Understanding Racial Bias in the Weapons Identification Task in Terms of Implicit Contrast Effects

Joseph Hilgard

University of Pennsylvania

Laura Scherer, Bruce D. Bartholow, and Hannah Volpert

University of Missouri

Authors’ Note

Joseph Hilgard, Annenberg Public Policy Center, University of Pennsylvania.

Laura Scherer, Bruce D. Bartholow, and Hannah Volpert, Department of Psychological Sciences, University of Missouri.

Correspondence concerning this article should be directed to Laura Scherer, 210 McAlester Hall, University of Missouri, Columbia, MO 65211. Email: [SchererL@missouri.edu](mailto:SchererL@missouri.edu).

Abstract

Measures of implicit bias have become an important and popular tool in the research of prejudice and stereotyping. However, previous research indicates that implicit contrast processes may cause the association between one prime and one target (e.g. Black faces and guns) to create an apparent response facilitation between the other prime and other target (e.g. White faces and tools), a phenomenon known as response-mapping contrast. Four experiments test how contextual features can alter the apparent associations between primes and targets. This contextual dependency can be parsimoniously explained by response mapping contrast models. Application of Process Dissociation Procedure further demonstrated that contextual shifts in response biases were unlikely to be caused by changes in controlled responses. Results indicate that response-mapping contrast effects generalize to semantic priming tasks and indicate that caution is necessary when designing and interpreting measures of implicit bias.

Intergroup prejudices such as racial bias continue to pose a serious societal problem and a worthy phenomenon for psychological study. For the effective study of this problem, accurate and valid laboratory measures of bias and prejudice are necessary. Researchers have long been concerned that self-reports of racial bias may be obscured by ignorance of one’s own bias or reluctance to admit to such bias. To circumvent these issues, researchers have developed and applied “implicit measures” that measure racial bias in ways that reduce the capacity for controlled responding, thereby providing measurements less contaminated by participants’ reluctance to appear biased. (De Houwer, Teige-Mocigemba, Spruyt, & Moors, 2009; Fazio, Jackson, Dunton, & Williams, 1995; Greenwald, McGhee, & Schwartz, 1998; Payne, 2001).

Although implicit measures may avoid self-presentation bias, the interpretation of these measures is more circumspect, relying on patterns of task performance. These patterns, however, are determined by more than implicit bias alone. The choice of control stimuli can alter patterns of task performance and hence, the inferred implicit bias. For example, Scherer and Lambert (2009) found that a single group of primes could elicit either a “pleasant” or an “unpleasant” response bias depending on the valence of the other prime stimuli that appeared in the task. If similar context-specific effects are present in measures of implicit bias, then the observed association between a prime and a target may represent not only implicit bias, but also some degree of contamination by contextual influence. The purpose of the current research was to test this possibility within the Weapons Identification Task (WIT), often used to assess an implicit association between young Black men and danger (see Payne, 2001, 2005).

**Response Selection and Interference**

Measures of implicit bias infer and quantify bias by considering the degree to which a prime facilitates or inhibits responses to a target. For example, in the WIT, participants use button presses to classify targets as either guns or tools after being primed with a White or Black face. Relative to White face primes, Black face primes facilitate gun responses and inhibit tool responses, suggesting the presence of an implicit racial bias that associates Blacks with armed violence .

One popular explanation of such priming effects is that the prime stimulus activates a response category. When that response category is the same as that required by the target, responses are facilitated; when the response category is not that required by the target, responses are inhibited (Bartholow, Riordan, Saults, & Lust, 2009; De Houwer, Hermans, Rothermund, & Wentura, 2002; Gawronski, Deutsch, & Seidel, 2005; Klauer & Tiege-Mocigemba, 2007; Klinger, Burton, & Pitts, 2000). This “response interference” model purports that the observed effects of primes on accuracy stem from the task’s categorization goal.

**Response mapping and implicit contrast effects.** One important implication of response interference models is that the primes cause preparation of a response, and this preparation is in turn responsible for prime-target facilitation or interference. These assumptions provided the basis for the Response Mapping (RM) model of priming (see Scherer & Lambert, 2009; Scherer & Lambert, 2012; Scherer & Schott, 2012). According to the RM model, although the goal of the priming task is to ignore the primes and classify only the target stimuli, participants also use the response options to categorize the primes.

Consider a task in which participants see negative and neutral picture primes followed by negative and positive word targets. If primes are categorized according to the response categories, negative primes will prepare the negative response and facilitate responses to negative word targets. This is unremarkable. However, because the negative response category is occupied, the neutral primes will be categorized as best they can with the remaining response option. Thus, the neutral primes are *contrasted away* from the negative response and are categorized with the positive response. The presentation of neutral primes then facilitates positive-word responses, even though the neutral primes lack positive affective content. Thus, an association between one set of primes and one response causes the other set of primes to be contrasted away to the other response. We will refer to this phenomenon as *response-mapping contrast* (RM contrast).

To date, RM contrasts have been demonstrated primarily in evaluative priming tasks such as the Affect Misattribution Procedure (as developed by Payne, Lambert, & Jacoby, 2005) and evaluative sequential-priming tasks (Scherer & Lambert, 2009). These studies have found that stimuli with no preexisting evaluative associations can nonetheless facilitate positive or negative responses in a priming task—resulting in the appearance of automatic positivity or negativity—depending on the valence of the other primes used in the task. Thus, RM contrast effects may cause the appearance of evaluative associations for otherwise neutral stimuli.

The present research sought to better understand the generality of the RM contrast effect by testing whether it also appears in semantic, rather than evaluative, contexts. This research tests RM contrast effects in a measure of implicit racial bias (the WIT) by manipulating the category of primes that accompany Black faces (or White faces) in the task.

**Past examples of possible RM contrast effects**

Previous research using the WIT suggests the influence of RM contrast effects. For example, research finds that White primes facilitate “tool” responses. That is, following a White face prime, respondents are more accurate in responding to tool targets compared to gun targets (Amodio et al., 2004, 2008; Payne, 2001; Payne et al., 2002; Stewart & Payne, 2008). Whereas an association between Blacks and guns is expected on the basis of prevailing racial stereotypes, it is less clear what causes the White-tool association. Interpreting this directly as an implicit association would indicate a stereotype linking Whites with tool use or manual labor, or at least a stereotype that inhibits the association of Whites with guns. Although this is possible, no such stereotypic association has been reported in the research literature.

A similarly curious pair of associations was observed by Judd, Blair, and Chapleau (2003), who used modified forms of the WIT in an attempt to determine whether response bias in the WIT was the result of stereotypic associations (i.e., between Blacks and gun violence) or a more general negative evaluative association. In these modified tasks, the gun and tool targets were replaced, in one block, by guns and insects, and, in the other block, by fruits and sports objects. Black primes significantly facilitated responses to guns over insects and sports objects over fruits, indicating that the priming effects were stereotypical and semantic, rather than evaluative, in nature. Bafflingly, White primes facilitated responses to insects relative to guns, and fruits relative to sports objects. As in the above apparent White-tool association, it seems implausible that participants have latent stereotypic associations linking Whites with insects and fruits.

A more likely explanation for these patterns seems to be the presence of a RM contrast effect. The RM contrast model would predict that, in each task, Black primes would be classified to the stereotypical response, i.e., guns and sports objects. This would leave the White primes to be mapped onto the remaining response, causing the presentation of a White face to facilitate responses to insects and fruit. The RM contrast phenomenon could thereby cause the illusion of an implicit association between a given prime and response.

