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In search for schemata underlying the inference of traits from interpersonal sentiment relations*

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Abstract

Three schemata relevant to the inference of traits attributed to a and b from respectively reciprocal liking and disliking relations between a and b are derived from the research literature: (a) Homogeneity according to which likable traits would be attributed to a and b if they like each other, while dislikable traits if they dislike each other; (b) balance according to which more similarity would be attributed to a and b if they like each other than if they dislike each other, the relative similarity effect being localized on a likableness dimension; (c) positivity bias according to which favorable traits would be attributed irrespective of the stimulus information given.

An experiment is reported which provides support for the three schemata with the exception that no unequivocal evidence is obtained for the restriction of the balance effect to a likableness dimension. Further, individual Ss are found not to have stable preferences for particular schemata but to switch readily from one schema to the other.

Do the impressions Ss form of the personalities of two people, *a* and *b*, vary as a function of whether *a* and *b* are presented as liking or disliking each other? In terms of present-day cognitive psychology this question may be formulated:

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Are there within *Ss* pre-established cognitive structures or 'schemata' that interconnect reciprocal sentiment relations with traits? Until now evidence about schemata has been provided predominantly with respect to the inference of traits from other traits within a single perceived other (intrapersonal approach) and the inference of interpersonal relations from other interpersonal relations within a perceived group (interpersonal approach). The inference of traits from relations, which unites both approaches, was neglected. Nevertheless sentiment relations may be suitable stimuli for the inference of traits because they represent a category of interpersonal relations which Defares (1963) found are experienced by naive *Ss* as 'revealing the inner life'. Hence we will examine how schemata stemming from intra- and interpersonal approaches may apply to the inference of traits from sentiment relations and then offer some empirical data. Thereby we will proceed as much as possible from concepts advanced by Heider (1958).

Intrapersonal approach

Heider (1958, p. 182-183) states that, as in figural perception a strongly unified field tends to look as uniform as possible, so in social perception the other person tends to look as 'homogeneous' as possible. As a case in point he mentions the halo phenomenon which can be conceived of as an intrapersonal schema that has the form of a general evaluative dimension underlying the inference of one attribute from the other. Studies on person perception, beginning with Asch (1946) and culminating in a number of multidimensional analyses of cognitive trait-organization reviewed by Rosenberg and Sedlak (1972), supported the concept of evaluative homogeneity in that perceived traits were found to covary along evaluative dimensions. However, these evaluative dimensions were apparently more specific than the general evaluative dimension involved in the halo effect. So Rosenberg, Nelson and Vivekanathan (1968) distinguished between a social-evaluative and an intellectual-evaluative dimension.

In the same way as the information that a person has a particular trait so also may the information that he is involved in a particular relation serve as an evaluative cue for the inference of further traits. Positive traits may be inferred from liking relations and negative traits from disliking relations where 'positive' and 'negative' would not reflect general evaluative opposites but more specific social-evaluative ones that, because of their connection with interpersonal like and dislike, may be characterized as 'likableness' and 'dislikableness'. As in the case of reciprocal sentiment relations the same evaluative cue is provided about *a* as about *b*, both being involved either in a liking or a disliking relation, we may expect the same traits to be attributed to *a* as to *b*, viz. 'likable' traits if *a* and *b* like each other and 'dislikable' ones if they dislike each other.

Interpersonal approach

The inference of traits from relations can be related to schemata involving the given *ab* relation and potential relations projected by the perceiving *S* between himself and respectively *a* and *b*. Similar 'interpersonal' schemata may affect the attribution of traits to *a* and *b* in that *S* may assign traits which are consistent with the projected *Sa* and *Sb* relations.

Interpersonal schemata may be derived from the same homogeneity concept as used in the intrapersonal approach. Indeed, as well as the traits perceived in a single person, also the relations perceived between *S* (oneself), *a* and *b* may function as a unified field that is organized as uniformly as possible. We may then expect that the information that *a* and *b* like each other would induce *S* liking *a* and *b* which in turn would lead *S* to assign likable traits to *a* and *b*. By the same process the information that *a* and *b* dislike each other would lead to the attribution of dislikable traits to *a* and *b*. As these expectations are substantially the same as those based on intrapersonal homogeneity we may, at least for the inference of traits from reciprocal sentiment relations, consider one single 'homogeneity schema' without distinguishing between intra- and interpersonal variants.

