3rd Heidelberg-Lisbon Social Cognition Labmeeting

1. Summary

The third Lisbon and Heidelberg joint lab meeting was held at the University of Heidelberg, from April 19-20, 2013. The program included several oral presentations from the members of both lab groups on their more recent research. Presentations covered a wide range of important social cognitive topics, including reasoning and decision making, heuristics use, social inferences and judgment, false memories, evaluative conditioning, construal level theory, and testing memory processes. We found that the presentations were followed by discussions intense and vibrant, which exceeded our expectations.

We can say that the outcome of the meeting was very positive. Small gatherings of this type are particularly suitable for open discussions and for the establishing of close working relationships. In short, the meeting provided with a great opportunity for an exchange of research ideas, fundamental to the progress of the work of those that had participated in it.

2) Description of the scientific content of and discussion at the event

At this meeting several communications took place within central areas of Social Cognition. Below, we present the summaries of these communications.

André Mata. Four studies show that people who make deliberative moral judgments have better insight into the moral judgments that other people make   than those who make intuitive moral judgments. Because deliberative judges share other people's intuition, they are aware that others might make intuitive judgments, instead of the deliberative judgments that they make. Intuitive judges, on the other hand, are less likely to consider the deliberative alternative and, therefore, they are more likely than deliberative judges to project their moral judgments onto others (Studies 1-3). Because of this metacognitive asymmetry, deliberative judges are better able than intuitive judges to understand and accept people who make the opposite moral judgments (Study 4). Further implications of this metacognitive asymmetry are discussed.

Tiago Almeida. People who use a deliberative mode of thinking to solve reasoning problems have better insight into the responses that other people may give. Because deliberative responders think of the intuitive response before of the deliberative response, they are aware that others might give the intuitive response. We found that deliberative thinkers are better able to use cues about the way other people think – whether they respond fast vs. slow, whether they are mentally busy or not, whether they respond with the first thing that comes to mind or change to a different response, and whether they have an intuitive thinking style or high need for cognition – to infer that others respond intuitively vs. deliberatively. Intuitive responders, on the other hand, do not think of the deliberative response alternative. Therefore, they are not aware that there is an alternative response to theirs, and so they infer that other people respond as they do, regardless of the way others respond.

Tânia Ramos. Our goal was to test a diagnostic-devaluation hypothesis, according to which inhibited items will be represented as less diagnostic. We applied a Go-NoGo task (Frischen et al., 2012). Male and female faces were presented. One gender was associated with "Go" responses and the other with "No-Go" responses. Participants were asked to evaluate the previous faces in terms of cheerfulness, and in terms of gender typicality. Go faces were evaluated as more cheerful than NoGo and New faces, $t(133) = 2.99$, $p = .003$. For gender typicality ratings, Go faces were evaluated as more typical of their gender, comparing with NoGo and New faces, $t(133) = 1.86$, $p < .06$. These results show that the attentional status of an item influence judgments of valence and typicality.

Tobias Krüger. The present research investigates how psychological distance and construal level influence the width of response categories that people use for judging target stimuli. Across four experiments, participants were presented with a series of visual stimuli (bridges, bowls filled with foods) and asked to provide interval estimates of a quantitative attribute (length, quantity). The difference between their minimal and maximal estimate provided a measure of category width. Framing the target objects as being located spatially distant (France) rather than close (USA; Studies 1 and 3), and as unlikely rather than likely (Study 2), increased the width of the response categories that were used for judging them. Similarly, category widths increased when the target objects were framed as abstract rather than concrete (Study 4). The final discussion focusses on the question if distance and construal level may not exclusively be concerned with semantic, but also with response categories.

