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INSTITUTE FOR  
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HARVARD LAW SCHOOL



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# Strategies for Reducing Racial Bias and Anxiety in Schools

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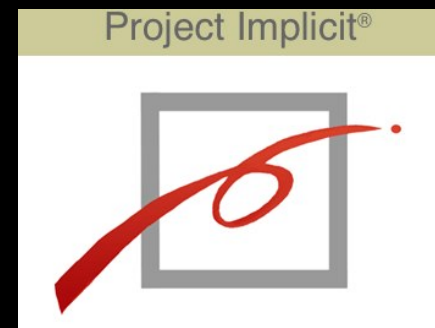
Johanna Wald and Linda R. Tropp  
November 9, 2013

# Implicit Social Cognition

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- Implicit social cognition is the process by which the brain uses "mental associations that are so well-established as to operate without awareness, or without intention, or without control."

Source: Project Implicit, Harvard University  
[https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/  
demo/background/faqs.html#faq2](https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/demo/background/faqs.html#faq2)



# Our Unconscious Networks

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- What colors are the following lines of text?

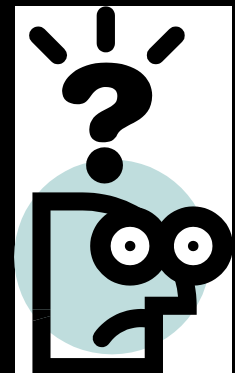
1. **Sky**
2. **Grass**
3. **Dirt**
4. **Sunshine**
5. **Stop sign**

# Our Unconscious Networks

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- What colors are the following lines of text?

1. **Green**
2. **Blue**
3. **Brown**
4. **Red**
5. **Yellow**



# How Implicit Social Cognition Translates into Bias

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- “Both history and societal factors play a crucial role in providing the content of schemas, which are programmed through culture, media, and the material context.”
- Implicit bias lives within our schemas.
- Bias doesn’t make you prejudiced; it makes you human.
- We all have biases—they allow for us to process and organize information efficiently

Source: <http://americansforamericanvalues.org/unconsciousbias/>

# Implicit Bias Vs. Explicit Bias

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- Related but different mental constructs.
- Neither viewed as solely “accurate” or “authentic”
- Increasing evidence that implicit biases, as measured by the IAT, predict behavior in the real world.

- Jerry Kang, *Implicit Bias, A Primer for the Courts*

# Measuring Implicit Bias

- Measures of implicit bias designed to assess people's "uncontrollable" automatic responses to members of other groups
- Commonly used measure:  
Implicit Associations Test (IAT)  
(see Project Implicit, Harvard University)



# Flower-Insect IAT

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In this test, you will see items that represent INSECTS, FLOWERS, pleasant words, and unpleasant words. You will see two columns of these items in the next slide: start reading through items in the left column, and when you get to the bottom, proceed to read through items in the right column.

Upon reading each item, you will be asked to respond on your left or right side as quickly as possible. Responses can be made by tapping either your left knee or right knee, or tapping the left side or right side of your desk.

INSECTS: WASP FLEA ROACH CENTIPEDE GNAT MOTH BEDBUG

FLOWERS: ORCHID TULIP ROSE DAFFODIL DAISY LILAC LILY

pleasant words: gentle enjoy heaven cheer happy love friend

unpleasant words: poison evil gloom damage vomit ugly hurt



gentle

WASP

poison

---

TULIP

heaven

CENTIPEDE

DAISY

gloom

FLEA

cheer

LILAC

vomit

ROACH

ugly

ORCHID

enjoy

evil

MOTH

love

ROSE

hurt

LILY

GNAT

happy

DAFFODIL

damage

BEDBUG

friend

# Negative Implicit Attitudes

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- Researchers who employ the IAT have found that the majority of tested Americans harbor negative implicit attitudes and stereotypes toward blacks, dark-skinned people...they consistently implicitly associate black with negative attitudes such as *bad and unpleasant*, and with negative stereotypes such as *aggressive and lazy*.
- *Smith & Levinson; The Impact of Implicit Racial Bias on the Exercise of Prosecutorial Discretion, 2011*

# Implicit Bias: A Summary

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Evidence from hundreds of thousands of individuals shows that:

- (1) the magnitude of implicit bias toward members of outgroups is large;
- (2) implicit bias often conflicts with conscious attitudes and intentional behavior;
- (3) implicit bias influences behavior toward those who are the subject of the bias.