It is noteworthy that Heider (1958) did not extend the application of the homogeneity concept from the intrapersonal to the interpersonal field. Instead he advanced a specific schema for the cognitive organization of relations: the triadic 'balance' schema. It implies that *a* and *b* liking each other would induce similarity between the *Sa* and *Sb* sentiment relations without specifying the positive or negative character of these relations, while *a* and *b* disliking each other would induce dissimilarity between the *Sa* and *Sb* sentiment relations, the one being positive, the other negative. It follows that if *a* and *b* like each other *S* may be inclined to assign traits to them in a way as to have them equally (dis)likable, while if they dislike each other he would assign likable traits to the one and dislikable ones to the other.

Considering that, as homogeneity and balance schemata relate to interpersonal like and dislike, they may involve the same social-evaluative likableness dimension, we should examine how they are situated with respect to each other. As to the inference of traits from liking relations, both schemata may be regarded as compatible, balance stressing evaluative similarity, homogeneity specifying that the evaluation is positive. However, as to the inference of traits from disliking relations there may incompatibility, balance stressing evaluative dissimilarity while homogeneity implying evaluative similarity, both *a* and *b* being negative. This incompatibility may account for the ambiguous character of the triad with three negative relations noticed by Heider (1958) who, however, did not relate it to the

interference between balance and another dynamic. The latter was done by Wyer and Lyon (1970) who interpreted the concurrence of cognitive tendencies toward triads with either only positive or only negative relations, observed in their own research and previously by Zajonc and Sherman (1967) as the manifestation of a 'similarity bias'. This bias or tendency to view the relations within a triad as having the same sign was conceptually treated as distinct from the tendency toward balance and could be matched with the concept of 'homogeneity'.

Empirical research

Most research on cognitive organization is not directly relevant to the inference of traits from relations. Nevertheless two points may be taken into account.

(a) A 'positivity bias' or 'leniency effect' has been observed making *Ss* infer positive rather than negative relations or traits irrespective of the nature of the stimulus information from which they are inferred. This bias, which has been shown to relate to a general behavioral positive-negative asymmetry (Peeters, 1971), may function as a 'positivity schema' interfering with homogeneity and balance.

(b) Numerous studies reviewed by Lott and Lott (1965) and Berscheid and Walster (1969) suggest an association of liking with similarity and disliking with dissimilarity as is implied in the balance schema. However, the bulk of evidence concerns relations and (dis)similarities between a perceived other and the perceiving *S* himself, rather than between two perceived others. It follows that the observed association between (dis)liking and (dis)similarity may not reflect the structural properties of a cognitive schema within *S* but may rather stem from a tendency to describe both oneself and one's friends in a favorable way (Cronbach, 1955) and from a tendency to project one's own unfavorable traits to friends in order to safeguard one's self-esteem (Bramel, 1962). An exception is a study by Miller et al. (1966) who found peers overestimating the similarity between the personalities of actual mutual friends. However, this result was not interpreted as the manifestation of a schema, associating liking with similarity, but as a generalization from perceived real similarities in socio-economic class, religion, attitude, etc., that characterized the mutual friends.

The empirical as well as the theoretical research literature being equivocal concerning possible schemata underlying the inference of traits from sentiment relations, the following experiment was undertaken. As a detailed report has been provided elsewhere (Peeters, 1973) we may largely restrict ourselves to a summary, entering into detail only for parts which are of high relevance or involve new analyses.

Design and method

Forty-eight Dutch-speaking senior highschool pupils (about 17 years old) were invited to write, in an order counterbalanced between Ss, two short essays each involving the description of two hypothetical people (*a* and *b*) who in the one essay were to be conceived of as liking each other (liking condition) while in the other as disliking each other (disliking condition).