Rita Ricot. In two experiments we contrast the fluency experiences induced by repetition and by color contrast in relation with inferences of truth. Using a feedback-learning procedure,

experiment 1 promoted the association of high-fluency unambiguous statements (i.e., very easy to know if true or false facts) with falseness inducing fluency either through color contrast or repetition. Results show that repetition's interpretation as a cue for truth is harder to reverse that when fluency spurs from color contrast, suggesting differences between the two sources of fluency in their association with truth. Experiment 2 manipulated repetition and color contrast simultaneously and orthogonally after a learning phase associating low color contrast with truth. As expected, a reversal of the truth effect was detected with color contrast; however it did not generalize to repetition. This result furnishes further evidence of the strong link between repetition and truth, and that individuals are able to distinguish different fluency experiences.

Mandy Hutter. A long-standing question is whether evaluative conditioning can change attitudes via automatic learning processes. A multinomial process dissociation procedure is presented that distinguishes controllable from uncontrollable processes during learning. In four experiments both controllable and uncontrollable learning mechanisms contributed to the evaluative conditioning effect. Furthermore, only the controlled component is affected by a cognitive load manipulation, while the uncontrolled component is not. The results support dual-process theories of attitudinal learning.

Jerônimo Soro. False memories in the DRM paradigm (Roediger & McDermott, 1995) are interpreted as depending on stable pre-existent associations in long term memory to account for the indirect activation of the critical lure and further error in attributing the origin of this activation, what causes it to be falsely recalled/recognized with a high degree of confidence. As predictable and controllable as the effect of DRM lists have proven to be, it cannot be ignored the fact that our semantic and associative memory can work in a very flexible way, not only being capable of making quick associations on the fly for specific purposes and contexts, but also conditioning existent structures of representations to adequate them to situational and goal related constrains (Smith & Semin, 2007; Barsalou, 2008). That leaves the question of how the false memory phenomenon, as produced by the DRM paradigm, is affected by our cognitive re-structuring capabilities, or if it even occurs at all under this conditions.

Paula Carneiro. This study aims to analyze whether false memories stemming from the DRM paradigm (Roediger & McDermott, 1995) are the product of automatic associative activation spreading from the studied words to the critical lures or whether they are due to the extraction of the general meaning of the list. In an attempt to separate associative activation and thematic extraction, we used lists with two types of critical items: one associative, corresponding to the word most strongly primed by its associates, and another thematic, the word that best describes the theme of the list. Three experiments were conducted to analyze the effect of different type of study instructions (warning, elaborative, standard) on associative and thematic false memories. Considerable levels of false recognition were obtained for associative and thematic critical items, suggesting that associative activation and thematic extraction both help to explain false memories production. However, associative critical items, even without being "good themes", produced higher false recognition than thematic critical items, which afford associative activation a more influential role in the production of false memories.

Max Ihmels. Biases are usually attributed to errors in information integration. The present work follows the idea that in some environments even perfect rationality (perfect information integration and awareness for flaws of the samples) can lead to biases. The experience sampling model (Denrell, 2005) states that information search is not only about accuracy, but also about the experienced outcomes (e.g. winning or losing money), sampling decisions about

an alternative depend on the current impression of that alternative. Seemingly negative alternatives are sampled less. This leads to biased (i.e., too negative) judgments for alternatives that provide only selective feedback. If you combine such a selective feedback alternative with another alternative that always provides feedback (i.e., incidental information), you can create a scenario in which biases should arise for the selective alternative but not for the incidental information alternative. The main goal of the present work was to investigate how people behave in such an asymmetric information scenario and whether they produce the biases that are predicted by a perfect expectancy-value maximizing strategy. We conducted 3 studies in which we confronted participants with the asymmetric scenario described above and told them to try to maximize profit. As predicted by the model, participants showed biases in judgments and choices related to the selective feedback alternative. Compared to its true value, it was evaluated too negatively and chosen too infrequently. Our findings support alternative sampling-based explanations for different well-known phenomena such as increased liking for in-group members or the formation and persistence of stereotypes.