**RM contrast in implicit bias tasks.** These studies suggest that RM contrast effects might play a role in stereotype priming tasks such as the WIT. If so, it may be inappropriate to interpret the degree of prime-target response facilitation or inhibition as a measure of absolute implicit association, because the apparent association between one prime and one target may depend on the categories represented by the other prime and other target. Thus, RM contrast effects may confuse the interpretation of task results. However, investigations of RM contrast effects have, to date, been limited to affective priming tasks; it is not clear whether RM contrast effects generalize to the semantic domain.

**Process dissociation procedure.** In addition to determining whether contrast effects can emerge for stereotypic associations in the WIT, the current research aims to address whether such effects are the result of shifts in automatic bias or shifts in the degree to which participants control their responses. It is now widely recognized that responses in any given “implicit” task can be the result of both automatic bias and variability in control over responses (Ito et al., 2014; Payne, 2005; Payne, Jacoby, & Lambert, 2005). Previous reports have portrayed implicit contrasts as the result of an automatic process (Scherer & Lambert, 2009). However, such contrasts could be caused by changes in control over responses: perhaps different combinations of primes elicit varying degrees of motivation to control one’s responses, or perhaps certain combinations of primes are more or less challenging to handle via controlled processing. To address this issue, we used the Process Dissociation Procedure (PDP; Jacoby, 1991) to create estimates of the extent to which participants’ responses were determined by controlled versus automatic processes (see Payne, 2001).

**Summary**

In the present study, we sought to establish whether implicit contrast effects previously studied in the context of evaluative priming paradigms (e.g., Scherer & Lambert, 2009) also emerge in a semantic priming paradigm, namely, the WIT. If so, this would represent a novel extension of the generality of RM contrast effects and suggest caution and consideration in the interpretation of bias observed in stereotype-priming paradigms. Attempts were made to rule out an alternative “shifting associative content” model of results, by which it would be argued that the associations of a prime are altered by comparison with another prime (e.g., comparison with Blacks makes Whites seem more industrial and thus related to tools).

Four experiments were conducted using modified forms of the WIT. In Experiment 1, participants performed a standard Black/White WIT or a version that replaced one category of primes (either Black or White faces) with neutral objects (e.g., a hair dryer). To extend and clarify these results, Experiment 2 investigated the apparent associations of Hispanic primes when compared to Black, White, or neutral primes. In Experiment 3, we tested whether inclusion of a target category very strongly associated with Blacks could cause a White-Gun association. In Experiment 4, we found that White primes prepared responses to a heterogeneous array of targets with no clear associative content. In all studies, PDP analyses assessed whether the observed effects were the result of changes in the influence of automatic or controlled processes.

**Experiment 1**

In this first experiment, we tested the effects of replacing one prime category with a new prime category consisting of neutrally-valenced household objects. Participants performed a standard WIT with Black and White primes, a modified WIT with Black and neutral household primes, or a modified WIT with White and neutral household primes.

We hypothesized that response-mapping contrast effects would change the apparent associations of primes such that a single stimulus could be capable of priming either “gun” or “tool” responses depending on the other primes in the task. When neutral-object primes are presented in contrast to Black-face primes, the neutral objects are expected to prepare “tool” responses. However, when neutral-object primes are presented in contrast to White-face primes, the neutral objects are expected to prepare “gun” responses.

**Method**

We report how we determined our sample size, all data exclusions, all manipulations, and all measures in the study. Data and analytic code are publicly hosted at https://github.com/hiv8r3/WIT4.

**Participants and design.** Participants were 130 university undergraduates who participated in exchange for partial course credit. Sample size was set so that the size of each experimental group roughly approximated those of previous studies of the RM contrast effect (e.g. Scherer & Lambert, 2009). The study was a 3 (Condition: Black/White, Black/Neutral, White/Neutral) × 2 (Prime category) × 2 (Target: Gun or Tool) mixed-model design, with Condition varying between subjects and Prime and Target varying within subjects. Prime content was determined by condition: In the Black/White condition, trials were evenly divided between Black and White faces that appeared as primes, as is typical of the WIT; in the Neutral/Black condition, primes included Black faces and neutral objects; in the Neutral/White condition, primes included White faces and neutral objects.

**Materials.** Materials included four images of each prime and target category: Black faces, White faces, neutral object primes, and guns and tool targets. Black and White primes and gun and tool targets were taken from the original WIT (Payne, 2001; available from <http://www.unc.edu/~bkpayne/materials.html>). Neutral household objects (e.g., hair dryer) were chosen from the International Affective Picture System (IAPS[[1]](#footnote-1); Lang, Bradley, & Cuthbert, 2008). These stimuli were converted to grayscale so as to match the other stimuli in the study. The stimuli used in both experiments are presented in Figure 1.

**Procedure.** Participants were randomly assigned to perform one of three versions of the WIT. All versions used the tool and gun targets that were used in the traditional WIT, but primes varied by condition. As is typical of the WIT, each trial started with a pre-stimulus pattern mask presented for 1000ms, followed by presentation of the prime for 200ms, followed immediately by a target presented for 200ms, followed by a pattern mask for 300ms. Participants were instructed to respond within 500ms of target onset. If participants failed to respond within this deadline, the post-target mask turned red to indicate a too-slow response. The post-target mask remained on screen for an additional 500ms if the response was within the deadline or an additional 1000ms if the response was too slow. Participants first performed a practice block of 24 trials of their version of the WIT. Participants responding outside the 500ms deadline on more than 10 trials were made to repeat the practice block; after this, participants began the task regardless of their response times. In the main task, each possible Prime × Target trial type was presented 64 times for a total of 256 trials. Participants were allowed a short break after every 32 trials.

**Results**

Data were preprocessed and analyzed using R (R core team, 2013).

Participants whose overall accuracy was not significantly greater than chance (accuracy < 57%, α = 0.01) were excluded (*n* = 16). As is typical in research investigating implicit racial bias, nonwhite participants (*n* = 33) were excluded from analysis[[2]](#footnote-2). Thus, the final sample size for Experiment 1 was *n* = 81 (26 Black/White, 28 Black/Neutral, 27 White/Neutral).

**Accuracy.** First, to characterize patterns of measured implicit bias, trial accuracies for each condition (Black/White, Black/Neutral, White/Neutral) were submitted to a 2 (Prime: White, Black, or Neutral, depending on condition) × 2 (Target: Tool, Gun) analysis of variance (ANOVA).[[3]](#footnote-3) (Because primes were nested within conditions, it was not possible to run the fully-crossed 3 Condition × 3 Prime × 2 Target ANOVA.) Significant Prime × Target interactions would indicate that the primes elicited differential response facilitation (i.e., what is typically interpreted as an implicit bias). Mean accuracy rates for each cell are presented in Table 1.[[4]](#footnote-4)

Replicating past research, in the Black/White Condition there was a significant Prime × Target interaction, *F*(1, 25) = 21.47, *p* < .001, *ηp2* = .46, 90% CI [.20, .61]. Following a Black prime, accuracy was significantly greater for gun targets than for tool targets, *t*(25) = 4.84, *p* < .001, *dz* = 0.90. Following a White prime, accuracy was somewhat greater for tool targets than for gun targets, *t*(25) = 1.98, *p = .*059, *dz* = 0.39.

In the Black/Neutral condition, there were significant effects of prime (*F*(1, 27) = 23.71, *p* < .001, ηp2 = .47, 90% CI [.22, .61]), target (*F*(1, 27) = 6.03, *p* = *.*021, ηp2 = .18, 90% CI [.02, .37]), and a Prime × Target interaction (*F*(1, 27) = 94.41, *p* < .001, ηp2 = .78, 90% CI [.62, .84]). Following a Black prime, accuracy was significantly better for gun targets than for tool targets, *t*(27) = 5.36, *p* < .001, *dz* = 1.01. Following a neutral object prime, accuracy was significantly better for tool targets than for gun targets, *t*(27) = 8.61, *p* < .001, *dz* = 1.63.

