

Implicit Bias: What Is It? And How Do We Mitigate its Effects on Policing?

Presentation by
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Overview

- **Define Implicit Bias**
 - Compare to explicit bias
 - Measurement
- **Effects of Implicit Bias on Policing**
 - Highlights of previous research
- **How to Reduce Implicit Bias**
 - Research-based strategies

What is Implicit Bias?

- **Implicit bias** is the process of associating stereotypes or attitudes toward categories of people without our conscious awareness.
 - It is an unconscious assumption about a group of people (e.g., race, gender, religious affiliation, etc.) that affects our behavior in ways we might not want.

Example of an Unconscious Assumption Affecting One's Behavior

- Without realizing it, you may speak slowly and loudly when introducing yourself to an elderly adult.
- Your behavior is a result of an unconscious assumption that older adults process information slowly and have a hearing impairment.
- This is an implicit bias.

What leads to Implicit Bias?

- Implicit bias may form as a result of exposure to stereotypes – “good” and “bad” ones.
 - “Women are more nurturing than men.”
 - “Women are bad at driving.”
- Exposure to a stereotype does not necessarily mean you *endorse* it, but it can affect the way that your brain works during social interactions.

How is it different from Explicit Bias?

- An **explicit bias** is a negative attitude or belief that we consciously hold and endorse about a group of people.
 - This can be expressed in derogatory statements about groups of people, including, for example, the use of racial slurs.
- People can be low in explicit racial bias, yet high in implicit racial bias.
 - Often these measures are not correlated, meaning that there is no relation between implicit and explicit bias.

The Implicit Association Test

If you respond more quickly when “African-American” and “bad” are paired, it indicates an implicit bias against African-Americans.



<https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/takeatest.html>

Who has Implicit Bias?

- We ALL do.
 - It varies by magnitude and by target social group (e.g., gender, race, sexual orientation, etc.).
 - Different situations provoke or inhibit implicit biases.
- However, just because we all have it does not absolve us from responsibility for our negative behaviors that are affected by our implicit biases.
 - Motivation to monitor and control implicit biases is linked to lower implicit bias (will discuss further at the end).

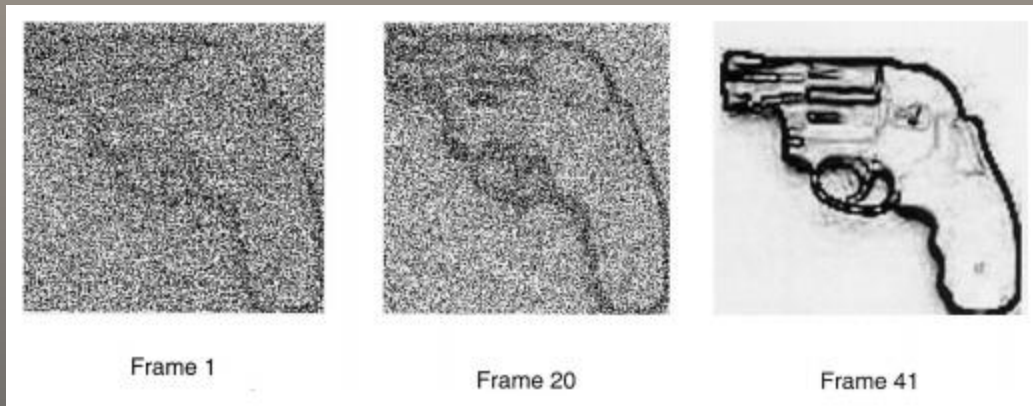
Effects of Implicit Bias on Behavior

- Generally, implicit attitudes predict spontaneous behaviors, which are often non-verbal.
 - Body language (e.g., gestures, emotional displays)
 - Social distancing (e.g., your physical proximity to someone from a social out-group)
- Which policing behaviors are spontaneous?
 - The decision to fire a weapon is a commonly researched behavior in relation to implicit racial bias.

Effects of Implicit Bias on Policing

Implicit Racial Bias Linking Black Americans to Crime

- Police officers (and undergraduates) were quicker to identify crime-related objects coming into visual focus when they were first exposed to Black, but not White, faces.





Correll, J., Park, B., Judd, C. M., & Wittenbrink, B. (2002). The police officer's dilemma: using ethnicity to disambiguate potentially threatening individuals. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 83(6), 1314.

