

IMPLICIT BIAS

UNDERSTANDING AND OVERCOMING OUR
IMPLICIT BIAS
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COMMISSION
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GOALS

- To increase understanding of the nature and sources of implicit bias
- To understand how bias affects perceptions and behavior
- To develop an initial understanding of how bias contributes to systemic racism
- To develop skills/strategies for reducing or overriding our biases

Understanding Human Behavior

The difference between
"conscious/explicit behavior" vs.
"unconscious/implicit behavior"

Conscious
vs.
Unconscious/
Implicit

Processing Information

Filters

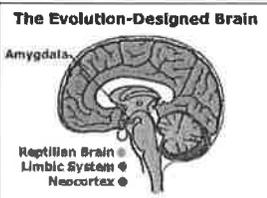
At any point in time...

- We are exposed to nearly 11,000,000 pieces of information
- Our brains can functionally recognize about 40
- And focus on only 7



Understanding Human Bias

- **Neocortex**
 - Conscious thought, language, reasoning
- **Limbic System**
 - Categorizes what we perceive
- **Reptilian Brain**
 - Controls the vital



Understanding Human Bias

Implicit

- Automaticity
- Shared experience
- Speed
- Adaptive
- Associative
- Outside of awareness



Understanding Human Bias

The difference between “Explicit Bias” vs. “Implicit Bias”

Explicit Bias

- Reflective
- Explicit
- Requires motivation, effort
- Takes more time



Understanding Human Bias

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Explicit/Conscious Bias

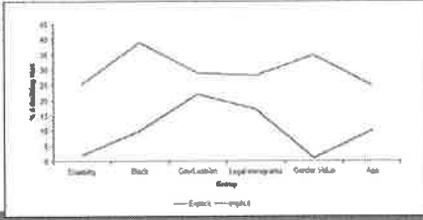


1927: K.K.K. rally in Montpelier VT

Understanding Human Bias

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- Often we do not know when we are impacted by biases (implicit)



Category	Explicit (%)	Implicit (%)
Ethnicity	30	15
Race	40	20
Conf./Lethal	30	25
Legal immigrants	30	15
Gender/MSL	10	35
Age	25	15



There are Many Types of Bias

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The most common include:

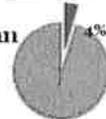
- **Confirmation/Commitment bias**- latching on to information that confirms our beliefs.
- **Selective Attention**- buy a car-suddenly you see the same model everywhere
- **Diagnosis/Value/Anchoring Bias**- labeling based on 1st impressions
- **Group think**- influence of family, friends, etc.
- **Anchoring bias**- tendency to rely too heavily on one trait or piece of information
- **Affinity Bias**- an implicit bias for people who are like us

Examples of Implicit Bias

There are many studies documenting implicit bias in nearly every aspect of life.

Implicit Bias: Height

What percentage of American men are over 6'2" tall?



What percentage of Corporate CEOs are over 6'2" tall?



Value Bias: Height

What percentage of American men are over 6 feet tall?



What percentage of Corporate CEOs are over 6 feet tall?



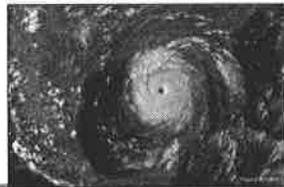
Affinity Bias- Names

- Job applicants with names associated with whites received a callback for one of every ten resumes; names associated with Blacks were one in fifteen
Carrie and Kristen- callback rate of more than **13%**
Aisha- **2.2%**
Keisha- **3.8%**
Tamika- **5.4%**

Anchoring Bias: Gender

Hurricane Alexandra vs. Hurricane Alexander

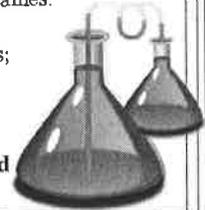
- o Changing a hurricane's name from male to female nearly triples the storm's fatalities



Confirmation Bias-Gender

Identical applications for a science lab assistant (except for a male or female name) were sent to faculty at various institutions. The applicants with male names:

- ❖ were offered the position more often;
- ❖ offered more mentoring opportunities;
- ❖ offered thousands more in salary than identically qualified women.



Both male and female faculty rated applicants similarly.

Diagnosis Bias- Gender

Boston Symphony Orchestra- 1952- created blind auditions to control for gender bias.

- Placed individuals behind a screen (made no real difference).
- Had people remove their shoes to control for the click clack of women's heels
- Other orchestras adopted the blind audition.

A 1997 study of 11 major orchestras documented a 55% increase in hiring of female musicians.