Finally, in the White/Neutral condition, there was a significant effect of prime (*F*(1, 26) = 14.7, *p* < .001, ηp2 = .36, 90% CI [.12, .53]) and a Prime × Target interaction (*F*(1, 26) = 35.52, *p* < .001, ηp2 = .58, 90% CI [.34, .70]). In contrast to the effects observed for White primes in the Black/White condition (i.e., the typical WIT), White primes increased accuracy for gun targets relative to tool targets, *t*(26) = 5.24, *p* < .001, *dz* = 1.01. In contrast, neutral object primes significantly increased accuracy for tool targets relative to gun targets, *t*(26) = 3.36, *p* = .002, *dz* = 0.65.

Next, we sought to determine whether the effects of primes significantly differed across conditions by testing separate 2 (Condition) × 2 (Target) interactions for each prime type. If accuracy rates for a particular prime were changed by the interaction of condition and target, this would indicate that task context altered the observed association between a prime and a target (e.g., through contrast effects). The effect of Black primes did not change between the Black/White and Black/Neutral conditions, *F*(1, 52) = 0.23, *p* = .632, ηp2 = .00, 90% CI [.00, .07]. However, the effect of White primes differed significantly across conditions, demonstrating a significant White-Tool bias in the Black/White condition but a significant White-Gun bias in the Neutral/White condition, *F*(1, 51) = 24.76, *p* < .001, ηp2 = .33, 90% CI [.16, .47]. A significant interaction also was observed for neutral primes, *F*(1, 53) = 8.74, *p* = .005, ηp2 = .14, 90% CI [.03, .28], indicating a Neutral-Tool response facilitation that was significantly larger in the Neutral/Black condition than in the Neutral/White condition.

***PDP analysis.*** Next we examined whether the aforementioned effects could be explained by changes in automatic or controlled processes across the task conditions. PDP (Jacoby, 1991) transforms accuracy rates to generate two parameters:

*C* = P(correct | congruent) – P(incorrect | incongruent)

*A* = P(correct | congruent) / (1 –C).

*C* represents the strength of a control process that selectively chooses a correct response regardless of prime-response congruency. *A* represents the strength of an automatic choice of response that can be observed in the case that *C* fails to choose a correct response.

Here, parameters *A* and *C* were generated for each category of primes such that a “gun” response was considered the congruent response. Thus, for each prime, *C* = (gun trial accuracy) – (tool trial errors) and *A* = (tool trial errors) / (1 – *C*). The *A* parameter for each prime thereby ranged from 0 (perfect “tool” response tendency) to 1 (perfect “gun” response tendency). The *C* parameter ranges from 0 (purely automatic) to 1 (purely controlled). PDP estimates for each prime type as a function of condition are given in Table 2.

A series of linear models was conducted to determine whether task condition (Black/White, Neutral/Black, Neutral/White) affected the PDP components associated with each set of primes. Parameter *A* for White primes was significantly affected by task condition*, t*(51) = 4.65, *p* < .001, *d* = 1.28 [0.67, 1.88]. White primes exhibited a stronger automatic response tendency towards guns in the Neutral/White condition (*A* = 0.62) than in the Black/White condition (*A* = 0.42). Parameter *A* for neutral primes was also significantly affected by task condition, *t*(53) = 3.18, *p* = .002, *d* = 0.86 [0.29, 1.42]. Neutral primes demonstrated stronger “gun” response tendency in the Neutral/White condition (*A* = 0.40) than in the Neutral/Black condition (*A* = 0.28). Parameter *A* for Black primes did not vary as a function of condition, *t*(52) = .225, *p = .*82, *d* = 0.06 [-0.49, 0.61]. Parameter *C* did not vary as a function of condition for any of the primes (For Black primes, *t*(52) = 0.57, *p* = .57, *d* = 0.16 [-0.39, 0.70]; for Neutral primes, *t*(53) = 1.00, *p = .*32, *d* = 0.27 [-0.81, 0.27]; for White primes, *t*(51) = 0.34, *p = .*56, *d* = -0.16 [-0.71, 0.39]). In summary, context changed the automatic tendency to respond “gun” following White and neutral primes, but not Black primes. Context did not change participants’ tendency to make controlled responses.

**Discussion**

Consistent with an RM contrast prediction, Experiment 1 found that the apparent degree to which Whites are associated with tools (vs. guns) depends heavily on the other category of primes. When the task included Black primes, White primes prepared tool responses, but when the task included neutral object primes, White primes prepared gun responses.

It is also notable that Black primes consistently facilitated responses to guns and were not affected by the task content, in line with prior research using an evaluative priming paradigm (Scherer & Lambert, 2012). The stability of this association across contexts suggests a strong implicit bias (Krosnick, 1988; Scherer & Lambert, 2012).

Furthermore, PDP analysis indicated that the observed effects were due to changes in the strength with which a prime automatically facilitated gun responses, not due to changes in the ability to make controlled, accurate responses.

In short, a single set of unchanging stimuli can prime different responses depending on the other primes in the task. These patterns are easily explained by an RM contrast perspective: Black primes are associated with guns through stereotypes; neutral objects resemble, and therefore prepare, tool responses; White primes are associated with neither, and will prepare whatever the available alternative response. Still, the current results are ambiguous with respect to which prime holds a given preexisting association and which prime is affected by contrast processes; perhaps instead Whites are modestly associated with guns, but not so much as are Blacks. The second experiment was designed to address these ambiguities through conceptual replication of the RM contrast phenomenon.

**Experiment 2**

A second experiment sought to examine how patterns of observed bias could vary for a single prime category across several contexts. To reduce the ambiguity as to which prime has a preexisting association and which prime is contrasted away, we use triangulation, comparing a single category of prime stimuli against several other categories. This way, changes in the apparent association of the single category are caused by contrast effects in general, rather than the particular associative content of a single category of contextual primes. Additionally, this experiment sought to characterize how implicit contrast effects could complicate the extension of the WIT to racial groups beyond Black and White.

In Experiment 2, Hispanic face primes were chosen as the ambiguous category based on the rationale that they represent a minority group that features some stereotypical association with armed violence (e.g., Latino gangs), but perhaps not so strong a stereotype as that linking Blacks with guns and violence.

Additionally, we replaced the set of neutral primes. In the first experiment, the neutral household object primes facilitated tool responses. We had hoped that the neutral primes would lack any preexisting association, but it seemed possible that they were associated with the tool targets, as the neutral primes and tool targets shared several perceptual and semantic attributes. To avoid the influence of this possible preexisting association, in the second experiment neutral abstract art primes were used instead of neutral household object primes. Hence, the categories of primes in this study included Hispanic faces that were presented along with either Black faces, White faces, or neutral abstract art (see Figure 1). It was predicted that associations with guns would be strongest for Black primes, reduced somewhat for White primes, and absent for neutral abstract art primes. Thus, the magnitude of Hispanic-gun bias was expected to be greatest in the Neutral/Hispanic condition, reduced somewhat in the White/Hispanic condition, and most significantly reduced in the Black/Hispanic condition.

