

Bread and Bullets

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Roles of Narratives in Decision Making

Perceptions and Cognition

Understanding the environment

Focusing attention

Predicting events

Preferences

Motivating action

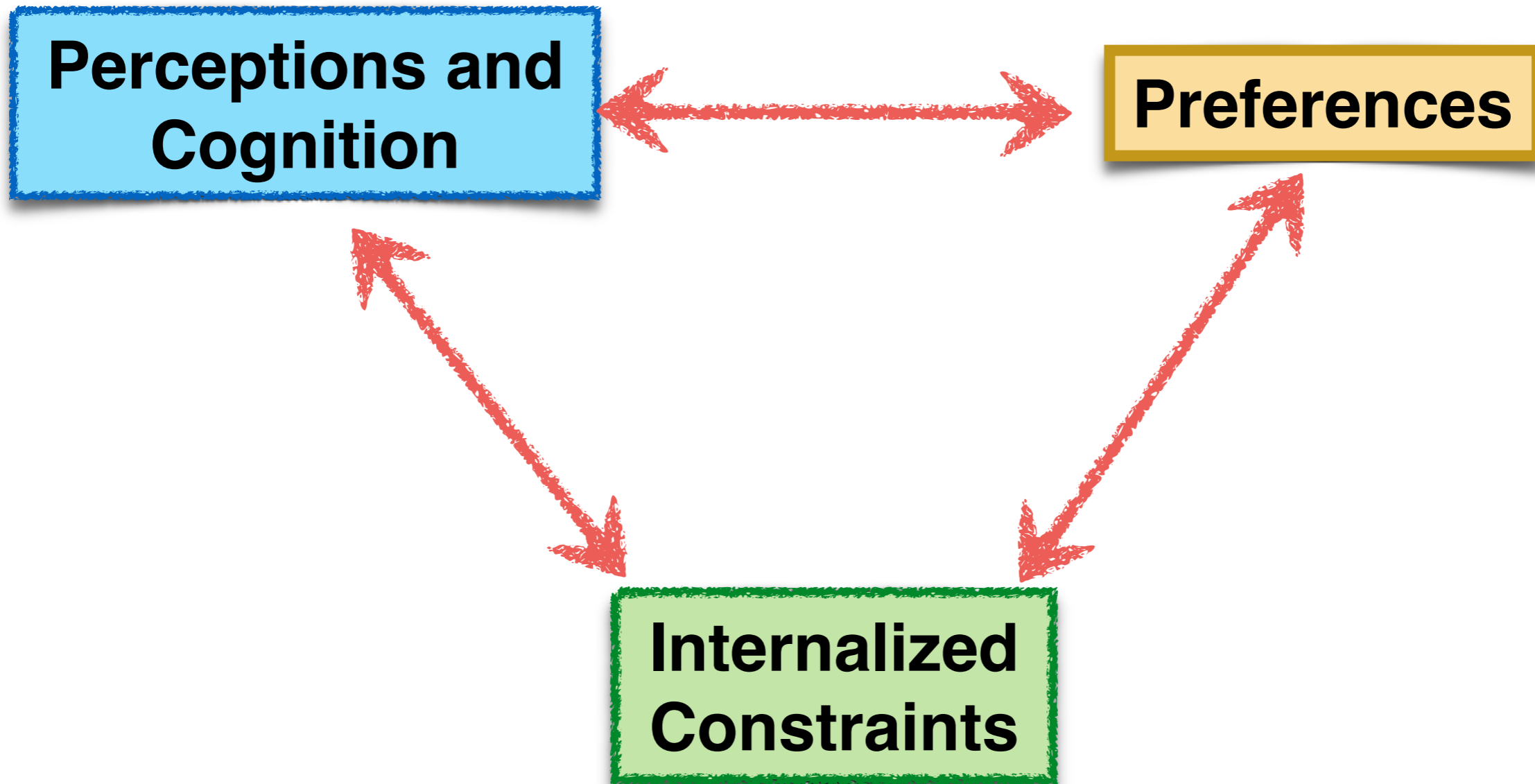
Social assignments and identities

Internalized Constraints

Power relationships

Social norms

Local Stability: Reinforcing Roles



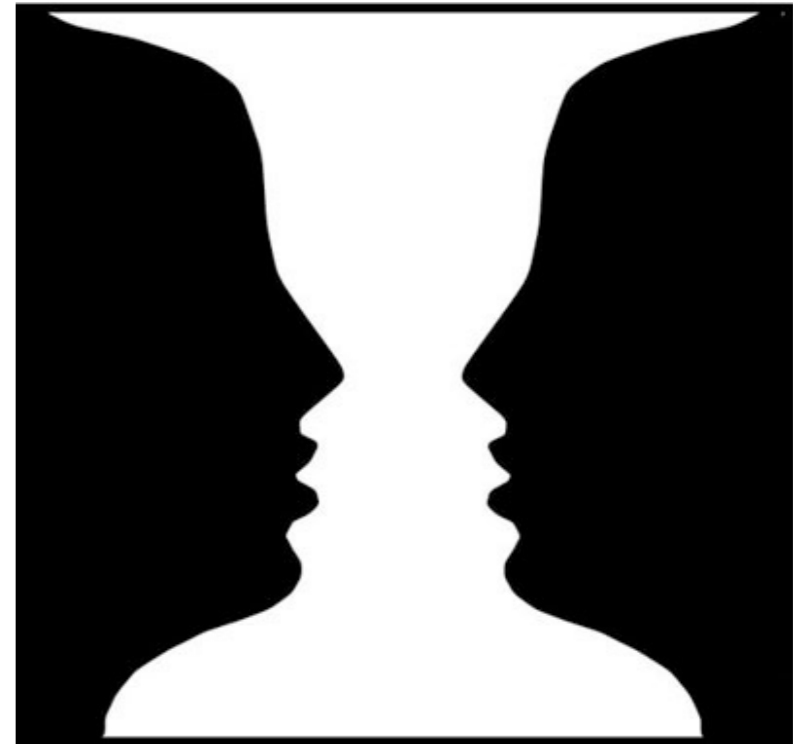
Understanding the Environment

Categories are constructed to suit our sensorimotor faculties.

Narratives are associations of categories.

Aims: Reducing

- anxiety of uncertainty,
- fear or betrayal,
- helplessness, and
- fear of separation from our social groups.



Focusing Attention

- Attention is a sustained focusing of our cognitive resources on particular environmental stimuli, combined with a sustained neglect of extraneous stimuli.
- Our attentional field is not the outcome of utility maximization, but depends on
 - our memory and characteristics of the stimuli (e.g. unusualness), emotions and motivations.



