

IMPLICIT BIAS

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UNDERSTANDING AND OVERCOMING OUR
IMPLICIT BIAS
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GOALS

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- To increase understanding of the nature and sources of implicit bias
- To recognize our own biases
- To understand how bias affects perceptions and behavior
- To develop skills/strategies for reducing or overriding our biases



Understanding Human Behavior

• The difference between “conscious/explicit behavior” vs. “unconscious/implicit behavior”

The diagram illustrates the relationship between explicit and implicit behaviors. Two human figures are shown on either side. A solid line with an arrow points from the left figure to a box labeled 'explicit', and another solid line with an arrow points from the right figure to a box labeled 'implicit'. Between these two boxes is the text 'vs.'. A dashed line with an arrow points from the left figure to the 'implicit' box, and another dashed line with an arrow points from the right figure to the 'explicit' box, suggesting reciprocal influences.

Understanding Human Bias

The difference between “explicit Bias” vs. “implicit Bias”

Explicit Bias

- o Reflective
- o Conscious
- o Requires motivation, effort
- o Takes more time

The image shows three white wind turbines against a dark background, representing a conscious and reflective choice.

Understanding Human Bias

Explicit Bias

The image shows a large group of people in white robes and hoods, holding American flags, at a public rally. This represents a highly visible and conscious form of bias.

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

Burlington, Vermont 2015

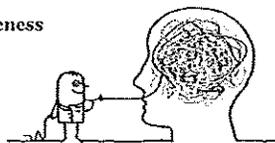


Understanding Human Bias

The difference between "explicit Bias" vs. "implicit Bias"

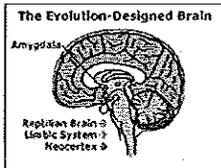
Implicit

- o Requires little effort
- o Reflexive
- o Outside Awareness
- o Fast



Understanding Human Bias

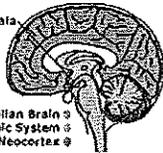
- Limbic system – categorizes what we perceive
 - o A very old part of the brain
 - o Very fast
- The amygdala, is responsible for strong emotional responses
 - o Fight, flight, freeze



Understanding Human Bias

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

The Evolution-Designed Brain



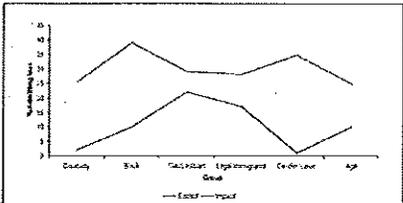
Amygdala
 Reptilian Brain
 Limbic System
 Neocortex

Listen to this...



Understanding Human Bias

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



| Group | Explicit (Solid Line) | Implicit (Dashed Line) |
|------------|-----------------------|------------------------|
| Country | 25 | 10 |
| Sex | 40 | 15 |
| Religion | 30 | 25 |
| Engagement | 30 | 20 |
| Generation | 35 | 10 |
| Age | 25 | 15 |

Explicit vs. Implicit Bias

Explicit bias is a snowball on top of a glacier
Implicit bias is the glacier underneath

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 feet tall?



What percentage of Corporate CEOs are over 6 feet tall?



iImplicit Bias: Height

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



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



Implicit Bias: Height

When corrected for age and gender, in the United States an inch in height is worth approximately \$789 per year in salary.



Implicit 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%

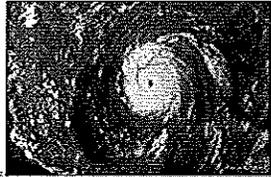
Other Examples- Race

- Doctors are more likely to recommend heart catheterization to White patients than to Black patients with identical conditions
- Blacks sent to bargain for a used car were offered prices \$700 higher and got fewer concessions than identically qualified Whites
- Identically qualified African-Americans were shown fewer apartments and houses for sale than Whites
- White legislators are less likely to respond to Black constituents than to White ones
- On eBay, iPods held by White hands received 21% more offers than those held in Black hands

Implicit Bias: Gender

Hurricane Alexandra vs. Hurricane Alexander

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



Another Example-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.

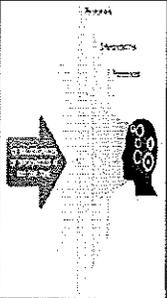
Both male and female faculty rated applicants similarly.

Processing Information

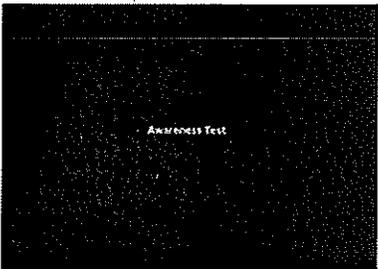
Filters

At any point in time...

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



How Many Passes Does The Team In White Make?



Processing Information

Whom do we prejudge?