For explorative purposes the liking-disliking manipulation within Ss was applied over a number of between-Ss conditions which were considered to have possible impacts upon the emergence of schemata. Half of the Ss were instructed that *a* and *b* (dis)liked each other 'because of their character' (character condition) while this instruction was not given to the other half of Ss. Further, 16 Ss were instructed to describe *a* and *b* as favorably as possible (positive set condition), another 16 Ss to describe them as unfavorably as possible (negative set condition) while the remaining 16 Ss were not instructed about the matter.

The entire experiment was repeated after a month with the same Ss. In order to facilitate the emergence of possible weak schemata that might not have shown up from the first time, the Ss were encouraged at session 2 to produce essays that differed from the ones they had written at session 1.

The critical data were not the discursive essays but descriptions of *a* and *b* made by the Ss on the end of each essay against 28 bipolar 8-point scales. Each scale contrasted two traits of which 16 judges (other highschool pupils) confirmed with high agreement that the one was favorable, the other unfavorable. The left-right positions of traits and the presentation order of scales were randomized within the scale list offered to the Ss and counterbalanced between Ss.

In order to be able to investigate the role of a possible social-evaluative 'likableness' dimension the Ss were asked at the end of each session to describe the concepts of 'likable' and 'dislikable' person against the same scales as were used for the essays. The more a scale discriminated between both concepts, the more it was regarded as representative of a likableness dimension which representativeness was referred to as the scale's 'likableness degree'.¹ In Table 1 the scales are rank-ordered from high to low likableness degree. Only the dislikable scale-poles are given. Note that this rank order was obtained immediately after the Ss

1. The mean algebraic difference between both concepts computed per scale over Ss was used as an index of likableness degree. The indexes from both sessions, which intercorrelated $\rho = .95$, were combined into a single index. It was ascertained that

low mean differences were not produced by reliable disagreements among Ss about the likableness-dislikableness character of trait-scale poles in which case the discriminative power of the scales in question should be regarded as high.

went through the liking and disliking conditions. This was done in order to tap the likableness degrees endorsed by the scales in the specific context of the experiment. However, the obtained rank order generalized fairly well beyond the context of the experiment to the rank order obtained from 27 Ss who, moreover, belonged to a different population (psychology sophomores) the rank correlation over scales amounting to $\rho = .78$.

Results and discussion

When the data were tabulated it became apparent that there was a high agreement among the conditions between Ss (character and set). This was confirmed by subsequent more refined analyses involving comparisons of obtained differences with random differences, correlational analyses and analyses of variance of critical data. Hence data from the between-Ss conditions will not be presented separately, the data being pooled over these conditions.

An overall picture of data

A preliminary analysis of the scale-response distributions showed that the data were not distorted by reducing the eight scale-points to only two categories: + for the likable and — for the dislikable scale half. So per essay and per scale three response configurations were possible: ++, ——, or +— according to whether *a* and *b* were localized in the positive, negative, or opposite scale halves. In Table 1 frequencies of Ss ($N = 48$) over the three configurations are given for the liking and disliking conditions from session 1. In the bottom rows rank correlations between frequencies and likableness degrees of scales are given for sessions 1 and 2. Within the liking and disliking conditions one-sample chi-square tests were applied to the ++ and —— frequencies (columns v, w, x, z), using the averages of ++ and —— as fe. Between conditions McNemar tests for the significance of changes were applied to the frequencies of +— (columns u, x). The significance of ρ was estimated using one-tailed probability tables of ρ .

On the basis of the homogeneity schema one could expect (a) more likable than dislikable traits assigned to *a* and *b* who like each other while (b) more dislikable than likable traits to *a* and *b* who dislike each other. Both expectations were confirmed respectively by (a) the positive differences 'v — w' and their positive correlation with the scales' likableness degree ($\rho = .66$), and (b) the negative differences 'y — z' and the negative correlation of these values with the scales' likableness degree ($\rho = -.56$). It may be noteworthy that the data concerning

Table 1. *Frequencies of +—, ++ and —— in the Liking and Disliking conditions for session 1 and rho between these frequencies and likableness degrees of scales for sessions 1 and 2*