(Priming Effect) Tell the Color of the Text



- Green
- Blue
- Red
- Black
- Purple
- Blue
- Orange
- Green
- Brown



- Red
- Blue
- Yellow
- Green
- Black
- Blue
- Black
- Brown
- Red

Pattern Recognition-Read the Following

- Olmy srmat poelpe can raed tihs. I cdnuolt blveiee taht I cluod aulacly uesdnatnrd waht I was rdanieg.
- It si the phaonmneal pweor of the hmuan mnid, aoccdrnig to rscheearch at Cmabrigde Uinervtisy,
- Tihs is bcuseae the huamn mnid deos not raed ervey lteter by istlef, but the wrod as a wlohe. Amzanig huh? yaeh and I awlyas tghuhot slpeling was ipmoranttl

Processing Information

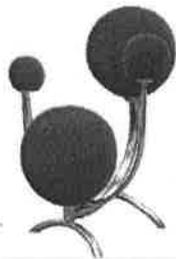
Whom do we prejudge?

Persons who we do not know (ambiguous stimuli)



Pattern Recognition

To make sense of the world we put things into groups...



Listen to this...



Processing Information

The characteristics we attribute to a person come from:

- Fight or Flight- amygdala brain function
- Categorization
- Stereotyping
- Institutional bias (press, movies, TV, etc.)
- Lack of contact

We **ALL** Have Implicit Bias

Yes, you do and so do I.

- Implicit bias is often incompatible with our explicit attitudes
- Even well-intentioned people have implicit biases-it does not make us bad people
- We are the products of a culture that is biased
- Implicit biases influence our perceptions and our behavior

Stereotyping

Is the general inclination to place a person into categories according to some easily and quickly identifiable characteristic such as age, sex, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, race, ethnic membership, nationality, religion, occupation, height, weight, liberal/conservative, etc. and then attribute to him/her qualities believed to be typical of members of that category.

The Power of Perception

“Everything we hear is an opinion, not a fact.
Everything we see is a perspective, not the truth.”

-Marcus Aurelius

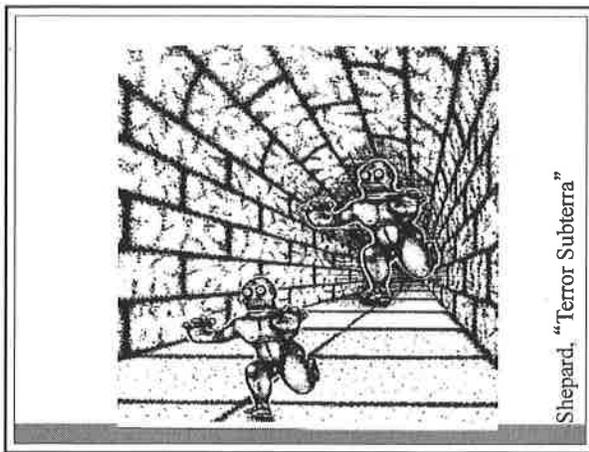
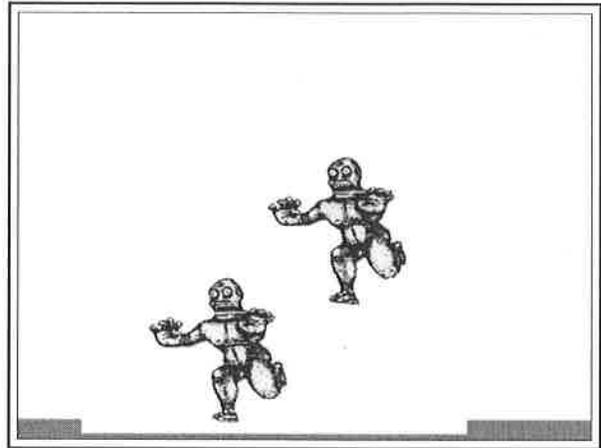
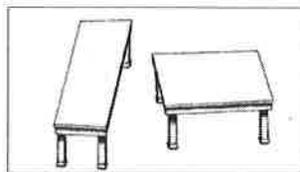
Most instances of perceived discrimination contain some ambiguity.

Thus the person's perception will likely determine his or her reaction to the same set of circumstances.

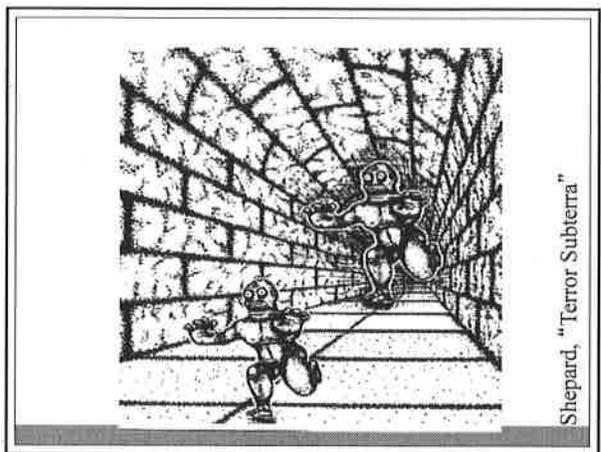
Perception



Are the tops of these tables the same?



