September 29, 2015

CHAPTER 4 CLASS NOTES: SOCIAL PERCEPTION

1. WHAT IS SOCIAL COGNITION?

An approach to Social Psychology

A. **Social Cognition:** the study of (the process of) how people make sense of themselves and others (the world); focus on process in addition to content
   i. Informed by the models, methods, and measures of Cognitive Psychology
B. Try to understand how people think about the world
   i. Models: categorization, information processing, mental representation
   ii. Methods: priming, sorting, imaging techniques
   iii. Measures: reaction time, recall, recognition
C. Associative Network Model of Person Memory
   i. Central node of person
      1. *Stronger links are darker*
         a. ***People can vary in what they associate with another person***
D. Social vs. Object Perception
   i. People are not things
      1. *People intentionally influence their environments*
         a. ***Objects typically do not have intention/motivation***
      2. *People perceive you back*
      3. *People can adjust their behavior*
      4. *People change more over time*
      5. *Accuracy of perceptions is elusive*

2. PEOPLE AS INFORMATION PROCESSORS

A. Automatic and Controlled Processes
   i. The Stroop Effect
      1. *It takes people longer to name ink colors and people make more errors in naming ink colors when the worse whose ink color they are naming are color words that different form that of the ink*
      2. *This happens because reading is AUTOMATIC*
      3. *Ignoring the reading is CONTROLLED*
   ii. Two Modes of Social Cognition
      1. *Automatic Processing: fast, unconscious, mandatory, efficient*
      2. *Controlled Processing: slow, conscious, optional, effortful*

iii. Attention to stimulus → automatic process triggered → perceiver aware of automatic process? If no, automatic processing. If yes, → are you motivated to correct? If no, automatic processing. If yes, → do you have the ability to correct? If no, automatic processing. If yes, → controlled processing

B. Heavily influenced by expectancies

i. Expectancies
   1. *Top-Down: expectancies in our heads drive our interpretation of the data we observe in the world (based on previous experiences or instructions); give us filter through which to watch something*
   2. *Bottom-Up: the data we observe drive our interpretation of themselves*

ii. Priming: the presentation of information can influence and bias subsequent responses
   1. *Perceptual priming: similarity in form such as shape, size, and color*
   2. *Conceptual priming: similarity in meaning or category, such as bacon and eggs*
   3. *One can be primed through any of your senses and it can be both conscious and unconscious*

iii. Schemas/Scripts: mental representations of the social world
   1. *Descriptive representations of reality (what we know and how it is organized)*
   2. *People, roles, and stereotypes*
   3. *Situations*

iv. Schemas and other expectancies can act as hypotheses about the world to be tests

v. **Hypothesis Confirmation Bias:** we tend to seek out evidence that will confirm out expectations but do not seek evidence that could disconfirm them; we overemphasize information that confirms our expectations and devalue evidence that disconfirms them
   1. *Wason Selection Task*
      a. *Framing Effects*
         i. First version – logical framing, confirmation bias abounds
         ii. Second version: social contract framing, confirmation bias minimized greatly
   2. *Why?*
      a. *Familiarity*
      b. *Suspicion and detection of social cheaters*
         i. Suspicion decreases the use of a cognitive bias

C. Tendency to use heuristics (shortcuts)

i. Mental shortcuts, or rules of thumb, for processing social information
   1. *Schemas = content*
   2. *Heuristics = process*

ii. When do we use these shortcuts?
   1. *Lack of time for full processing*
   2. *Information overload*

3. *When issues are not important*
4. *When we have little solid information*

iii. **Representativeness Heuristic:** we have a schema of what 'random' should look like; things that match our schema seem more accurate

1. ***Conjunction Fallacy:*** *the representativeness heuristic guides our judgment in person perception*
   a. *P (A) > P(A+B)*

iv. **Availability Heuristic:** making judgments based on the ease with which information comes to mind

v. **Anchoring and Adjustment Heuristic:** what is closer to the starting value, or anchor, is the correct answer

1. *Estimating values by insufficiently adjusting from an initial starting value, or anchor*

3. ATTRIBUTION

A. **Attribution:** process of trying to determine the cause of behavior

i. Correspondent Inference Theory

1. *What motivates other's behavior?*
   a. *Internal, personal, or dispositional factors: traits, opinions, beliefs (blame the person)*
   b. *External/situational factors: roles, constraints, luck (blame it on the situation)*
2. *How do we decide which?*
   a. *Expectedness (normativeness): unexpected behaviors lead to internal attributions*
   b. *Consequences (positive or negative): negative consequences allow us to specify motives*
   c. *Choice: lack of choice leads to external attributions*

B. The Castro Study

i. **Correspondence Bias/Fundamental Attribution Error:** to look at one's behavior and attribute it to their disposition (internal factors) while underestimating the role of their situation (external factors)

1. *We tend to ignore situation constraints such as forced choice - → why?*
   a. *Behavior engulfs the perceptual field*
   b. *Heuristic processing*
      i. Anchoring and (insufficient) adjustment
2. *Anchoring and Adjustment*
   a. *Dispositional inference are automatic and require controlled adjustment due to situational constraints. We just don't adjust enough.*

C. Biased Attribution

i. Disrupting controlled processes: by definition, controlled processes use cognitive resources while automatic processes do not.