Social Cognition

Lecture 2

Plans for 2 classes

1st class

1. Social cognition perspective
2. Knowledge structures:
   - **Schemas**
   - **Stereotypes**
   - **Scripts**
   - **Prototypes**
   - **Priming/Framing**
   - **Associative networks**
3. Attributions:

- **theories of attributions**

2nd class

- **errors of attributions**

4. Biases: self-serving, negativity, conformation
5. Heuristics: availability, representativeness, simulation, gaze
6. Self-Fulfilling Prophecies

Social Thinking

=

Social Cognition

Social Cognition

- How people think about themselves and the social world, or more specifically, how people select, interpret, remember, and use social information to make judgments and decisions.

Social Cognition

- *Social cognition* refers to the cognitive structures and processes that shape our understanding of social situations and that mediate our behavioral reactions to them.

- Overlaps with other "core" areas of social psychology (e.g., attribution theories, impression formation, attitude formation/change, stereotypes, the self)

- Heavily influenced by the field of cognitive psychology

How is social cognition different from "regular" cognition?

- A common answer to this question is that whereas cognitive psychologists often study cognitive processes in a manner that is divorced from the real-life contexts in which these mechanisms operate, social-cognition researchers muddy the waters by attempting to add back some of the real-life context into their experiments.

How is social cognition different from "regular" cognition?

- In real life, our mental processes occur within a complex framework of motivations and affective experiences.

- Whereas most cognitive psychology experiments attempt to eliminate the role played by these factors, social cognition researchers have had to increasingly recognize that an understanding of how the social mind works must include a consideration of how basic processes of perception, memory, and inference are influenced by motivation and emotion.

Social Cognition as an Approach

- Social cognition is both a subarea of social psychology and an approach to the discipline as a whole.

- As a subarea, social cognition encompasses new approaches to classic research on **attribution theory** (which means how people explain behavior and events), **impression formation** (how people form impressions of others), **stereotyping** (how people think about members of groups), **attitudes** (how people feel about various things).

Two Basic Types of Thinking

Automatic Thinking (An analysis of our environment based on past experience and knowledge we have accumulated)

- Quick, effortless
- Limited conscious deliberation of thoughts, perceptions, assumptions

Controlled Thinking

- Effortful, deliberate
- Thinking about ourselves and our environment
- Carefully selecting the right course of action

Principles of social cognition

(Susan Fiske)

Principle of people as *cognitive misers*

- And one of those principles is the principle of people as ***cognitive misers***. This is a term that Shelley Taylor and Susan Fiske thought up once in a Nashville hotel room the night before one had to use it for a talk. ("There must be some way to describe this! You know, people don't like to think. They don't like to think in complicated ways. They like to hoard their scarce mental resources. What can we call it?“ And then we came up with "cognitive miser.") The basic idea is that people do not like to take a lot of trouble thinking if they do not have to. Not that people are not capable of thinking hard but the world is so complicated, and especially the world of other people is so complicated, that we cannot think carefully all the time. So, we take a lot of shortcuts, and we create a lot of approximations. People use them both in thinking about people and in thinking about nonsocial things.

Unabashed mentalism

- The next principle here concerns what one might call ***unabashed mentalism***; this term goes back to the erstwhile dominance of behaviorism in American psychology. That is, social cognition researchers are neither too intimidated nor too ashamed to study and analyze thinking. It is as simple as that. This may seem like old news, but, coming on the heels of a behaviorist ideology that refused respectability to anyone studying anything that went on between people's ears, this was a daring enterprise. To be unafraid of studying people's mental processes means of course that one is trying to guess the contents of the black box one cannot open. One assumes that its contents create certain overt manifestations

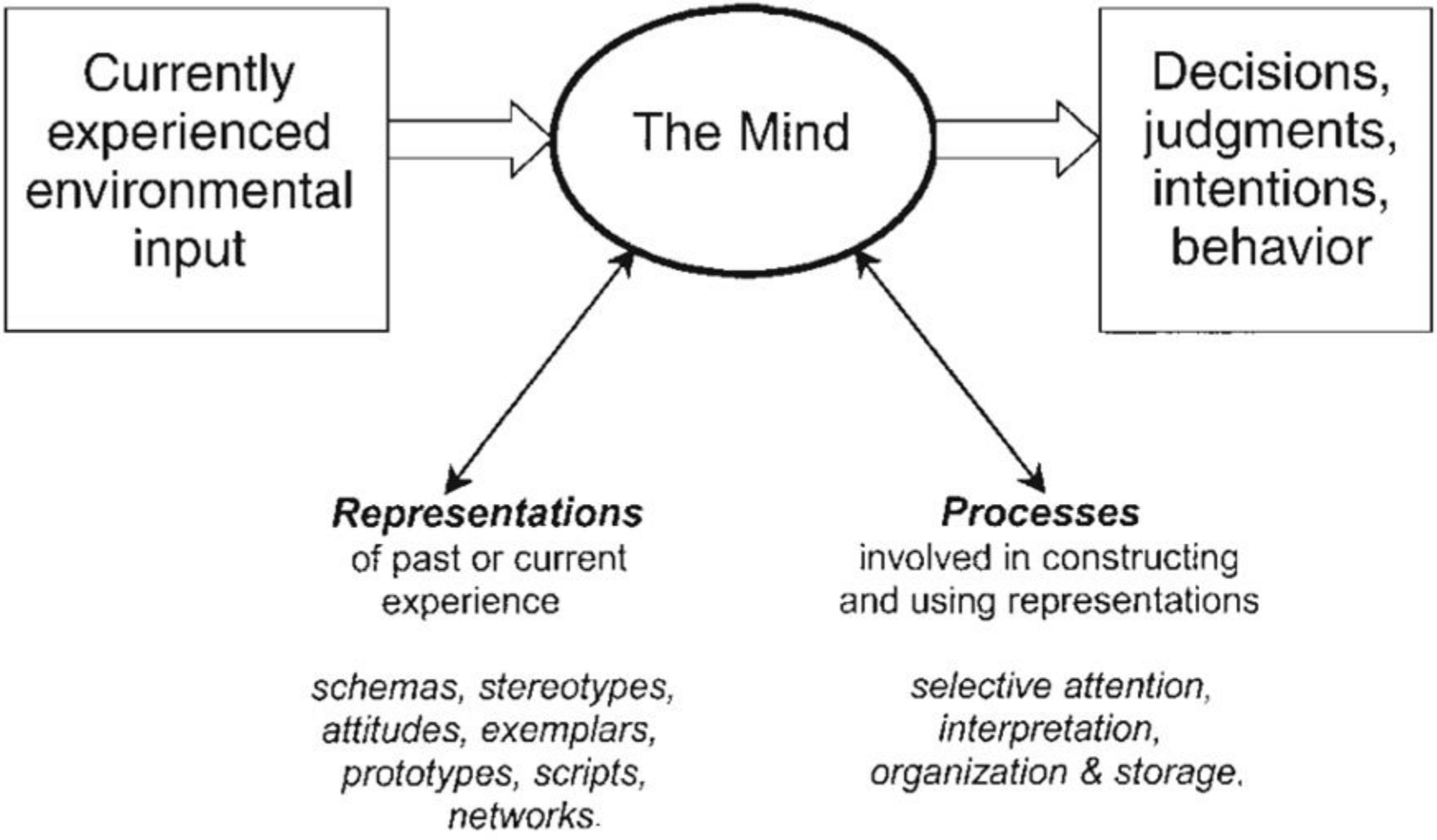

Figure A schematic overview of the core assumptions of the social cognition perspective.

Process orientation

- Another principle concerns a ***process orientation.*** Because of the information processing metaphor-because of the idea that people, like computers, take in information, encode it in some fashion, store it away for later retrieval, inference, and use-cognitive psychology generally and social cognitive psychology specifically tend to look at things in stages. Researchers analyze social thinking in terms of flowcharts, depicting a series of processes: *A* leads to B leads to C leads to *D.* Suppose, for example, that you are interested in how people form impressions of presidential candidates; it matters whether they gather information from a variety of sources, store it away, and then make a judgment at the last minute (attention+memory+judgment) or whether they gather information, updating their judgment each time, and incidentally remember some of the information (attention + judgment and, separately, attention +memory).This has practical implications. In one case, a presidential campaign would want to create (favorable) media events as memorable as possible, but in the other case, they would not have to be particularly memorable, just as favorable as possible (Hastie & Park, 1986; Lodge, McGraw, & Stroh, 1989).

