



CHAPTER FOUR

Employment

“...EVEN THE MOST WELL-MEANING PERSON UNWITTINGLY ALLOWS UNCONSCIOUS THOUGHTS AND FEELINGS TO INFLUENCE SEEMINGLY OBJECTIVE DECISIONS. **THESE FLAWED JUDGMENTS ARE ETHICALLY PROBLEMATIC AND UNDERMINE MANAGERS’ FUNDAMENTAL WORK**—TO RECRUIT AND RETAIN SUPERIOR TALENT, BOOST THE PERFORMANCE OF INDIVIDUALS AND TEAMS, AND COLLABORATE EFFECTIVELY WITH PARTNERS.”

Dr. Mahzarin R. Banaji, Dr. Max H. Bazerman, and Dr. Dolly Chugh, 2003, p. 56

The employment realm, with all of its complex processes and multiple key actors, is another domain in which implicit racial bias not only exists, but can flourish. In fact, a March 2013 report released by the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission listed “unconscious bias and perceptions about African Americans” as one of the seven “major obstacles hindering equal opportunities for African Americans in the federal work force,” boldly declaring that the more subtle discrimination that exists in our current society “can often be directly attributable to unconscious bias” (*EEOC African American Workgroup Report*, 2013; “New EEOC Report Examines Obstacles Facing African Americans in Federal Workplace,” 2013). Some scholars note the growing assertion that unconscious bias is the most pervasive and important form of discrimination in society today, particularly in the workplace (Katz, 2007; Wax, 1999).

Indeed, implicit bias can permeate the employment process at many stages, such as those discussed in this chapter. Even well-meaning individuals who profess egalitarian values may hold implicit biases that result in negative employment consequences for minorities (Katz, 2007). In a short article in *HR Review*, Raj Tulsiani regards unconscious bias as a “disease,” noting that recruitment consultants and others who analyze CVs (particularly those CVs that reflect non-traditional career paths) may be influenced by unconscious bias, and organizations must be proactive to mitigate its unfortunate effects on minority candidates (Tulsiani, 2013). Green and Kalev caution that we must be aware of implicit biases not only

in moments of decision making (such as when hiring new employees) but also during everyday workplace interactions (T. K. Green & Kalev, 2008). We now turn to more specific aspects of the employment domain to examine how implicit racial bias can operate across various contexts.

INGROUP BIAS AND NEBULOUS NOTIONS OF BEING A GOOD “FIT” FOR A POSITION

One overarching concern in the employment realm is the introduction of implicit bias through ingroup bias wherein people who are ‘one of us’ (i.e., our ingroup) are favored compared to those in the outgroup, meaning those who differ from ourselves (Greenwald & Krieger, 2006). Ingroup favoritism is associated with feelings of trust and positive regard for ingroup members and surfaces often on measures of implicit bias (see, e.g., Greenwald, et al., 1998).

In terms of employment, ingroup bias can compel people to favor those who are most similar to themselves, thereby leading to a tendency for bosses and other human resources personnel to hire, promote, or otherwise esteem those who mirror attributes or qualities that align with their own (Banaji, Bazerman, & Chugh, 2003; Bendick Jr. & Nunes, 2012). Colloquial terms associated with this phenomenon include “like-for-like,” fostering a “mini me” culture, finding someone who fulfills the nebulous and elusive notions of being a good “fit” for a given position, or identifying someone with whom you have “chemistry” (Luscombe, 2012; Peacock, 2013a, 2013b; H. Ross, 2008; Shah, 2010; Tulsiani, 2013).

Critically analyzing this concept of “fit” and “cultural matching,” a 2012 article by Lauren A. Rivera argued that hiring is more than just finding the most qualified candidate; rather, it relies heavily on cultural matching. More specifically, and quite alarmingly, in Rivera’s study on the hiring practices of elite employers, she finds that “Evaluators described fit as being one of the three most important criteria they used to assess candidates in job interviews; more than half reported it was the most important criterion at the job interview stage, rating fit over analytical thinking and communication” (Rivera, 2012).

Finally, quoted in *The New York Times*, behavior expert Ori Brafman echoed these ingroup bias concerns more broadly, asserting that “Time and again, the research shows that interviews are poor predictors of job performance because we tend to hire people we think are similar to us rather than those who are objectively going to do a good job” (Alboher, 2008).