Across the Thin Blue Line: Police Officers and Racial Bias in the Decision to Shoot

Joshua Correll
University of Chicago

Bernadette Park and Charles M. Judd
University of Colorado at Boulder

Bernd Wittenbrink
University of Chicago

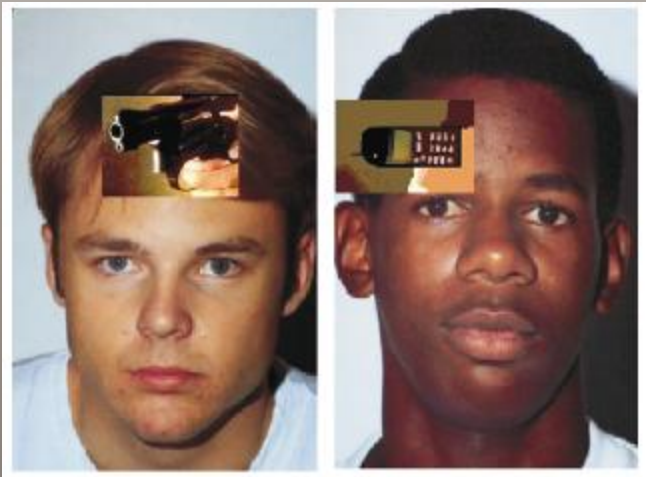
Melody S. Sadler
University of Colorado at Boulder

Tracie Keese
University of Denver

- Like community members, police officers were slower to make correct shooting decisions when faced with an armed White suspect and an unarmed Black suspect.
- However...police officers were more likely to make the correct decision than community members, even though it took them a longer time in the counter-stereotypical conditions above.
- That's good news! Suggests that training increases an officer's ability to override automatic associations!

How to Reduce Implicit Bias

Repeated exposure to images where group membership (e.g., race) is not linked to stereotypicality (e.g., crime)



Images of Black faces were paired with images of neutral objects.

Eliminated shooter bias of undergraduates 24 hours later.

Repeated Exposure to Positive Images of Admired Black Americans

- Admired Black Americans
 - Denzel Washington



- Reduced implicit bias among undergraduates on the race IAT 24 hours later.

Dasgupta, N., & Greenwald, A. G. (2001). On the malleability of automatic attitudes: combating automatic prejudice with images of admired and disliked individuals. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 81(5), 800.

Get the Police to Meditate

A University of Wisconsin professor suggests that mindfulness might be one way to reduce police violence.

The Atlantic

EMMA GREEN | JUL 2, 2015

- “[Dr. Richard Davidson] says the potential benefits of these activities include better emotional control, improved health outcomes, and, importantly, reductions in implicit biases, or unconscious beliefs or stereotypes that affect people’s behavior.”

