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Effects of Social Information on Drawn Route Traversals

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Abstract: Why do people use spatial language to describe social relationships? To what extent do they anchor their thoughts about social relationships in terms of space? In this study, we used a drawing task to further explore the conceptual structure of social distance. Participants read a short narrative about passing through an environment that included stick figures that represented either friends or strangers, and then drew a line that represented the route. On average, people drew paths that were closer to the stick figures when they had read about friends versus strangers, critically, even though no interaction was stated. These preliminary results support the idea that the conceptual structure of social relationships is linked to thought about space.