ANTI-DISCRIMINATION LAW – TITLE VII

In the years since Title VII, human resource professionals and hiring managers have been expected to conduct hiring searches that are free from bias and discrimination. As part of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title VII explicitly articulates unlawful practices that cover a broad range of employment-related situations, such as:

Section 703. (a) “It shall be an unlawful employment practice for an employer –

(1) to fail or refuse to hire or to discharge any individual, or otherwise to discriminate against any individual with respect to his compensation, terms, conditions, or privileges of employment, because of such individual’s race, color, religion, sex, or national origin; or

(2) to limit, segregate, or classify his employees or applicants for employment in any way which would deprive or tend to deprive any individual of employment opportunities or otherwise adversely affect his status as an employee, because of such individual’s race, color, religion, sex, or national origin.” (Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964)

Many scholars have contended that the current body of anti-discrimination laws are ill-equipped to address or affect implicitly biased behaviors (see, e.g., Bagentos, 2006; Krieger, 1995). This argument has also been put forth in the employment context. For example, Strauss writes, “Unconscious bias challenges antidiscrimination law because it implies that individuals treat women and minorities in a disparate manner, resulting in negative employment decisions, when they are oblivious to doing so” (see also Jolls & Sunstein, 2006; Strauss, 2013). On a related note, Wexler and colleagues do not challenge the existence of implicit bias but contend that “it has no place in today’s legal landscape” because its measures of reliability and validity are, in their view, “insufficient to prove liability in either a disparate treatment or a disparate impact claim under Title VII” (Wexler, Bogard, Totten, & Damrell, 2013).

Conversely, others assert their belief in Title VII’s ability to handle unconscious discrimination. Hart argues that “the existing Title VII framework provides significant potential for challenging unconscious discrimination” (M. Hart, 2005, p. 745). Jolls declares that these laws can have the effect of reducing implicit bias in important ways. Specifically, in the employment realm she reflects on how anti-discrimination laws’ prohibition on discriminatory hiring, firing, and promotions can reduce implicit workplace bias through increasing the representation of protected groups to create a diverse workforce (Jolls, 2007). Lee goes a step farther and parses out specific strategies for introducing unconscious bias to employment discrimination litigation, ultimately declaring that the disparate treatment aspect of Title VII (as opposed to disparate impact) may be the most practical approach (A. J. Lee, 2005).

UNCOVERING BIAS BY USING FICTITIOUS RESUMES

Researchers have found the use of fictitious resumes to be a valuable method for gaining insights on how implicit biases can taint the very first step in the hiring process—sorting resumes and other application materials into categories that distinguish potential candidates from those who do not merit further consideration.

One popular and oft-cited study on racial discrimination in the labor market is a 2004 article by Bertrand and Mullainathan. In a field experiment, the researchers responded to over 1,300 help-wanted ads in Chicago and Boston newspapers by sending fictitious resumes featuring randomly assigned African American- or White-sounding names. In addition to modifying the applicants' names, they also experimentally varied the quality of the resumes. The resumes of higher quality applicants reflected a longer work history with fewer employment gaps, a relevant certification, foreign language skills, and/or honors that the lower quality applicants lacked. This manipulation of resume quality was carefully handled so that high quality applicants did not risk appearing overqualified for a given position. Researchers responded to each ad with four resumes (a high quality African American applicant, a low quality African American applicant, a high quality White applicant, and a low quality White applicant) that closely fit the job description.

The racial differences in callbacks were startling and statistically significant. Looking solely at the name manipulation, White-sounding names (e.g., Emily, Greg, Sarah, Todd) received 50 percent more callbacks for interviews than resumes with African American-sounding names (e.g., Lakisha, Jamal, Latoya, Tyrone) (Bertrand & Mullainathan, 2004). Putting this in perspective, “a White name yields as many more callbacks as an additional eight years of experience on a resume” (Bertrand & Mullainathan, 2004, p. 992). The researchers then analyzed how the racial gap in callbacks was affected by resume quality. Higher quality White resumes were 27 percent more likely to receive callbacks than lower quality White resumes; however, African American resumes did not experience the same gains with the improved credentials. An improved resume for an African American applicant only increased the likelihood of a callback by eight percent, which is not even a statistically significant difference from what the lower quality African American applicant received. After ruling out several other possible explanations for these disparities, including various job and employer characteristics, Bertrand and Mullainathan are left to conclude that race is a factor when reviewing resumes, and that even within the context of an identical job search, individuals with African American-sounding names receive fewer interviews.

