

# Personality

What makes us who we are?

## Psych 305A: Lecture 10

# **Class Updates**

- **Today: we will wrap up Self, then move on to the Trait Approach**
- **Will cover self-esteem on FRIDAY**
- **Wednesday is a guest lecture, on trait taxonomies and personality development & change**
- **Change from syllabus!**

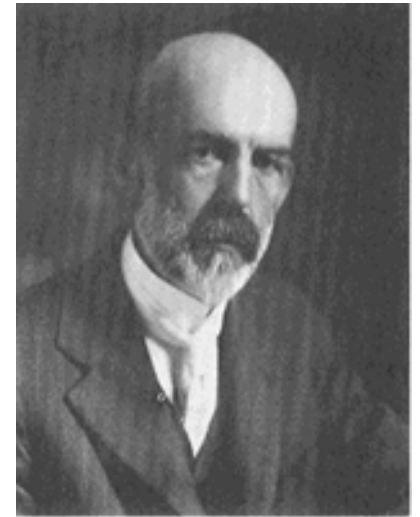
## Exam 2

- **Mean score = 74%**
- **Range = 38% - 100%**
- **Grades will be posted online tonight**
- **Will go over problem items on Fri.**

# How do we know a child has a sense of self?

- **Emotional markers (age 2.5-3)**
  - Self-conscious emotions
    - Shame
    - Guilt
    - Embarrassment
    - Pride
  - Require ability to evaluate the self (“I” self evaluates the “me” self)
  - Empathy

# Where does the Self-Concept come from?



Charles Horton Cooley

- “Looking Glass Self”
- Charles Cooley (1864-1929)
  - *“Human Nature and the Social Order”*
- “Each to each a looking glass, reflects the other that doth pass”
  - Self is **socially constructed**
    - Our sense of self is built upon the life-long experience of seeing ourselves through the eyes of others (i.e., through the “looking glass”)
- **But are there aspects of the self that cannot be shaped by others?**

# Looking Glass Self: How Many Different Mirrors?

- **During a one week period, the typical university student interacts with 50 different people and has 146 different interactions**
- **Of the 50 different people:**
  - 5% are complete strangers
  - 6% are strangers linked by mutual acquaintance
  - 6% are immediate family members
  - 7% are formal relations (e.g., service workers)
  - 14% are close friends
  - 34% are other friends
  - 28% are casual acquaintances
- **Do we have a different self for each of these interactions?**

# **Unitary vs. Multiple Selves**

- **Multiple selves correspond to multiple roles--we see ourselves differently in each social role**
- **Think about how you see yourself as:**
  - Son/daughter
  - Friend
  - Student
  - Romantic partner
  - Worker
- **Do you have a different self for each relationship?**

# Is it Adaptive to Have Multiple Selves?

- **Study:** Compared people who saw themselves similarly across social roles (unitary selves) with those who saw themselves very differently across their social roles (multiple selves)

- **Assessment:**

**How do you see yourself in the following roles?**

	Daughter/ Son		Friend	Student	Relationship Partner		Worker
Assertive	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Try to be helpful	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Punctual	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Worry a lot	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Clever, witty	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____



# Is it Adaptive to Have Multiple Selves?

- **Findings:**
  - Multiple selves → lower well-being and self-esteem
    - During university years
    - 20 years later during mid-life
  - Low well-being and self-esteem in university → multiple selves 20 years later
  - Frequent relationship and career changes → multiple selves
- **Conclusion: A highly differentiated self-concept reflects psychological fragmentation and lack of an integrated core self**

# Trait Taxonomies

# What is a trait?

- **Almost any adjective (or sometimes a noun) that describes the way some people are and others aren't**

# Traits are the Basic Building Blocks of Personality

- **Shy**
- **Happy**
- **Organized**
- **Punctual**
- **Talkative**
- **Creative**