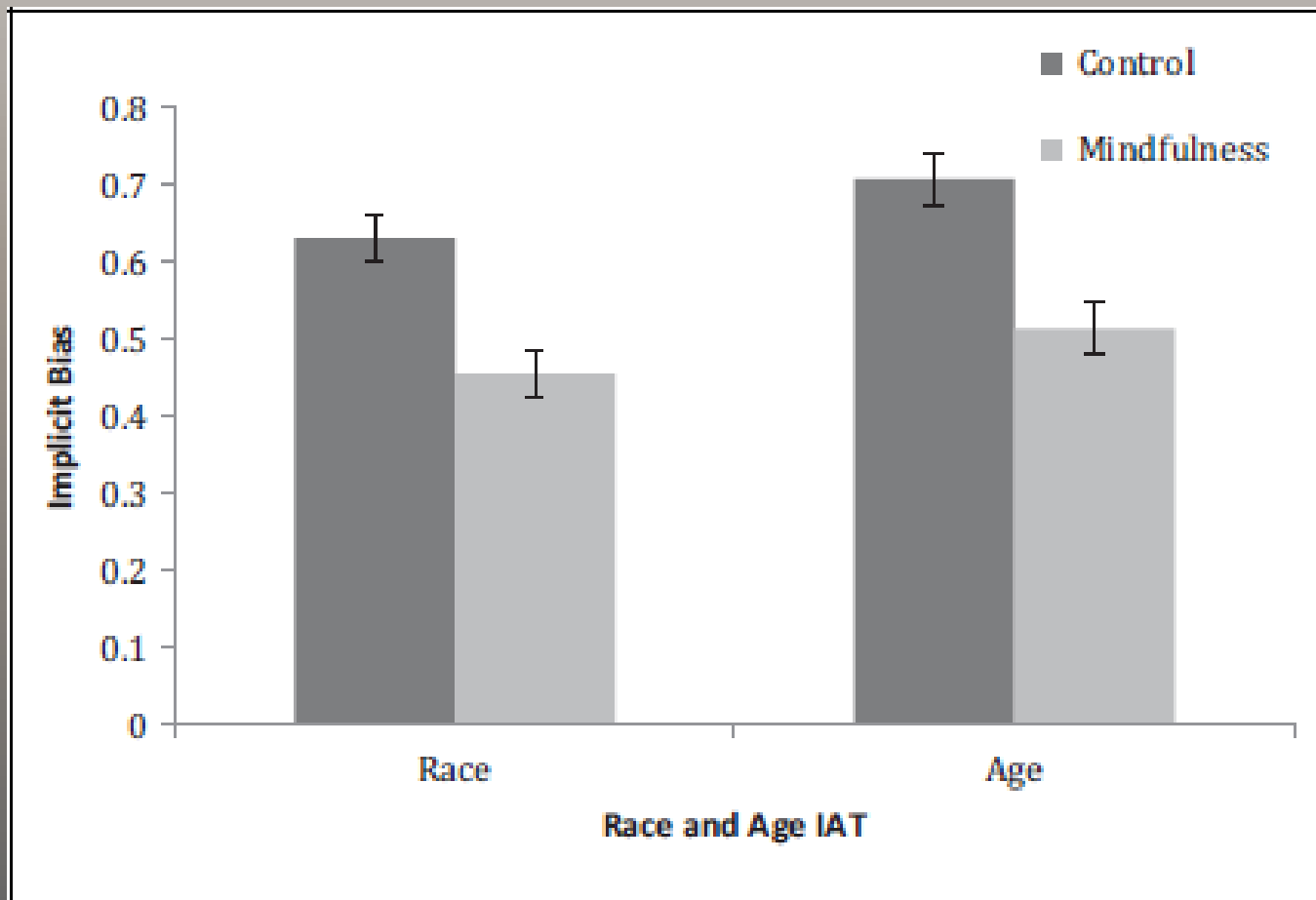


- Hillsboro Police Department in Oregon piloted a 9-week Mindfulness-Based Resilience Training (MBRT) program.
- Preliminary evidence demonstrates improvements in:
 - sleep**
 - emotional intelligence**
 - pain management**
 - emotion regulation**
- Can it reduce implicit bias as well?

Mindfulness Meditation Reduces Implicit Age and Race Bias: The Role of Reduced Automaticity of Responding

Adam Lueke¹ and Bryan Gibson¹

Social Psychological and
Personality Science
2015, Vol. 6(3) 284-291



12-week Intervention Reduced Implicit Racial Bias in Undergraduate Sample

- People who showed the greatest concern about discrimination and who actually used the strategies provided in the intervention (next slide) showed the greatest improvement in race IAT scores 12 weeks later.
- Researchers are currently conducting a follow-up study 2 years after the intervention.

Devine, P. G., Forscher, P. S., Austin, A. J., & Cox, W. T. (2012). Long-term reduction in implicit race bias: A prejudice habit-breaking intervention. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology, 48*(6), 1267-1278.

Description of Devine et al. (2012) 12-week Intervention

- **Stereotype Replacement**
 - Recognizing, labeling, and responding to statements based on stereotypes
- **Counter-stereotypic Imaging**
 - e.g., exposure to images of admired Black Americans
- **Individuation**
 - Evaluate people on individual traits and not group attributes
- **Perspective-taking**
 - Take first-person perspective of an outside group member
- **Increasing Opportunities for Contact**
 - Engage in positive interactions with out-group members

Resources on Implicit Bias Training

<http://trustandjustice.org/>



Implicit Bias

Implicit bias describes the automatic association people make between groups of people and stereotypes about those groups.



Procedural Justice

Procedural justice focuses on the way police and other legal authorities interact with the public, and how the characteristics of those interactions shape the public's views of the police, their willingness to obey the law, and actual crime rates.



Reconciliation

Reconciliation is a method of facilitating frank engagements between minority communities, police and other authorities that allow them to address historical tensions, grievances, and misconceptions, and reset relationships.



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