As Jost et al., 2009 points out, Bertrand and Mullainathan's study does not provide absolute certainty that the discriminatory behavior documented resulted from implicit rather than explicit biases (Jost, et al., 2009). Nevertheless, the resume selection task “theoretically satisfies several criteria thought to be important for implicit discrimination to arise” (Bertrand, et al., 2005, pp. 95–96). These include time pressures wherein the hiring managers must sort through large quantities of

applications in a timely manner, ambiguity from the lack of a simple formula that plainly distinguishes “good” applicants from the other candidates, and minimal accountability in that little justification or explanation is required when differentiating potential hires from those discarded (Bertrand, et al., 2005). Moreover, two subsequent resume-focused studies discussed below provide further evidence that race-based hiring biases are likely to be linked to implicit bias.

First, in a pilot test conducted by Bertrand, Chugh, and Mullainathan, student participants were asked to screen 50 resumes and select those that they believed were the 15 best candidates. Mirroring Bertrand and Mullainathan’s study design, each resume had been randomly assigned a first name that was either White-sounding or Black-sounding. Findings indicated that while no correlation emerged between the number of African American resumes selected and the participants’ explicit attitudes toward African Americans; however, individuals’ implicit attitudes about intelligence in Blacks and Whites correlated with the number of African American resumes subjects selected, particularly for individuals who felt rushed during the task (Bertrand, et al., 2005).

Second, exploring this phenomenon outside of the U.S. context, other researchers have found similar unconscious biases against various groups when examining resumes. Carlsson and Rooth (2007) uncovered implicitly discriminatory behavior among Swedish employers when they studied the callback rate of applications for fictitious individuals. Employing a research design similar to Bertrand and Mullainathan (2004), Rooth submitted comparable applications using either common Swedish or Middle Eastern-sounding male names for a range of highly skilled or unskilled occupations. Of the 3,104 applications distributed to 1,552 employers, in 283 cases only one of the two individuals was offered an interview; Middle Eastern candidates had a callback rate that was, on average, 50% lower compared to the applications bearing Swedish-sounding names, despite all other aspects of the applications being comparable (Carlsson & Rooth, 2007).

Following up on this research several months later, Rooth located a subset of the employers/recruiters from the aforementioned Carlsson and Rooth (2007) study and measured recruiters’ explicit and implicit attitudes and performance stereotypes of Swedish and Middle Eastern male workers. Results suggested a strong and statistically significant negative correlation between implicit performance stereotypes (e.g., Swedes as hardworking and efficient vs. Arabs as lazy and slow) and the callback rate for applicants with Arab/Muslim sounding names (Rooth, 2007). More specifically, the probability that applicants with Arab/Muslim sounding names being invited for an interview declined by 6% when the recruiter had at least a moderate negative implicit stereotype towards Arab/Muslim men (Rooth, 2007). Beyond highlighting how implicit biases can color interview callback decisions, Rooth emphasized that this study also showed the predictive power of the IAT in hiring situations.

Geoffrey Beattie also used this fictitious resume approach to explore implicit biases in two 2013 publications. First, in his book, *Our Racist Heart?: An Exploration of Unconscious Prejudice in Everyday Life*, Beattie discussed an exploratory study that examined the eye movements (“gaze fixation points”) of participants while they were looking at fictional CVs and applicant pictures related to a job posting. Beattie sought to understand whether there was a relationship between his British participants’ implicit racial biases and their review of the CVs. He found that participants with higher implicit preferences for Whites compared to non-Whites spent more time looking at the positive information on the White candidates’ CVs and less time looking at the positive information on the CVs of non-White candidates (Beattie, 2013). Based on this finding, Beattie concludes that “our implicit attitude would seem to be directing our unconscious eye movements to provide exactly the information it wants for a ‘rational’ decision. This is both extraordinary and very worrying” (Beattie, 2013, p. 241).