# Key Elements of Traits

- **Personal ('internal') rather than situational ('external')**

# Key Elements of Traits

- **Chuck and Lyndie**
  - INTERNAL traits vs. EXTERNAL situation

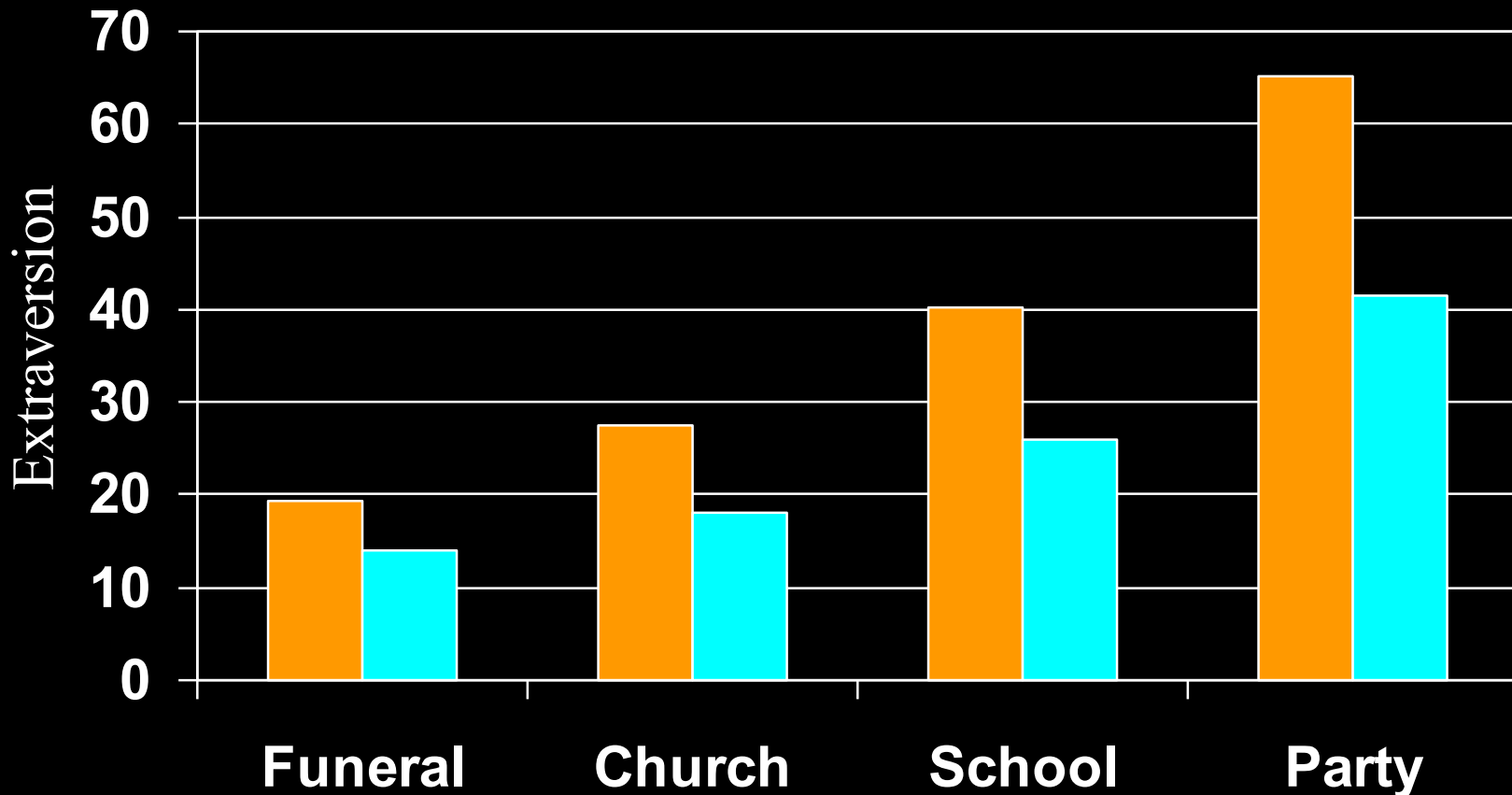


# Key Elements of Traits

- **Personal ('internal') rather than situational ('external')**
- **Consistent across 'similar' situations**
  - People who are friendly at school also tend to be friendly at home, at work, when they meet new people, etc.
  - But, situations also influence behaviour