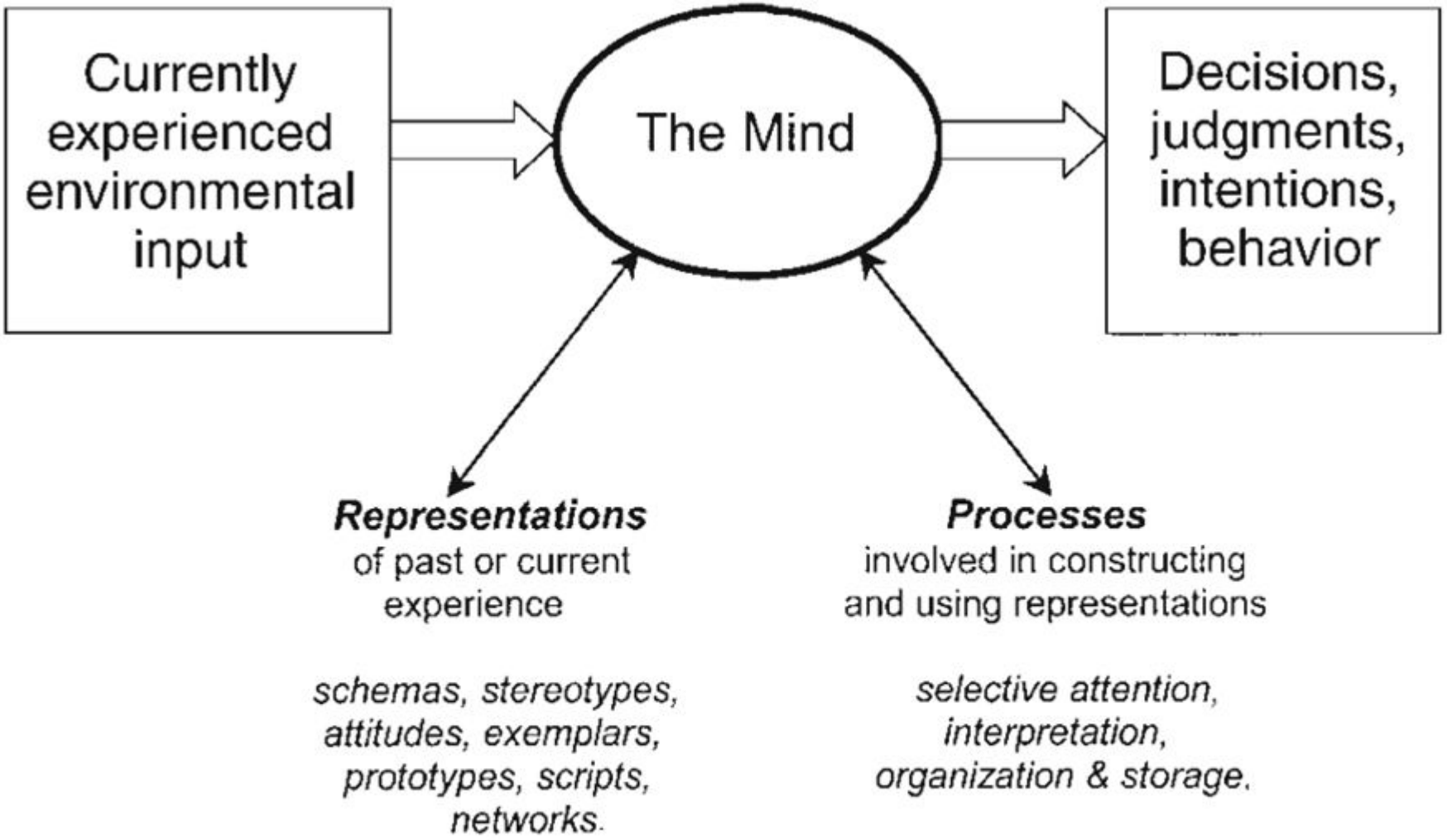

Figure A schematic overview of the core assumptions of the social cognition perspective.

Representations

- Schemas
- Stereotypes
- Scripts
- Prototypes
- Associative networks
  - Priming/Framing

Knowledge structures

Automatic thinking requires little effort because it relies on knowledge structures, e.g.,

- **Schemas**
- **Scripts**
- **Associative networks**
- **Stereotypes**

We reduce complex and detailed realities to simple images that can be stored and recalled.

Schemas & Scripts

Schemas describe the temporal organization of objects

Scripts describe the temporal organization of events

Schemas (F. Bartlett, 1932)

- Stored and automatically accessible information about a concept, its attribution, & its relationships to other concepts.

People try to fill the missing places in the schema automatically.

We can observe this not only in everyday life but also in science.

ПЕРИОДИЧЕСКАЯ СИСТЕМА ЭЛЕМЕНТОВ Д.И. МЕНДЕЛЕЕВА

	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII
1	1 H 1,01 ВОДОРОД						(H)	2 He 4,00 ГЕЛИЙ
2	2 Li 6,94 ЛИТИЙ	4 Be 9,01 БЕРИЛЛИЙ	5 B 10,81 БОР	6 C 12,01 УГЛЕРОД	7 N 14,01 АЗОТ	8 O 16,00 КИСЛОРОД	9 F 19,00 ФТОР	10 Ne 20,18 НЕОН
3	3 Na 22,99 НАТРИЙ	12 Mg 24,31 МАГНИЙ	13 Al 26,98 АЛЮМИНИЙ	14 Si 28,09 КРЕМНИЙ	15 P 30,97 ФОСФОР	16 S 32,06 СЕРА	17 Cl 35,45 ХЛОР	18 Ar 39,95 АРГОН
4	4 K 39,10 КАЛИЙ	20 Ca 40,08 КАЛЬЦИЙ	21 Sc 44,96 СКАНДИЙ	22 Ti 47,90 ТИТАН	23 V 50,94 ВАНАДИЙ	24 Cr 52,00 ХРОМ	25 Mn 54,94 МАРГАНЕЦ	26 Fe 55,85 ЖЕЛЕЗО	27 Co 58,93 КОБАЛЬТ	28 Ni 58,70 НИКЕЛЬ
	5	29 Cu 63,55 МЕДЬ	30 Zn 65,38 ЦИНК	31 Ga 69,72 ГАЛЛИЙ	32 Ge 72,59 ГЕРМАНИЙ	33 As 74,92 МЫШЬЯК	34 Se 78,96 СЕЛЕН	35 Br 79,90 БРОМ	36 Kr 83,80 КРИПТОН	
5	6	Rb 37 85,47 РУБИДИЙ	Sr 38 87,62 СТРОНЦИЙ	Y 39 88,91 ИТТРИЙ	Zr 40 91,22 ЦИРКОНИЙ	Nb 41 92,91 НИОБИЙ	Mo 42 95,94 МОЛИБДЕН	Tc 43 98,91 ТЕХНЕЦИЙ	Ru 44 101,07 РУТЕНИЙ	Rh 45 102,91 РОДИЙ	Pd 46 106,42 ПАЛЛАДИЙ
	7	47 Ag 107,87 СЕРЕБРО	48 Cd 112,41 КАДМИЙ	49 In 114,82 ИНДИЙ	50 Sn 118,69 ОЛОВО	51 Sb 121,75 СУРЬМА	52 Te 127,60 ТЕЛЛУР	53 I 126,90 ИОД	54 Xe 131,30 КСЕНОН		
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7	10	Fr 87 [223] ФРАНЦИЙ	Ra 88 226,03 РАДИЙ	**89 Ac [227] АКТИНИЙ	104 Ku [261] КУРЧАТОВИЙ	105 Ns [261] НИЛЬСБОРИЙ	106 Sg [263] СИБОРГИЙ	107 Bh [262] БОРИЙ	108 Hs [265] ХАССИЙ	109 Hs [266] МЕЙТНЕРИЙ	

атомный номер, обозначение элемента: 6 C, 12,01 УГЛЕРОД; относительная атомная масса

- s - элементы
- p - элементы
- d - элементы
- f - элементы

* ЛАНТАНОИДЫ

58	59	60	61	62	63	64	65	66	67	68	69	70	71
Ce 140,12 ЦЕРИЙ	Pr 140,91 ПРАЗЕОДИМ	Nd 144,24 НЕОДИМ	Pm [145] ПРОМЕТИЙ	Sm 150,40 САМАРИЙ	Eu 151,96 ЕВРОПИЙ	Gd 157,25 ГАДОЛИНИЙ	Tb 158,93 ТЕРБИЙ	Dy 162,50 ДИСПРОЗИЙ	Ho 164,93 ГОЛЬМИЙ	Er 167,26 ЭРБИЙ	Tm 168,93 ТУЛИЙ	Yb 173,04 ИТТЕРБИЙ	Lu 174,97 ЛЮТЕЦИЙ

** АКТИНОИДЫ

90	91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99	100	101	102	103
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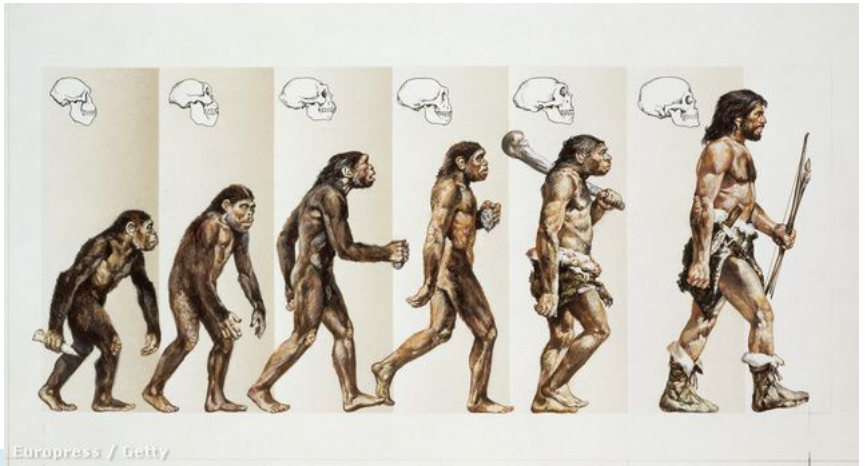


Schemas Influence

- Our attention and encoding
- Our memory
- Our judgments
- Our behaviour
  - which can in turn influence our social environment

Types Of Schemas

- Role Schemas: Are about proper behaviours in given situations. Expectations about people in particular roles and social categories (e.g., the role of a social psychologist, student, doctor, teacher)
- Self-Schemas: Are about oneself. We also hold idealized or projected selves or possible selves. Expectations about the self that organize and guide the processing of self-relevant information (e.g., if we think we are reliable we will try to always live up to that image. If we think we are sociable we are more likely to seek the company of others).
- Person Schemas: Are about individual people. Expectations based on personality traits. What we associate with a certain type of person (e.g., introvert, warm person, outstanding leader, famous footballer).
- Event Schemas: Are also known as **Scripts**. They are about what happens in specific situations. Expectations about sequences of events in social situations. What we associate with certain situations (e.g., restaurant schemas, Demonstration, First Dating).