Second, Beattie collaborated with Doron Cohen and Laura McGuire to study British participants’ implicit and explicit attitudes toward ethnic minorities in the context of selecting candidates to interview for specific jobs in higher education. White and non-White British participants reviewed CVs and photographs of comparable White and non-White candidates for an academic position and an administrative post. Using the multi-ethnic IAT described in Chapter 2, the researchers then compared participants’ implicit ethnic bias scores with how they rated and prioritized candidates for interviews. Results showed that pro-White implicit attitudes predicted the interviewee candidates selected by White, but not non-White participants (Beattie, et al., 2013). Reflecting on the fact that the candidates’ CVs for each position were similar except for the name and photograph on the CV, Beattie et al. declared that implicit ethnic bias is the only plausible explanation for why White candidates favored White applicants (Beattie, et al., 2013). They concluded with a range of policy suggestions to help counter the presence of implicit biases in resume review and interviewee selection, including assessing candidates using specific, pre-defined selection criteria, employing an ethnically diverse selection panel, and allowing plenty of time for decision making (Beattie, et al., 2013).

INTERVIEWS

For most jobs, employment interviews represent a key component of the hiring process. The judgments and decisions made by employers assessing job candidates during interviews comprise yet another realm in which implicit racial biases can creep into the selection process. Work by Segrest Purkiss and colleagues considered two ethnic cues that can evoke implicit biases in an interview setting—the presence or absence of speech accent, and whether or not the candidate has an “ethnic name”—to study the effects of these cues on interviewers’ favorable judgments and decision to hire. This particular experiment focused on cues that would signal Hispanic ethnicity, specifically Spanish-accented English and a name that suggests Hispanic ethnicity (e.g., Miguel Fernandez compared to Michael Freder-

ickson). Utilizing a matched-guise technique to manipulate accent and ethnicity cues and controlling for several other factors, the researchers found that the interaction of applicant name and accent predicted favorable judgments of the applicant; the applicant with an ethnic name and accent was regarded the least positively (Segrest Purkiss, Perrewé, Gillespie, Mayes, & Ferris, 2006). The authors acknowledge that “subtle cues may be triggering unconscious or implicit forms of ethnicity bias in judgments and decisions” (Segrest Purkiss, et al., 2006, p. 155).

The interpersonal nature of interviews also allow for interviewers to evaluate candidates not only by the candidates’ statements, but also through their nonverbal behaviors (Parsons & Liden, 1984; Parsons, Liden, & Bauer, 2009). Conversely, the verbal and nonverbal actions by interviewers can also affect candidates’ performance. An article by Word et al. studied the behavior of White interviewers interacting with both Black and White applicants, finding that White interviewers placed more physical distance between themselves and Black applicants as opposed to White (Word, Zanna, & Cooper, 1974). White interviewers also spent 25% less time with Black applicants and made significantly more speech errors around them compared to the White job candidates (Word, et al., 1974). These kinds of nonverbal body language findings have been associated with the presence of implicit racial biases in more recent interracial interaction scholarship from non-interview contexts (see, e.g., Dovidio, et al., 2002; Fazio, et al., 1995).

PERCEPTIONS OF COMPETENCE DURING HIRING

Another aspect of the employment realm where implicit bias can lurk is when assessing an applicant’s competence for a position. A study by Dovidio and Gaertner found that when evaluating candidates for a position as a peer counselor, White participants rated Black and White candidates equally when the candidates were either clearly well-qualified or poorly-qualified. However, when the candidates’ qualifications were ambiguous, Black candidates received less strong recommendations and were recommended for hire less often than similarly situated White candidates (Dovidio & Gaertner, 2000). This finding aligns with other work that suggests that ambiguous situations can trigger reliance on implicit biases (Levinson & Young, 2010a; National Center for State Courts).

A 2001 experiment considered how the race and applicant quality can have effects on employment decisions and the actual decision makers’ ability to recall the applicants’ responses after the interview has concluded. While the research participants in the hiring role were shown to have selected Black and White candidates equally, the Black job applicants were remembered one week later as having given less intelligent answers, even though their actual responses were identical to the White applicants (Frazer & Wiersma, 2001). Frazer and Wiersma cite the cognitive sciences when explaining this discrepancy. Recognizing that schemas are mental shortcuts that allow us to quickly categorize individuals and associate meanings with those categories (for more on schemas, see Kang, 2009), the researchers note that the schema of ‘Black person’ was activated during the recall of

the Black applicants' interview. This particular schema likely provoked the social stereotype of Blacks being less intelligent than Whites (Frazer & Wiersma, 2001). The researchers presume that this negative schema was suppressed during the hiring decision phase that did not indicate any signs of prejudice but was later revealed through the unobtrusive recall measure.

