

Lecture 15 – Bad Attitudes, Bad Behavior

The Abstract: In the first part of this lecture, I will discuss four factors that contribute biased attitudes about groups of people:

Factor 1: Ethnocentrism - the "We're #1" phenomenon

Factor 2: Stereotyping – The idea that "they" are all something else

Factor 3: The fundamental attribution error – The over-application of a Trait Theory of personality to other people.

Factor 4: The role of ignorance in person perception

In the second part of the lecture, I will describe some notable experiments that show how surprisingly easy it is to make people do "bad" things. Let me stress that to explain biased attitudes and bigoted behavior is not to condone them. Rather, it may be hoped the knowledge might point to amelioration.

Lecture Notes

Let us take as a given that racism and prejudice are bad.

There are two parts to the problem:

Racist attitudes

Racist behavior

Eisenhower: "You can't legislate morality."

Martin Luther King "but you can legislate moral behavior".

IMPORTANT NOTE: TO EXPLAIN IS NOT TO EXCUSE

Factor One: Ethnocentrism:

What does Evolutionary Psychology have to say?

Lab studies of "minimal group affiliation"

Tajfel et al (1971) create some artificial groups

Part 1: Look at abstract art
and determine if like Klee better than Kandinsky or vice versa

Part 2: Play a game with the following payoff choices

choice 1:	them \$1	us \$2
choice 2:	them \$4	us \$3

What is the result?

What is the point?

Factor Two: Stereotyping

Stereotyping: the tendency to infer attributes on the basis of group membership

The self-evident bit: If "we're #1", then someone else is #2.

What becomes part of a stereotype?

Silly example: Is bipedal part of the stereotype for blacks?

NOTE: THESE "DATA" ARE ALL OPINIONS. NOT FACT.

	World	German
1. Efficient	50	63
2. Extremely nationalistic	35	56
3. Scientifically minded	33	43
4. Pleasure-loving	82	72

Guess which are parts of the German stereotype?

What is the role of ignorance in stereotyping?

Factor Three: The fundamental attribution error

Stereotype matter because we think that traits are causal...in others.

What does this mean?

Trait theory	vs	Situationalism	
Nature	vs	Nuture Again

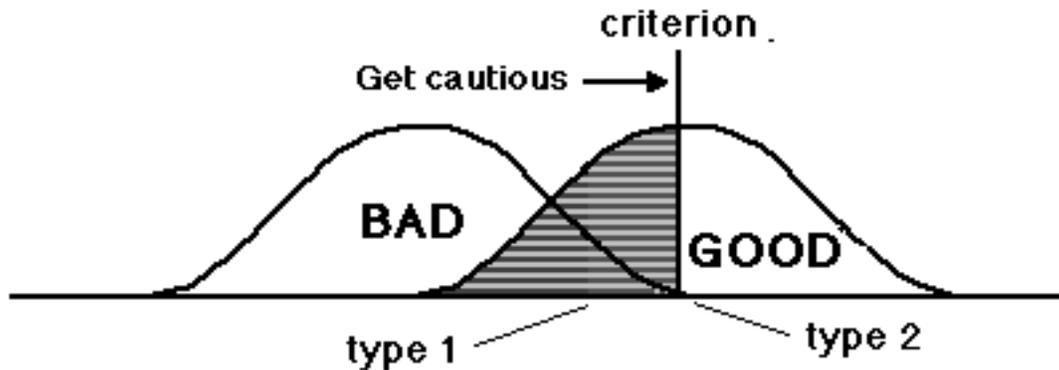
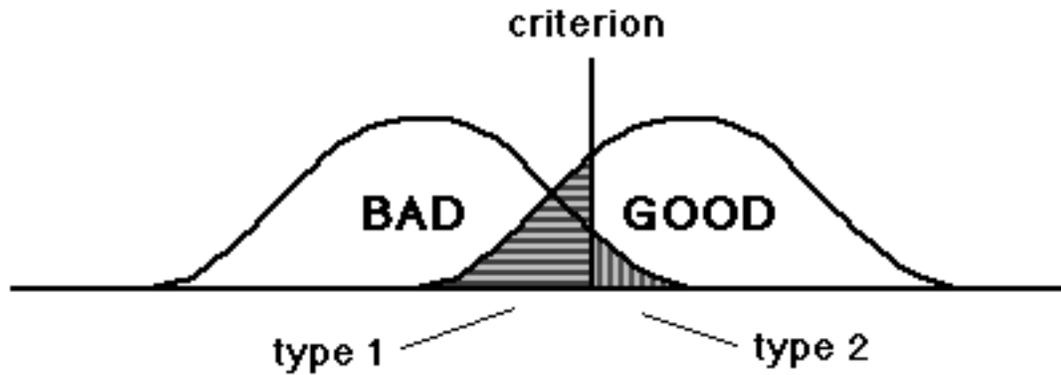
The fundamental attribution error is a tendency to see the behavior of others in terms of _____ not _____.

E.g. Why did you flunk the test? Vs Why did HE flunk the test?

Factor Four: The role of ignorance in person perception

	Assessment	
"Reality"	Bad	Good
Bad	OK	type 2 error
Good	type 1 error	OK

Which type of error is worse?

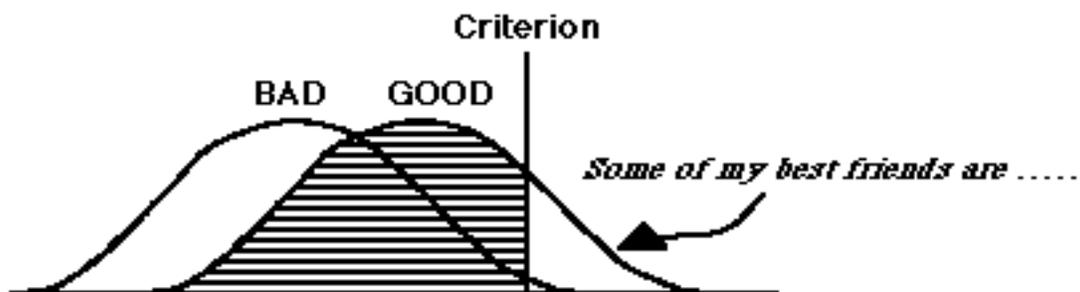


ABOVE MAY BE YOUR GROUP OR ANOTHER

Add to that the problem that you aren't as good at evaluating other groups as you are at evaluating your own. This is seen in the good and bad distributions spreading out so that the relative difference is smaller.

THIS IS NOW THE OTHER GUYS

Get ignorant (That makes the distributions wider so they overlap more)



It gets worse – Implicit Attitudes

What is the Stroop task.

How does the IAT (Implicit attitude test) work?

From Bad Attitude to Bad Behavior

How can people be moved from thought to action?

Asch - Peer Pressure

How does the experiment work?

What is the result?

The Milgram Experiment

What was done?

What were the predictions? (And why did Milgram do the exp?)

What were the data?

How could this happen?

The Manufacturer's Human Relations Consultant's (MHRC) encounter, (1981)

What was done?

What were the data?

Latané (1981) pronounced Latin A The law of social impact.

3 factors (you should be able to describe evidence for each of them)

STRENGTH means authority of the experimenter.

IMMEDIACY....How vivid/salient are the factors?

NUMBER: How many people produce/receive the pressure?
IF TIME (unlikely) Zimbardo - The Stanford Prison Experiment