■ *Fair Measures, California Law Review, Kang and Banaji*

# What Would You Do?

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Reserved for "Bicycle Thief" video

# Unconscious Stereotypes about Adolescents

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Two studies examined unconscious racial stereotypes of police officers and juvenile probation officers. They found those decision-makers who were subliminally exposed to category “Black” reported more negative trait ratings, greater culpability and endorsed harsher punishments than those subliminally exposed to race-neutral primes, after reading a vignette with unstated race of offender and ambiguous causes of the crime.

Source: Sandra Graham and Brian Lowery, Priming Unconscious Racial Stereotypes About Adolescent Offenders.



# The Superpredator Script

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- A mere five second exposure to a mug shot of African American and Hispanic youth offenders raises levels of fear among viewers, increases their support for “get tough” crime policies, and promotes racial stereotyping.

Frank Gilliam and Shanto Iyengar, 1998



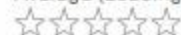
**AP** Associated Press AP - Tue Aug 30, 11:31 AM ET

A young man walks through chest deep flood water after **looting** a grocery store in New Orleans on Tuesday, Aug. 30, 2005. Flood waters continue to rise in New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina did extensive damage when it

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Two residents waded through chest-deep water after **finding** bread and soda from a local grocery store after Hurricane Katrina came through the area in New Orleans, Louisiana. (AFP/Getty Images/Chris Graythen)

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# Anger to Happiness?

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# How Do We De-Bias?

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- Intention: Motivation to Change
- Attention: To When Stereotypical Responses or Assumptions are Activated
- Time: To Practice New Strategies

# “There Is Great Promise...

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- ...from the most recent 2007 ‘shooter bias’ study indicating that police officers are able to completely overcome implicit racial bias with adequate training and in the 2009 study of judges indicating that judges are able to apply a ‘cognitive correction’ to their implicit biases, if motivated to do so.”

Joshua Correll, *Across The Thin Blue Line*, *supra*, and  
Jeffrey Rachlinski, *Does Unconscious Racial Bias Affect Trial Judges*

# Devine Intervention

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“Our data provide evidence demonstrating the power of the conscious mind to intentionally deploy strategies to overcome implicit bias”

Patricia Devine, *“Long-term Reduction in Implicit Race Bias: A Prejudice Habit-breaking Intervention”*

# Conditions for Reducing Unconscious Bias

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- Motivation to Overcome Bias
- Awareness of Bias
- Ability to detect subtle influence of stereotypes
- Learning and practicing strategies that help reduce automatic bias

# What Are These Strategies?

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- Individuation
- Stereotype Replacement
- Counter-Stereotypic Imaging
- Perspective Taking
- Increasing Opportunities for Contact

Patricia Devine, *“Long-term Reduction in Implicit Race Bias: A Prejudice Habit-breaking Intervention”*

# Individuation? (vs. Generalization)

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- Moving beyond racial categories by gathering specific information about an individual. This allows you make judgments on the basis of his or her personal, rather than group, characteristics.
- Individuating involves recognizing that race is just one facet of other people that makes each person unique.

# Stereotype Replacement

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This strategy can be used when you detect stereotypic portrayals of racial minorities in your environment and when you detect a stereotypic response within yourself. Steps:

- 1. Label the response or portrayal as stereotypical
- 2. Evaluate the situation to determine how the response or portrayal occurred and how it might be prevented in the future, and
- 3. Replace the stereotypical response or portrayal with one that is non-stereotypical.

# Counter-Stereotypic Imaging

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After you detect a stereotyped response:

- Think of examples of either famous or personally known people that show the stereotype to be inaccurate. For example, while watching a movie that portrays Black people as unintelligent, you could think of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Barack Obama, Condoleeza Rice, Frederick Douglass, or intelligent, personally known Black friends or acquaintances.
- Thinking of counter-stereotypic people provides concrete examples that demonstrate the inaccuracy of stereotypes.



# Perspective Taking and Empathy

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- Imagining in the first person what it feels like to be in another person's situation. Think about how you would feel to have your abilities questioned, or to be viewed as lazy and potentially violent on the basis of your appearance.
- This strategy can be used either proactively, without any prompting from outside sources, or reactively, after a stereotypic response or portrayal has been detected.
- Perspective taking, especially after the detection of a stereotypic response or portrayal, is very useful in assessing the emotional damage caused by stereotyping others.

# Increasing Opportunities for Contact

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- Actively seek out situations where you are likely to have positive interactions with stereotyped groups. You can do this by joining particular clubs, participating in particular events, and so on. This allows you to meet people who disconfirm stereotypes.
- In addition to seeking personal contact, you can modify your visual environment by watching movies, TV, and news that portray stereotyped groups in non-stereotypical ways.

