Implicit Intergroup Bias: The Contributions of Ingroup Liking and Outgroup Disliking

Kristin A. Lane & Mahzarin R. Banaji
Harvard University

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To what extent does implicit bias reflect positivity toward one's ingroups versus negativity toward one's outgroups? While some theories suggest that prejudice reflects a general tendency to evaluate outgroups negatively, others argue that intergroup bias is rooted in ingroup liking rather than outgroup derogation. To date, research on implicit bias has focused on relative liking between different groups, leaving the primary question largely unanswered. Participants completed measures of their absolute implicit positivity and negativity toward a series of ingroups and outgroups (such as their university and ethnic group, and other ethnic groups). Two primary findings emerged. First, participants exhibited strongly positive attitudes toward their ingroups and either neutral or slightly negative attitudes toward their outgroups. This finding would support theories of prejudice that suggest intergroup bias is rooted primarily in liking for the ingroup rather than hostility toward the outgroup. Second, however, the data also indicated that greater ingroup positivity was related to greater outgroup negativity. That is, unlike the main effects, the correlational data suggested that implicit bias is a function of both ingroup positivity and outgroup negativity - strong ties to one's ingroups may lead to stronger dislike of one's outgroups. Thus, looking at the individual level indicates that intergroup bias, at least at the implicit level, stems from both strong ingroup liking and outgroup derogation.