**Method**

**Participants and design.** One hundred undergraduate students completed the study for partial course credit. Sample size was again based roughly on previous sample sizes in contrast effect research. The study design was a 3 (Condition: Black/Hispanic, White/Hispanic, or Neutral/Hispanic) × 2 (Prime: Hispanic or Other) × 2 (Target: Gun or Tool) mixed model, with Condition varying between subjects and Prime and Target varying within subjects. The “Other” category of primes was determined by the level of Condition, as described below.

**Materials.** As in Experiment 1, Black and White face primes and gun and tool images were the same as in the typical WIT (Payne, 2001). A pilot study (*n* = 21) was conducted to identify four identifiably Hispanic faces. Four Hispanic faces were chosen by the combined criteria of being the most likely to be identified as Hispanic and the least likely to be identified as Black or White.[[5]](#footnote-5) Neutrally-valenced abstract art stimuli were selected from the IAPS set[[6]](#footnote-6) (Lang et al., 2008; mean valence = 4.88 (SD = 0.19), mean arousal = 3.05 (SD = 0.68)).

**Procedure.** Participants were randomly assigned to one of three conditions defined by the prime categories they included: Black/Hispanic, White/Hispanic, or Neutral/Hispanic. In each condition, participants performed a WIT, identifying targets as either guns or tools via button press. In the Black/Hispanic condition, primes were Black Faces and Hispanic faces. In the White/Hispanic condition, primes were White faces and Hispanic faces. In the Neutral/Hispanic condition, primes were neutrally-valenced abstract art stimuli and Hispanic faces. Presentation durations and the response deadline were the same as in Experiment 1. Participants first performed a practice block of 24 trials of a WIT in which every trial was primed by a neutral object. Participants responding outside the 500ms deadline on more than 10 trials were made to repeat the practice block. After that, participants performed 24 trials of each prime-target pairing, for a total of 96 trials. Participants were given a brief break after the 32nd and 64th trials.

The primary hypothesis was that a significant Condition × Target interaction would emerge for Hispanic-prime trials, indicating that the effect of the Hispanic primes varied as a function of the other primes in the experiment.

**Results**

Nonwhite participants (*n* = 18) were excluded from analysis[[7]](#footnote-7), as were participants who did not have an overall accuracy significantly greater than chance (*n* = 15). Thus, the final sample included 67 individuals (By condition: Black/Hispanic, *n* = 18; White/Hispanic, *n* = 25; Neutral/Hispanic, *n* = 24).

**Accuracy.** Again, to characterize the patterns of accuracy in each context, separate 2 (Prime: Hispanic, Other) × 2 (Target: Gun, Tool) ANOVAs were conducted within each task condition. As in Experiment 1, significant Prime × Target interactions would indicate response facilitation caused by the primes. Mean accuracy rates for each cell are presented in Table 3.[[8]](#footnote-8)

In the Black/Hispanic condition, a main effect of Target was nearly significant (*F*(1, 19) = 3.93, *p* = .062, ηp2 = .17, 90% CI [.02, .23]), and the Prime x Target interaction was significant (*F*(1, 19) = 26.98, *p* < .001, ηp2 = .59, 90% CI [.30, .72]). Following a Black prime, responses to guns were more accurate (*M* = .781) than responses to tools (*M* = .671), *t*(19) = 4.13, *p* < *.*001, *dz* = 0.92. Following a Hispanic prime, responses to guns (*M* = .723) were not significantly different from responses to tools (*M* = .721), *t*(19) = 0.07, *p = .*948, *dz* = 0.01.

In the White/Hispanic condition, the main effect of Target was significant, *F*(1, 26) = 12.20, *p* = .002, ηp2 = .32, 90% CI [.09, .50], but the Prime × Target interaction was not significant, *F*(1, 26) = 0.60, *p = .*444, ηp2 = .02, 90% CI [.00, .17]. Participants were more accurate on gun trials than tool trials, regardless of prime. Specifically, following a White prime, gun trials (*M* = .807) were more accurate than tool trials (*M* = .732), *t*(26) = 2.66, *p = .*013, *dz* = 0.51; following a Hispanic prime, gun trials (*M* = .818) were more accurate than tool trials (*M* = 0.732), *t*(26) = 3.63, *p = .*001, *dz* = 0.70.

Finally, in the Neutral/Hispanic condition, the Prime × Target interaction was significant, *F*(1, 24) = 44.15, *p* < .001, ηp2 = 0.65, 90% CI [.42, .75]. Following a neutral abstract prime, responses to tools were more accurate (*M* = .767) than responses to guns (*M* = .655), *t*(24) = 4.09, *p* < .001, *dz* = 0.82, but following a Hispanic prime, responses to guns were more accurate (*M* = .803) than responses to tools (*M* = .663), *t*(24) = 5.05, *p* < .001, *dz* = 1.01.

Next we conducted a 3 Condition × 2 Target ANOVA on the Hispanic-prime trials only. A significant interaction would support the hypothesis, indicating that the contextual stimuli altered the degree to which Hispanic primes facilitated responses to tools and guns. A significant effect of target was apparent, F(1, 69) = 25.99, p < .001, ηp2 = .27, 90% CI [.13, .40]. More importantly, the Condition × Target interaction was significant as predicted, *F*(2, 69) = 5.78, *p = .*005, ηp2 = .14, 90% CI [.04, .27], suggesting that the magnitude of Hispanic-gun response facilitation varied across conditions.

Contrast weights were assigned to test this possibility (e.g. [(Neutral/Hispanic Gun – Neutral/Hispanic Tool) - (Black/Hispanic Gun – Black/Hispanic Tool)]). Hispanic-gun response bias in the Black/Hispanic condition was significantly lower than Hispanic-gun response bias in the White/Hispanic condition (*t*(69) = 2.09, *p = .*041) and in the Neutral/Hispanic condition (*t*(69) = 3.39, *p = .*001). Hispanic-gun response bias did not differ between the Neutral/Hispanic condition and the White/Hispanic condition (*t*(192) = 1.45, *p = .*152).

***PDP Analysis.*** Parameters *A* and *C* were again estimated through PDP for Hispanic primes. As before, estimates were calculated so that an *A* parameter of 1 would indicate a perfect automatic tendency to respond “gun,” while an *A* parameter of 0 would indicate a perfect automatic tendency to respond “tool.” A one-way ANOVA was conducted to determine whether task condition affected these parameters for Hispanic primes. PDP parameter estimates are provided in Table 2.

Parameter *A* was significantly affected by task condition, *F*(2, 69) = 6.53, *p* = .003, ηp2 = .16, 90% CI [.04, .27]. The automatic “gun” response tendency for Hispanic primes was weakest in the Black/Hispanic block, stronger in the White/Hispanic block, and strongest in the Neutral/Hispanic block. Post-hoc tests indicated that the *A* parameter was significantly lower in the Black/Hispanic task than in the other two tasks, which did not significantly differ. The strength of parameter *C* was not affected by task condition, *F*(2, 69) = 1.79, *p = .*175, ηp2 = .05, 90% CI [.00, .13].

**Discussion**

In this study, the significant Condition × Target interaction in Hispanic-primed trials demonstrates that task context can change the effect of a prime on task behavior. PDP analysis supports this claim by indicating that the different contexts changed the tendency of Hispanic primes to automatically facilitate “gun” responses, but not participants’ abilities to make controlled, accurate responses.

Consistent with our predictions, the response facilitation of Hispanic primes on gun targets differed by condition. By contrast, Hispanic-gun response facilitation was reduced in the White/Hispanic condition and Black/Hispanic conditions. Additionally, Hispanic-gun stereotypes appear to have exerted contrast effects on the neutral primes. These neutral abstract art primes significantly facilitated tool responses despite being in no way “tool-like.”