Schemas: The good

- Effective tool for understanding the world.
- Through use of schemas, most everyday situations do not require effortful thought.

Schemas: The bad

- Influences & hampers uptake of new information (**proactive interference**), such as when situations are inconsistent with *stereotypes*.

- A ***stereotype*** is "...a fixed, over generalized belief about a particular group or class of people." (Cardwell, 1996).

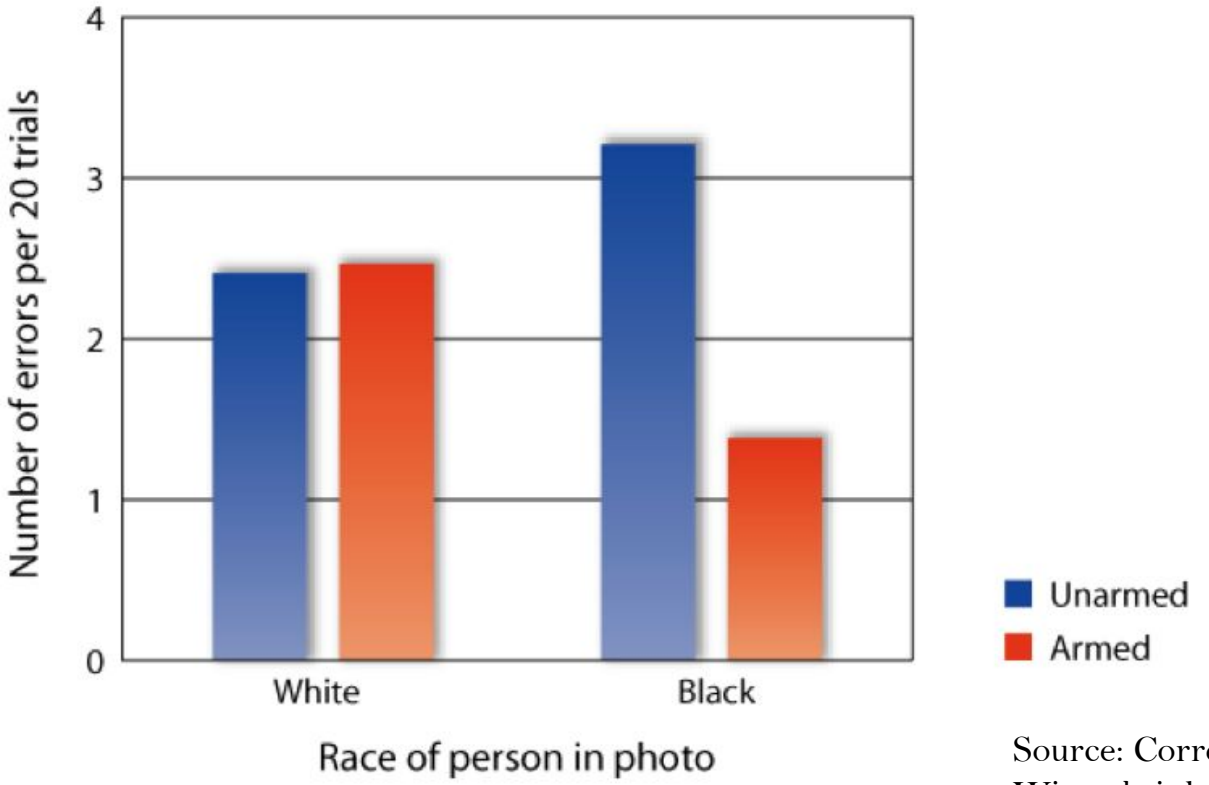
- One advantage of a stereotype is that it enables us to respond rapidly to situations because we may have had a similar experience before

Social stereotypes

- **Social Stereotypes** are beliefs about people based on their membership in a particular group. Stereotypes can be positive, negative, or neutral. Stereotypes based on gender, ethnicity, or occupation.

Schemas & Stereotypes
[Race and Weapons]

White participants were showed pictures of white and black individuals in a variety of settings (e.g., in a park, train station, sidewalk). Half of the people in the pictures were holding a gun, other half holding non-threatening objects (wallet, cell phone, camera). Press one button to shoot or another button to not shoot. Little time to decide. Gained points. Not shooting someone without a gun (5 points); shooting someone with a gun (10 points); shot someone without a gun (lose 20 points); not shoot someone with a gun (lose 40 points)



Source: Correll, Park, Judd, & Wittenbrink (2002)

The Stability of Stereotypes

Stereotypes are not easily changed, for the following reasons:

- When people encounter instances that disconfirm their stereotypes of a particular group, they tend to assume that those instances are atypical subtypes of the group.

- People's perceptions are influenced by their expectations.

Example: Liz has a stereotype of elderly people as mentally unstable. When she sees an elderly woman sitting on a park bench alone, talking out loud, she thinks that the woman is talking to herself because she is unstable. Liz fails to notice that the woman is actually talking on a cell phone.

Scripts

Schemas knowledge structures that represent substantial information about a concept, its attributes, and its relationships to other concepts

Scripts are knowledge structures that contain information about how people (or other objects) behave under varying circumstances. In a sense, scripts are schemas about certain kinds of events.

- Script is like plan of actions in which separate actions can change places on condition of reaching the target.

- Scripts guide behavior: The person fist selects a script to represent the situation and then assumes a role in the script. Scripts can be learned by direct experience or by observing others (e.g., parents, siblings, peers, mass media characters)

Example: here we have a script. If we make a mistake in it, this can be easily found. What are the mistakes in this example?

1. Hostess greets person

2. Hostess seats person

3. Person pays for food

4. Person orders food from waiter

5. A person enters a restaurant

6. Person looks at menu

7. Person leaves restaurant

8. Person eats food

Answer: The order of the items is 5, 1, 2, 6, 4, 8, 3, 7

One example of a script is a restaurant

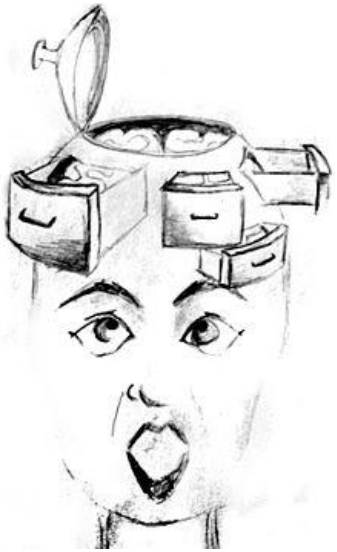
- However, schematic models have been **criticized** as being too loose and theoretically underspecified (e.g., Alba & Hasher, 1983; Fiske & Linville, 1980).

- In addition, newer approaches to mental representation have been proposed that can account for many if not all of the same phenomena covered by schema theory, but with a much greater degree of theoretical specificity.

- We turn now to one of these **alternatives** to schema theory—namely, **exemplar models**.

Exemplar models

- A major alternative of schema model was provided by **exemplar (prototype) models** (e.g., Smith & Zárate, 1992), *which hold that social cognition is based on specific representations of individual exemplars.*
- Instead of relying on precomputed generalizations, perceivers are assumed to retrieve and use sets of prior relevant and specific experiences to guide their social information processing.



Prototype

- A prototype is a cognitive representation that exemplifies the essential features of a category or concept. Specifically, a prototypical representation reflects the central tendency or the average or typical attributes of the members of a category.

- A prototype is an abstract mental representation of the central tendency of members of a category.

- The most representative member of category.

Prototype

- **Prototype** refers to a specific ideal image of a category member, with all known attributes filled in.

- As formulated in the 1970s by Eleanor Rosch and others, prototype theory was a radical departure from traditional necessary and sufficient conditions as in Aristotelian logic, which led to set-theoretic approaches of extensional or intensional semantics. Thus instead of a definition based model - e.g. a bird may be defined as elements with the features [+feathers], [+beak] and [+ability to fly], prototype theory would consider a category like bird as consisting of different elements which have unequal status - e.g. a robin is more prototypical of a bird than, say a penguin.
- This leads to a graded notion of categories, which is a central notion in many models of cognitive science and cognitive semantics, e.g. in the work of George Lakoff (Women, Fire and Dangerous Things, 1987).

