

## Einstellungen und soziale Urteile (Attitudes and Social Judgment)

Vertiefendes Seminar Sozialpsychologie  
(BSc Psychologie, Modul PSY11, 4 CP)

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Week 4



## Recap from Week 2: Measurement of Attitudes

1. Measurement: Basic concepts
2. Direct measurement
3. Indirect measurement (implicit measures)
4. Special focus:  
Can automatic associations predict real-world political beliefs and decisions?



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### 1. Measurement: Basic Concepts

- Measuring = assigning numbers to objects according to rules  
in such a way that the relation between numbers reflects the critical relations between the objects
- Example: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 for tram lines or student performance
- Scale levels: nominal, ordinal, interval, ratio



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### 2. Direct measurement

- Processes in question answering (self-report):
  - interpreting the question
  - retrieving or constructing attitude-relevant information
  - creating response (adjusting, formatting)
  - overtly communicating response
- Rating items
  - single-item measures
  - multi-item measures (e.g., Likert scale)



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### 2. Direct measurement

- study objects in psychology = other humans  
⇒ Unlike observed stones or stars, they may realize they are being studied.
- Response biases: due to the potential reactivity of study participants who are aware of being studied
  - demand characteristics
  - impression management
  - providing socially desirable responses



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### 2. Direct measurement

- **Countermeasures** against response biases in **DIRECT** measurement:
  - use of cover story disguising purpose of study
  - ensuring anonymity
  - direct appeals: asking for cooperation, emphasizing importance of accurate answers
  - controlling bias with social desirability scales
  - Bogus pipeline technique (Jones & Sigall, 1971)
  - or else ...



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### 3. Indirect measurement

- disguised attitude measures (biased responses to factual knowledge questions)
- non-reactive measures (analyses of archival data or physical traces, behavior observation in field studies)
- physiological / biopsychological measures (GSR, EMG, EEG, brain imaging techniques ...)
- implicit attitude measures  
response-compatibility / latency measures (affective priming/"bona fide" pipeline, IAT)



### Affective Priming / Bona fide pipeline

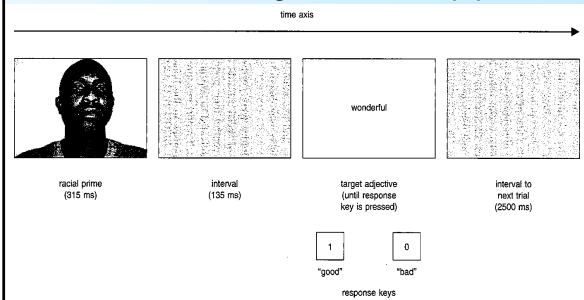


Figure 2A. The bona fide pipeline procedure of measuring implicit racial attitudes. Stimulus sequence of one trial, as introduced by Fazio et al. (1995).

From Bohner & Wänke (2002), p. 42



weiblich

männlich

Thomas  
Alfred  
Monika  
Barbara  
Peter  
Birgit  
Peter  
Roland  
Heike  
Julia  
Thomas  
Peter  
Alfred  
Thomas  
Monika  
Robert  
Birgit  
Roland  
Heike  
Monika



Zuhause

Arbeitswelt

Buchhaltung  
Küche  
Labor  
Familie  
Firma  
Garten  
Hausarbeit  
Büro  
Manager  
Kinder  
Buchhaltung  
Büro  
Küche  
Labor  
Familie  
Garten  
Hausarbeit  
Firma  
Garten  
Labor



Zuhause oder weiblich

Arbeitswelt oder männlich

Thomas  
Familie  
Buchhaltung  
Monika  
Firma  
Alfred  
Peter  
Büro  
Labor  
Familie  
Peter  
Birgit  
Büro  
Thomas  
Küche  
Barbara  
Labor  
Garten  
Roland  
Heike



Zuhause oder männlich

Arbeitswelt oder weiblich

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Büro  
Thomas  
Küche  
Barbara  
Labor  
Garten  
Roland  
Heike





### Week 4: Attitudes as temporary constructions

1. Stability and change of attitudes: File-drawer model and temporary-construction model
2. Influences of accessible information: chronic vs. temporary accessibility
3. Context influences on evaluation: goals, mood, bodily states, standards
4. How information is used: Ease of retrieval and appropriateness
5. Special focus: Stability of attitudes

### File-drawer model

- One approach: An evaluation has to be stable over time to qualify as an attitude
- Corresponding theorizing: File-drawer model
- attitudes as mental files which people consult for the evaluation of an object
- Attitudes: enduring concepts stored in memory and retrieved when needed

### Alternative model: Attitudes as temporary constructions

- Many evaluations of object are not stable; they vary across situations (e.g., evaluation of a food items)
- People often do not possess an already stored attitude.
- Rather, they generate evaluations based on the information that concurrently comes to mind.
- Attitudes as temporary constructions

### 2. Influences of accessible information

- Information = anything that informs people about their evaluation of an attitude object
- Examples: exemplars of an object category, like Barack Obama or George Bush for the category "politicians"; feelings, one's behavior, goals, bodily states, standards
- Important factor of influence: accessibility of information

### Factors of accessibility

- Salient quality (vividness, unexpectedness)
- Organization of information in memory (strength of associations, connectedness to other information / concepts)
- Frequency of activation
- Recency of last activation

