Chapter 11
Biases in Perception of Cause and Effect

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Causal Explanations
- Over search for coherence

coherence  \(\rightarrow\) Regular pattern

More knowledge

Continue search

If no

Conclude from randomness
Misleading Issue of Cause

- Random events often have pattern
  - Predication of bomb hit position
  - Computer simulated animal evolution

Favoring of Centralized Direction

- Reason
  - Slow to perceive accidents, small causes to large results
  - Quick to see coordinated actions, conspiracies
- Consequence
  - Failure when the behavior is inconsistent
  - Wrong attention for isolated behavior
  - Overestimate important one’s inference to others
  - Perceive inconsistent policies as duplicity

Centralized Direction

Similarity of Cause and Effect

- Similarities between cause and effect dominates ones judgment
  - Small event causes small effect
  - Large animals leave large track
- Exceptions
  - Small ants destroy big den
Internal v.s. External Causes

- **Internal**
  - Attitude, beliefs, personality

- **External**
  - Incentives, role requirements, social pressure

- **Overestimate internal causes**
  - Lack of knowledge of other people’s past behavior
  - Incline to focus on different people’s behavior under same situation

- **Overestimate own importance**
  - Familiar with my efforts to influence others
  - Less informed with other factors

- **Other facts**
  - Take my actions as the cause of succeed, not failure
    - Parents take credit for good children, less blame for bad ones
  - Take hurting actions as intentional expressions
    - It may be unintended

Illusory correlation

- Correlation is one basis for inferring causation
  - Existence of one implies existence of the other
  - But not necessarily being causation
    - Co-occur two may have same cause
    - One maybe always follows the other

- Example
  - Bad economics leads to rising support of opposite party
  - Domestic problem leads to foreign adventurism

How Illusory Correlation Happens?

- Illusory correlation occurs when people try to perceive non-exist relationship
  - Trend: focus on supporting evidence, ignore conflict one

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How Illusory Correlation Happens?

- Illusory correlation occurs when people try to perceive non-existent relationship
  - Trend: focus on supporting evidence, ignore conflict one => incomplete data

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Who is the cause?

Conclusion

- Take one more second...
- The world is far more complicated than it appears 😊

"I hope we're not going to have the same old argument."

Who is the cause?