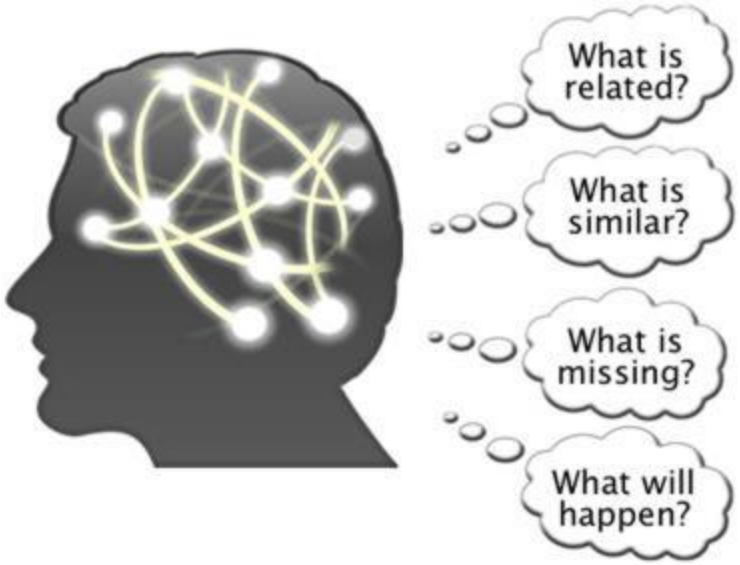
Prototype

- People store prototypical knowledge of **social** groups for example, librarians, policemen.

- These prototypical representations facilitate people's ability to encode, organize, and retrieve information about everyday stimuli.

Associative Network Models

- The associative network approach assumes that mental representations consist of ***nodes*** of information that are ***linked*** together in ***meaningful ways*** (e.g., Wyer & Carlston, 1994).
- For example, a mental representation of a person named George could consist of various concepts that are associated with him, such as personality traits, occupational roles, physical appearance, and so on.



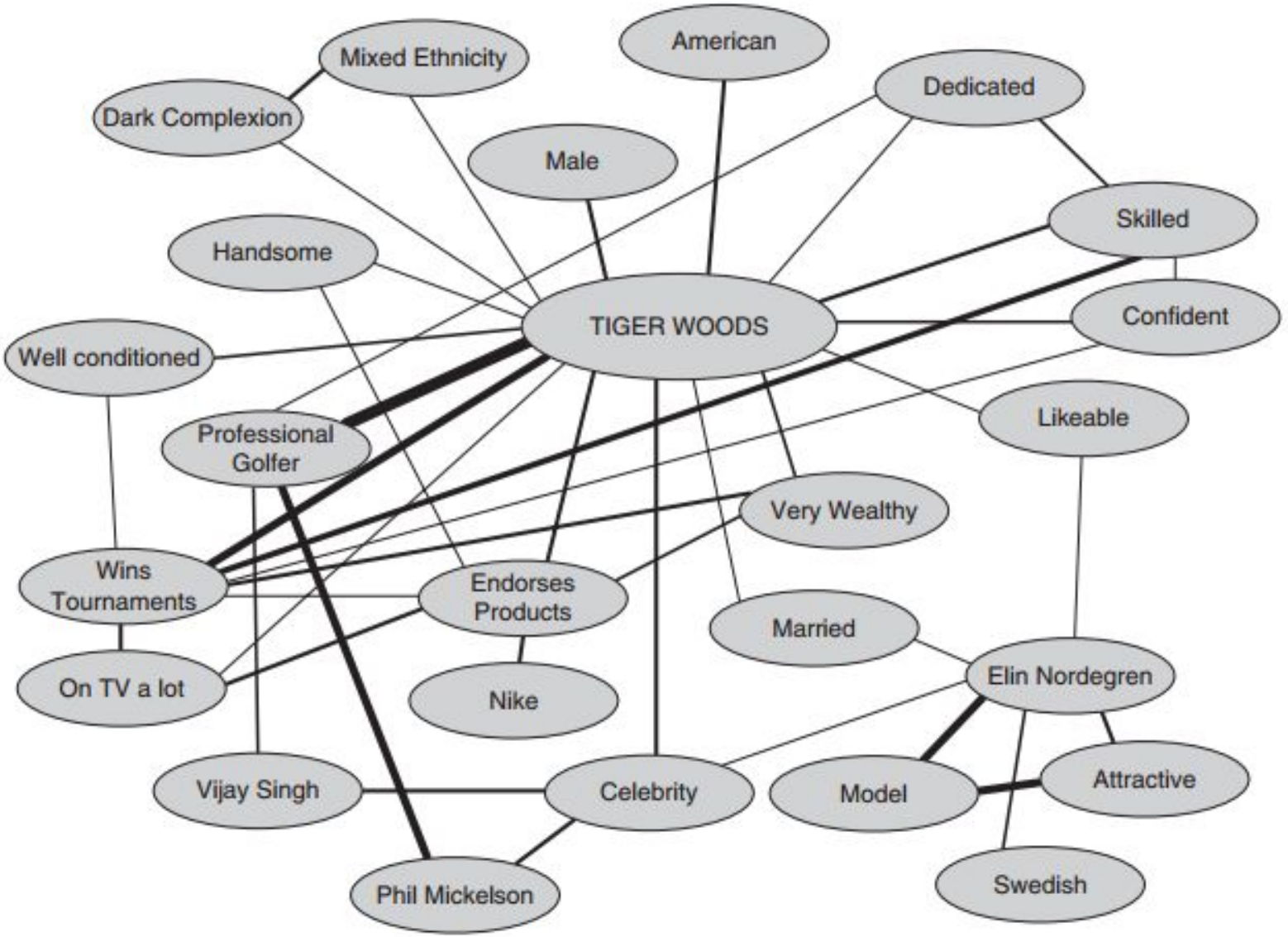
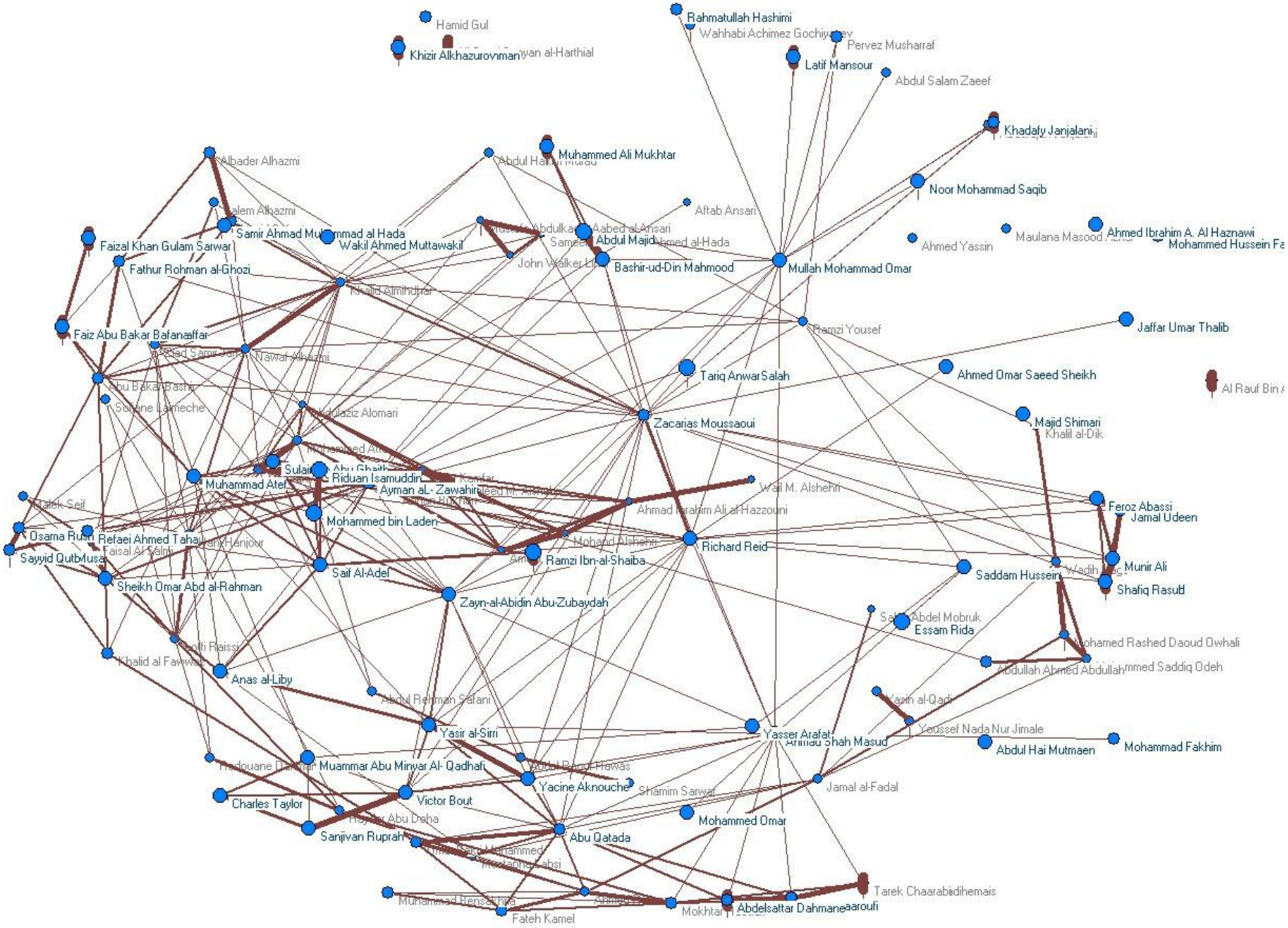


FIGURE 3.1. A portion of an individual's mental representation of golfer Tiger Woods as depicted in an associative network model. Thicker lines represent stronger associations. (Editor's note: This figure was submitted for publication prior to highly publicized events that may alter the associations that some readers have of Tiger woods.)