### Accessibility in a semantic network

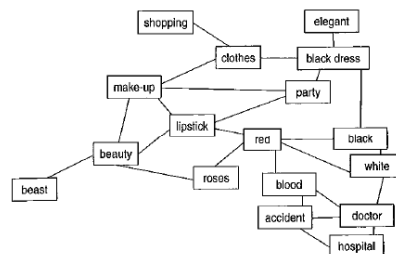


Figure 5.1. Example of a small portion of a semantic network, as postulated by the spreading activation model. Shorter lines represent stronger links.

from Bohner & Wänke (2001), p. 91

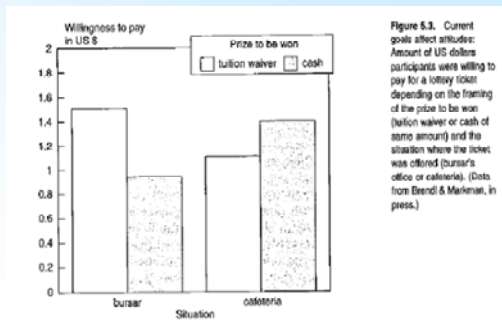
### Chronic vs. temporary accessibility

- **Chronic accessibility:**  
independent of the particular situation or context (Higgins & King, 1981); depends on frequency of activation, salience, connectedness)
- **Temporary accessibility:**  
depends on the specific situation, particularly the recency of last activation

### 3. Context influences on evaluation

- **Goals:**  
Attitude objects that contribute to (vs. impede) the attainment of currently active goals are evaluated more favorably (e.g., Shavitt, Swan, Lowery, & Wänke, 1994).

### Goal influences on evaluation

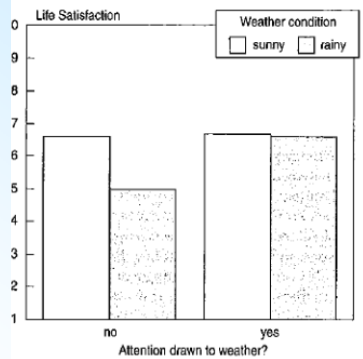


from Bohner & Wänke (2001), p. 97

### 3. Context influences on evaluation

- **Mood:**  
Mood may influence people's evaluations and attitudes (e.g., by priming or activating congruent thoughts; Bower, 1981).
- **Mood-as-information account (Schwarz & Clore, 1983):**  
The current mood may be used as input informing people about their evaluation of a given object.

### Mood as information (Schwarz & Clore, 1983)



from Bohner & Wänke (2001), p. 100

### 3. Context influences on evaluation

- **Bodily states:**  
Evaluations of objects may be affected by evaluative implications of bodily states.  
→ embodied grounding of attitudes
- **Examples:** facial expressions, approach vs. avoidance movements (arm flexion vs. extension; pulling a joystick toward vs. away from oneself); head movements indicating acceptance vs. rejection...

### Strack, Martin, & Stepper (1988)



from Niedenthal (2007), *Science*, 316, p. 1002

### 3. Context influences on evaluation

- Standards:  
People evaluate objects differently depending on the standard they use for attaining an evaluation.  
⇒ relativity of thinking (evaluations, judgments)
- Moderate standards typically lead to assimilation, whereas extreme standards often lead to contrast (Gulliver among the Lilliputs vs. Brobdingnagians).
- For example: In one study, men's attractiveness ratings of their own wives decreased after being exposed to highly attractive women (Kenrick, Gutierrez, & Goldberg, 1989).

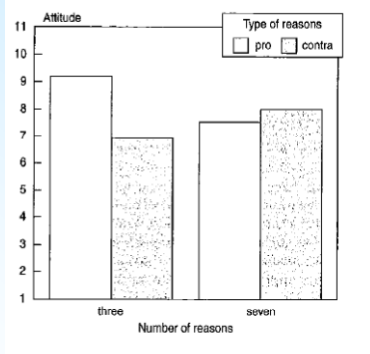
### 4. How information is used: Ease of retrieval and appropriateness

- Use of information in attitude construction does not merely depend on whether it comes to mind.
- Other factors:
  - (a) **How** the information comes to mind (experienced ease of retrieval)
  - (b) Appropriateness of its use

### The moderating influence of ease of retrieval

- The ease vs. difficulty of retrieving favorable or unfavorable information about an object can moderate the effect of the retrieved information.
- favorable + easy OR unfavorable + difficult = positive evaluation
- unfavorable + easy OR favorable + difficult = negative evaluation

Wänke, Bless, & Biller (1996): Attitudes toward public transportation



from Bohner & Wänke (2001), p. 108

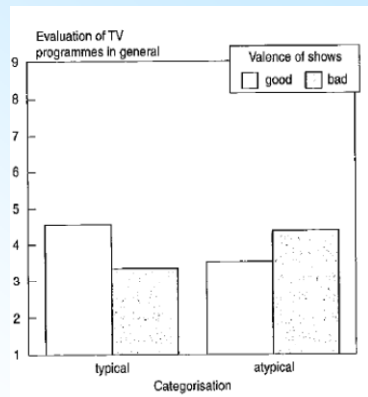
### The moderating influence of appropriateness

- The perceived appropriateness of information for creating an attitude about an object can moderate the effect of the retrieved information.
- Inappropriate information may be ignored; but it may also trigger contrast effects.
- favorable + appropriate OR unfavorable + inappropriate = positive evaluation
- favorable + inappropriate OR unfavorable + appropriate = negative evaluation



Bless & Wänke, (2000): Attitudes toward TV programs

from Bohner & Wänke (2001), p. 108



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## 4. Special Focus

- The role of social category exemplar change in attitude stability (Sia et al., 1997)

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