(Why) Do I Think What You Think?

Epistemic Social Tuning and Implicit Prejudice

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Seminar: Attitudes and Social Judgement

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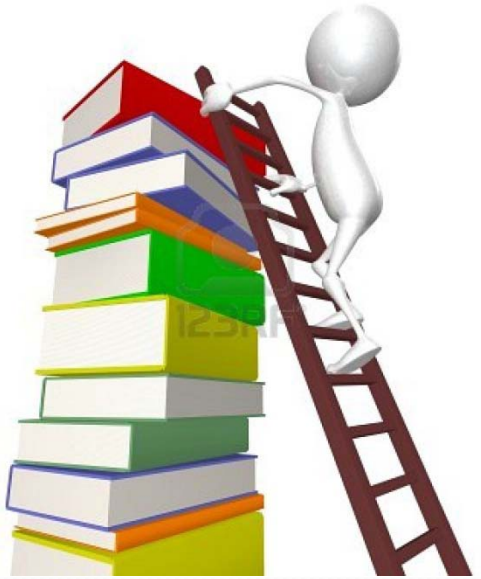
Goals

- What is “epistemic social tuning”?
- Why do we adapt to others‘ opinions?
- Why does epistemic motivation influence implicit attitudes – especially implicit prejudice?

Introduction

General terms

1. *Epistemic motivation*:
   - the need to acquire knowledge



2. *Affiliative motivation*:
   - the need for social connectedness

Introduction

General terms

3. *Social sharing*:
   - the concept of exchanging mutual values, ideas, standards to form a social "community"
4. *Social tuning*:
   - adapting one's attitudes to in-group peers
5. *Implicit attitude:*
   - unconscious opinion/position/belief

Hypothesis

Shared Reality Theory

- concept describing how individuals adopt attitudes/ideas/beliefs by interacting with each other

  causes a „shared reality“ in case of agreement

- includes behaviour, circumstances and inner states

  → ***subjective*** reality

Hypothesis

Shared Reality Theory

- Function:
  - satisfies affiliative and epistemic needs
  - validates the referent target
  - strengthens the bond between them
  - resolves ambiguity

  → achieving a ***social consensus***

Hypothesis

Epistemic social tuning hypothesis

- amount of epistemic motivation moderates the degree to which one tunes his or her implicit attitudes correspondent to the apparent view of another person

  the more knowledge is lacking, the higher is your epistemic motivation

  the more epistemically motivated you are, the higher is the degree of tuning

  → ***subliminal*** process

Study

(Why) Do I Think What You Think?

Epistemic Social Tuning and Implicit Prejudice (2007)

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Study

- **Goal**

  “Examine whether people who experience epistemic motivation (…) [come] to have implicit attitudes consistent with the apparent beliefs of another person”

Source:

Lun, J., Sinclair, S., Whitchurch, E. R., & Glenn, C. (2007). (Why) do I think what you think? Epistemic social tuning and implicit prejudice. *Journal Of Personality And Social Psychology*, *93*(6), 957.

- **Composition**

  3 experiments

Experiment I

Assumption

- attitude accessibility as reasonable proxy for epistemic motivation

  → reaction time = appropriate measure

Hypothesis

- epistemically motivated people are more likely to engage in social tuning concerning egalitarian views
- attitude accessibility captures the degree of uncertainty

Experiment I

Procedure

Steps	function
computer task →statement evaluation	reaction time = measure of attitude accessibility → epistemic motivation
2 conditions white female experimenter ↙ ↘ "Erasicm-T-shirt" plain T-Shirt	represents experimenter's apparent attitude → egalitarian vs. non-egalitarian view

Experiment I

„Eracism-T-Shirt“ vs. „plain-T-Shirt“ - condition

vs.

Experiment I

Procedure

Steps	function
candy as a token	maintain affiliative motivation in both conditions
visual acuity test “Eracsim-T-Shirt” vs. plain-T-Shirt	ensures the recognition of the term “eracism”

Experiment I

„Eracism-T-Shirt“ vs. „plain-T-Shirt“ - condition

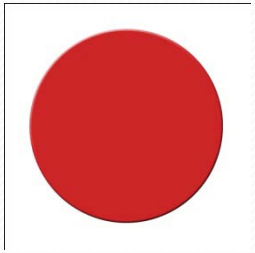
vs.