Trait scale	Liking (Li)				Disliking (Di)				Diff. Li - Di x - u
	+— u	++ v	—— w	Diff. v - w	+— x	++ y	—— z	Diff. y - z	
1 disliked	5	39	4	+35**	20	6	22	—16**	15**
2 intolerant	9	36	3	+33**	20	8	20	—12*	11*
3 selfish	10	35	3	+32**	28	3	17	—14**	18**
4 stern	3	41	4	+37**	28	8	12	—4	25**
5 boring	7	38	3	+35**	19	10	19	—9	12**
6 impertinent	7	39	2	+37**	27	10	11	—1	20**
7 untrustworthy	8	39	1	+38**	20	14	14	0	12*
8 conceited	7	39	2	+37**	25	8	15	—7	18**
9 introvert	8	33	7	+26**	26	7	15	—8	18**
10 suspicious	10	34	4	+30**	23	6	19	—13**	13**
11 lazy	5	40	3	+37**	19	20	9	+11	14**
12 impassive	11	34	3	+31**	26	12	10	+2	15**
13 inflexible	16	27	5	+22**	26	3	19	—16**	10
14 despondent	7	39	2	+37**	23	13	12	+1	16**
15 seclusive	10	37	1	+36**	22	18	8	+10*	12*
16 careless	11	33	4	+29**	20	16	12	+4	9
17 unrealistic	11	33	4	+29**	31	11	6	+5	20**
18 clumsy	4	41	3	+38**	25	10	13	—3	21**
19 impulsive	14	29	5	+24**	28	8	12	—4	14*
20 frivolous	13	33	2	+31**	29	13	6	+7	16**
21 stupid	12	32	4	+28**	25	16	7	+9	13**
22 fickle	11	31	6	+25**	30	9	9	0	19**
23 nervous	17	28	3	+25**	26	8	14	—6	9
24 slow	13	31	4	+27**	25	16	7	+9	12*
25 conformistic	13	32	3	+29**	26	16	6	+10*	13**
26 shy	14	29	5	+24**	25	18	5	+13**	11*
27 unambitious	9	27	12	+15*	28	9	11	—2	19**
28 weak	15	22	11	+11	27	10	11	—1	12*
rho sess. 1	—67**	73**	—41*	66**	—37*	—44*	68**	—56**	18
sess. 2	—74**	64**	—08	46**	—05	—58**	53**	—59**	59**

* $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$

(a) are stronger than those concerning (b), the positive 'v — w' values being more pronounced than the negative 'y — z' values. The latter are only significant for some scales with relatively high likableness degrees while even for some scales with relatively low likableness degrees significant positive values were obtained. This peculiarity may be interpreted as a positivity bias inflating the inference of positive traits in the liking condition and inhibiting the inference of negative traits in the disliking condition to such an extent that for some scales with low likableness degrees, and thus involving relatively low homogeneity pressures, the positive responses may exceed the negative ones.

On the basis of the balance schema one could expect (a) more similarity attributed to *a* and *b* who like each other than to *a* and *b* who dislike each other, and (b) the localization of this effect on a likableness dimension. Expectation (a) is confirmed by the significant differences 'x — u'. However, as to (b) the correlation between the given differences and the scales' likableness degree, although in the expected direction ($\rho = .18$) is not significant and too low to confirm that the balance effect would involve a likableness dimension. It could be argued that the observed weakness of the relationship between balance and likableness degree is only due to the data from the disliking condition. Indeed, in the liking condition the occurrence of balanced similarity-configurations (sum of ++ and — —) correlates positively over scales with likableness degree ($\rho = .67, p .01$). However, this positive correlation is only due to the ++ data (column v) and thus is most economically interpreted as a homogeneity effect.

The data from session 2 pointed largely to the same conclusions as those from session 1. The only noteworthy difference was that the balance effect (x — u) correlated significantly and in the expected direction ($\rho = .59$) with the scales' likableness degree. This suggests that although the relative similarities and dissimilarities of the balance schema may apply relatively independently of a likableness dimension (session 1) this does not exclude that they may involve a likableness dimension on occasion (session 2).