Persons who we do not know (ambiguous stimuli)



Processing Information

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



Understanding Human Bias

When we don't know an individual, we assign characteristics to him or her by placing the person into categories according to easily and quickly identifiable characteristics.

This happens unconsciously



Processing Information

The characteristics we attribute to a person come from:

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

Stereotyping

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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, or occupation, height, weight, liberal/conservative, etc. and then attribute to him/her qualities believed to be typical of members of that category.

Another Obstacle to Overcoming Bias

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Racial Anxiety- this refers to the discomfort about the experience of dealing with someone who is different and the potential consequences of inter-racial interactions.

- People of color may feel they will be the target of discrimination or hostility
- White people may feel they will be presumed to be racist and will be met with mistrust and hostility

If two people are anxious that an encounter will be negative, it most likely will be thus creating a negative feedback loop that is confirmed by the behavior of the other.

Yet Another Obstacle

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Stereotype Threat- refers to the pressure people feel when they fear their performance may confirm a negative stereotype about their group.

- People of color and women experience this as a distraction that interferes with intellectual functioning.
- White people may experience this as a threat to one's character (being perceived as racist) which is also harmful.

Being perceived as racist has led teachers, professors, and supervisors to give less critical feedback to people of color which is harmful in the long run.

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

Quote of the Day

“In an avalanche, every snowflake pleads innocent.”



Perception

Pick a partner and take 5 minutes to identify a bias that you know that you have and discuss why you believe you have that bias.

Perception

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Understanding how implicit bias can affect our perceptions and behavior is the first step to "overriding" implicit bias.



Process of Perception

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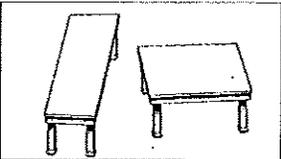
- Our beliefs are the truth
- The truth is obvious
- Our beliefs are based on real data
- The data we select are real data
- Conclusion/Judgment
- Prediction

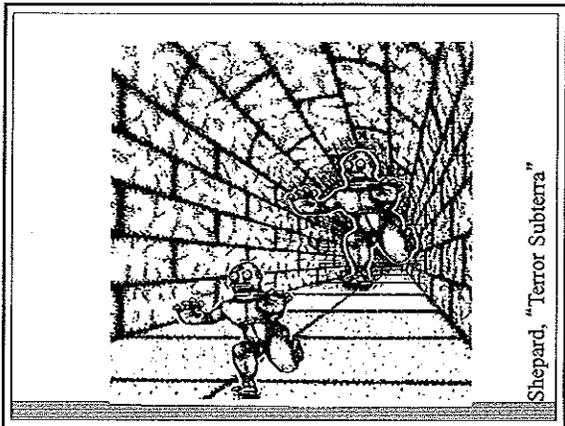


Perception

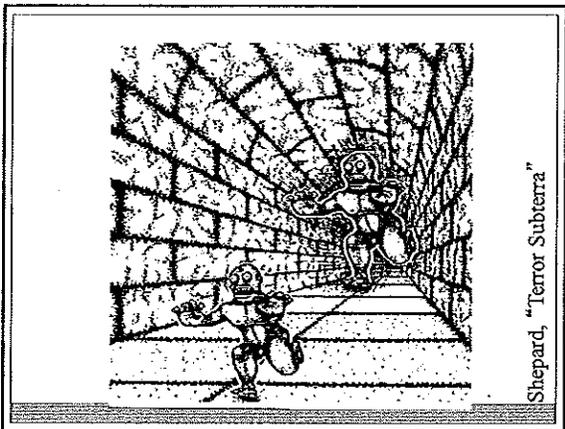
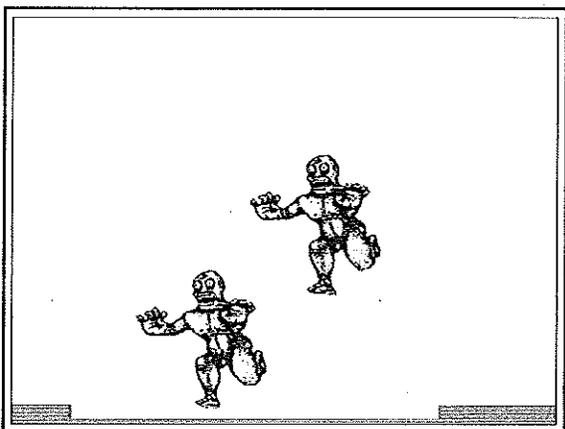
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Sometimes our brains don't get it right...