THE ILLUSION OF OBJECTIVITY AND HIRING MANAGERS

Given the pervasiveness of implicit biases, it is not surprising that hiring managers are susceptible to the illusion of objectivity, which refers to the false impression that one may be free from biases, opinions, and other subjective influences (Armor, 1999). In a study by Uhlmann and Cohen, participants were asked to evaluate job candidates. Some participants were primed to view themselves as objective while others were not. Distressingly, the researchers found that “when people feel that they are objective, rational actors, they act on their group-based biases more rather than less” (Uhlmann & Cohen, 2007, p. 221). Other work declares that when implicit associations arise in the hiring process, “their predominantly negative content about traditionally excluded groups (e.g., African Americans are uneducated; women are not career-committed) handicap members of these groups in competing for jobs” (Bendick Jr. & Nunes, 2012, p. 240). Bendick and Nunes cite a plethora of reasons why individuals who make hiring decisions may truly believe their decisions are objective and unbiased when in reality their decision-making process is rife with implicit biases due to the unconscious influence of stereotypes (Bendick Jr. & Nunes, 2012).

HIRING DECISIONS

Ziegert and Hanges (2005) considered employment discrimination in the context of hiring decisions, specifically focusing on the role of implicit racist attitudes and motivation to control prejudice. Non-Black participants completed explicit attitude measures as well as a race-based IAT that uncovered a negative implicit bias toward Blacks among members of the sample. Participants then were placed in the role of a hiring manager and asked to evaluate the dossiers of eight job applicants. Two conditions existed—a climate for equality and a climate for racial bias (in which participants were provided a business-based justification for supporting racial discrimination). Researchers discovered that when a climate for racial bias existed, implicit racism interacted with this climate to predict discrimination (Ziegert & Hanges, 2005). Specifically, discrimination against Black job candidates was higher for more implicitly racist participants in the climate for racial bias condition (Ziegert & Hanges, 2005). The researchers also emphasize that the explicit measures of bias did not predict discrimination; however, the implicit measure did predict racially biased discriminatory actions.

PERCEPTIONS OF LEADERSHIP

One group that has been particularly studied with respect to perceptions of leadership is Asian Americans. Widely characterized as a well-educated, high achieving population, Asian Americans have often been stereotyped as a “model minority” (Cheryan & Bodenhausen, 2000; *The Rise of Asian Americans*, 2012). Despite these attributes, Asian Americans generally have not ascended to leadership positions in high numbers. For example, one report on the representation of Asians and Pacific Islanders (APIs) on the boards of Fortune 500 companies noted that APIs held only 135 (2.43%) of the 5,545 board seats, and 77.8% of Fortune 500 companies did not have any Asians or Pacific Islanders on their boards whatsoever (2011 API Representation on Fortune 500 Boards, 2011). Research has sought to understand how biases related to leadership may play a role in hindering the professional ascent of Asian Americans. Thomas Sy and colleagues found that when Asian Americans were in roles in which they were perceived to be more technically competent than Caucasian Americans (e.g., engineers), they were still perceived “to be less prototypic leaders” than Caucasians (Sy, et al., 2010). This finding aligns with previous work by Rosette et al., 2008, who found that “being White is an attribute of the business leader prototype” (Rosette, Leonardelli, & Phillips, 2008, p. 762). Others have noted that the perception of Asian Americans being passive can hinder their ability to be seen as leaders (Bridgeford, 2013). Expanding this exploration to other populations, results from an earlier study found that Caucasian Americans and Asian Americans were regarded as being more associated with the successful-manager prototype than African Americans or Hispanic Americans (Chung-Herrera & Lankau, 2005). In sum, unconscious racial and ethnic stereotypes regarding the attributes of various populations can manifest themselves in perceptions of leadership and what individuals are seen as leaders.

PERFORMANCE AND PERFORMANCE EVALUATIONS

Performance evaluations are another aspect of employment where implicit bias can arise, often to the detriment of non-White employees (Wax, 1999). Several studies have documented that Black and White evaluators assess members of their own racial group more highly on performance evaluations than employees of other races (Greenhaus, Parasuraman, & Wormley, 1990; Kraiger & Ford, 1985; Mount, Sytsma, Hazucha, & Holt, 1997). This research resonates with the concept of ingroup bias that was discussed earlier in this chapter.