# Extraversion Across Situations

■ Jane the Extravert ■ Jim the Introvert



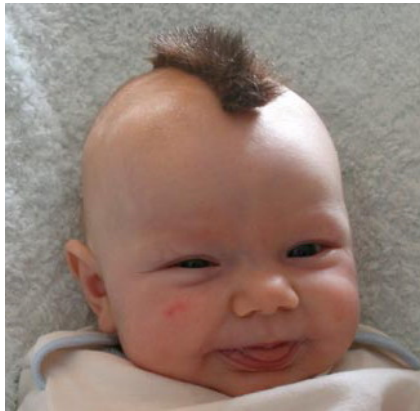


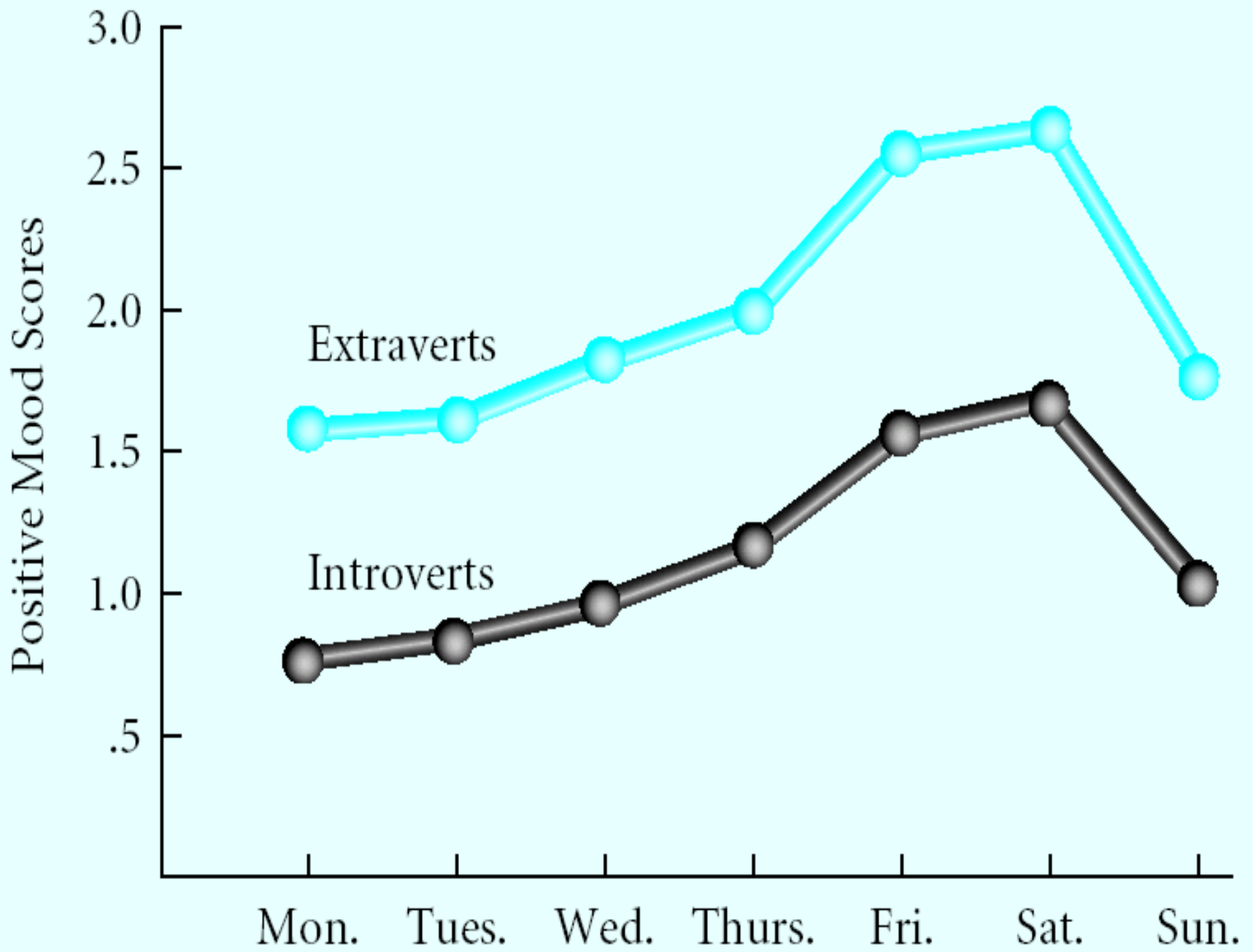


# Key Elements of Traits

- **Personal ('internal') rather than situational ('external')**
- **Consistent across 'similar' situations**
- **Stable across time**

