

SOCIAL COGNITION

Social Schemas and Representations

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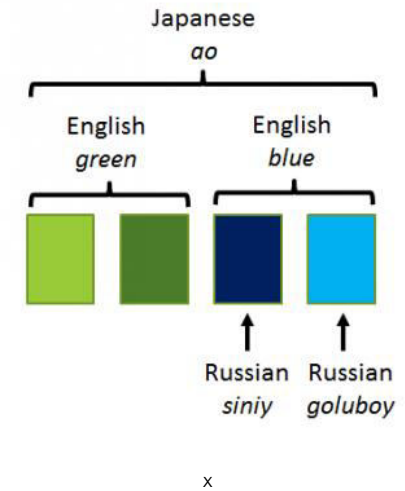
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LAST WEEK: CATEGORICAL MEANING-MAKING

- Running vs. walking
- Color categorization
- Container categorization
- Abstract cognitive schemas (representations)

Color naming



CATEGORIZATION



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CATEGORIZATION

We also categorize people



Photo by Keyra McPhee



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EXERCISE



What do you think of this guy?

- What is he like? What kind of behaviour would you expect?
- Take 1-2 minutes to write down couple of impressions
- Turn to the person next to you and discuss what you have written down and what made you get such an impression.



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SOCIAL CATEGORIES

- Knowledge about a concept (schema)
- Describe our expectations about people/situations
- Predict behaviour
- Essential for well-being
- Can be misleading



TOP-DOWN VS. BOTTOM-UP PROCESSES

Top-down: knowledge driven

Bottom-up: data-driven

She's cutting the bread with a...



SOCIAL PROCESSING: CATEGORY VS. DATA-DRIVEN

Category-driven (top-down)

- “Gap-filling”
- Ignoring important information
- Maintaining schemas
- Prior knowledge necessary
- Abstract

Data-driven (bottom-up)

- Often unclear
- Prior knowledge not necessary
- Contribute to new schema creation
- Specific



SOCIAL SCHEMAS

Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E8BCcrM9DDI>



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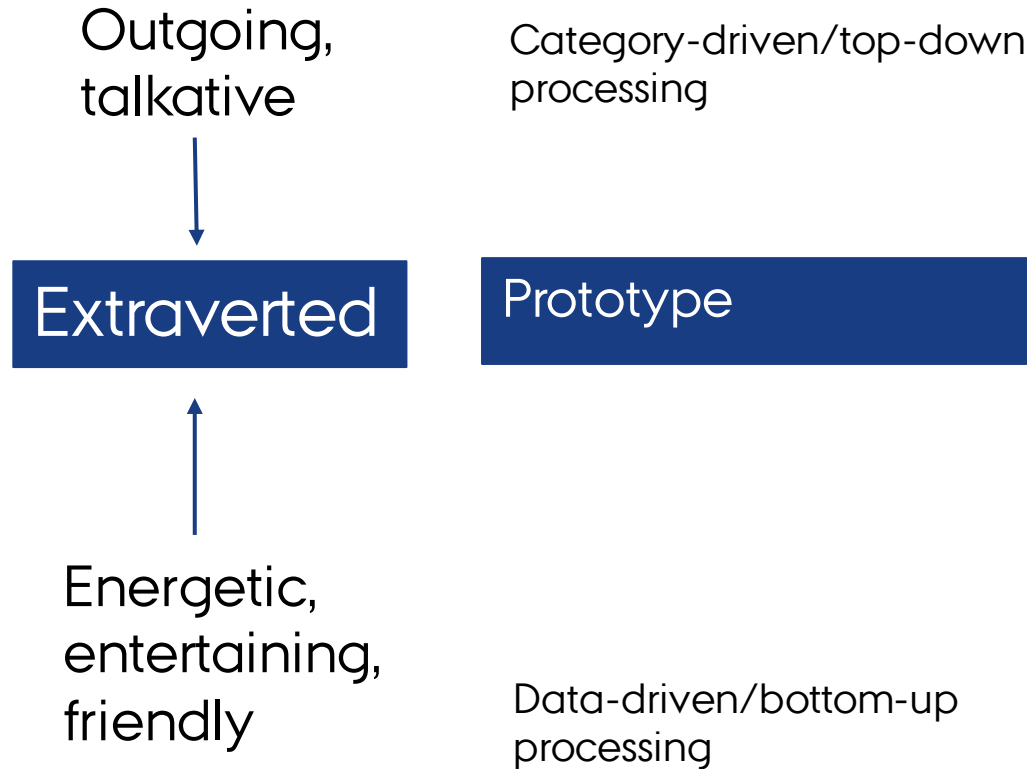


CATEGORICAL PERCEPTION

- We perceive things categorically
- Fuzzy sets
- Prototypes: the “average”
- Category members related
- Hierarchical organization of categories
- Cultural aspects of categorical perception (e.g. nature systems)
- False memories



CATEGORICAL PERSON PERCEPTION



SOCIAL SCHEMA ACTIVATION

Novel social situations

- Information processing
- Behavioural adjustment



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SOME CRITICISM

- Ideal, not average prototype
- No "summary" representation
- Representations: collection of examples
- Fuzzy hierarchies



EXEMPLARS

- Schemas based on examples, not prototypes
- Correlation of attributes within a category
- More flexible (i.e. a new exemplar can be added)



EXEMPLARS

- Judgment affected by irrelevant similarities (e.g. a foreigner similar to another one)
 - Familiarity creates predictability and safety
 - Familiarity important in compound categories (e.g. female primary school teacher)
 - The better you know, the more you see the variability
-
- 1. abstract 2. specific – less variability
1. specific 2. abstract – more variability

Medin et al. (1984)



EXEMPLARS (2)

- Variability can also be used to generalize
- Minimal differences in out-groups, not necessarily exemplar frequency related
- Immediate response (without a schema)
- Norm theory: backward reasoning (exemplars)
- Category and schema theories: forward reasoning



EXEMPLARS (3)

- Strained cognitive capacity
- More complex concepts
- Young children
- Familiar: abstraction, unfamiliar: examples
- Summary-plus-exception model: the marriage of the two (Babey et al., 1998)
- In-group: exemplar + prototype, out-group: only prototype



EXERCISE

- Think about the exercise in the beginning of the class. Did you use exemplar or prototype models?
- Did you use top-down or bottom-up processing?