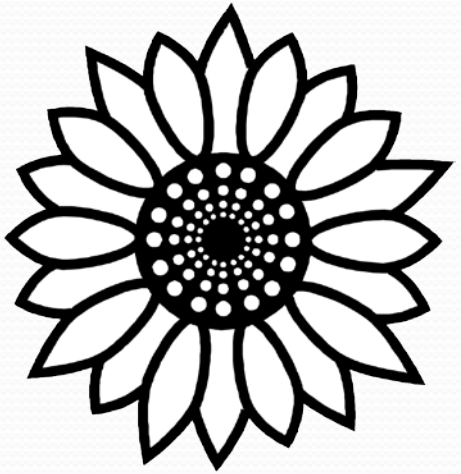
RXJQTM

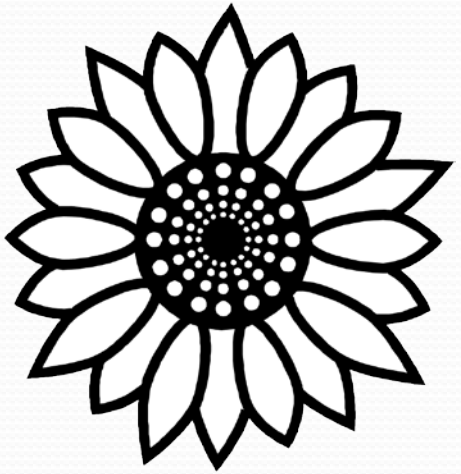
Experiment I

Procedure

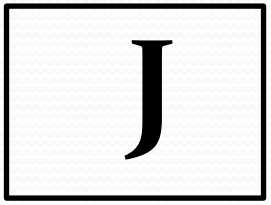
Steps	function
“implicit prejudice computer task” →black vs. white face pictures (subliminal) → “Good vs. Bad”	measure implicit prejudice (pro white & anti black) reaction time → response latency
questionnaire	validate the outcome







Good



Experiment I

Results

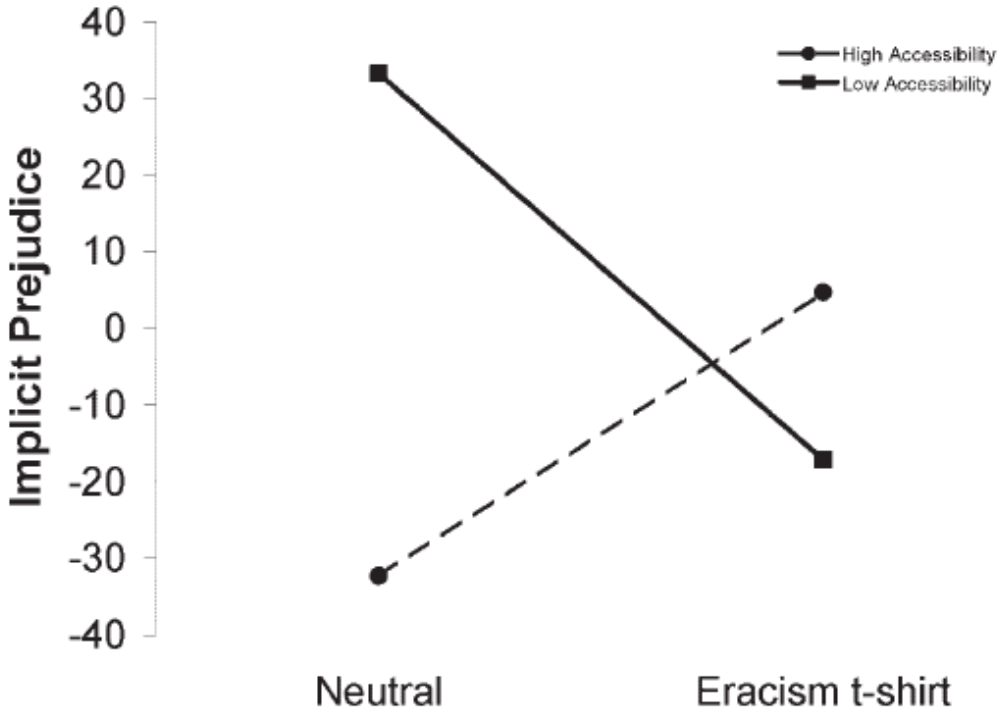


Figure 1. Implicit prejudice as a function of ethnic attitude accessibility and perceived experimenter's views in Experiment 1.

Experiment I

Results

- individuals having less accessible attitudes, had lower implicit prejudice after interacting with an experimenter who ostensibly held egalitarian views

Problem

- results of Experiment I cannot be fully explained by weak attitude account

Experiment II

Assumption

- Epistemic motivation can be manipulated by priming with concepts related to uncertainty

Hypothesis

- Uncertainty-primed people respond strongly to egalitarian view

  → adaptation

- epistemic motivation of neutral-primed people is not affected

Experiment II

Procedure

Steps	function
2 conditions white female experimenter ↙ ↘ "Erasicm-T-shirt" plain T-Shirt	represents experimenter's apparent attitude → egalitarian vs. non-egalitarian view
Sentence unscrambling task → Uncertainty related concept vs. neutral concept	prime with concepts related to uncertainty to reinforce epistemic motivation