# Development and Stability of Personality



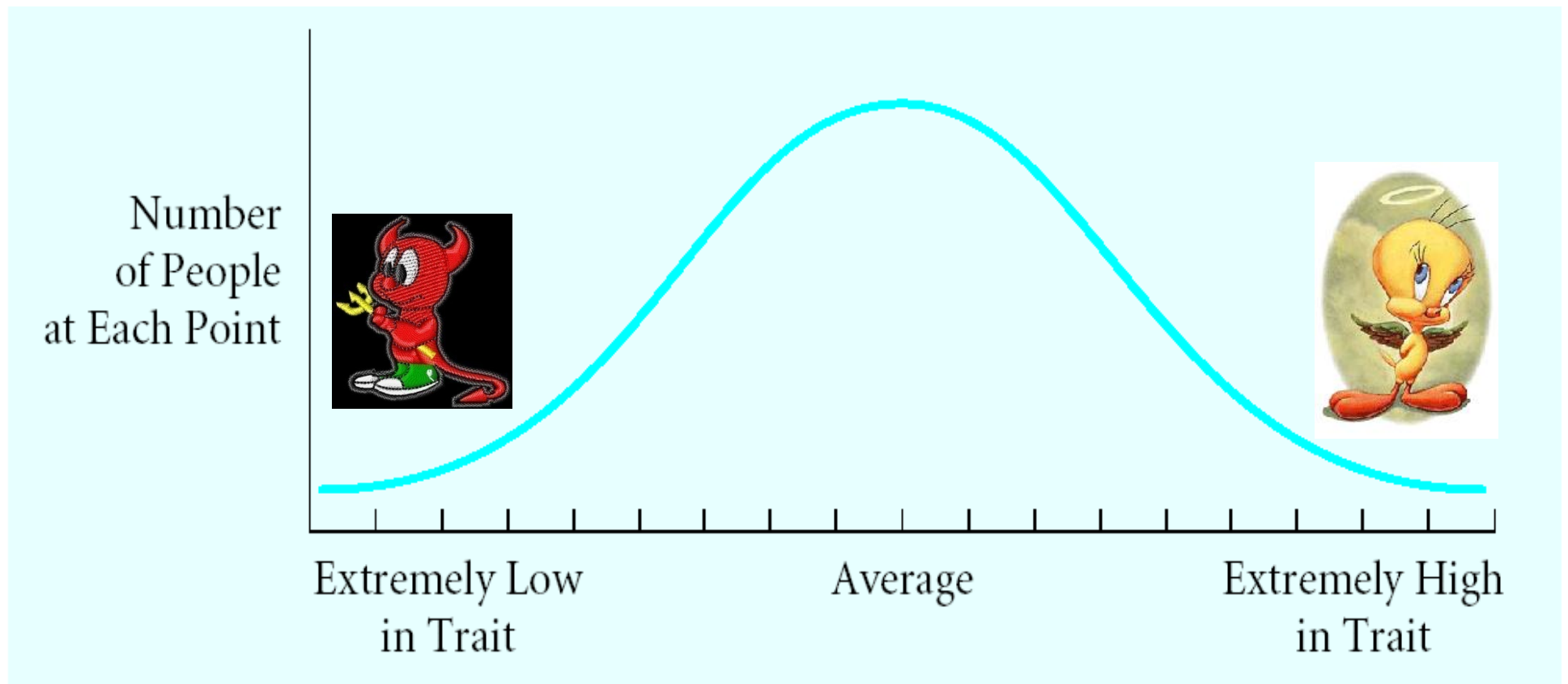


# Key Elements of Traits

- **Personal ('internal') rather than situational ('external')**
- **Consistent across 'similar' situations**
- **Stable across time**
- **Universal dimensions: Individual differences (across people)**
  - Useful way of describing and comparing personality differences in all people

# Key Elements of Traits

- Compare people across a continuum



# Key Elements of Traits

- **Personal ('internal') rather than situational ('external')**
- **Consistent across 'similar' situations**
- **Stable across time**
- **Universal dimensions: Individual differences (across people)**
  - Useful way of describing and comparing personality differences in all people
- **Descriptive, not explanatory**
  - Why did he talk a lot? Because he's extraverted

# What Aren't Personality Traits?

- **Temporary states (e.g., embarrassed)**
- **Attitudes (e.g., sexist, liberal)**
- **Cognitive ability (e.g., GRE scores)**
- **Physical attributes (e.g., tall, short, thin)**
- **Social categories (e.g., bully, wimp, jock)**