SELF-PERCEPTION AND SOCIAL ADJUSTMENT IN CHILDREN

- Social schemas for the self
- Self-perception and peer-perception not studied together (prior to Salmivalli et al., 2005)
- Self-perception doesn't predict behaviour (e.g. high self-esteem in aggressive and prosocial kids)



HOSTILE ATTRIBUTION BIAS

- Hostile tendencies attributed to peers (even when no indications present)
- A general hostile representation of the world
- Present in depressive, anxious and withdrawn kids

No differentiation:

- Aggressive vs. Withdrawn
- Internalizing vs. Externalizing



SOCIAL GOALS

- Instrumental goals – aggression
- Agentic goals – aggression
- Communal goals – prosocial behaviour

- How about self-perception?



INTERPERSONAL GOALS

- Relational schema: self-schema + other-schema representation
- Attachment styles
- Relationship representations
- Internal working models of relationships



EXERCISE: SALMIVALLI ET AL.

- Discuss the following in pairs/groups of three:
 1. what are the main hypotheses of the paper?
 2. did the authors find evidence for these hypotheses?
 3. what is the main contribution of the paper to social cognition?
- Submit your short answers to [menti.com](https://www.menti.com), code: 5335895
This is how I'll know you're done 😊



HYPOTHESES

- Positive self-perception ~ agentic goals
- Perception of peers ~ communal goals
- Self-perception + peer-perception ~ social goals



FINDINGS

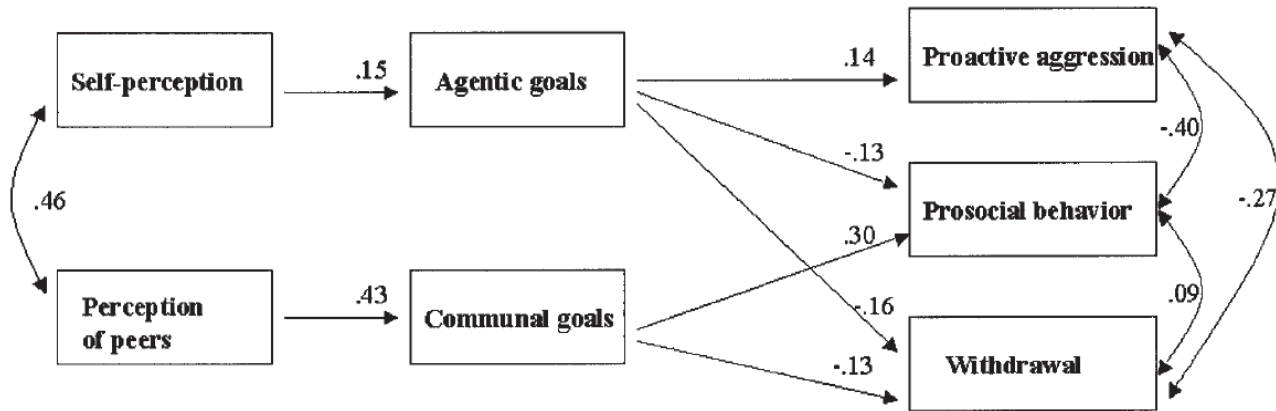


Figure 1. The mediational model of associations among self- and peer perception, social goals, and three types of social behavior. $\chi^2(10, 585) = 18.44, p = .05$; comparative fit index = .98; root-mean-square error of approximation = .04. All paths are significant.

HYPOTHESES AND FINDINGS

- Positive self-perception ~ agentic goals

Yes

- Perception of peers ~ communal goals

Yes

- Self-perception + peer-perception ~ social goals

Yes



THEORETICAL CONTRIBUTION

- Dismissing schema: positive self, negative other, agentic goals, aggressive behavior
"I'm OK and you're not"
 - Secure schema: positive self, positive other, communal goals, pro-social behavior
"I'm OK and you're OK"
 - Dual perception (self and other) better predictor of social behavior
- Gender differences:
- Communal goals in girls
 - Agentic goals in boys
- Nothing new 😊



EXAM PAPER UPDATE

- Great work!
 - The peer-review is working great!
- More writing for next week
- Now: sit in pairs and provide feedback to the submissions



SOCIAL SCHEMAS AND REPRESENTATIONS: APPLICATION

- We have social schemas that can be:
 - prototypical
 - exemplary
- So what?
Discuss with the person sitting next to you why we should care



FURTHER READING

Fiske, S. T., & Taylor, S. E. (2013). *Social cognition: From brains to culture*. Sage. Chapter 4

Loftus, E. F. (2004). Memories of things unseen. *Current directions in psychological science*, 13(4), 145-147.

Macrae, C. N., & Bodenhausen, G. V. (2000). Social cognition: Thinking categorically about others. *Annual review of psychology*, 51(1), 93-120.

Smith, E. R. (1998). Mental representation and memory. *The handbook of social psychology*, 2, 391-445.