This study presents further evidence that the observed stereotypic association between a racial prime and a particular target is not absolute, but instead is contingent on the nature of the comparison primes used in a particular task. An RM contrast processes of categorization and response selection explains these changes parsimoniously.

One reviewer pointed out that the phenomenon as examined in studies 1 and 2 could be explained by transient shifts in the associated content primed by stimuli. For example, in study 1, White primes prepared gun responses when compared to abstract neutral stimuli, but these primes prepared tool responses when compared to Black primes. The RM contrast model explains this phenomenon as Black primes occupying the gun response, thereby pushing White primes towards the opposite response. However, an alternative explanation is possible. Perhaps seeing White primes in the context of Black primes causes contrast between the stereotype content, making White primes somehow seem more orderly or industrious by contrast, and thus, more associated with tools than guns. A similar explanation may apply to Study 2: Perhaps Hispanic primes seem violent compared to abstract art, but less so in comparison to Black primes. Our next two experiments sought to test these competing hypotheses.

**Experiment 3**

Our third experiment tested whether an RM contrast effect could be observed without changing the primes. If so, this would rule out the possibility that the association between one prime and one target is evaluated in comparison to the association between the other prime and that target.

In this experiment, participants performed one of two forms of the WIT. One group performed the typical task with Black-face and White-face primes and gun and tool targets. The other group performed a modified task which kept the same Black and White primes, but the targets were guns or Black faces. We had hypothesized that by using a target category that should be more highly associated with Blacks than guns, response contrast would cause White primes to prepare gun responses. That is, the Black-Black association should be stronger than the Black-Gun association; thus, the Black response would occupy the Black primes, leaving the Gun response to be activated by White primes.

We preregistered this experiment at <https://osf.io/3nqwa/>.

Participants were recruited from the undergraduate student body of a large Midwest university as well as a convenience sample of friends, family, and other graduate students. Because the semester was ending, participants volunteered in exchange for a snack, rather than for course credit. Thirty-three performed the standard WIT, and 32 performed the modified WIT. As before, African-American participants’ data was removed from analysis. Two subjects were excluded for insufficient attention to the task, and another eight were excluded for failing to perform significantly (p < .05) above chance accuracy. This left a final sample of 32 participants in the Gun-Tool task (of which 13 came from convenience samples) and 24 participants in the Black-Gun task (of which 6 came from convenience samples).

To accommodate the reduced incentive to participate, the task was shortened to 30 trials of each prime-target combination. Following complaints from participants, the task was further shortened to 24 trials of each prime-target combination.

**Analysis**

Each subjects’ accuracy for each Prime × Target interaction was averaged. These averages were then analyzed as a 2 (Condition: Between) × 2 (Prime: Within) × 2 (Target: Within) repeated-measures ANVOA. Supporting our hypothesis, the 3-way Condition × Prime × Target was statistically significant, *F*(1, 54) = 8.36, p = .005, η2 = .13 [.02, .27].

This three-way interaction was further analyzed by performing a 2 Condition × 2 Prime ANOVA on each level of Target. In our preregistration, we hypothesized a Condition × Prime interaction for gun-target trials such that in the typical WIT, Black primes would increase gun-target accuracy relative to White primes, but in the modified WIT, Black primes would decrease gun-target accuracy. The evidence for this particular interaction was ambiguous, F(1, 54) = 2.98, p = .090, η2 = .05 [.00, .17], although the pattern of the means was, at least, in the predicted direction.

For non-gun target trials, the 2×2 interaction was of the opposite direction, and statistically significant, F(1, 54) = 5.55, p = .02, η2 = .09 [.01, .22]. That is, in the typical WIT, White primes facilitated tool responses, but in the modified WIT, it was Black faces that facilitated Black responses.

**Discussion**

Our third experiment yielded partial support for our hypothesis. We established a significant three-way Condition × Prime × Target interaction, consistent with our preregistered hypotheses. In the typical WIT, Black primes facilitated gun responses relative to tool responses, whereas White primes had little effect. In the modified WIT, however, Black primes facilitated Black-face responses relative to gun responses; White primes had a similar, but slightly weaker, effect.

The hypothesized specific contrast, however, received only ambiguous support. The predicted reversal, in that White primes would impair gun responses in the typical WIT but facilitate them in the modified WIT, was what some might call “marginally significant.”

Data collection suffered from a number of shortcomings owing to the limited resources available at the time: subjects performed far fewer trials of the task; data was collected in noisy, public areas such as dining halls and coffee shops; data included that of friends, family, and psychologists.

We prepared a fourth experiment to compare the RM contrast and shifting association hypotheses. This experiment again changed the target categories, rather than the prime categories; the modified-WIT replaced the tool category with a group of heterogeneous stimuli for which response facilitation could not be explained by a sensible single association.

**Experiment 4**

To address this possibility, we examined another modified version of the WIT. In this version, the tool category was replaced by a set of four heterogeneous stimuli: an abstract neutral image from the IAPS, a banana, a giraffe, and a grip-strength tool.

**Method**

We preregistered this experiment at <https://github.com/hiv8r3/WIT4/blob/master/materials/Study4/Registration%20document%20WIT4.docx>.

One hundred and six participants participated in exchange for partial course credit. Five subjects were excluded for failing to use the correct keys in the task. Three subjects were given the wrong task and was excluded. Twenty-one subjects were excluded for not performing significantly (p < .01) above chance. Data from seven African-American participants was set aside per our preregistration. This left final sample sizes of 33 Gun/Tool WIT and 38 Gun/Other WIT.

Due to an error in programming, participants in the classic Gun/Tool WIT performed 30 trials of each prime-target pairing (120 total), whereas participants in the modified Gun/Other WIT performed 60 trials of each prime-target pairing (240 total). To prevent confounding by fatigue, we used only the first 120 trials from each participant.

**Analysis**

Response accuracy was analyzed by a 2 (Condition: Gun/Tool, Gun/Other) × 2 (Prime: White, Black) × 2 (Target: Gun, Not-Gun) repeated measures ANOVA.

Consistent with our hypotheses, the Prime × Target interaction was statistically significant (F(1, 69) = 19.63, *p* < .001, η2 = .22 [.09, .35[), but the 3-way interaction was not (F(1, 69) = 0.00, p = .98, η2 = .00 [.00, .01]). This indicates that the Gun/Tool and Gun/Other WITs demonstrated similar patterns of priming. Indeed, both conditions demonstrated a significant Prime × Target interaction: within the Gun/Tool condition, *F*(1, 32) = 6.78, *p* = .014, η2 = .17 [.02, .35]; within the Gun/Other condition, *F*(1, 37) = 15.14, *p* < .001, η2 = .29 [.10, .45].

Finally, to test whether White primes prepared non-gun responses, we restricted our analyses to White-primed trials within each condition. Within the Gun/Tool task, White-Tool trials were slightly more accurate than White-Gun trials, but this difference in accuracy was not statistically significant, *F*(1, 32) = 1.76, *p* = .194, η2 = .05 [.00, .21]. Within the Gun/Other task, White-Other trials were nearly, but not significantly, more accurate than White-Gun trials, *F*(1, 37) = 3.81, *p* = .059, η2 = .09 [.00, .25].

**PDP**

As before, responses were analyzed via PDP to make four parameters for each subject: Automaticity of gun responses for each prime (White, Black) and Control over responses for each prime. No prime’s effect significantly differed across condition: White primes prepared gun-vs-not-gun responses roughly equivalently whether the non-gun targets were tools or miscellany, t(69) = -0.15, p = .882, d = -0.04 [-0.51, 0.44].