Comparison of schemata

So far we know that the data are consistent with the simultaneous application of the homogeneity, balance, and positivity schemata. The agreement over sessions and conditions between *Ss* suggests that these schemata, except the likableness dimension of the balance schema, may be quite compelling. However, we do not yet have an idea about how compelling they are in comparison with each other. A possible answer may be provided by comparing the percentage of responses that can be accounted for by the various schemata. For that purpose an analysis

Table 2. *Possible response patterns (numbered from 1 to 9), their position with respect to Homogeneity, Balance, Positivity bias and Alternation (upper part of the table), and their occurrence (in %) in sessions 1 and 2 (bottom part of the table)*

	1		2		3		4		5		6		7		8		9	
	Li	Di	Li	Di	Li	Di	Li	Di	Li	Di	Li	Di	Li	Di	Li	Di	Li	Di
	++	--	--	++	++	+-	--	+-	+-	++	+-	--	++	++	--	--	+-	+-
Homogeneity	I	I	0	0	I	?	0	?	?	0	?	I	I	0	0	I	?	?
Balance	I	0	I	0	I	I	I	I	0	0	0	0	I	0	I	0	0	I
Positivity	I	0	0	I	I	?	0	?	?	I	?	0	I	I	0	0	?	?
Alternation	0	0	0	0	0	I	0	I	I	0	I	0	0	0	0	0	I	I
% Session 1																		
Scale 1	38		0		33		4		2		4		10		4		4	
Scale 28	8		4		25		10		4		6		13		8		21	
Mean	20		1		34		5		4		3		17		3		13	
% Session 2																		
Scale 1	32		0		26		9		0		2		15		11		6	
Scale 28	13		2		21		13		4		9		9		9		21	
Mean	19		2		34		6		3		4		14		4		14	

was done the basic units of which were no longer the three configurations of two responses ($++$, $--$, and $+-$) but the nine possible patterns of two configurations resulting from the S 's responses in respectively the liking (Li) and disliking (Di) condition presented as column heads in Table 2. Thus pattern 6 ($+- --$) tells us that in the liking condition a and b were contrasted at the opposite poles of a particular scale, while in the disliking condition with the negative or dislikable pole of the same scale. In the stub column are listed the three schemata under investigation and in addition a fourth concept 'alternation'. The latter refers to a hypothetical tendency to produce $+-$ configurations which might, for instance, result from random responding, the probability of $+-$ being twice that of either $++$ or $--$. It was only introduced in order to control for it when the effects related to the three schemata would be delineated. In the field of the table 'I' means that the configuration in the column head is predicted by the concept in the stub column, while 'O' means that it is opposite to the prediction of that concept. So pattern 1 ($++ --$) implies two homogeneous configurations ($++$ in Li and $--$ in Di) one of which is balanced ($++$ in Li) the other being unbalanced. The symbol '?' is used when the configuration in the column head is ambiguous with respect to the concept in the stub column. So $+-$, with one positive and one negative response, is ambiguous with respect to the positivity schema. The lower part of the table shows, respectively for session 1 and 2, the percentage of S s by whom the patterns in the column heads are produced. The percents concern respectively scale 1 (highest likableness degree), scale 28 (lowest likableness degree) and the mean percentage over 28 scales.

The predictive power of homogeneity may be estimated by comparing the percents for patterns 1 and 2. Indeed, as can be derived from the upper part of Table 2, both patterns may be regarded as equivalent with respect to balance, positivity, and alternation² while they contrast with respect to homogeneity. Subtracting the occurrence of pattern 2 from that of pattern 1 should isolate approximately the effect of homogeneity. In this way we obtain for session 1 respectively 38 % and 4 % for the scales with the highest and lowest likableness degrees, the mean over 28 scales being 19 %. The difference between 38 % and 4 % reflects the likableness dimension involved in the homogeneity schema which was confirmed by the rank correlation over 28 scales between the homogeneity percentages for separate scales and the scales' likableness degrees amounting to

2. A restriction to the equivalence of both patterns may relate to the fact that in pattern 1 the balanced configuration is also the positive one while this is not the case for pattern 2, which might allow for a dif-

ferential interaction effect of positivity bias and balance. To the extent, however, that the effects of schemata combine additively, the equivalence may be perfect.