# Intergroup Contact Theory



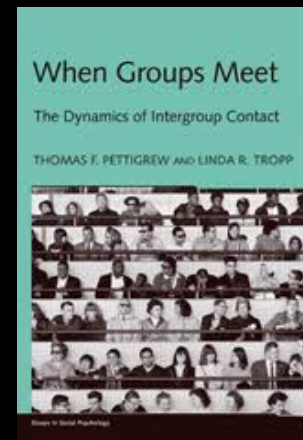
- ❑ Positive intergroup contact can reduce racial prejudice and anxiety, enhance empathy
- ❑ Optimal Conditions for Contact (Allport, 1954; Pettigrew, 1998)
  - Equal status between groups in contact situation
  - Cooperation and common goals
  - Support from institutional norms and authorities



# Quantitative Integration of Contact Studies

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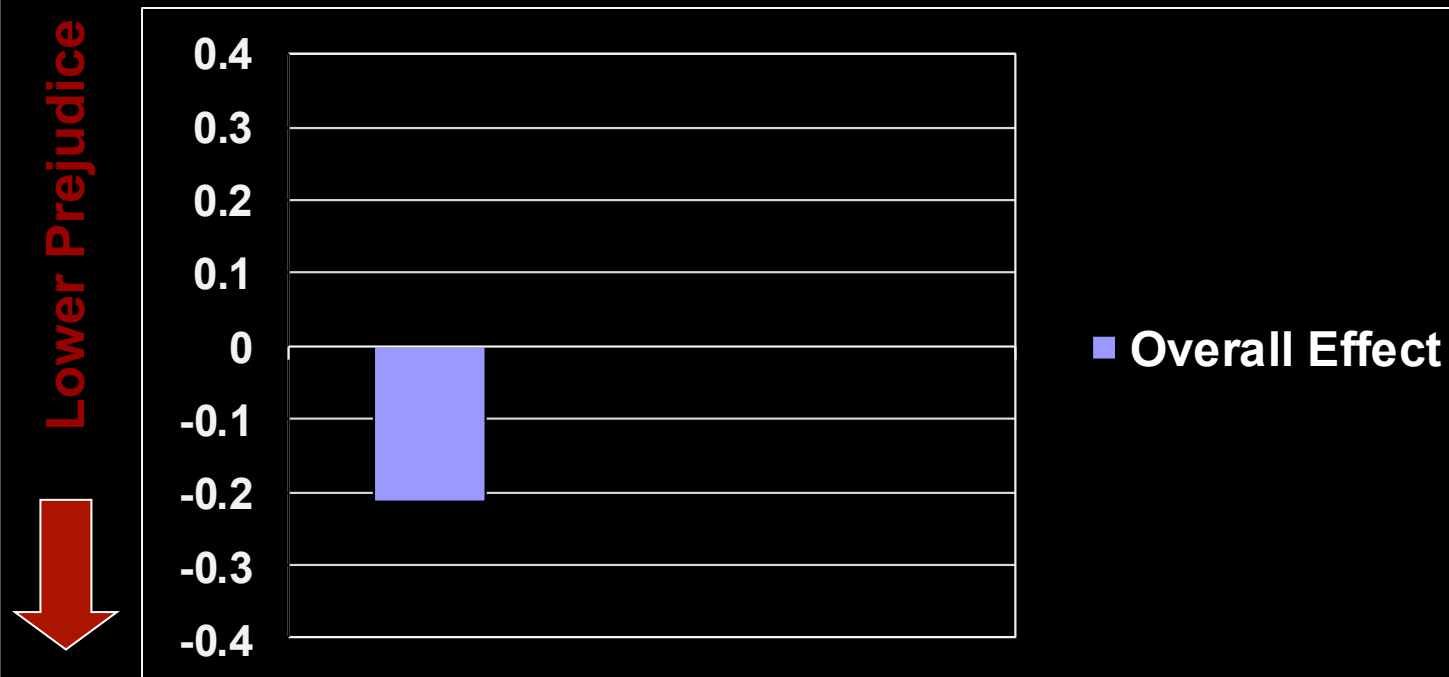
- ❑ Total of 515 studies (713 independent samples)
  - Conducted between 1940s and 2000
  - Data from 250,089 study participants
- ❑ Research conducted in diverse contexts
  - Contact studies from 38 different countries
  - Participants from different groups and settings
  - Studies gathered from multiple disciplines  
(e.g., psychology, sociology, political science, psychiatry, medicine, social work, education)