Shepard, "Terror Subterra"

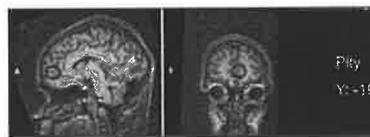


Shepard, "Terror Subterra"

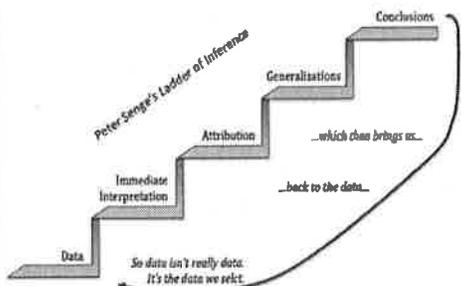
How Many Passes Does The Team In White Make?



Susan Frisch, Princeton University,
used a MRI scanner to observe...



Frisch, 2008



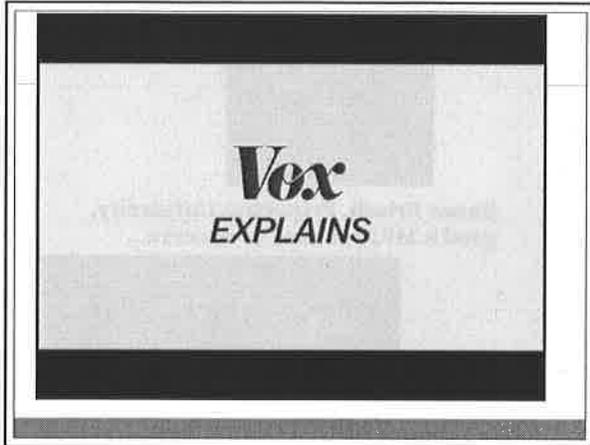
Test Your Implicit Biases



Go to one of these websites and test your implicit biases about race (and any others you want to do).

<http://www.understandingprejudice.org/iat/racframe.htm>

<http://www.tolerance.org/hiddenbias>



Examples of Institutionalized Racism/Sexism

- Slavery/ Women as property of men
- Taking land from Native Americans by force and extermination
- U.S. Immigration laws
- Denial of the right to vote (blacks and women)
- Jim Crow/Segregation
- Separate But Equal

Racism

The systematic subordination of members of targeted groups who have little social power in the U.S. (Blacks, Latino/as, Native Americans, Asians) by the members of the dominant racial group who have more social power (Whites).

Prejudice/bias (explicit or implicit) + power = oppression



The image shows a black and white photograph of a sign for a 'PUBLIC SWIMMING POOL'. A smaller sign is attached to the main sign that reads 'WHITE ONLY'. The background of the main sign is partially obscured by a person's head and shoulders.

Institutional Media Bias

White Suspect

Son in Staten Island murders was brilliant, athletic– but his demons were the death of parents

This is how the Staten Island Advance covered the case of Eric Bellucci, a mentally ill New York man who allegedly killed his parents.

Black Victim

Trayvon Martin was suspended three times from school

Meanwhile, NBC News ran this headline during ongoing coverage of the Trayvon Martin killing.

Same Crime, Same Day, Same Station



TV EXECS
BIAS & PROPAGANDA

- THE POLICE OVER-PATROL**
51% of programs that depict police officers depict them as black.
- THE NEWS MEDIA OVER-EXAGGERATE**
84-75% of the search term bias matrix broadcast as statements for those covered by black.
- NEWS REPORTERS ARE BROADCASTING BIAS**
The bias was made, resulting in a bias against the and various elements of diversity, including the black community.
- INACCURATE IS DANGEROUS FOR BLACK PEOPLE**
Often, inaccuracies in reports are not only racist, but they are also a result of the media's discrimination.

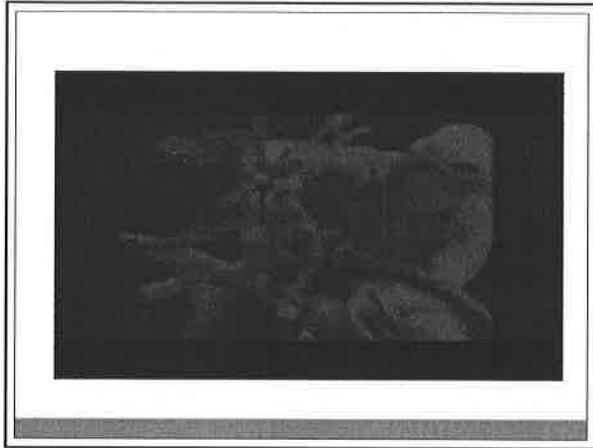
You Get the Picture

These two nearly identical photos with very different captions appeared almost simultaneously...



