBERATION – No significant Main Effects for Deliberation were evidenced on either WC or Verdict.

3. DELIBERATION X TIME SLICE –
   - No significant Deliberation X Time Slice for WC.
   - Significant Deliberation X Time Slice for Verdict, F(2, 24) = 7.68, p < .01, consistent with hypothesized results: Significant differences across time slices for deliberating jurors only yielding a sign. difference between the 30 sec. group and the other groups.

4. MODERATORS – When entered into the model as moderators, no moderator relationships were found.
   - Without deliberation, thin slice exposure to experts yielded lower credibility judgments and more punitive judgments.
   - With deliberation, thin slice judgments yielded statistically similar verdicts for non-deliberating jurors; suggesting a strong impact of expert witness' first impressions on jurors' verdicts and support for thin slice predictions.
   - Deliberation minimizes the strength of first impressions and accuracy of thin slice predictions.

IMPLICATIONS:
- First impressions of experts matter on WC and verdict
- Considering deliberation in jury research is indicated
- Qualitative analysis of deliberations is recommended

Note: Analyses used Linear Mixed Modeling to control for the effect of grouped data collection.

PROCEDURE:

- Packet A
  - View Testimony Case Fact Sheet
  - Participant Information Sheet
  - No Deliberation
  - 15 Min Filler Task
- Packet B
  - Group Vote
  - Deliberation
  - 15 Min Deliberation (5 Min After Charge)

Effect of Deliberation X Time Slice on Verdict

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