*(Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006; 2008; 2011; Tropp & Pettigrew, 2005a; 2005b)*

# Does Contact Reduce Prejudice?

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*(Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006)*

# Does Type of Contact Matter?

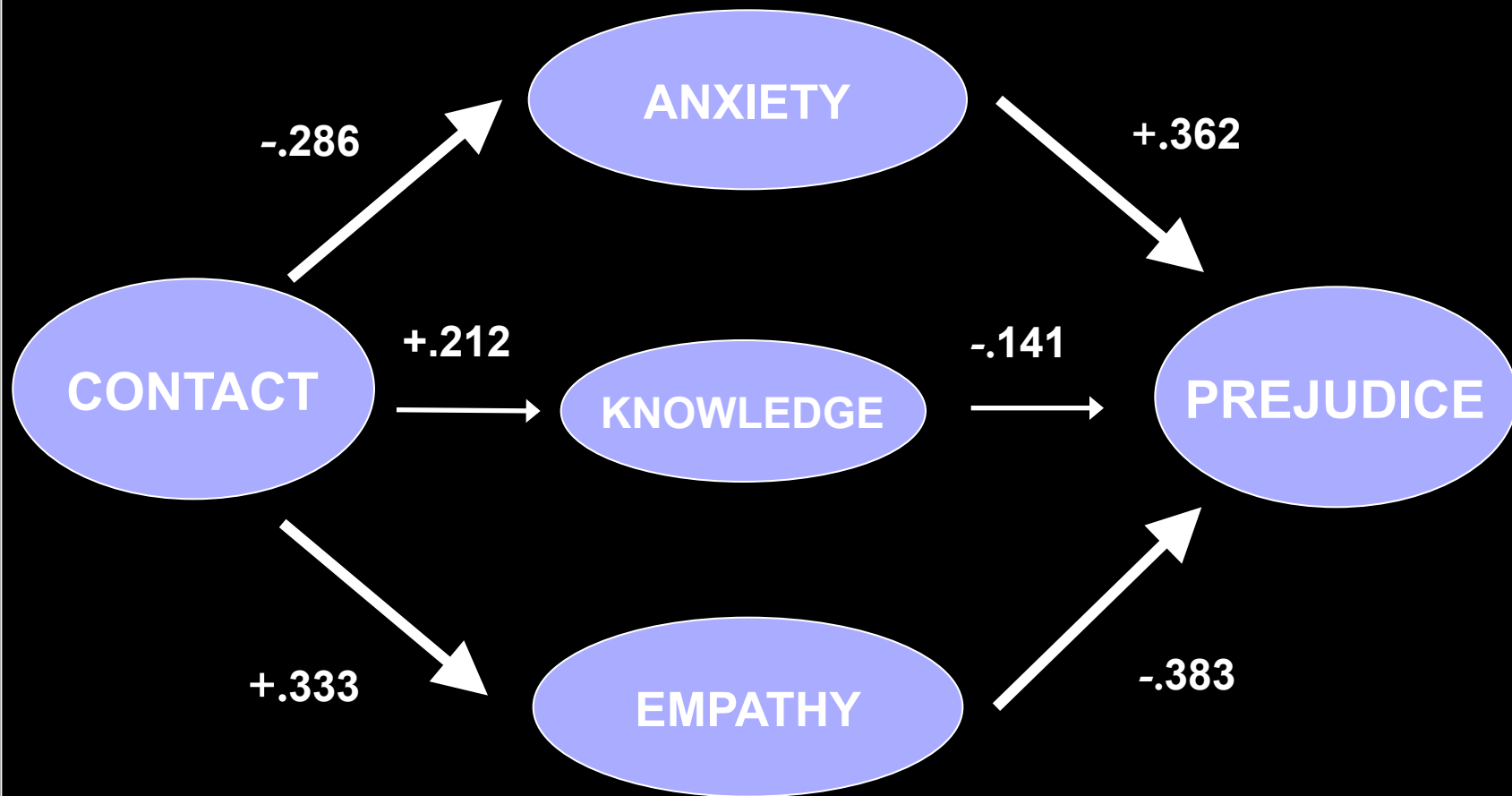
Yes, contact under optimal conditions shows stronger effects



(Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006)

# How Does Contact Reduce Prejudice?

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*(Pettigrew & Tropp, 2008)*

# Key Challenges

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How can we encourage people to acknowledge and address bias in productive ways?

How can we adapt Devine's and other strategies to school settings?

Where do we focus attention?

What and how do we measure effects?