# How can we figure out which traits are most important?

- **Lexical Approach**

- We can learn about personality by studying *language*
- If a trait is important, people everywhere will have a word for it
  - cross-cultural universality
- If a trait is very important, there will be many words for it
  - Synonym frequency

# Fundamental Lexical Hypothesis

- **“the most important individual differences in human transactions will come to be encoded as single terms in some or all of the world’s languages”**

**-Goldberg, 1990**

# Trait Taxonomy

- **Comprehensive system that includes all of the major traits of personality**
- **Traits in a taxonomy are organized in some systematic manner**
  - Hierarchical system
  - Some traits more important (or “basic”) than others

# Trait Hierarchy

## Extraversion

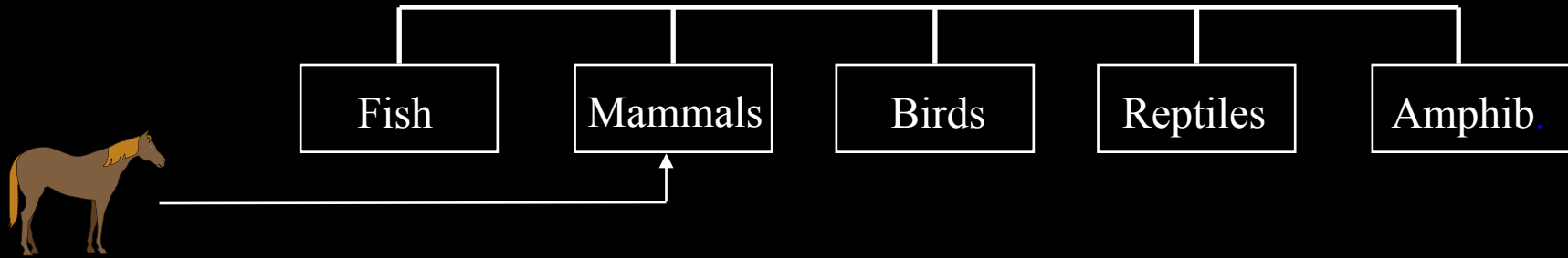
**outgoing      friendly      social**

**Many clubs      Likes parties**  
**Club president      Many friends**

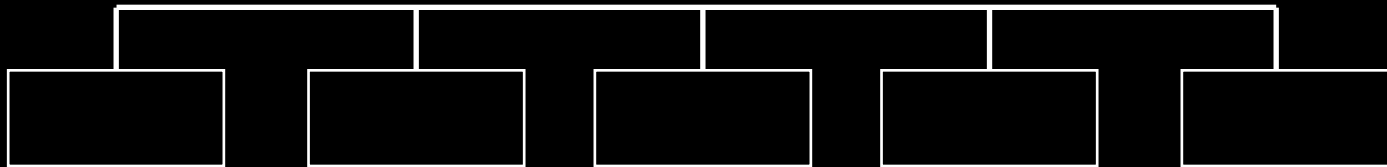
# Personality Taxonomies

Can psychologists identify a basic set of categories (dimensions) into which all personality traits can be classified?