**Discussion**

The results of study 4 provide further evidence for our hypothesis by establishing the generality of response contrast effects. In this study, White primes were observed to prepare responses to affectively-neutral heterogeneous stimuli of no clear associative content: an abstract neutral image, a banana, a grip-strength trainer, and a giraffe. Although it is possible that participants associate Whites with not only tools, but also bananas, giraffes, art, and firm handshakes, a response-contrast model explains these patterns most parsimoniously. When one prime strongly prepares one response, the other prime will be more likely to prepare the other response regardless of its associative content.

**General Discussion**

The present research highlights the reliability and generality of contrast effects in priming paradigms. Specifically, we observed systematic changes in automatic stereotypic response bias caused by various prime stimuli, and these changes were consistently in the direction that would be predicted by contrast effects. For example, in Experiment 1 and Experiment 2, we observed [THAT THE STRENGTH OF A PRIME-TARGET ASSOCIATION DEPENDED ON THE OTHER PRIMES IN THE EXPERIMENT.] Additionally, by changing task features to exploit RM contrast effects, we observed patterns of response facilitation that are difficult to explain by the activation of associations alone. For example, in Experiment 3, we observed [MARGINAL EVIDENCE THAT A BLACK-GUN ASSOCIATION IS REDUCED BY INCLUSION OF A TARGET CATEGORY THAT IS MORE STRONGLY ASSOCIATED]. Similarly, in Experiment 4, we observed that, just as White primes can prepare responses to tool targets, they can also preparing responses to giraffes, bananas, abstract art, and grip-strength machines. These heterogeneous associations can be parsimoniously explained when one considers that they were presented in contrast to a stronger prime-target mapping.

Results also illustrate that the strength of associations may be reflected by the (lack of) susceptibility to contextual effects. Racial primes with stronger stereotypic associations with guns were found to be less contextually malleable than racial primes with weaker gun associations, and primes with stronger associations tended to have the largest contrastive effect on the other prime categories in the task. This is a novel finding, as automatic contrast effects have most typically been found in evaluative, not semantic, priming tasks. These data lend support to the RM model and have important implications for tasks measuring implicit bias and stereotypes.

In concordance with the idea that weak associations are more contextually sensitive than strong associations (Scherer & Lambert, 2012), the present studies found that Black primes facilitated “gun” responses across conditions, regardless of the comparison primes with which they were paired. Moreover, as predicted, Hispanic and especially White primes did not facilitate “gun” responses when compared to Black primes, but these primes did facilitate “gun” responses when compared to other neutral prime stimuli. This finding suggests that biases measured in these tasks may not be as symmetrical (i.e., simultaneous and complementary biases, as in a White-good bias with a matching Black-bad bias) as is sometimes supposed (see Greenwald et al., 1998). Instead, response contrast effects may cause response patterns to take on the appearance of a symmetrical bias. For example, the present data indicate that patterns of response facilitation and interference in the WIT are chiefly due to a stable stereotypic association between Blacks and guns. However, response contrast effects then cause the White primes to become categorized with the opposite “tool” response. This process causes participants to demonstrate patterns of responses suggesting that they have an implicit stereotype that associates Whites and tools, when it seems unlikely that any such association exists (similar effects have been observed for evaluative bias towards the elderly: Scherer & Lambert, 2009, Experiment 6; Scherer & Schott, 2012, Experiment 3).

Previous research provides further evidence of this phenomenon. Judd et al. (2003) used modified forms of the WIT that replaced gun/tool decisions with gun/insect and sports object/fruit decisions. Participants demonstrated response associations between Black faces and guns and Black faces and sports objects, indicating semantic bias. However, in that study response facilitation also was observed between White faces and insects and White faces and fruit. Because it seems extremely unlikely that there is an implicit semantic association between Whites and insects or Whites and fruit, this previous study provides further evidence for the role of RM Contrast processes in performance of the WIT and similar tasks.

The present research also highlights the complexity involved when generalizing the WIT and similar tasks to stimuli of other races and content. Measurement of preexisting stereotypic associations is complicated by these contrast effects, such that observed patterns of bias are due not only to the construct of interest, implicit associations, but also due to the way in which participants use the response options to categorize the prime stimuli. The influence of task context on a given priming effect ranged from fairly small (ηp2= .04 for changes in Hispanic-gun bias in Experiment 2) to fairly large (ηp2= .14 for changes in White-gun bias in Experiment 1). At their largest, the apparent gun biases for these primes were larger than the standard Black/White WIT effect itself (here observed in Experiment 1 as ηp2= .17, while gun bias in modified WITs were as large as ηp2= .27 in the Neutral/White WIT, Experiment 1, and ηp2= .33 in the Neutral/Hispanic WIT, Experiment 2). Researchers may need to consider and account for these effects in order to most accurately depict implicit bias. In spite of these complexities, it seems likely that within a single version of an implicit bias task, contrast effects may be stable across participants, and thereby variance in observed task performance should still reflect the relative strength of implicit associations between a given group and guns.

Finally, the present results lend support to the response-selection, rather than spreading-activation, account of priming effects. The RM contrast model argues that participants automatically categorize the primes according to the available responses, even when there is no evaluative or semantic association between prime and response. Thus, categorization of primes is likely a vital and inevitable process in priming tasks, and can explain certain phenomena which cannot be explained by spreading semantic activations. While the present report focuses on the influence of categorization processes and response mapping contrasts in measurements of implicit racial bias, it seems likely that these processes are also active in sequential priming tasks in general.

**Limitations and Future Directions**

The current research is limited by some lingering complications of interpretation. Due to the nature of contrast effects and asymmetrical associations between primes and target categories, it is difficult to conclude which priming effects are due to preexisting associations and which are due to contrast effects. For example, in Study 1, White primes activated gun responses when in the context of neutral object primes. It cannot be determined from these data whether this effect is due to a preexisting association between Whites and guns or due to contrast effects caused by an association between neutral objects and tools. Similarly, it is not clear in Study 2’s Neutral/Hispanic condition whether the association between Hispanics and guns caused the response facilitation between the neutral primes and tools, or if there was instead an association between neutral primes and tools which, through contrast effects, caused response facilitation between Hispanics and guns. Of course, the former seems much more plausible than the latter; either way, the findings still demonstrate the malleability of a prime’s effect as a function of the context in which it is presented.

Although we believe that RM contrast effects provide the most parsimonious explanation for most—if not all—of the presently observed effects, we cannot unambiguously rule out the more conventional explanation for implicit attitude malleability effects; namely, that the task context changes the accessibility of the prime’s associative content. This shifting-associative-content account provides a good explanation for the findings of other studies of context effects (e.g., Barden, et al., 2004; Dasgupta & Greenwald, 2001; Dasgupta & Asgari, 2004; ) but does not explain the present results well. Unlike the RM contrast model, this shifting-associative-content explanation would suggest that participants’ stereotypic associations with the primes are changing based on the context: both White and Hispanic faces automatically activate stereotypes related to guns when compared to neutrally-valenced abstract art, but do not activate those stereotypes when they are compared to Black primes. This possibility seems less likely and less parsimonious than an RM contrast account of the study’s findings.

Finally, not every study yielded wholly significant effects, particularly when analyses were restricted to subsets of trial types. Experiment 3 yielded the anticipated 3-way interaction, but the 2-way interaction among gun-target trials was not statistically significant. Similarly, Experiment 4 did not yield the anticipated 2-way interaction in the Gun/Tool WIT, and the 2-way interaction in the Gun/Other WIT was just barely statistically significant. However, Experiments 3 and 4 are preregistered, and among those results that were not statistically significant, they were not excessively far from significance. Such imperfections are to be expected in data. Thus, on the balance of the available data, we feel that the evidence supports malleability of prime-target associations in the WIT consistent with a response-contrast effect.

