Attribution - Jones and Harris (1967).

Participants were shown speeches, written by college students, that either favored or opposed Fidel Castro, the communist leader of Cuba. The independent variable was whether the college students were allowed to choose, or were assigned by the experimenters, to write a pro-Castro or an anti-Castro essay. The dependent variable was the participants’ pro-Castro attitude, measured on a scale of 10 to 70, as rated by observers.

Participants listened to the pro- and anti-Fidel Castro speeches. They were then asked to rate the pro-Castro attitudes of both. If the participants were told that the writers were assigned a particular side then their measurements of the students’ true attitudes should be the same, regardless of whether they were forced to write in favor of or against Castro. If the position was assigned, how could participants infer the writers’ true positions knowing that the behavior was forced by the situation?

However, when the Participants believed that the speech makers freely chose which position to take (for or against Castro), they rated the people who gave the pro-Castro speeches as having a more positive attitude toward Castro. However, contradicting Jones and Harris' hypothesis, when the participants were specifically told that the speech makers gave either a pro- or an anti-Castro speech solely as the result of a [coin flip](http://psychology.wikia.com/index.php?title=Coin_flip&action=edit&redlink=1) ([random](http://psychology.wikia.com/wiki/Random)), the participants still rated the people who gave the pro-Castro speeches as having, on average, a more positive attitude towards Castro than those giving anti-Castro speeches. Thus, even when participants were aware that the speeches made were solely because of the flip of a coin, they committed the fundamental attribution error when it came to judging the motivation behind pro or anti-Castro attitudes of the speech makers.