# Taxonomy of Animals



# Taxonomy of Personality?



# Lexical Class Exercise

- **What slang words do you use to describe a person?**

# Developing a Trait Taxonomy

## Part 1

- **Lexical Class Exercise**
  - What slang words do you use to describe a person?
- **Research Study: What is taxonomy of pride**
  - Let's take the lexical approach



# Research Study: The Lexical Approach to Pride

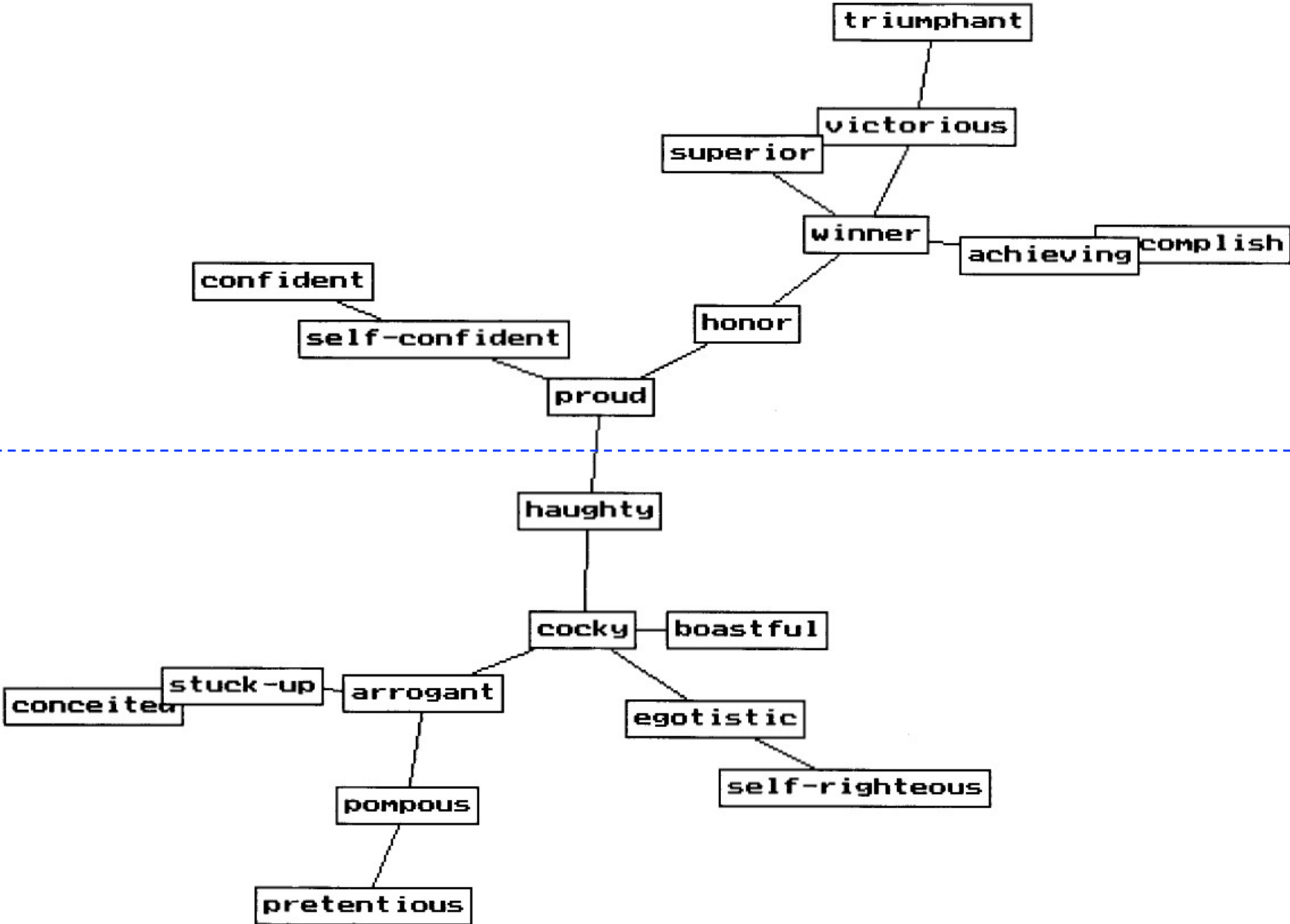
- **Research Procedure (Step 1)**
  - Asked participants to “list words that characterize what you think, feel, and do when you feel pride”
  - 205 participants listed a total of 795 different words
  - 65 words were listed by at least 2% of the sample (i.e., 4 people)