When considering the collaborative atmosphere and team-based dynamics in many modern workplaces, Strauss cautions that performance evaluations in this environment can be conducive to the rise of implicit biases. She notes, “the focus on teams creates more possibilities for implicit bias when teams play a role in the performance evaluations of women and minorities,” notably when an individual’s particular identity category is salient and distinctive in an otherwise relatively homogenous context (this is known as the “solo effect”) (Strauss, 2013, p. 185).

Another factor that can influence performance is stereotype threat. This psychological phenomenon refers to a fear of being viewed through the lens of a negative stereotype, or the fear of inadvertently confirming an existing negative stereotype of a group with which one self-identifies (C. M. Steele & Aronson, 1995). Research indicates that these fears often manifest themselves in lower performance by the stereotyped group, even when the stereotyped group and comparison (non-stereotyped) group have been statistically matched in ability level (C. M. Steele & Aronson, 1995). In short, anxiety at the prospect of reinforcing a negative stereotype can implicitly activate a “disruptive apprehension” that interferes with performance (Ferguson, 2003; C. M. Steele, 1997).

Research indicates that stereotype threat not only can exist in workplace settings, but it can also unconsciously affect our self-perceptions and workplace performance (Roberson, Deitch, Brief, & Block, 2003; H. Ross, 2008). Among the studies that delve into this area, Roberson and Kulik concluded that three conditions can exist in the workplace that make the activation of stereotype threat likely for negatively stereotyped groups: 1) the employee is invested in his/her work performance, that is, caring about his/her work and desiring to do well; 2) the work task is challenging and stereotype-relevant, and 3) the context/work setting seems to reinforce the stereotype (Roberson & Kulik, 2007). Also in the employment domain, Block and colleagues formulated a conceptual model to further understanding of the possible responses to stereotype threat in workplace settings, including fending off the stereotype, becoming discouraged by the stereotype, and becoming resilient to the stereotype (Block, Koch, Liberman, Merriweather, & Roberson, 2011). Each response category includes specific strategies an employee may adopt based on his/her response to the situation (Block, et al., 2011). In sum, the subtle activation of stereotypes can implicitly affect workplace performance.

ADDRESSING IMPLICIT BIAS IN THE WORKPLACE

Several strategies may be used to counter the effects of implicit biases in the employment process. While complete eradication may be impossible, the techniques discussed in this section offer some oft-suggested ideas for addressing implicit bias in this realm.

First and foremost, individuals, particularly those involved in the hiring process, need to be made aware of the existence of implicit bias and the specific implicit biases that they themselves hold (Bertrand, et al., 2005; Faragher, 2013; Kang & Banaji, 2006; Rudman, 2004a). It is important to make people aware of any discrepancies that may exist between their conscious ideals and non-conscious automatic biases they may hold (Dovidio, et al., 1997; Monteith, Voils, & Ashburn-Nardo, 2001). For many companies and organizations, this can take the form of staff trainings wherein participants are introduced to the concept of implicit bias and encouraged to consider the role it may play in various workplace inter-

actions (Faragher, 2013). This knowledge is often sustained through the repetition and reinforcement of the ideas presented at the trainings (Faragher, 2013).³

Looking at the interview process, many individuals suggest that the structure of the hiring and interview procedures is key to minimizing the extent to which implicit bias can infiltrate the process. For example, Segrest Purkiss and colleagues suggest additional training for interviewers, the use of a structured procedure for rating candidates, the presence of multiple interviewers, and videotaping the actual interview (Segrest Purkiss, et al., 2006). Others have endorsed structured interviews that limit the level of discretion available to the interviewers, thereby limiting the amount of bias (explicit or otherwise) that infiltrates the process (Babcock, 2006; Bertrand, et al., 2005; Huffcutt & Roth, 1998; Laskow, 2013).

Beattie cautions against asking for a “first impression,” “preliminary thought,” or a “gut response” in the selection interview stage, as these “gut feelings” are likely to be derived from biased implicit processes (Beattie, 2013, p. 254; Beattie, et al., 2013). Like Beattie, Richards-Yellen’s advice for removing implicit bias when hiring includes a reminder to embrace a deliberative process that allows for time and reflection (Beattie, et al., 2013; Richards-Yellen, 2013). This admonition against making a quick decision echoes previous literature that declares that time limitations can be a condition in which implicit biases arise (Bertrand, et al., 2005).