Hamid Gul
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Pervez Musharraf
Latif Mansour
Abdul Salam Zaeef
Khadafy Janjalani
Albader Alhazmi
Muhammed Ali Mukhtar
Noor Mohammad Saqib
Aftab Ansari
Samir Ahmad Muhammad al Hada
Wakil Ahmed Muttawakil
Abdul Majid
Ahmed al-Hada
Ahmed Yassin
Ahmed Ibrahim A. Al Haznawi
Faizal Khan Gulam Sarwar
Fathur Rohman al-Ghozi
Bashir-ud-Din Mahmood
Mullah Mohammad Omar
Faiz Abu Bakar Bafana
Ramzi Yousef
Jaffar Umar Thalib
Tariq Anwar Salah
Ahmed Omar Saeed Sheikh
Zacarias Moussaoui
Majid Shimari
Khalil al-Dik
Muhammad Atef
Riduan Isamuddin
Ayman aL- Zawahiri
Wail M. Alshehri
Feroz Abassi
Jamal Udeen
Mohammed bin Laden
Ahmad Ibrahim Ali al-Hazzouni
Osama Rush
Refaei Ahmed Taha
Richard Reid
Sayyid Qutb
Ramzi Ibn-al-Shaiba
Munir Ali
Saddam Hussein
Shafiq Rasul
Saif Al-Adel
Sheikh Omar Abd al-Rahman
Zayn-al-Abidin Abu-Zubaydah
Abdel Mobruk
Essam Rida
Anas al-Liby
Abdullah Ahmed Abdullah
Yasir al-Sirri
Yasser Arafat
Abdul Hai Mutmaen
Mohammad Fakhim
Muammar Abu Minyar Al- Qadhafi
Yacine Aknouche
Victor Bout
Charles Taylor
Jamal al-Fadal
Mohammed Omar
Sanjivan Ruprah
Abu Qatada
Tarek Chaarabidihemais
Abdelsattar Dahmane
Fateh Kamel

Each attribute would constitute one node, and each node would be connected to a central organizing node via links.

- The strength of these links is hypothesized to vary.

- The central process that is assumed to operate on this type of representational structure is the **spreading of activation**.

- Each of the nodes in a network can vary in its degree of activation.

- **When activation levels are minimal**, the **information** contained in a node is essentially dormant in long-term memory, and **have no influence** over the ongoing course of social cognition.

- However, **when the level of activation rises above a critical threshold**, the **information** contained in the **node** is **assumed to enter working memory and to begin to influence ongoing cognition**. For example, if our hypothetical friend George were suddenly encountered on the street, the George node in longterm memory would be activated and thereby brought into working memory

Priming & Framing

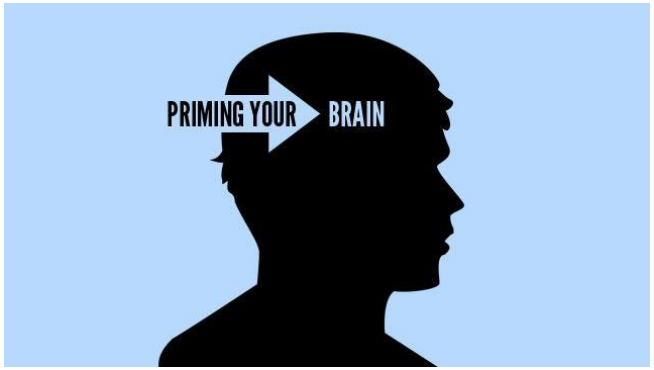
Priming

- When someone primes an engine (e.g., on a lawnmower), the person pumps gas into the cylinder so that the spark plug will fie more easily, which makes the engine start more easily. The term “prime the pump” refers to government action taken to stimulate the economy (e.g., cutting taxes, reducing interest rates). Memory is filed with concepts. Related concepts are linked together in memory (e.g., the concepts *cradle* and *baby*), as depicted in the following figure

- Прайминг спсосб подталкивания к вспоминаю чего-л.

- Priming is an implicit memory effect in which exposure to one stimulus (i.e., perceptual pattern) influences the response to another stimulus.
- Prime – to activate a schema through a stimulus
- When one concept becomes primed in memory by thinking about it, related concepts in memory become more accessible.

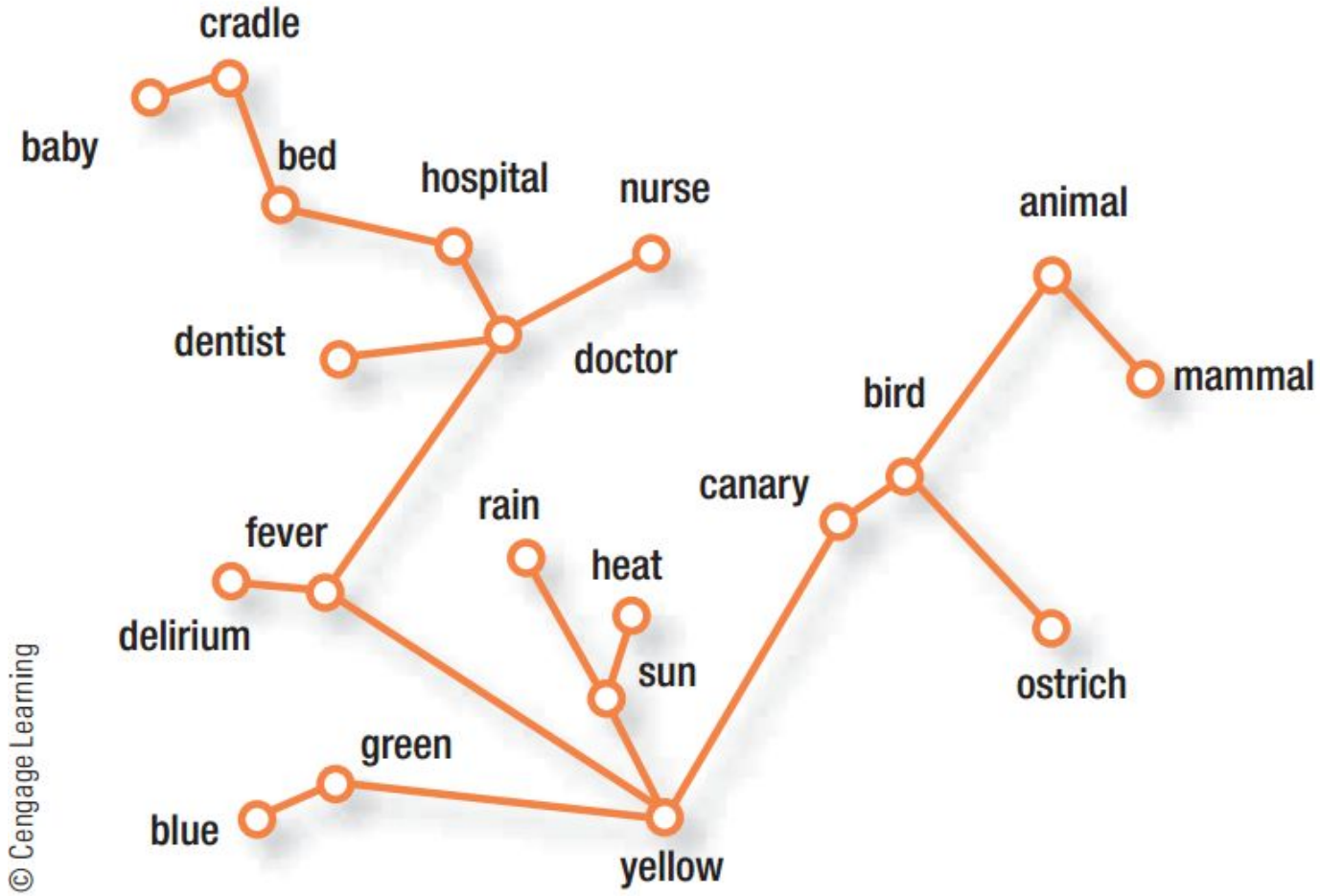
Priming



Activating a concept in the mind:

- Influences subsequent thinking
- May trigger automatic processes

- For example, exposing someone to the word "red" will make them more likely to think of "apple" instead of "banana" if asked to name a fruit. In essence, the word "red" is *priming* the word "apple" in the subject's brain.



FIGURE

Human memory can be represented as a network. The nodes represent the concepts. Related concepts are linked in memory.

Study 1: Identify colors and memorize a list of positive words (adventurous, confident, ambitious) or negative words (reckless, conceited, self-absorbed)

The power of priming to activate concepts, which then hang around in the mind and can influence subsequent thinking, was demonstrated in an early study. Participants were asked to identify colors while reading words. The words did not seem at all important to the study, but they were actually very important because they were primes.

By random assignment, some participants read the words *reckless*, *conceited*, *aloof*, and *stubborn*, whereas others read the words *adventurous*, *self-confident*, *independent*, and *persistent*.