.84 ($p < .01$). For session 2 the data point in the same direction (mean: 17 %; scale 1: 32 %; scale 28: 11 %; $\rho = .69$, $p < .01$).

According to a similar rationale, the balance effect can be estimated by subtracting the sum for patterns 5 and 6 from the sum for patterns 3 and 4. In this way we obtain the same values as in column 'x — u' of Table 1 which means: 31 % for scale 1, 25 % for scale 28, and 32 % for the mean in session 1. For session 2 these values are respectively 33 %, 21 %, and 33 %. The rank correlations between balance percentages and likableness degree are of course the same as those reported in column 'x — u' of Table 1 which means that the ambiguous status of the likableness dimension with respect to the balance schema is maintained.

Finally, subtracting the percent for pattern 8 from this for pattern 7, we may have an estimation of the percent of the data accounted for by the positivity schema. Here we obtain mean percents of 14 % for session 1 and 10 % for session 2. The rank correlations with the scales' likableness degree are respectively $-.31$ and $-.37$ which, although low, are consistent with the tendency to have the positivity bias show up for scales with relatively low likableness degrees which was observed in Table 1 (column 'y — z').

Our conclusion may be that on the average balance stands out more than homogeneity, while the latter more than positivity bias. However, the importance of homogeneity increases, and may even reach beyond that of balance, for traits with high likableness degrees, while it decreases and even may fade away for traits with relatively low likableness degrees.³

Individual schemata

So far we have presented evidence of schemata for a group. In the present section we will examine how individual *Ss* contributed to the group result. For that purpose individual indices discriminating between *Ss* for their relative contribution to the various schemata standing out in the group result were developed. Individual indices for balance were obtained by subtracting per *S* the *S*'s mean absolute

3. Proceeding from extensions of Table 2 the predictive power of schemata was investigated in still other ways. For instance, the patterns' representativeness for each of the concepts in the stub column was weighted by assigning numerical values of 1, 0.5, and 0 to the respective symbols I, ?, and O, and summing up these weight values per pattern. Pearson correlations over patterns

between the schemata weights, obtained in this way, and pattern frequencies were predominantly positive for the three schemata. As the correlations of weights computed over patterns between concepts (schemata) are all zero, the above positive correlations reflected the predictive power of single schemata.

scale difference over the 28 eight-point scales) between *a* and *b* in the liking condition from that in the disliking condition. The higher a *S* scores positively on this index, the more he associates liking with similarity and disliking with dissimilarity. The initially hypothesized relationship between balance and likableness is disregarded by the index because it was not sufficiently confirmed by the group results.

In order to arrive at an index for homogeneity, mean scale values of either *a* and *b* were computed per *S* over the 28 scales and the higher of both means obtained in the disliking condition was subtracted from the lower of both means obtained in the liking condition. The higher a *S* scores positively on this index, the more he tends to associate *a* and *b* with likable traits in the liking condition and with dislikable traits in the disliking condition.

Finally, the lower of the above-mentioned mean scale values for *a* and *b* obtained in the disliking condition was used as an index of positivity bias. The higher a *S* scores for this value, the more he can be assumed to contribute to the positivity bias shown by the group results.

Table 3. *Means, standard deviations, and intercorrelations of indexes for Homogeneity, Balance, and Positivity bias (self correlations are between sessions)*

		M	SD	Pos.	Bal.	Hom.
Hom.	Sess. 1	1	1.6	— .52**	— .05	.46**
	Sess. 2	0.6	1.7	— .42**	— .10	
Bal.	Sess. 1	1.3	1.2	— .28	.23	
	Sess. 2	1.5	1.3	— .24		
Pos.	Sess. 1	3.9	1	.59**		
	Sess. 2	3.7	0.9			

** $p < .01$

Means, standard deviations, and Pearson intercorrelations computed over *Ss*⁴ for the three indices are presented in Table 3. The self-correlations of indices between sessions, although significant by *t*-test for homogeneity and positivity bias, may be too low in order to conclude that individual *Ss* show reliable preferences for particular schemata. Further the correlations between schemata within sessions, although significantly negative between homogeneity and positivity bias, are also

4. $N = 45$, three *Ss* being dropped because of incomplete data at session 2.

low which suggests that even within single descriptions *Ss* do not necessarily stick to one particular schema, but may apply simultaneously other schemata as well. Nevertheless, the significant correlations suggest that there may be some subject-specificity for homogeneity and positivity bias, both being somewhat reliable over sessions and somewhat mutually exclusive within sessions.