Finally, Ross (2008) captures many of these ideas in his list of ten ways to combat hidden biases in the workplace. They are summarized as follows:

- 1.) The first step to mitigating unconscious bias in the workplace is to recognize our own biases.
- 2.) “Reframe the conversation to focus on fair treatment and respect, and away from discrimination and ‘protected classes’” (p. 15). Examine every step of the employment process from screening resumes to termination for the presence of unconscious biases.
- 3.) Conduct anonymous employee surveys to uncover the presence of unconscious biases, recognizing that the nature of these biases may vary across divisions of a company.
- 4.) Conduct anonymous surveys with former employees to gather insights on any unconscious biases they may have experienced during their tenure. Assess their perceptions of the company now.

3. One free training toolkit on unconscious bias in a workplace setting, “Five Points for Progress,” is available online at <http://raceforopportunity.bitc.org.uk/tools-case-studies/toolkits/five-5-points-progress-toolkit-know-yourself-unconscious-bias-tool>.

- 5.) Use the survey results from current and former employees to offer customized training to address unconscious bias by defining it, discussing its implications, and providing positive methods to address it.
- 6.) Implement an anonymous third-party complaint channel where employees may air unconscious bias concerns.
- 7.) Conduct a resume study in your own company or department to assess whether race and gender cues found on the resumes lead to unequal assessments of roughly equivalent resumes. (For a great example of this type of study, see Bertrand & Mullainathan, 2004.)
- 8.) Use a resume study (see above) “to reassign points based on earned accomplishments vs. accidents of birth—e.g., take points off for someone who had an unpaid internship, add points for someone who put him/herself through college” (p. 15).
- 9.) Encourage the distribution of stories and images that counter stereotypes, particularly positive images of persons of color, GLBT, and women. The use of counter-stereotypic exemplars and similar debiasing agents has been discussed fairly extensively in the literature as a means to combat implicit bias (see, e.g., Dasgupta & Asgari, 2004; Dasgupta & Greenwald, 2001; Kang & Banaji, 2006; Kang, et al., 2012; Lehrman, 2006; National Center for State Courts), though there is not complete consensus on its effectiveness (Joy-Gaba & Nosek, 2010; Schmidt & Nosek, 2010).
- 10.) “Identify, support and collaborate with effective programs that increase diversity in the pipeline” (p. 15).



Art of Hosting Meaningful Conversations Training – Implicit Bias

From July 29-31, 2013, a group of Ohio State faculty and staff participated in a training on the Art of Hosting Meaningful Conversations. The training introduced participants to a range of powerful methods for harnessing collective wisdom and engaging in meaningful conversations with an eye toward change.

Structured as a three-day residential retreat, participants were empowered to host and design meaningful conversations within their own parts of the university community. In particular, the training emphasized meaningful conversations around implicit bias, reflecting on the questions participants had about implicit bias and the ways in which a fuller understanding of this phenomenon can help them in a workplace setting and beyond. This event was sponsored by The Women’s Place.

CONCLUSION

In sum, “There is little doubt that unconscious discrimination plays a significant role in decisions about hiring, promoting, firing, and the other benefits and tribulations of the workplace” (M. Hart, 2005). In an essay that encourages sociologists to look beyond purposive actions by dominant group members as the key force behind workplace inequality, Reskin declares that “we cannot rid work organizations of discrimination until we recognize... that much employment discrimination originates in automatic cognitive processes” (Reskin, 2000, p. 321).

Although this Review focuses primarily on racial and ethnic biases, this chapter would be incomplete without recognizing the extensive literature that has documented the implicit gender biases that exist in the employment domain. From hiring to promotions (notably the “glass ceiling” effect), implicit biases against women have been repeatedly shown to hinder women’s ability to enter into and advance in workforce (see, e.g., Goldin & Rouse, 2000; Levinson & Young, 2010b; Moss-Racusin, Dovidio, Brescoll, Graham, & Handelsman, 2012; Reskin, 2005; Rudman & Glick, 2001; Rudman & Kilianski, 2000; Strauss, 2013). Implicit biases against women in the workforce is also a very active topic of discussion outside of the academic realm both in the United States and abroad, with many Human Resource specialists, professional societies, and employers considering this phenomenon and its implications for women’s careers (among many others, see, e.g., “Confronting Implicit Gender Bias in Neuroscience,” 2013; Dooley, 2013; L. Jones, 2013; Ondraschek-Norris, 2013).