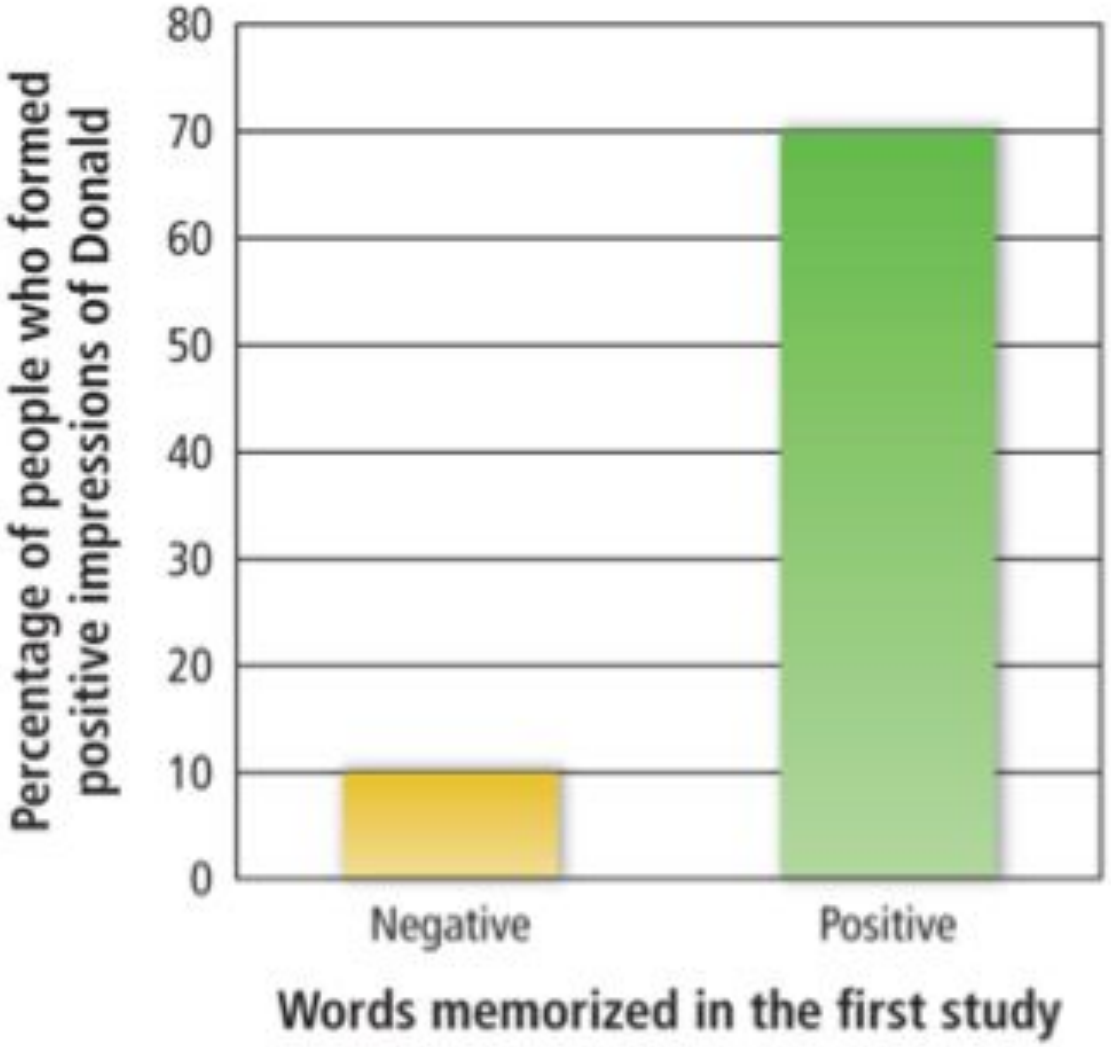
Then all participants were told that the experiment was finished, but they were asked to do a brief task for another, separate experiment. In that supposedly different experiment, they read a paragraph about a man named Donald who was a skydiver, a powerboat racer, and a demolition derby driver, and they were asked to describe the impression they had of Donald. It turned out that the words participants had read earlier influenced their opinions of him. Those who had read the words *reckless*, *conceited*, *aloof*, and *stubborn* were more likely to view Donald as having those traits than were participants who had read the other words. That is, the fist task had primed" participants with the ideas of recklessness, stubbornness, and so forth, and once these ideas were activated, they influenced subsequent thinking

Study 2: Read a description of 'Donald" and assess him on a variety of characteristics

Description of Donald

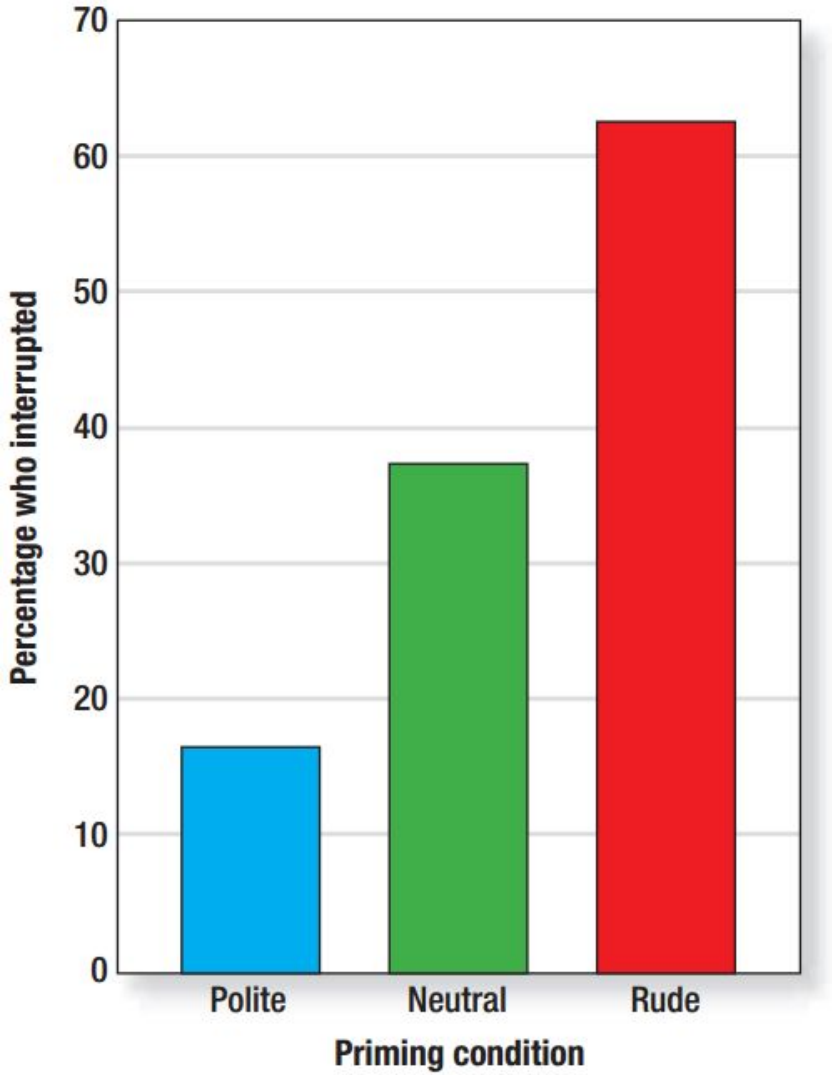
Donald spent a great deal of time in his search of what he liked to call excitement. He had already climbed Mt. McKinley, shot the Colorado rapids in a kayak, driven in a demolition derby, and piloted a jet-powered boat—without knowing very much about boats. He had risked injury, and even death, a number of times. Now he was in search of new excitement. He was thinking perhaps he would do some skydiving or maybe cross the Atlantic in a sailboat. By the way he acted one could readily guess that Donald was well aware of his ability to do many things well. Other than business engagements, Donald's contacts with people were rather limited. He felt he didn't really need to rely on anyone. Once Donald made up his mind to do something it was as good as done no matter how long it might take or how difficult the going might be. Only rarely did he change his mind even when it might well have been better if he had.

~ Priming and Accessibility ~



Participants in one study fist unscrambled sentences by choosing four out of fie words to make a grammatically correct sentence. They were told to do this as quickly as possible. In the rude priming version, one of the fie words was rude **(e.g., *they/her/bother/see/usually*).** In the polite priming version, one of the fie words was polite **(e.g., *they/her/respect/see/usually*).** In the neutral priming version, the polite or rude word was replaced by a neutral word **(e.g., *they/her/send/see/usually*).** Participants were told that after they completed the task, they should come out into the hallway and find the experimenter.

The experimenter waited for the participant, while pretending to explain the sentence task to a confederate. The confederate pretended to have a difficult time understanding the task. The experimenter refused to acknowledge the participant, who was waiting patiently for instructions on what to do next. The dependent variable in the study was whether participants interrupted the experimenter within a 10-minute period. Of course, it is rude to interrupt somebody who is speaking to another person. As can be seen in next Figure, participants primed with rude words were much more likely to interrupt the experimenter than were participants primed with polite words. Thus, priming activated the idea of being rude (or polite), which then lingered in the mind and influenced behavior in a seemingly unrelated context.