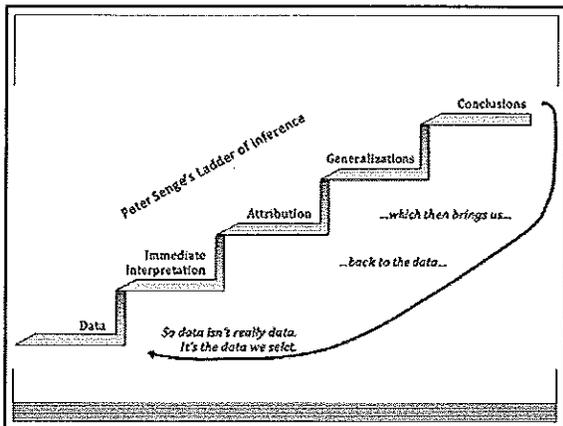




Shepard, "Terror Subterra"



Shepard, "Terror Subterra"



The Power of Perception

- People perceive and understand the world based on experience and previous knowledge
- New information is interpreted based on what we already know and believe

Two basic assumptions underlie most knowledge construction:

- 1) There is no single truth, and
- 2) Reality is defined by a your experiences and societal roles (nationality, gender, social class, religion, race, etc.)

These combine to adjust the lens through which you view the world.

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.

P.A.U.S.E.

Pay attention to what's actually happening beneath the judgments and assessments.

Acknowledge your reactions, interpretations and judgments.

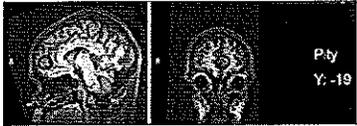
Understand the other possible reactions, interpretations and judgments that may be possible

Search for the most constructive, empowering, or productive way to deal with the situation.

Execute your plan.

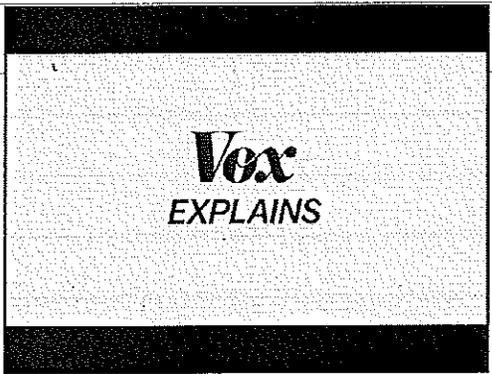


Susan Friske, Princeton University,
used a MRI scanner to observe...



Phy
Y: -19

Friske, 2008



Vox
EXPLAINS

Institutional Bias/Racism

Prejudice/bias (explicit or implicit) + systemic institutional power



Examples of Institutionalized Racism/Sexism

- Slavery/ Women as property of men
- Taking land from Native Americans by force and extermination
- Denial of the right to vote (blacks and women)
- Paying women less for the same job
- Jim Crow/Segregation
- Separate But Equal

Institutional Media Bias

In case you are not convinced of institutional media bias...

White Suspect

Alabama suspect brilliant but social misfit
That's how the Lubbock Avalanche-Journal chose to present the story of Amy Bishop, a former college professor who eventually pleaded guilty to killing three colleagues and wounding three others at a faculty meeting in 2010.

Black Victim

Montgomery's latest homicide victim had a history of narcotics abuse and tangles with the law
And that's the headline AL.com ran about the shooting death of a 25-year-old black man in Alabama earlier this year

More Headlines

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 Belhooel, a mentally ill New York man who allegedly killed his parents.

Black Victim

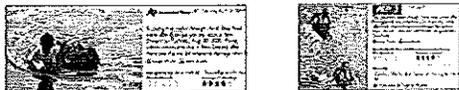
Trayvon Martin was suspended three times from school
Meanwhile, NBC News ran this headline during ongoing coverage of the Trayvon Martin killing.

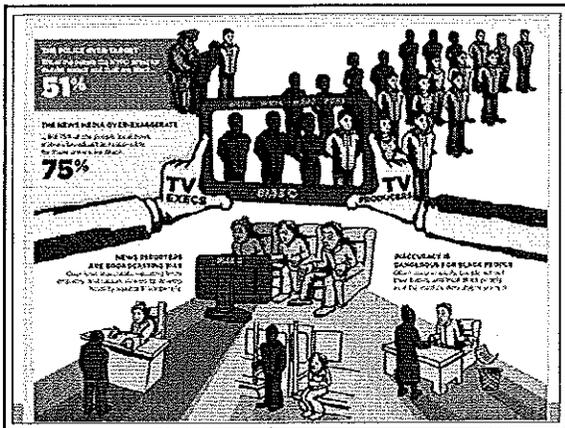
Same Crime, Same Day, Same Station



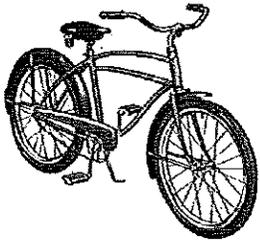
You Get the Picture

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





How implicit Bias Plays Out



A line drawing of a bicycle with a diamond frame, fenders, and a rear rack. It is positioned in the center of the slide.



A solid black square is centered on the slide.

