Research Seminars in General Psychology and Cognitive Neuroscience

("Forschungskolloquium für Absolventen, Doktoranden, und Mitarbeiter“)

„General Psychology and Cognitive Neuroscience“

(Prof. Dr. Stefan R. Schweinberger)

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Place: Am Steiger 3/EG, SR 009

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Event Schedule

16.07.2007	Melanie Steffens, Jena	Gender Stereotypes and Gender Attitudes
25.06.2007	Friederike Engst, Dresden	Recognizing Famous Faces and Buildings: An ERP-Analysis of Repetition Priming
18.06.2007	Holger Wiese, Jena	The Age of the Beholder: ERP Evidence for a Perceptual Learning Account to the Own-Age Bias in Face Memory
11.06.2007	Johanna Stahl, Jena	Face and Race: Evidence for expertise-dependent influences on recognition memory for own- and other-race faces
05.06.2007	Gyula Kovács, Budapest	Face on! The electrophysiological correlates of facial adaptation
04.06.2007	Volker Franz, Giessen	Dual pathway hypotheses for perception and action: A critical view.
21.05.2007	Jürgen Kaufmann, Jena	How abstract are familiar face representations? Evidence for an influence of emotional expressions on face identity recognition.

Melanie C. Steffens
Friedrich-Schiller-Universität Jena

Gender Stereotypes and Gender Attitudes

Social perception appears to rest on a complicated interplay of social-group related and individual factors: An individual’s social-group membership might or might not influence impression formation. Several paradigms have been developed in social cognition in order to tease apart individual and group-related factors. According to traditional gender stereotypes, men in general are assumed to possess more task competence than women, whereas women in general possess more social skills. Social role theory postulates that these stereotypes are rooted in the different frequencies with which men and women are observed in different social roles (women as caregivers, men as breadwinners). However, these social roles are changing. Particularly, more and more women participate in the workforce. Thus, the stereotypic male-competence association should be decreasing, whereas the women-warmth association might

persist. We introduce one series of studies where the role of these gender stereotypes for the ascription of task competence and social skills to individual males and females was investigated. A second series of studies tested implicit associations of competence and warmth with men and women in general, using diverse samples and different implicit measures. In line with changing social roles, little evidence of differences in competence associations was found, whereas women-warmth associations seem to persist. This might be one basis for the general preference for women that is alluded to in the "women are wonderful" effect. Taken together, our findings suggest that gender stereotypes do not threaten competence judgments of women, but that men might need to show more evidence of their social skills than women.

Friederike Engst
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Recognizing Famous Faces and Buildings: An ERP-Analysis of Repetition Priming

In order to fully understand differences in the recognition of faces and other types of objects, features apart from the general visual category have to be considered, such as visual expertise and the categorization level (Tarr & Cheng, 2003). I will present data from a study were we directly compared the behavioural performance and event-related potentials (ERPs) for faces and buildings that could be likewise accessed at the exemplar level in a repetition priming paradigm. For all participants individual sets of 64 pictures of each, familiar faces and familiar buildings, were selected and intermixed with the same number of unfamiliar stimuli. Participants had to perform a familiarity-decision task. EEG was recorded from 64 channels. Analysis concerned the priming (primed and unprimed), the different categories (buildings and faces) and the level of specificity (familiar and unfamiliar). Reaction times (RTs) revealed reliable priming effects for both categories. The early ERPs of interest, the P100 and the N170, were smaller in amplitude or even absent, respectively, and delayed for buildings compared to faces. Results showed a very distinctive ERE/N250r to both categories with larger amplitudes for familiar than for unfamiliar targets. Topographic comparisons suggested the same underlying source of the ERE/N250r for familiar faces and familiar buildings, whereas priming effects in the late repetition effect (LRE/N400) revealed different scalp topographies for faces and buildings. These findings suggest that after differential perceptual processing the initial access to a common store of structural knowledge is followed by the activation of categoryspecific cortical representations of person- and building-related semantic knowledge.