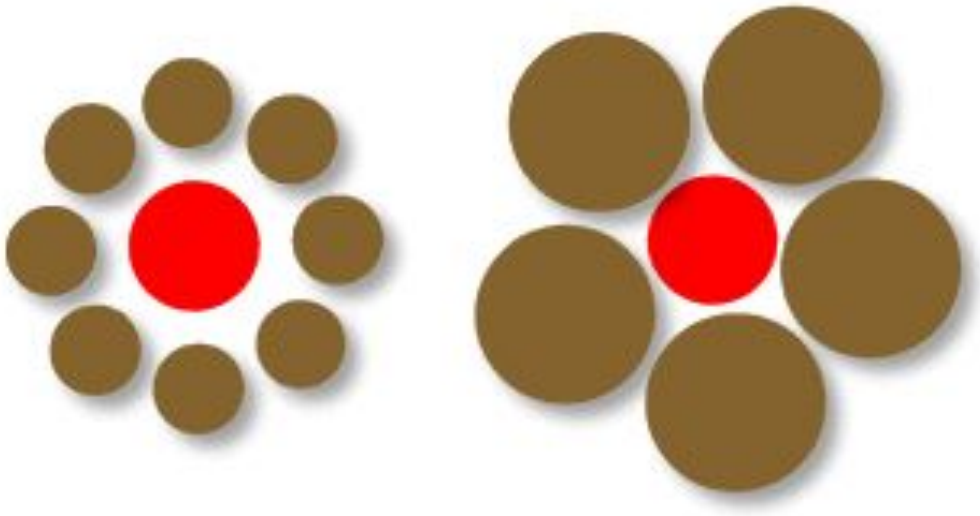


FIGURE

In one study, participants primed with rude words were much more likely to interrupt the experimenter than were participants in the polite condition. Source: Bargh et al. (1996).

Framing

The Framing effect means that people will give different responses to the same problem depending on how it is framed or worded.



Changing the frame can change and even reverse interpretation.

Framing Experiment

- In a key experiment, Tverksy and Kahneman split participants into two groups and asked them to choose between two treatments for 600 people infected with a deadly disease.

Kahneman's Framing Experiment

- In Group 1, participants were told that with **Treatment A**, "200 people will be saved." With **Treatment B**, there was "a one-third probability of saving all 600 lives, and a two-thirds probability of saving no one."

- In Group 2, on the other hand, participants were told that with **Treatment A**, "400 people will die." And with **Treatment B**, there was "a one-third probability that no one will die, and a two-thirds probability that 600 people will die."

- Presented with this option, which treatment plan would you choose?

Framing	Treatment A	Treatment B
Positive	"200 people will be saved"	"a one-third probability of saving all 600 lives, and a two-thirds probability of saving no one"
Negative	"400 people will die"	"a one-third probability that no one will die, and a two-thirds probability that 600 people will die"

Kahneman's Framing Experiment

- Most participants opted for Treatment A – the sure thing (1st group).
- In 2nd group, the results were reversed. Most participants opted for Treatment B.

Note that Treatment A and Treatment B are exactly the same in both groups – all that changed was the wording.

When the treatments were presented in terms of lives saved (positive framing), the participants opted for the secure program (A). When the treatments were presented in terms of expected deaths (negative framing), they chose the gamble (B).

The Effect of Mood on Cognition

- The mood-congruence effects
  - We remember positive details of an event if we were in a good mood
  - We remember negative details of an event if we were in a bad mood

This can lead to more decision-making errors!

Processes

1. Attributions:
   - **theories of attributions**
   - **errors of attributions**
2. Biases: self-serving, negativity, conformation
3. Heuristics: availability, representativeness, simulation, gaze
4. Self-Fulfilling Prophecies

Attributions

Attribution Theory deals with how the **social perceiver** uses information to arrive at **causal explanations** for events”

Attribution Theory

Attribution theory, the approach that dominated social psychology in the 1970s.

Attribution theory is a bit of a misnomer, as the term actually encompasses multiple theories and studies focused on a common issue, namely, **how people attribute the causes of events and behaviors.** This theory and research derived principally from a single, influential book by Heider (1958) in which he attempted to describe ordinary people's theories about the causes of behavior. His characterization of people as "naive scientists" is a good example of the phenomenological emphasis characteristic of both early social psychology and modern social cognition.

Why do we make attributions?

- Sense of cognitive control.
- To predict the future (So, it can help us avoid conflict).
- To respond appropriately.
- It can improve relationships.
- It can lead to self-understanding

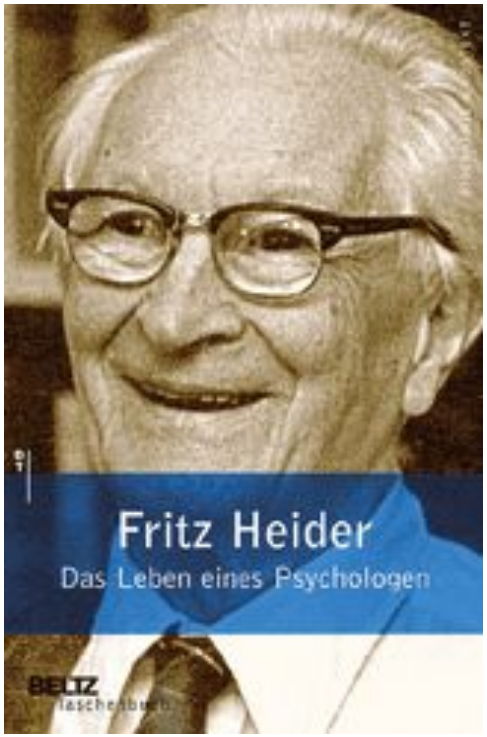
Theories of attribution

- Heider (1958): **‘Naive Scientist’**
- Jones & Davis (1965): **Correspondent Inference Theory**
- Kelley (1973): **Covariation Theory**

Heider(1958): 'Naive Scientist'

Heider hypothesised that:

People are **naive scientists** who attempt to use rational processes to explain events.



Attribution theory: 'Naive Scientist'

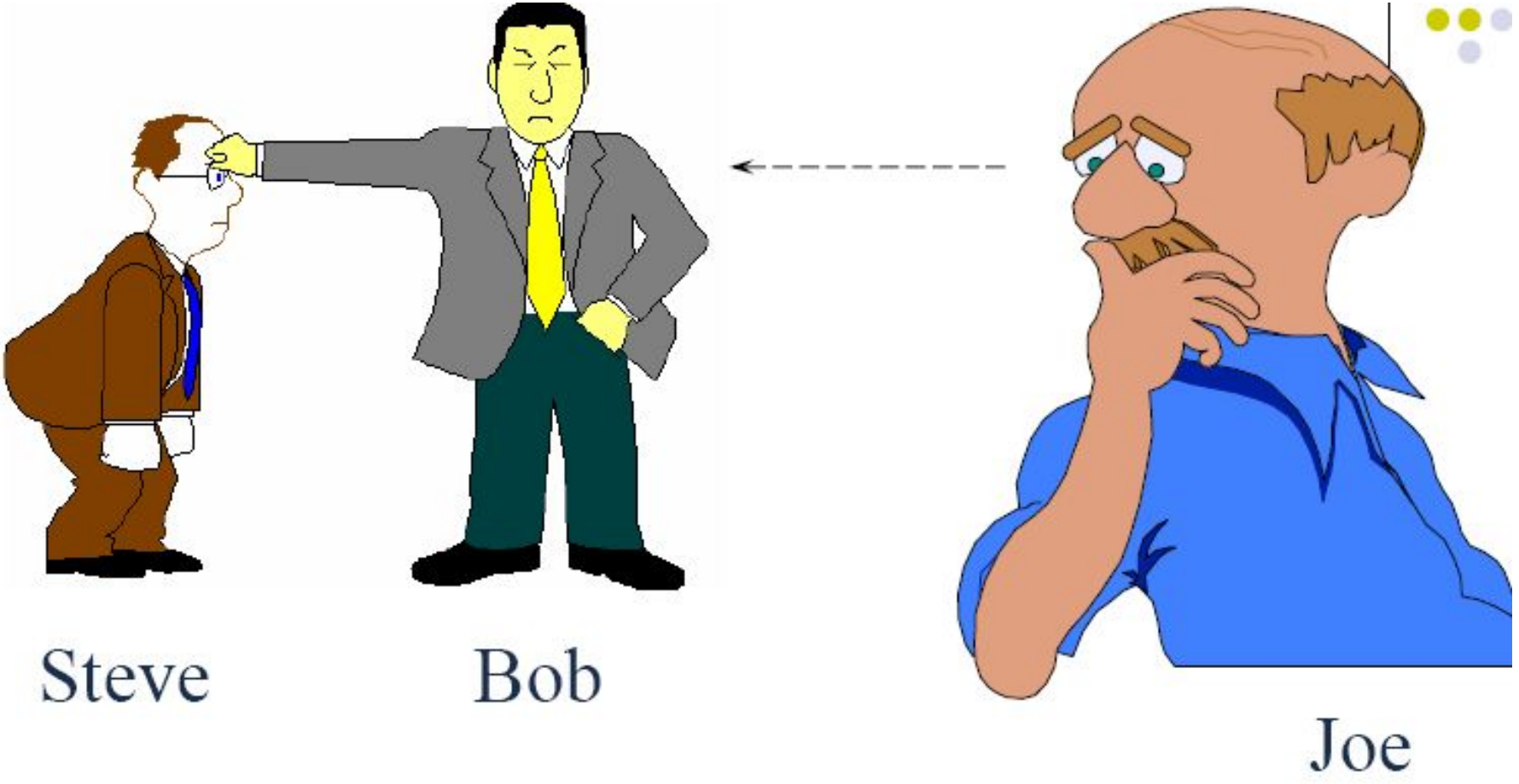
- People perceive behaviour as being ***caused***.
- People give causal attributions (even to inanimate objects!).
- Both *disposition* & *situation* can cause behaviour.