Conclusions

The experiment confirmed that *Ss* infer traits from liking and disliking relations in a way consistent with (a) a homogeneity schema in that *a* and *b* who like each other are described in a more likable way than *a* and *b* who dislike each other, and (b) a balance schema in that more similarity is assigned to *a* and *b* who like each other than to *a* and *b* who dislike each other, however, without the implication that this similarity effect would be restricted to a likableness dimension. In addition, evidence of a positivity bias or leniency effect was provided.

These conclusions are corroborated by that the results were consistent over a number of between-*Ss* conditions. So the effects of verbal instructions aiming at the facilitation or inhibition of the positivity bias were negligible. Also, it did not matter whether or not the *Ss* were explicitly invited to assume a causal relationship between the personalities of *a* and *b* at the one side, and the critical sentiment relation between *a* and *b* at the other side, which may suggest that the *Ss* presuppose a causal relationship anyhow.

The intercorrelations of schemata, included positivity bias, computed over *Ss* were quite low suggesting that the various schemata constitute a range of possibilities among which *Ss* while inferring traits from sentiment relations may select in a rather arbitrary way, even applying different schemata simultaneously within the same description. Only the *Ss*' preferences for homogeneity and positivity seem to show some mutual exclusiveness and persistence over time.

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Résumé

Trois schémas relatifs à la déduction de traits attribués à *a* et *b* à partir de relations respectivement d'affection et d'aversion réciproque entre *a* et *b* ont été tirés de publications scientifiques: (1) le schéma d'homogénéité: des traits aimables seraient attribués à *a* et *b* s'ils s'aiment et des traits désagréables s'ils ne s'aiment pas; (2) le schéma d'équilibre: on pourrait attribuer plus de similarité à *a* et *b* s'ils s'aiment que s'ils ne s'aiment pas, l'effet relatif de similarité étant fixé sur une dimension d'amabilité; (3) le biais de positivité: on attribuerait des traits favorables quelle que soit l'information stimulus donnée.

Exposé d'une expérience confirmant la valeur de ces trois schémas sauf dans le cas où l'on n'obtient aucune preuve non équivoque permettant de limiter l'effet d'équilibre à une dimension d'amabilité. On a constaté en outre que, individuellement, les sujets ne manifestaient aucune préférence suivie pour des schémas particuliers mais passaient facilement d'un schéma à l'autre.

Zusammenfassung

Aus der Forschungsliteratur werden drei Schemata abgeleitet, die Zuschreibung von Eigenschaften betreffend, die *a* und *b* in jeweils reziproken Sympathie- und Antipathiebeziehungen zwischen *a* und *b* attribuiert werden: (a) Homogenität: *a* und *b* werden angenehme Eigenschaften zugeschrieben, wenn sie sich gegenseitig sympathisch finden, dagegen unangenehme Eigenschaften, wenn sie sich unsympathisch finden; (b) Balance: *a* und *b* wird mehr Ähnlichkeit zugeschrieben, wenn sie sich gegenseitig sympathisch finden, als wenn sie sich unsympathisch finden, wobei der relative Ähnlichkeitseffekt auf einer Sympathiedimension anzusiedeln ist; (c) Neigung zum positiven Urteil (positivity bias): ungeachtet der gegebenen Reizinformation werden günstige Eigenschaften attribuiert.

Es wird ein Versuch dargestellt, der die Existenz der drei Schemata bestätigt, mit der Ausnahme, daß für die Beschränkung des Balanceeffektes auf eine Sympathiedimension kein eindeutiger Nachweis erbracht wird. Weiterhin stellt sich heraus, daß einzelne Vpn keine stabilen Präferenzen für besondere Schemata haben, sondern bereitwillig von einem zum anderen Schema wechseln.