- **Happy** 64%
- **Confident** 64%
- **Strong** 34%
- **Accomplish** 30%
- **Smile** 29%
- **Proud** 24%
- **Excited** 20%
- **Egotistic** 20%
- **Joy** 18%
- **Satisfied** 17%
- **Arrogant** 15%
- **Energetic** 15%
- **Powerful** 13%
- **Self-esteem** 13%
- **Show-off** 11%
- **Stand up straight** 11%
- **Success** 10%
- **Content** 10%
- **Achieve** 10%
- **Good** 9%
- **Better** 9%
- **Motivated** 9%
- **Respect** 9%
- **Superior** 9%
- **Boastful** 8%
- **Fulfilled** 8%
- **Courageous** 7%
- **Cocky** 6%
- **Relief** 6%
- **Head held high** 6%
- **Honor** 6%
- **Determined** 6%
- **Stubborn** 6%
- **Hard-working** 6%
- **Laugh** 6%
- **Love** 6%
- **Intelligent** 5%
- **Self-worth** 5%
- **Knowledgeable** 5%
- **Great** 5%
- **Winner** 5%
- **Haughty** 4%
- **Important** 4%
- **Self-centered** 4%
- **Independent** 4%
- **Overwhelming** 4%
- **Perseverant** 3%
- **Pleased** 3%
- **Positive** 4%
- **Relaxed** 3%
- **Reward** 3%
- **Self-assured** 3%
- **Self-confident** 3%
- **Special** 4%
- **Support** 3%
- **Talkative** 4%
- **Tall** 4%
- **Worth** 3%
- **Ability** 4%
- **Encourage** 4%
- **Conceited** 3%
- **Enthusiasm** 3%
- **Fearless** 3%
- **Friendly** 3%
- **Goal** 3%

# Pride Lexical Study

- **Step 2: Figure out how words group together**
  - Are there coherent sub-groups of words within the pride domain?
  - How are all the words related to each other?
    - Some should be more similar to each other than others

# Lexical Structure of Pride



# Developing a Trait Taxonomy

## Part 2

- **Statistical (Experiential) Approach**
  - Factor analysis
  - Step 1: Ask participants to rate the extent to which each trait describes them
  - Step 2: Enter ratings into *factor analysis* program, which tells you how traits “hold together” in people’s experiences



# Statistical Structure of Pride: Results from Factor Analysis

## **Factor 1**

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- Accomplished
- Achieving
- Confident
- Happy
- Head held high
- Goal-fulfilled
- Self-assured
- Self-esteem
- Triumphant

## **Factor 2**

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- Arrogant
- Boastful
- Cocky
- Conceited
- Egotistic
- Haughty
- Self-centered
- Self-righteous
- Snobbish

# Next Class

- **Trait taxonomies, Personality change and development**
  - Larsen & Buss, Ch. 3