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# Social Panoramas

Social Panoramas<sup>1)</sup>, developed by Lucas Derks, is a tool that helps to analyze and improve human relationships by exploring the spatial characteristics of social imagery. Derks, a social psychologist and researcher, inspired by NLPs understanding of timelines, believes that people exist in space and begin to represent the space around them. This representation of physical space in the mind is called “mental space,” which is like a three-dimensional unconscious landscape or unconscious blackboard on which the cognitive map of reality is drawn.

According to Derks, a person's model of the social world is constructed from generalizations about where they believe they are situated relative to others in physical space. The way an individual positions themselves in regard to others in mental space governs the better part of social behavior and is the foundation of the social side of personality. Social Panoramas offers a way to change these unconscious landscapes and improve relationships by exploring and changing the mental space that governs social behavior.



Relation equals Location  
*Lucas Derks*

## The spatial structure

In any relationship, two aspects are at play, how one perceives themselves and how others are perceived. The unique aspect of the approach is understanding this spatial structure of one's self-concept. For this the model differentiates between real people and the mental representations of individuals, referred to as “personifications” with the goal to modify these personifications and thus to form the individual's model of social reality.

Spatial language use describes relationships. George Lakoff and Mark Johnson's work, “Metaphors We Live By” and “Philosophy in the Flesh”, suggest that these expressions are metaphoric and result from our bodily experiences, e.g.:

- Distance: Proximity greatly influences how people represent others, from distant galaxies to the center of their bodies. Externally referenced people tend to have closer social representations, while internally referenced people have more distance. Feeling lonely requires representing people as far away, while loved ones are both seen and felt as very near.
- Vertical: The size of a personification can be determined by the position of their eyes relative to our own - “see eye to eye”. Size often relates to importance and can influence experiences of power and authority.
- Horizontal: Many people associate left with bad and right with good, or nice with one side and nasty with the other.
- Side by side: People tend to see side-by-side positions as cooperative and face-to-face positions as conflicting.

## Universal patterns

The concept that a person's relationship with someone else is directly tied to their physical location implies that if a relationship is not satisfactory, changing the location of the other person can improve it. However, simply asking the client for suggestions on where to move the other person may not always yield the best results. In such cases, a consultant may suggest and test locations based on "universal patterns," which include:

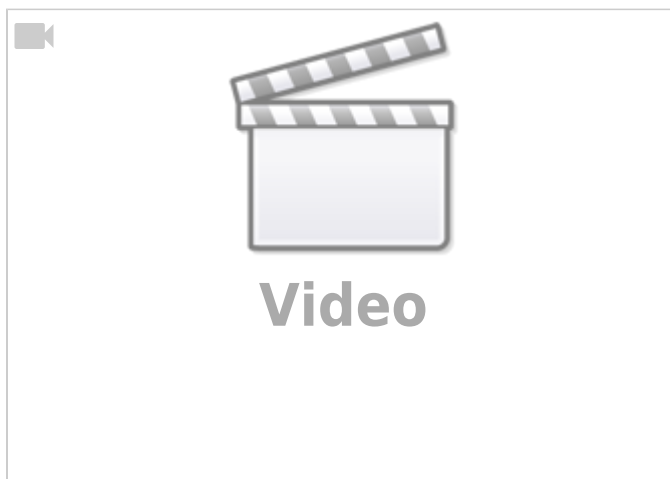
1. Social feelings intensify as a personification gets closer, and weaken as it moves away.
2. The higher a personification rises above eye level, the more influence it has. Lowering it decreases its influence.
3. The direction in which a personification is looking indicates attention.
4. Personifications directly in front get more attention and have a greater influence.
5. Personifications directly in front can represent either confrontation or intimacy, depending on the facial expression.
6. Personifications directly in front may interfere with the self-image.
7. Personifications with the same eye direction indicate shared attention.
8. Personifications at the back, looking in the same direction as the subject, may either be supportive or controlling.
9. Two personifications sharing the same location often lead to identity confusion.
10. Bi-locations and tri-locations may cause uncertain relationships and show role conflict.
11. The other person appears dominant or authoritative when they are higher, closer, broader, and/or lighter than the self-image.

Lukas Derks work uses these basics to reference and transfer personified resources, explore and remedy psychosomatic responses caused by a personification, explore traits via the family panorama, approach religious issues the spiritual panorama and generally explore the self awareness of the client.

Derks has written seven books on psychology, many of which explore the theory and application of Social Panoramas in greater detail.

## Lucas A. C. Derks

Lucas A. C. Derks<sup>2)</sup> is a social psychologist, researcher, and trainer contributed to the field of psychotherapy, conflict coaching, and management through his innovative work with the Social Panorama model. Born in the Netherlands, Lucas originally studied art and psychology, teaching drawing and painting at De Werkschuit in Utrecht in the 1970s. However, his interest in psychology continued to grow, leading him to pursue a masters degree in social psychology and pragmatism. It was during this time that he became familiar with the work of Bandler and Grinder, and he later trained at the New York Training Institute for NLP and the Institute for



Eclectic Psychology in Nijmegen, Holland.

During the 1990s developed the “social panorama model”, a powerful tool for analyzing and improving human relations. This approach combines principles from NLP and social psychology to help individuals and groups understand how their internal representations of themselves and others influence their behaviors and interactions.

Lucas has written several books on psychology and continues to train and work with psychotherapists, mediators, conflict coaches, managers, and dentists to help them apply the principles of the Social Panorama model to their practices.

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<sup>1)</sup> Social Panorama [sociaalpanorama.nl](https://sociaalpanorama.nl)

<sup>2)</sup> Lucas Derks [Wikipedia](#)

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Last update: **2023/04/24 15:52**

