

# Internet Research Projects

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## Chapter 3: Prejudice and Discrimination

### IMPLICIT PREJUDICE

In Chapter 3, prejudice was treated as a set of attitudes, opinions, stereotypes, and emotions that people express in their everyday conversations and that can be measured by surveys like the social distance scale. A group of psychologists have developed a very different approach to the topic: They believe that people have a largely unconscious and unspoken set of attitudes towards other groups that affects their thinking, feelings, and actions (Greenwald, et al. 2002 and Greenwald and Banaji, 1995). These implicit or hidden prejudices are acquired during socialization and shape our relationships with other groups, even when we are not aware of it. This form of prejudice can exist even in people who have no conscious prejudice and who behave in non-discriminatory ways.

Do you have an implicit negative reaction to other groups? You can find out by taking the Implicit Association Test (IAT) at the Project Implicit website. To complete this test, follow these instructions:

1. Go to the IAT website at <https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/>. Alternately, you can search for “Implicit Association Test” using your search engine.
2. Find the box on the left labeled “Project Implicit Social Attitudes.” You will probably want to proceed as guest user, so click “GO!” in the lower panel of the box, next to the U.S. English window.
3. Read the information and disclaimer on the next window and then click “I wish to proceed.” Take several of the tests, including the Race IAT.
4. Learn more about the IAT by clicking the **Education** button on the top of the widow after you finish the tests and then clicking “About the IAT.” Browse the rest of the site and, especially, read the “Frequently Asked Questions”.

After taking the tests and gathering some perspective on the IAT, consider these questions:

1. What is an “implicit” attitude? How does implicit prejudice differ from affective prejudice, stereotypes, social distance, and modern racism?
2. If test shows you have a preference for one group over another, does this mean that you are prejudiced against the less-preferred group? Do you feel that the test accurately reflects your feelings and ideas? Why or why not? (*Remember that your implicit and explicit or conscious attitudes can be quite different*)
3. Research using the IAT reveals that many white Americans have a preference for whites over blacks. Why do you think this is so? What aspects of American culture might create and sustain this preference?

4. Which of the situation listed below would be *most* and least affected by a person's implicit attitudes? Why?
  - a. Friendship choices in a multi-group elementary school classroom.
  - b. Friendship choices in a multi-group high school or university.
  - c. Reactions to hearing that a friend is dating a member of a different racial or ethnic group.
  - d. Reactions to a news story that a minority group male raped and killed a dominant group female.
  - e. Reactions to a news story that a dominant group male raped and killed a minority group female.
  - f. Choices between political candidates who are from different racial or ethnic groups
  - g. Support for controversial policies such as affirmative action.
  - h. Hiring decisions involving applicants from a variety of groups.
  - i. Choices about which neighborhoods to live in.
  - j. Choices in a "shoot / don't shoot" situation involving a white police officer and a possibly armed black male suspect. How about if the suspect was a white female?
5. If the IAT shows that you have a group preference you would rather NOT have, what are some things you could do to change yourself?

Optional Group Discussion: Select three of the questions from #4 above to discuss with classmates. (*Your instructor may have more specific or different instructions.*) Add your own questions or topics if you wish.

To aid the discussion, bring a summary of what you learned about the IAT to class. What was the most important thing you learned from taking the IAT?

NOTE: Individual students should NOT reveal their IAT scores during these discussions.