How Unconscious Bias Plays Out





Privilege

- Unearned benefits conferred upon members of mainstream or dominant groups (in the U.S. these include male, white, heterosexual, affluent, young, able-bodied, and/or Christian) at the expense of other groups.

Dominant groups may be unaware of their privilege or simply take it for granted.

Systemic Racism

Systemic racism refers to an highly adaptive system that ensures unequal distribution of resources between or among racial groups.

White people continue to benefit from institutional racism even if we are not personally responsible for the aspects of it.

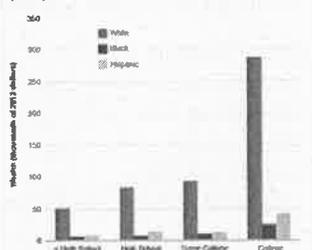
People of color can be at the tables of power but the vast majority of decision-makers will be White.

Microaggressions



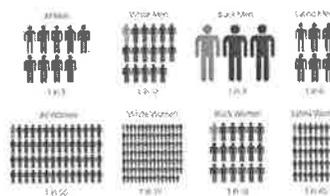
If we have achieved true equality, how can we explain these disparities?

Median Wealth By Race & Education (2013)



Institutional Bias Matters

Lifetime Likelihood of Imprisonment



The Wealth Gap is Growing

- The already large wealth gap between whites and Blacks **quadrupled** between 1984 and 2007.
- In 1995 white households had **10** times as much wealth as Black households. In 2014 white households are worth **20** times what Black households are worth.

Combating Bias

Step 1

Recognize and acknowledge your explicit biases and implement controlled responses.

<http://www.understandingprejudice.org/iat/racframe.htm>

<http://www.tolerance.org/hiddenbias>

Concern About Discrimination

Step 2

Be concerned about the consequences of failing to acknowledge or override your explicit bias

Dormant beliefs, attitudes, intentions and other similar constructs are activated below implicit awareness and have observable effects on judgments and actions despite your good explicit intentions.

Reduce Conditions that Increase Susceptibility

Associations may be formed based on skewed, over-generalized information or distorted beliefs or stereotypes.

Factors that affect processing include:

- Ambiguous or incomplete information
- Compromised cognitive load
- Time constraints
- Overconfidence in objectivity

Reducing these conditions can make us less susceptible

Implement Strategies to Overcome Bias

Step 3



REFLECT

Spend time reflecting on your biases-

How were they formed?

Is there a sound or logical reason for them?

CONFRONT

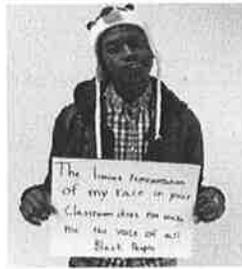
**What keeps you from overcoming the bias?
Confront the underlying myths:**

- Racists are bad people; I am a good, moral person therefore I cannot be racist
- Our country has equality of opportunity. Therefore, people have an equal opportunity so if you are not successful you are not trying hard enough (meritocracy).
- Racism is a thing of the past. We should just move on.
- I'm color blind. We're all human. I treat everyone the same.
- My family suffered too but we didn't call it racism; women are oppressed too. Why is it always about race?

COMMIT

Commit to obtaining specific information about a person. Each person is unique- not a stereotype of a group.

Avoid profiling by proxy (assuming that someone speaks for all members of their group).



ENGAGE

Positive contact between members of different groups improves inter-group attitudes and reduces both explicit and implicit bias.



MAINTAIN

Keep making connections with individuals- embrace the opportunities to meet and experience new people and appreciate the differences that make them unique.



DISCUSS

Talk about experiences with bias and with overcoming bias

Use discussion to point out lingering blind spots

Help build a bias-free workplace & world

It Works!

Eventually new brain pathways will lessen your primal reactions. No really!

Exercise

In groups of 4-5 people, discuss one of the following:

If people of color had been given and kept the right to vote after the Civil War, in what ways might our country's political system look different now?

In what ways do segregated neighborhoods and schools affect those who live in them?

Other Strategies for Overcoming Bias

- Empathize with people- see them as individuals and humans not objects
- Educate yourself about cultural differences
- Be willing to talk about difference; don't ignore it
- Read about civil rights and institutional bias
- Speak out against hate speech
- Educate yourself about microaggressions
- Avoid profiling by proxy

Challenges

- Pay more attention to what you read and see in the media, in the news, movies and on TV? Do you see examples of institutional media bias now? How might that bias affect your reactions to people of color, women, elders, etc.?
- Pay attention to the ladder of assumptions as it applies to all aspects of your personal and professional lives but particularly when encountering difference.
- Look for ways that implicit bias and privilege affect decision-making in your workplace and look for ways to minimize the effects.

Final Thought

“We are more alike than different.”

Maya Angelou



Some final thoughts

Race, gender, sexual orientation, national origin, religion, etc. are all social constructs