Attribution theory: ‘Naive Scientist’

- Causes of behaviour are seen as **inside** (internal) or **outside** (external) of a person.

Internal External

Causes



Joe observes Bob hitting Steve. How does Joe explain this behaviour?

Internal attribution

‘Bob is a jerk!’

‘Bob is short-tempered!’

‘Bob likes to beat people up!’

External attribution

‘Steve just told Bob that he is having an affair Bob’s wife.’

‘Steve paid Bob $100 to give him a black eye.’

‘Bob tripped on a cord and accidentally hit Steve when he lost his balance.’

Internal & external attributions

1. You were late for the lecture.

2. Masha failed the test.

Jones & Davis (1965): Correspondent Inference Theory

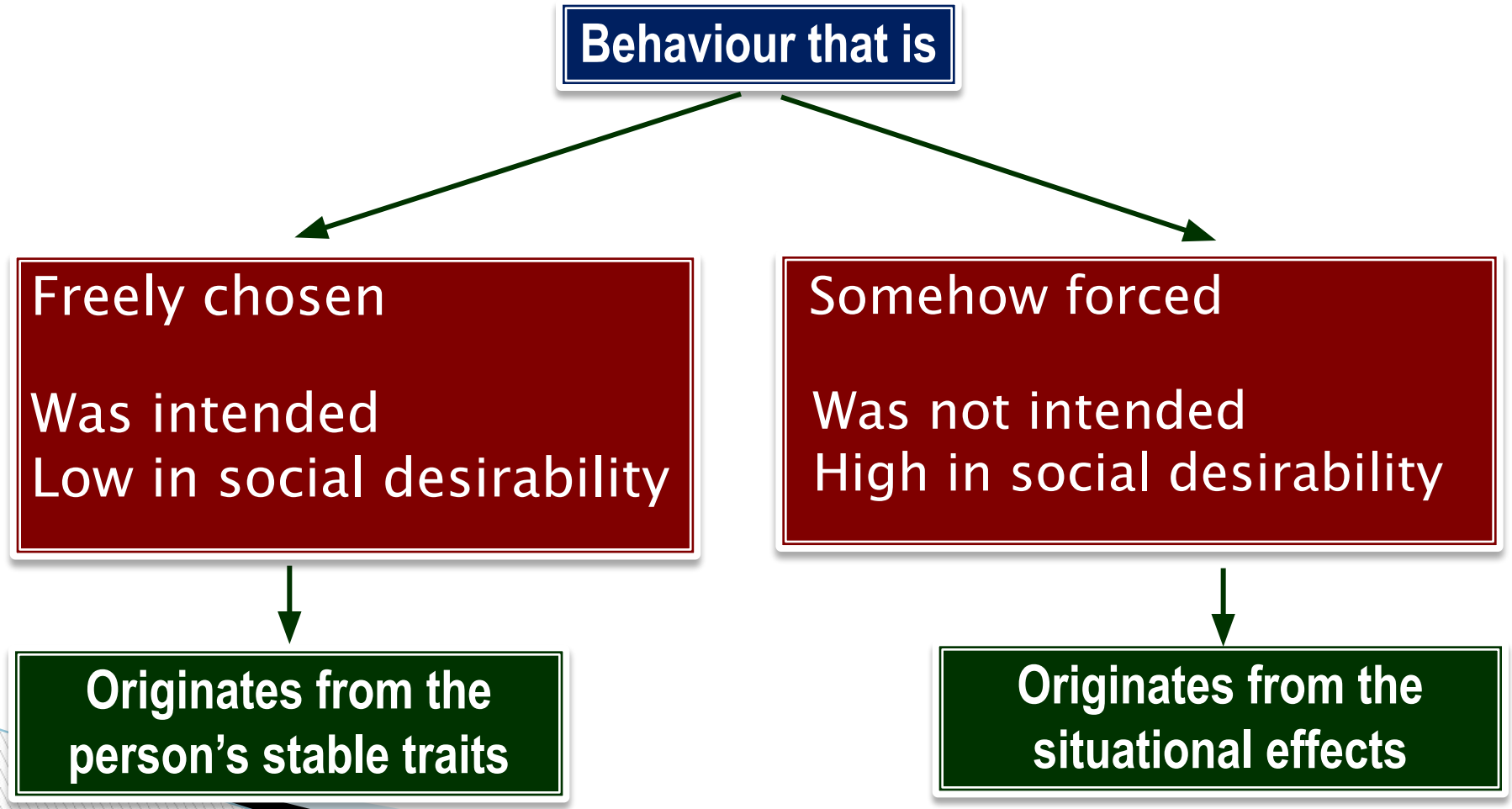
- A **correspondent inference** is made when a behavior is believed to correspond to a person's internal beliefs.

Correspondent Inference Theory

We are likely to make a **correspondent inference** when we perceive that the behaviour:

- was freely chosen.
- was intended.
- was low in social desirability.

Correspondent Inference Theory



Kelley's Covariation Model

- ***Harold Kelley's covariation theory*** derived from **Heider's covariation principle**.

- Heider's covariation principle, states that **people explain events in terms of things that are present** when the event occurs but absent when it does not.

Kelley's Covariation Model

Attributions based on 3 kinds of information:

- **Consensus**
- **Consistency**
- **Distinctiveness**

Kelley's Covariation Model

Attributions based on 3 kinds of information, which represent the degree to which:

- **Consensus**
  …**other actors** perform the same behavior with the same object.

Kelley's Covariation Model

- **Consistency**
  …the actor performs that same behavior toward an object on **different occasions**.

Kelley's Covariation Model

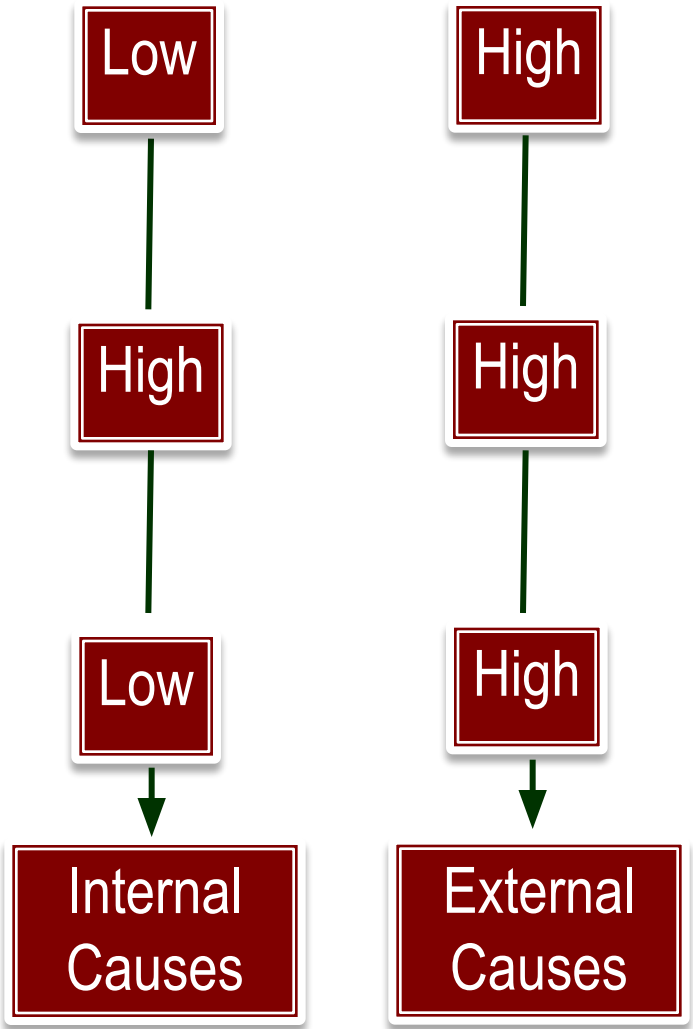
- **Distinctiveness**
  …the actor performs **different behaviors** with different targets.

Kelley's Covariation Model

Consensus
The extent to which an individual's response is similar to one shown by others

Consistency
The extent to which an individual responds to a given situation in the same way as on different occasions

Distinctiveness
The extent to which an individual responds in the same way as to different situations



An Example of Causal Attribution

- Suppose you were the only person who performed well on a variety of tests over a range of occasions.
- That would be:
  - *Low consensus* (you're the only such person)
  - *Low distinctiveness* (it happens with a variety of tests)
  - *High consistency* (occurs over a range of occasions)

An Example of Causal Attribution

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- That would be:
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  - *Low distinctiveness* (it happens with a variety of tests)
  - *High consistency* (occurs over a range of occasions)
- In such a case, Kelley would predict a "person attribution"