Privilege

- Being white, heterosexual, able-bodied, or of middle or higher socioeconomic status in the United States means that you are born with privileges of historical access and advantage
- This leads white people and institutions controlled by them, to intentionally perpetuate or unintentionally collude in all of the various forms of "ism"- racism, sexism, ageism, etc.
- This privilege along with institutional preference causes protected groups to suffer harm.

Whiteness as Property

Whites possess nearly twelve times as much median net worth as Blacks, or \$43,800 vs. \$3,700
Average white household controls \$6,999 in net assets; the average Black family has none
Poverty level whites control nearly as many net assets as the highest earning Blacks.
White financial accumulation at comparable education levels is 5-10 times that of Blacks



**Race and Inheritance
(a will and a won't)**

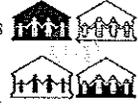
- One in four white families receives a bequest on the death of a relative compared with only one in twenty Black families
- Whites inherit seven times more money than Blacks

Overall it is worth \$94,426 in net financial assets and \$136,173 in net worth to be white



The Segregation Tax

Between 1996 and 2002 the typical home owned by white families increased in value by \$28,000 more than homes owned by Blacks.
Homes lost more than 16% of their value when located in a neighborhood that is more than 10% Black
If average-earning Blacks could live in the same neighborhoods as average-earning whites, their houses would be worth 39% more
For average-earning Latinos the difference is 76% more



The Wealth Gap is Growing

- A 2010 study by the Institute on Assets and Social Policy at Brandeis University found that 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.

By 2050 Whites Will be the Minority in the United States

Figure 6
Population by Race and Ethnicity, Actual and Projected:
1960, 2003 and 2050
Continued

| Race/Ethnicity | 1960 | 2003 | 2050 |
|----------------|------|------|------|
| White* | 85% | 67% | 47% |
| Hispanic | 3% | 14% | 29% |
| Black* | 11% | 13% | 13% |
| Asian* | 0.6% | 5% | 2% |

Note: All over-cast and not projected. *Asians and Blacks include Native Hawaiians. See "What's Next?" Pop. Trends for 2050 located by right margin bars. Source: From Brookings Report 2/2008

Combatting Bias

Step 1

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

Implement Strategies to Control Behavior

Step 3
 Devine, P.D., et al. Long-term reduction in implicit race bias: A prejudice-breaking intervention. *Journal of Experimental Psychology* (2012). DOI:10.1037/a0027003

| Training | Strategy description |
|--------------------------------|---|
| 1. Stereotype replacement | Recognizing stereotypic responses within oneself and society, labeling them, and replacing them with less stereotypic responses |
| 2. Counter stereotypic imagery | Imagining examples of out-group members who counter popularly held stereotypes |
| 3. Individuating | Viewing others according to their personal, rather than stereotypic, characteristics |
| 4. Perspective taking | Adopting the perspective in the first person of a member of a stigmatized group |
| 5. Contact | Increasing exposure to out-group members |

Stereotype Replacement

- Recognize that a response is based on stereotypes
- Label the response as such
- Reflect on why the response occurred
- Consider how it can be avoided in the future
- Replace it with an unbiased response

Counter-Stereotypic Imaging

Imagine in detail counter-stereotypic others.

They can be abstract or real, famous (Michelle Obama, Michael Jordan, Denzel Washington) or not famous (relative, friend, co-worker, etc.)



Individuation

Obtain specific information about individual group members.

Avoid profiling by proxy. Evaluate people based on personal attributes rather than group-based evaluation and don't assume that the individual speaks for a group.



Perspective Taking

Take the first person perspective of the member of the stereotyped group.



This increases psychological closeness and ameliorates the automatic group-based evaluations

Increase Opportunities for Contact

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

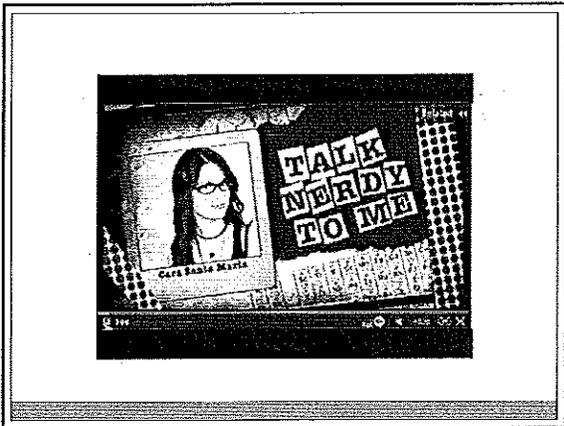


Other Strategies for Overcoming Bias

- 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

It Works!

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



Challenges

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- 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.
- Pay attention to your own bias and how you react to it. Implement strategies to overcome it.

Some final thoughts

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

Final Thought

“We are more alike
than different.”
Maya Angelou