**Summary**

In summary, we suggest that patterns of responses in implicit bias tasks are influenced by all of the following: 1) the semantic association between prime content and target, 2) the influence of controlled processes (Ito et al., 2014; McFarland & Crouch, 2002; Klauer et al., 2010), and 3) the unintentional categorization of primes using the available responses. The RM contrast model provides an easy way to consider these interactions between prime categories, which may contaminate and complicate the measurement of implicit bias. Researchers may wish to explore the possibility of testing a stimulus in a variety of prime contexts and assessing not only the *degree* of apparent bias, but also the *stability*, as primes with stronger associations are expected to be less contextually sensitive, as in this report and elsewhere (Scherer & Lambert, 2012).

**References**

Amodio, D. M. & Devine, P. G. (2006). Stereotyping and evaluation in implicit race bias: Evidence for independent constructs and unique effects on behavior. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 91*, 652-661. doi: 10.1037/0022-3514.91.4.652

Amodio, D. M., Harmon-Jones, E., Devine, P. G., Curtin, J. J., Hartley, S. L., & Covert, A. E. (2004). Neural signals for the detection of unintentional race bias*. Psychological Science, 15,* 88-93. doi: 10.1111/j.0963-7214.2004.01502003.x

Barden, J., Maddux, W. W., Petty, R. E., & Brewer, M. B. (2004). Contextual moderation of racial bias: The impact of social roles on controlled and automatically activated attitudes. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 87*, 5-22. doi: 10.1037/0022-3514.87.1.5

Biernat, M., & Manis, M. (1994) Shifting standards and stereotype-based judgements. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 66,* 5-20. doi: 10.1037/0022-3514.66.1.5

Blair, I. V., Ma, J. E., & Lenton, A. P. (2001). Imagining stereotypes away: The moderation of implicit stereotypes through mental imagery. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 81,* 828-841. doi: 10.1037/0022-3514.81.5.828

Conrey, F. R., Sherman, J. W., Gawronski, B., Hugenberg, K., & Groom, C. J. (2005). Separating multiple processes in implicit social cognition: The quad model of implicit task performance. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 89*, 469-487. doi: 10.1037/0022-3514.89.4.469

Dasgupta, N., & Asgari, S. (2004). Seeing is believing: Exposure to counterstereotypic women leaders and its effect on the malleability of automatic gender stereotyping. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology, 40,* 642-658. DOI: 10.1016/j.jesp.2004.02.003

Dasgupta, N., & Greenwald, A. G. (2001). On the malleability of automatic attitudes: Combating automatic prejudice with images of admired and disliked individuals. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 81,* 800-814. doi: 10.1037/0022-3514.81.5.800

De Houwer, J., Teige-Mocigemba, S., Spruyt, A., & Moors, A. (2009). Implicit measures: A normative analysis and review. *Psychological Bulletin, 135,* 347-368. doi: 10.1037/a0014211

Fazio, R. H., Jackson, J. R., Dunton, B. C., & Williams, C. J. (1995). Variability in automatic activation as an unobtrusive measure of racial attitudes: A bona fide pipeline? *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 69,* 1013-1027. doi: 10.1037/0022-3514.69.6.1013

Fazio, R. H., Sanbonmatsu, D. M., Powell, M. C., & Kardes, F. R. (1986). On the automatic activation of attitudes. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 50,* 229-238. doi: 10.1037/0022-3514.50.2.229

Greenwald, A. G., McGhee, D. E., & Schwartz, J. L. K. (1998). Measuring individual differences in implicit cognition: The implicit association test. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 74,* 1464-1480. doi: 10.1037/0022-3514.74.6.1464

Hilgard, J., Bartholow, B. D., Dickter, C. L., & Blanton, H. (in press). Characterizing switching and congruency effects in the Implicit Association Test as reactive and proactive cognitive control. *Social Cognitive and Affective Neuroscience.*  doi: 10.1093/scan/nsu060

Ito, T. A., Friedman, N. P., Bartholow, B. D., Correll, J., Loersch, C., Altamirano, L., & Miyake, A. (2014). *Toward a comprehensive model of executive cognitive function in implicit racial bias*. Manuscript submitted for publication.Jacoby, L. L. (1991). A process dissociation framework: Separating automatic from intentional uses of memory. *Journal of Memory and Language, 30,* 513-541. DOI: 10.1016/0749-596X(91)90025-F

Judd, C. M., Blair, I. V., & Chapleau, K. M. (2004) Automatic stereotypes vs. automatic prejudice: Sorting out the possibilities in the Payne (2001) weapon paradigm. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology, 40,* 75-81. doi:10.1016/S0022-1031(03)00063-5

Kawakami, K., Dovidio, J. F., Moll, J., Hermsen, S., Russin, A. (2000). Just say no (to stereotyping): Effects of training in the negation of stereotypic associations on stereotype activation. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 78,* 871-888. doi: 10.1037/0022-3514.78.5.871

Klauer, K. C., Schmitz, F., Teige-Mocigemba, S., & Voss, A. (2010). Understanding the role of executive control in the Implicit Association Test: Why flexible people have small IAT effects. *The Quarterly Journal of Experimental Psychology, 63,* 595-619. DOI:10.1080/17470210903076826

Krosnick, J. A. (1988). Attitude importance and attitude change. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology, 24,* 240-255. DOI: 10.1016/0022-1031(88)90038-8

Lai, C. K., Marini, M., Lehr, S. A., Cerruti, C., Shin, J-E. L., Joy-Gaba, J. A., Ho, A. K., Teachman, B. A., Wojcik, S. P., Koleva, S. P., Frazier, R. S., Heiphetz, L., Chen, E. E., Turner, R. N., Haidt, J., Kesebir, S., Hawkins, C. B., Chaefer, H. S., Rubichi, S., Sartori, G., Dial, C. M., Sriram, N., Banaji, M. R., & Nosek, B. A. (2014). Reducing implicit racial preferences: I. A comparative investigation of 17 interventions. *Journal of Experimental Psychology: General, 143*, 1765-1785. doi: 10.1037/a0036260

Lang, P., Bradley, M., Cuthbert, B. (2005). International Affective Picture System (IAPS): Affective Ratings of Pictures and Instruction Manual. University of Florida, Gainesville, FL.

McFarland, S. G., & Crouch, Z. (2002) A cognitive skill confound on the Implicit Association Test. *Social Cognition, 20,* 483-510. doi: 10.1521/soco.20.6.483.22977

Mendoza, S. A., Gollwitzer, P. M., & Amodio, D. M. (2010). Reducing the expression of implicit stereotypes: Reflexive control through implementation intentions. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 36*, 512-523. doi: 10.1177/0146167210362789

Payne, B. K. (2001). Prejudice and perception: The role of automatic and controlled processes in misperceiving a weapon. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 81*, 181-192. doi: 10.1037/0022-3514.81.2.181

Payne, B. K. (2005).Conceptualizing control in social cognition: How executive control modulates the expression of automatic stereotyping. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 89*, 488-503. doi: 10.1037/0022-3514.89.4.488

Payne, B.K., Cheng, C. M., Govorun, O., & Stewart, B. (2005).An inkblot for attitudes: Affect misattribution as implicit measurement. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 89*, 277-293.

Payne, B. K., Lambert, A. J., & Jacoby, L. L. (2002). Best laid plans: Effects of goals on accessibility bias and cognitive control in race-based misperceptions of weapons. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology, 38*, 384-396.