Uncertain Condition Scrambled Sentences Task
(Experiments 2 and 3)

know I *want to* heavy more
sky the seamless red is
believe they look *don't* her
a smile what parrot great
about Jane the it felt *uncertain*
saw hammer the train he
Bob outcome is the *unsure* of seems
the push wash frequently clothes
questions news Todd the throws
unstable market admirable the is very
been I have *there* seen *never*
Katie *doubts* drives promise his
have wing a butterfly I
what Amy eat *can't* to *decide seek*
the are results mountain *inconclusive*
she line leads the tracks
not people *confident* valid are
answer Steve flies *guesses* the
salad She make green tasty
felt *unprepared* possessed Helen
helpless it hides there over
is the punctual *ambiguous* instruction
curious I am it about look

Note. The italicized words indicate concepts related to uncertainty.

Experiment II

Procedure

Steps	function
visual acuity test “Eracsim-T-Shirt” vs. plain-T-Shirt	ensures the recognition of the term “eracism”
“implicit prejudice computer task” →black vs. white face pictures → “Good vs. Bad” + modifications • No candy • No knowledge about measuring	measure implicit prejudice (pro white & anti black) reaction time → response latency epistemic social tuning

Experiment II

Procedure

Steps	function
questionnaire	examine liking of experimenter → affiliative motivation

Experiment II

Results

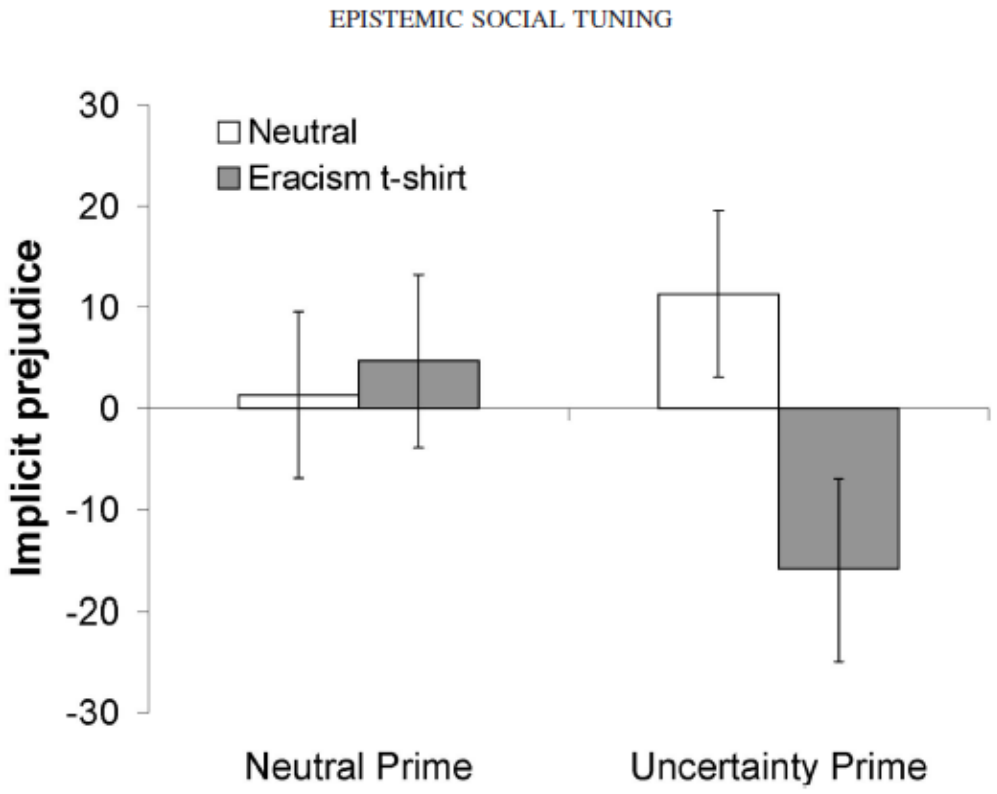


Figure 2. Mean implicit prejudice as a function of prime and perceived experimenter's views in Experiment 2. Vertical lines depict standard errors of the means.

