Lecture Outline
Being the Target of Prejudice

Stereotype Threat
Positive Prejudice

How Prejudice Affects Targets

Stereotype Threat
Consequences of positive prejudice

Premise:
Stigmatized groups are aware of negative stereotypes

This awareness produces "stereotype threat".

Stereotype Threat
Definition:
Fear that one will be viewed or treated in way consistent with stereotype, or that one will confirm the stereotype.

Stereotype Threat
Stereotype threat is situationally induced

Arises when target realizes that negative stereotype can explain their behavior or attributes.

Stereotype Threat Study
Steele & Aronson (Study 1, 1995)

Purpose:
Test theory of stereotype threat with respect to achievement test performance.
### Stereotype Threat Study
Steele & Aronson (Study 1, 1995)

- **Valid measure of achievement**
- **Laboratory exercise**

African American (AA) < White (W)

#### Purpose:
Examined whether stereotyped targets distance themselves from the stereotype when stereotype threat is activated.

#### Distancing Study
Steele & Aronson (Study 2, 1995)

- **Participants:**
  - African American
  - White
- **Procedure:**
  - Completed a 30 V-SAT items
- **Manipulation:**
  - Valid test
  - Invalid test (laboratory exercise)
- **DV:** number correct on test

#### Participant Preferences:
- **Music:** jazz, rap music, classical
- **Sports:** baseball, basketball, boxing
- **Traits:** extroverted, aggressive, humorous

Never actually took test
Distancing Study
Steele & Aronson (Study 2, 1995)

**Manipulation:**
- Valid test
- Invalid test (laboratory exercise)

**DV:**
- Extent to which participant rated self consistent with African American stereotype

Affirmative Action

**Designed to:**
"overcome the discriminating effect of past or present practices, policies, or other barriers to equal employment opportunity" (EEOC, 1970)

EEOC’s statement:
Says that group membership should be explicitly taken into account in hiring decisions

Unspoken assumption that non-discrimination not sufficient to counteract consequences of prejudice and inequality

Untended Consequences of Positive Prejudice

Affirmative action designed to help minorities and underrepresented groups, but could it unintentionally undermine their self-views and job performance

Affirmative Action Study 1
Heilman, Simon, & Repper (1987)

**Purpose:**
Examine whether affirmative action damages the self-views of those who benefit from it
Affirmative Action Study 1
Heilman et al. (1987)

Prediction:
Women who believe they are preferentially selected have less confidence in their ability than those who believe they are selected on merit.

Affirmative Action Study 1
Procedure:
1. Paired with opposite sex confederate
2. Task described; leader more important
3. Answered items assessing ability for leadership role
4. Manipulation occurred.......

Affirmative Action Study 1
Heilman et al. (1987)

Procedure continued:
5. Performed task
6. Rated self on:
   • task performance
   • leadership ability
   • desire to persist as leader in task 2

Affirmative Action Study 2
Heilman, Rivero, & Brette (1991)

Purpose:
Examine if preferential selection causes women to select easier tasks.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Performance</th>
<th>Leadership ability</th>
<th>Persist as leader</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Men:</td>
<td>5.35</td>
<td>6.47</td>
<td>5.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preference</td>
<td>5.37</td>
<td>6.59</td>
<td>5.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women:</td>
<td>5.24</td>
<td>6.72</td>
<td>5.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preference</td>
<td>4.02</td>
<td>5.27</td>
<td>4.05</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Men:** Selection basis did not influence men's perceptions of performance, leadership ability, or desire to persist as leader.

**Women:** Selection basis did influence women. Lower perceived performance, and ability, and less desire to remain as leader when preferentially selected. No different from men in merit condition.
Affirmative Action Study 2
Heilman et al. (1991)

Tasks:
- Financial service manager
- Subordinate

Procedures:
- Test assessed managerial skills

Manipulation:
- Merit or preference based selection

Participants then indicated which of two tasks they would most like to do:
- Easy task
- Difficult task

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Task Choice</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Merit</td>
<td>87%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Preference</td>
<td>13%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Merit</td>
<td>93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preference</td>
<td>7%</td>
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</table>

**Men:** Chose difficult task more often regardless of selection basis

**Women:** Selection did influence task choice. Women selected easy task more often when preferentially selected. No different from men in merit condition.

Conclusion:
Preferential selection reduces confidence
Preferential selection causes people to select less challenging tasks at work

Affirmative Action: Good or Bad?

Does Affirmative Action always have unintended negative consequences?

**No.**

When it is based on merit and group membership, many of the bad effects it creates disappear