Leonel Garcia-Marques. We propose that we encode and store information as a function of the particular ways we have used similar information in the past. More specifically, we contend that the experience of retrieval can serve as a powerful cue to the most effective ways to encode similar information in comparable future learning episodes. We did two studies in which all participants went through study-test cycles of single category lists while we manipulated the nature of the recognition tests (either included only same-category lures or only different category lures). The experience of repeated testing lead participants to avoid categorical knowledge but only when this knowledge was poorly diagnostic for recognition (i.e., in the same-category lures condition). In a second study, we showed that repeating testing with lures were from the same category as study items improved a final recall surprise tests compared to conditions in which different-category lures were used. Such a difference is akin to the one obtained when encoding instructions focus on distinctive item features compared to cases in which the focus is on relational processing (Hunt & McDaniel, 2003; Nairne, 2006). We suggest that testing requirements lead to adaptive changes at encoding.

Teresa Garcia-Marques. In this talk I will present three sets of evidence developed in the persuasion field, addressing cues/beliefs that have been claimed to support heuristic processing: expertise, attractiveness, affect, consensus, number of arguments, etc. One set of studies address assessment of "heuristic explicit agreement", and show that individuals do not agree explicitly with the use of any heuristic, but that even so, tend to agree more when they are presented with a positive (contrary to negative) frame. A second set of studies show that the presence of heuristic cues in a persuasion setting impact attitude changes and level of explicit agreement, but that this implicit measure and the explicit measure are not correlated with each other. Finally the third set presents evidence of a dissociation between explicit and implicit beliefs previously manipulated in a persuasion setting.

Anna-Lena Schubert. Research on reasoning and judgment often uses problems where intuition and reasoning are in conflict, suggesting different solutions. We used methods from research on language comprehension to investigate whether biased responses to these problems are a consequence of incorrect problem-solving or whether they start earlier, from misrepresenting the information in the premises. In one study, participants solved several problems. Then the problems were presented again in different versions, changing conflict problems to no-conflict problems and vice-versa. Participants who were more sensitive to these changes showed better reasoning. In another study, participants who responded

incorrectly to conflict problems subsequently performed better when their attention was drawn to the conflict. These results suggest that biases can start before the problem-solving stage, from misrepresenting the conflict between reasoning and intuition.

Diana Orghian. Spontaneous trait inference (STI) and spontaneous trait transference (STT) are well established phenomena in the person impression literature. The current debate over them focuses on their underlying processes. Two different explanations are currently discussed. One explanation claims that a single associative process is responsible for both. The second explanation postulates two processes, an associative process for STT and an attributional process for STI. Here we suggest a third approach to STI and STT by demonstrating that a fairly simple connectionist model, based on associative learning principles, can simulate the four major findings that distinguish STI from STT. Furthermore the simulations suggest that these distinguishing effects are due to the amount of attention paid to targets while spontaneously forming impressions.

Mariana Sequeira. Over the years several studies have shown that people tend to prefer the prototypes over more unusual members of a category. In fact, more recently, Wienkielman, Halberstadt, Fazendeiro and Catty (2006), using random dot patterns as stimulus material, demonstrated that individuals prefer the not-seen prototype of a category over their idiosyncratic previously seen members. The main goal of this research is to show that this preference for the average arises because people perceived the previously seen patterns as members of one single category due to a-priori expectations about unity. More specifically, we tried to demonstrate that by manipulating the unit of analyses the preference for prototypes may not arise. The unit of analyses was manipulated by presenting different labels (in congruent and incongruent ways) with the stimulus material. The results were not conclusive.

Mário Ferreira. This talk main goal is to explore the reconstructive nature of attitudes and beliefs. We start with the following paradox: given the strong human motives to hold consistent attitudes how to explain the ease with which attitudes change as function of persuasion? Based on previous research and on new evidence we claim that even when we change our minds we perceive our attitudes as stable over time. In other words, attitude change is typically unnoticed by the Self. Social perceivers draw on accessible information to make evaluative judgments and attitudes are constructed based on these accessible information. In two studies we further show that traces of previous attitudes are assembled with current attitudes (Study 1), and other contextually salient knowledge (Study 2). Source monitoring moderates this assemblage process in some circumstances (e.g., attitudes towards truisms; Study 1).