Experiment II

Results

- people exposed to the “eracism-shirt” showed a remarkable shift in implicit prejudice when primed with uncertainty

Experiment III

Assumption

- beliefs of an interacting partner provide the basis for social tuning not mere thought about the beliefs themselves

Hypothesis

- uncertainty primed people in the eracism shirt condition respond strongly to egalitarian views (see Exp. II)
- all people in the eracism poster condition are unaffected

  → no change

Experiment III

Procedure

Steps	function
2 conditions white female experimenter ↙ ↘ "Erasicm-T-shirt" plain T-Shirt	represents experimenter's apparent attitude → egalitarian vs. non-egalitarian view
2 conditions Sentence completion task	prime a state of **certainty** or uncertainty

Experiment III

Procedure

Steps	function
3 conditions Visual acuity test “Eracism” on T-Shirt nonsense word **“Eracism” on poster**	examine effect of mere thought on implicit prejudice in comparison with results from Exp. 2

Experiment III

Procedure

Steps	function
"implicit prejudice computer task" →black vs. white face pictures (subliminal) → "Good vs. Bad"	measure implicit prejudice (pro white & anti black) reaction time → response latency
questionnaire debriefing	• measure of affiliative motivation • **measure of explicit prejudice** validate the outcome

Experiment III

Results

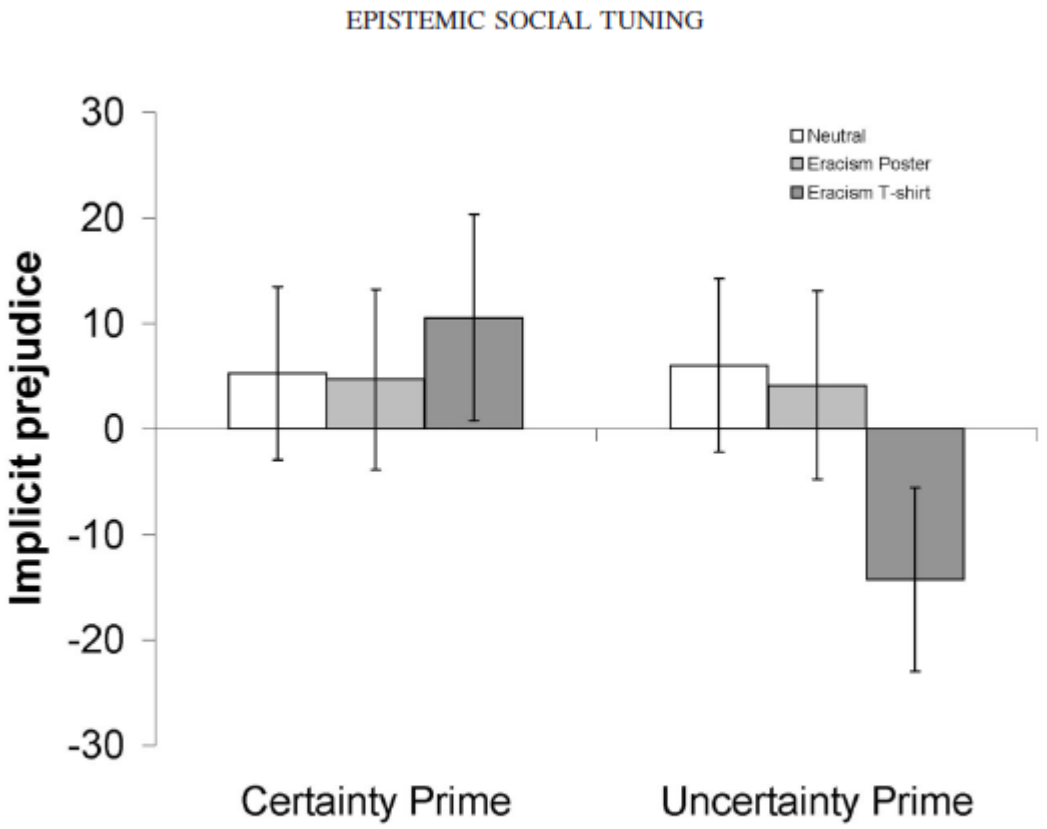


Figure 3. Mean implicit prejudice as a function of prime and perceived experimenter's views in Experiment 3. Vertical lines depict standard errors of the means.

Experiment III

Results

- remarkable shift in implicit prejudice only in the "uncertainty-prime-eracism condition"
- no effect in "poster condition"

Conclusion

Experiment I:

less accessible attitude + erasicm “stimulus“

→ lower implicit prejudice

Experiment II + III:

uncertainty priming + eracism “stimulus“

→ lower implicit prejudice

Experiment III:

eracism – poster “stimulus“ doesn‘t suffice for successfully building a “shared reality”

Conclusion

- desirable attitude needs to be ***directly linked*** to the experimenter
- meaning of ***eracism*** is crucial
- ***subliminal*** & uncontrolled process

EPISTEMIC MOTIVATION as precondition

Epistemic social tuning hypothesis

Take Home Message

When experiencing a lack of knowledge individuals tend to resolve it by adapting their attitude to present in-group members and thus building a “shared reality”.

List of references

Study

Lun, J., Sinclair, S., Whitchurch, E. R., & Glenn, C. (2007). (Why) do I think what you think? Epistemic social tuning and implicit prejudice. *Journal Of Personality And Social Psychology*, *93*(6), 957-972. doi:10.1037/0022-3514.93.6.957

Pictures

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Thank you for your attention!!!