Predicting Events

- Hume's problem of causality
- Our sense of causality arises from our interaction with our environment through the exertion of force.



- How we become convinced of our predictions:
 - Coverage, emotions (anxiety reduction, positive feelings)
 - Plausibility, consistency, completeness, thoughtfulness
 - Speed of processing and retrieval
 - Support from other explanations and beliefs, trust in others believing the narrative, accord with social norms and conventions

Motivating Action



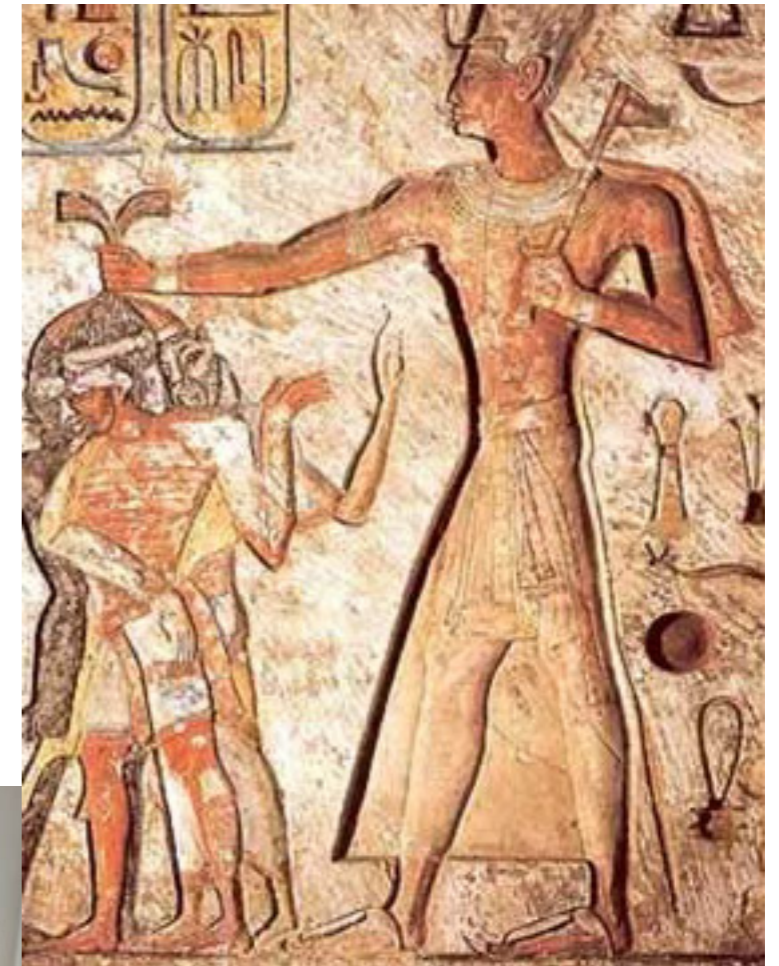
- A motive stimulates, controls and sustains a particular behavior pattern.
- Resource seeking, care, affiliation, status seeking, achievement, threat avoidance and threat approach

Social Assignments and Identities



Power Relationships

- Narratives establish power relationships when they gain legitimacy within specified social groups, defining hierarchies of legitimate power



Social Norms

- Narratives (1) teach social norms and (2) explain why we should obey them and (3) when we should punish those who disobey them.