R Core Team (2013). R: A language and environment for statistical computing. R Foundation for Statistical Computing, Vienna, Austria. <http://www.R-project.org/>.

Rouder, J. N., Speckman, P. L., Sun, D., & Morey, R. D. (2009). Bayesian *t* tests for accepting and rejecting the null hypothesis. *Psychonomic Bulletin & Review, 16,* 225-237. DOI: 10.3758/PBR.16.2.225

Sadler, M. S., Correll, J., Park, B., & Judd, C. M. (2012). The world is not black and white: Racial bias in the decision to shoot in a multiethnic context. *Journal of Social Issues, 68,* 286-313. DOI: 10.1111/j.1540-4560.2012.01749.x

Scherer, L. D., & Lambert, A. J. (2009). Contrast effects in priming paradigms: Implications for theory and research on implicit attitudes. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 97*(3), 383-403. doi: 10.1037/a0015844

Scherer, L. D., & Lambert, A. J. (2012) Implicit race bias revisited: On the utility of task context in assessing implicit attitude strength. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology, 48*, 366-370. doi: 10.1016/j.jesp.2011.06.010

Scherer, L. D., & Schott, J. P. (2012) The Affect Misattribution Task impacts future implicit and explicit judgments. *Social Cognition, 30,* 537-563. doi: 10.1521/soco.2012.30.5.537

Stewart, B. D., & Payne, B. K. (2008). Bringing automatic stereotyping under control: Implementation intentions as efficient means of thought control. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 34,* 1332-1345. doi: 10.1177/0146167208321269

Table 1

*Mean Accuracy Rates in the Weapons Identification Task: Experiment 1*

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Target type | |  |
| Context and prime type | Gun | Tool | Difference |
| *Black/White task* |  |  |  |
| Black primes | .83 (.08) | .73 (.12) | .10\*\*\* |
| White primes | .76 (.11) | .80 (.13) | -.04\* |
| Difference | .08\*\* | -.08\*\* |  |
|  |  |  |  |
| *Black/Neutral task* |  |  |  |
| Black primes | .84 (.08) | .74 (.12) | .10\*\*\* |
| Neutral primes | .62 (.10) | .85 (.08) | -.22\*\*\* |
| Difference | .22\*\*\* | -.11\*\*\* |  |
|  |  |  |  |
| *White/Neutral task* |  |  |  |
| Neutral primes | .66 (.11) | .77 (.12) | -.11\*\*\* |
| White primes | .82 (.10) | .71 (.12) | .11\*\*\* |
| Difference | -.16\*\*\* | .06\* |  |

*Note:* values in parentheses are standard deviations. †*p* < .10; \**p* < .05; \*\**p* < .01; \*\*\**p* < .001.

Table 2. PDP estimates in the Weapon Identification Task, Experiments 1 and 2. Values in parentheses are standard errors. Parameter estimates in Experiment 2 are for Hispanic-prime trials.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Experiment 1 | | | |
|  | Black/White | Neutral/Black | Neutral/White |
| Parameter *A* |  |  |  |
| Black primes | .61 (.03) | .62 (.04) |  |
| White primes | .42 (.03) |  | .62 (.04) |
| Neutral primes |  | .28 (.03) | .40 (.04) |
|  |  |  |  |
| Parameter *C* |  |  |  |
| Black primes | .56 (.03) | .58 (.05) |  |
| White primes | .56 (.04) |  | .53 (.05) |
| Neutral primes |  | .47 (.03) | .43 (.04) |
|  |  |  |  |
| Experiment 2 | | | |
|  | Black/Hispanic | Neutral/Hispanic | White/Hispanic |
| Parameter *A* | .48 (.03) | .63 (.04) | .57 (.04) |
| Parameter *C* | .48 (.05) | .51 (.06) | .57 (.06) |

Table 3. Mean accuracy rates in the Weapons Identification Task, Experiment 2.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Target type | |  |
| Context and prime type | Gun | Tool | Difference |
| *Black/Hispanic task* |  |  |  |
| Hispanic primes | 0.74 | 0.74 | 0.00 |
| Black primes | 0.80 | 0.69 | 0.11\*\*\* |
| Difference | -0.06† | 0.05† |  |
|  |  |  |  |
| *White/Hispanic task* |  |  |  |
| Hispanic primes | 0.82 | 0.75 | 0.07\*\* |
| White primes | 0.81 | 0.76 | 0.05\* |
| Difference | 0.01 | -0.01 |  |
|  |  |  |  |
| *Neutral/Hispanic task* |  |  |  |
| Hispanic primes | 0.81 | 0.70 | 0.11\*\*\* |
| Neutral primes | 0.68 | 0.78 | -0.10\*\*\* |
| Difference | 0.13\*\*\* | -0.08\*\*\* |  |

*Note:* †*p* < .10; \**p* < .05; \*\**p* < .01; \*\*\**p* < .001.

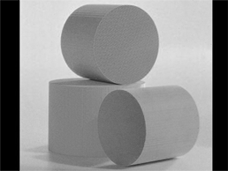
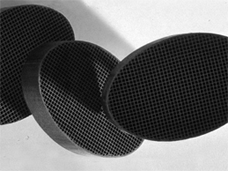
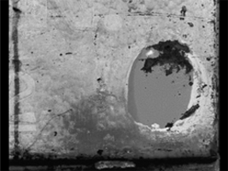
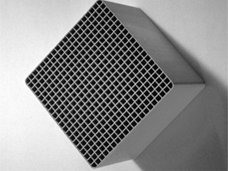
**Figure Captions**

***Figure 1.*** Stimuli used in experiments 1 and 2. Black, White, Tool, and Gun stimuli are as provided by Payne (2001). Hispanic face stimuli were retrieved by Google image search. Neutral object and abstract art stimuli were selected from the IAPS. Experiment 1 used the Black, White, and Neutral Object primes, while Experiment 2 used the Black, White, Neutral Abstract, and Hispanic Primes.

Tool: 

Gun: 

Neutral Object: 

Neutral abstract: 

Black: 

White: 

Hispanic: 

1. Image numbers 6570.2, 7002, 7025, and 7175, as used in Scherer & Lambert (2009). [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. This exclusion did not influence the patterns of means or significant effects. Curious readers are welcome to download the data and code. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Results were also analyzed using multilevel logistic models to predict the probability of a correct response on each trial given the condition, prime, and target. Those results are available in the supplement. The simpler ANOVA model is presented here because it is easy to interpret and yields effect size ηp2. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Because the current form of the WIT used a response-time deadline, the primary performance metric is accuracy rates, not reaction times (RTs). However, RT data also were analyzed. These analyses are reported in the supplemental materials. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. These faces were acquired through Google image search. By accident, one Hispanic face was of George Zimmerman, the defendant in the infamous court case *State of Florida v. George Zimmerman*. Data collection was completed months before the trial: the last subject was collected on May 8, 2013, while the trial ran from June 24th to July 18th, 2013. Neither any participant nor any researcher recognized Zimmerman during the pilot test and experiment. Cropping this face to make it more similar to the usual WIT primes may have made it harder to recognize. Excluding this prime from analysis did not change the pattern of results. Even if this picture were somehow causing the Hispanic faces as a category to be more strongly associated with guns, this would not complicate interpretation of the results, which support the hypotheses through changes in Hispanic-gun association across conditions. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Images used were IAPS numbers 7184, 7185, 7186, and 7187. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Again, exclusion of these participants did not change the pattern of means or significance of effects, and readers are welcome to download and re-analyze the data. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Reaction times were also analyzed for rigor’s sake. These analyses are available in the supplement. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)