



# Deindividuation of Drivers: Are We Individuals?



Keith R. MacArthur  
Department of Psychology, University of Central Florida

Presenting at UCF's Showcase of Undergraduate Research Excellence

## INTRODUCTION

**Festinger et al. (1952)** seminal research

- The reduction of internal psychological restraints due to a group effect
- Group membership more attractive

**Singer et al. (1965)** first replication

- Hypothesis: DI caused by the relaxation of social restraints
- 2 experiments manipulating participant dress to investigate identifiability
- Results:

- Exp1: (post hoc) lack of a clear factor of identification
- Exp2: support DI theory, however may only be assessing specific aspects of DI

**Zimbardo (1969)** Anonymity Factor.

- Shifts focus from group to environment effect
  - Allows DI to occur without a group
- Hypothesis: "...antecedent social conditions lead to changes in perception of self and others ... lowered threshold of ... restrained behavior" (p. 251)
- 2 experiments manipulating anonymity
  - Exp1 with students, Exp2 with soldiers
- Results:
  - Exp1: DI occurred
  - Exp2: DI did not occur.
    - Post hoc: pre-existing DI
      - Uniforms afford anonymity

## Deindividuation

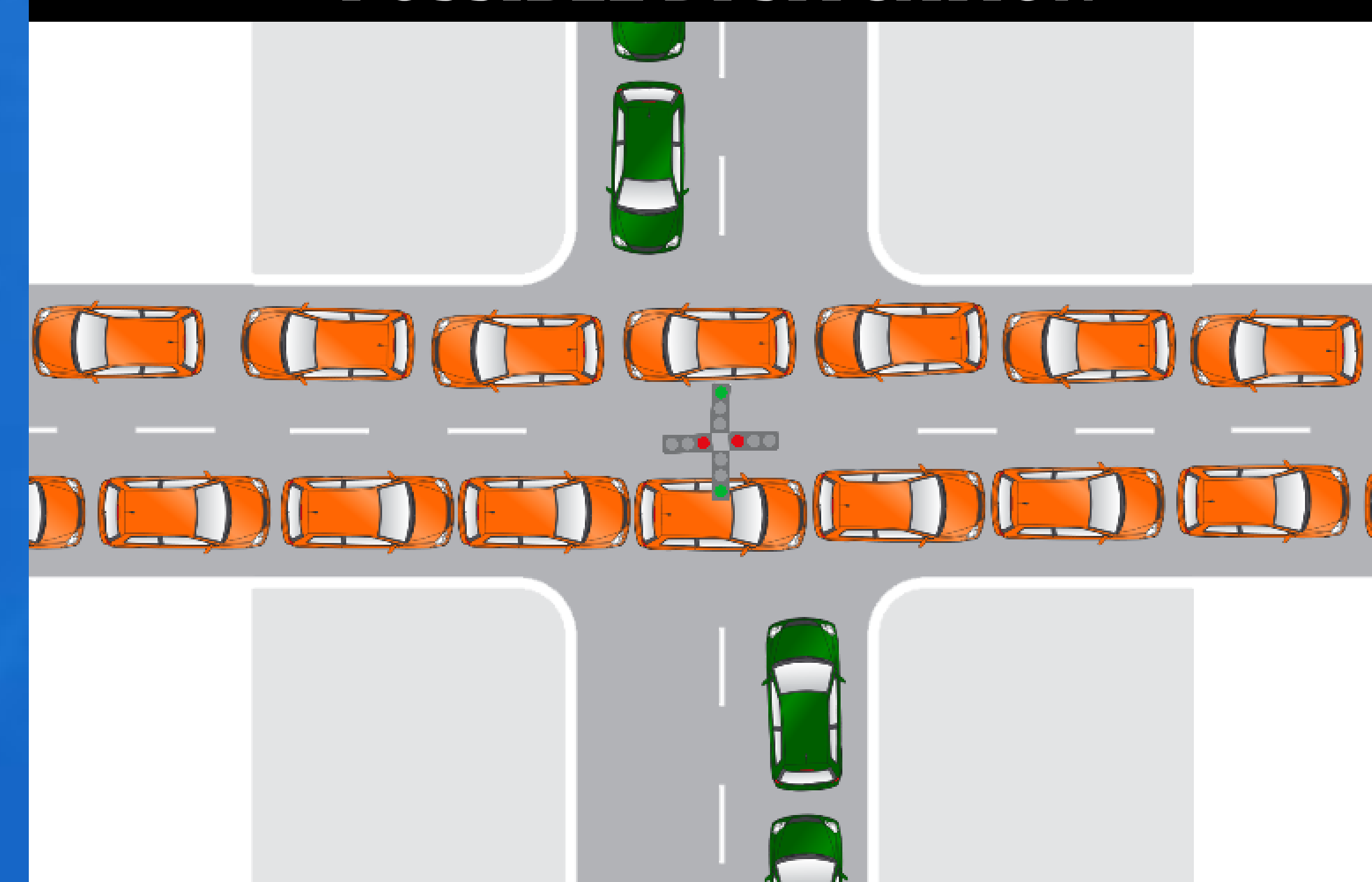
Deindividuation (DI) occurs when an environment reduces the "individuality" or identifiability of a person.

### GROUP ANONYMITY



When in a group the individual feels less identifiable and thus less responsible.

### POSSIBLE DI SITUATION



### SOLITARY ANONYMITY



When individuals can not be identified by evaluative observers they feel able to act as they wish

### EXPERIMENTAL SPACE



## EXPERIMENTAL METHOD

2 Conditions:

- Aware of evaluative observers
- Unaware of evaluative observer

Recorded video/audio instructions.

Training in driving simulator.

Signs to instigate involvement.

Experimental Drive

Online questionnaire software  
n = 40 for exploratory, n = 100 for experimentation.

Expected Results:

- Unaware: will deviate from societal norms.
- Aware: conform to societal norms.

## MEASURES

Objective:

- # of Crashes
- Time spent 5mph over and 5mph under
- Time spent off primary roadway

Subjective:

- NASA Task Load Index
- Driver Stress Inventory
- Driver Coping Questionnaire
- Dundee Stress State Questionnaire

## SELECTED REFERENCES

- Festinger, L., Pepitone, A., & Newcomb, T. (1952). Some consequences of de-individuation in a group. *The Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology*, 47(2S), 382.
- Lee, E. J. (2008). When are strong arguments stronger than weak arguments? Deindividuation effects on message elaboration in computer-mediated communication. *Communication Research*, 35(5), 646-665.
- Singer, J. E., Brush, C. A., & Lublin, S. C. (1965). Some aspects of deindividuation: Identification and conformity. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 1(4), 356-378.
- Zimbardo, P. G. (1969). The human choice: Individuation, reason, and order versus deindividuation, impulse, and chaos. In *Nebraska symposium on motivation*. University of Nebraska Press.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

P.A. Hancock  
G.M. Hancock  
Ben D. Sawyer



Office of  
Undergraduate  
Research