Klaus Fiedler. Construal-level theory's basic assumption of a unitary dimension of psychological distance implies positive relationships between temporal, spatial, social and probabilistic distance. Systematic evidence from a series of experiments (Fiedler, Jung, Alexopoulos & Wänke, 2012) indeed reveals substantial positive correlations. High (low) distance in any aspect covaries with high (low) distance in all other aspects, and there is no sign of discounting effects (e.g., high temporal distance rendering high personal distance obsolete). An analysis of objective distance coordinates of memorized episodes elicited by different action and state verbs suggests that actually existing ecological correlations can account for the existence of a unitary distance dimension. Events that are remote in time are also more likely to be spatially and socially distant and to involve unlikely events than events experienced here and now. Verbal primes that vary in valence, affect, and social power solicit highly regular differences in all distance aspects.

3) Assessment of the results and impact of the event on the future direction of the field

The relationship between the two groups (which has largely been established through these joint lab meetings) had and continues to have a very important role in the work developed in collaboration between the Heidelberg and Lisbon Social Cognition Research groups. As an example, we have the work of Dr. André Mata group on decision making and judgment, in cooperation both with members of Heidelberg (Prof. Klaus Fiedler) and with members of the Lisbon group (Prof. Mário Ferreira and Prof.. Leonel Garcia-Marques). Recently Tiago Almeida (a former master student of the University of Lisbon) is conducting research in a more permanent way at the University of Heidelberg. This collaboration has given important outputs to the decision making research (e.g., Mata, Fiedler, Ferreira, & Almeida, 2013)

4) Final programme of the meeting

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Friday, 19th

Meet up (10:30 @ Social Psych Department, Hauptstr. 47-51)

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11:00 Uhr	André Mata	*Social Metacognition in Moral JDM*
11:30 Uhr	Tiago Almeida	*Metacognitive Cues to Others' Thinking*

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Lunch Break (12-13:30 @ Mensa)

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13:30	Tânia Ramos	*Is ignored information judged as less typical? The relevancy devaluation hypothesis*
14:00	Tobias Krüger	*The Influence of Construal Level and Psychological Distance on the Formation of Internal Response Categories*
14:30	Rita Ricot	*The Illusion of Truth and the Differential Experience of Fluency Due to Repetition and Fluency Due to Color Contrast*
15:00	Mandy Hütter	*What is learned from repeated pairings? Distinguishing between evaluative identity conditioning and evaluative cue conditioning*

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Coffee Break (15:30-16)

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16:00	Jerônimo Soro	*False Memories and the malleability of knowledge Structures*
16:30	Paula Carneiro	*False memories: associative activation or thematic*

extraction?

Pre-Dinner (17-19)

Dinner at 19:30 @ Palmbräu Gasse

Options for going out: Cave54, Ginsburg, Distille, Café Villa

Saturday, 20th

11:00 Uhr	Max Ihmels	*Sampling in asymmetric environments: exploration versus exploitation*
11:30 Uhr	Leonel Garcia-Marques	*Doing the wrong memory studies: The neglected interplay between memory and knowledge*

Lunch Break (12-13:30 @ Mensa)

13:30	Teresa Garcia-Marques	*The explicit use of heuristics: It goes beyond normative knowledge*
14:00	Anna-Lena Schubert	*Good-enough representations of reasoning problems*
14:30	Diana Orghian	*A Connectionist Model of Spontaneous Trait Inference and Spontaneous Trait Transference*
15:00	Mariana Sequeira & Tobias Vogel	*To like or not to like: The role of a-priori expectations about category structure as a moderator for the preference for prototypes*

Coffee Break (15:30-16)

16:00	Mário Ferreira	*Attitudes, persuasion, and illusions of change*
16:30	Klaus Fiedler	*Ecological origins of a unitary dimension of psychological distance*

Pre-Dinner (17-19)

Dinner @ Klaus' and Michi's place in Weinheim

Going back to Heidelberg: there's a 5 tram going from Weinheim to Bismarkplatz every hour