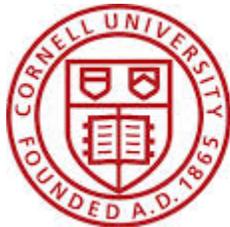


Addressing Unconscious Bias in the Staff Search Process

Cornell Interactive Theatre Ensemble



Cornell University

Presentation Overview:

- ▶ Main findings of unconscious bias research,
- ▶ How unconscious bias works,
- ▶ Tools for combating unconscious bias.

Low-blame, high-accountability

- All people have unconscious bias
 - Even good, well-intentioned people
- Biases are often out of our consciousness
- We can reduce reliance on biases

Research on Unconscious Bias

Main finding is that biases often disadvantage **women and people of color**

- ▶ Studies showing unconscious bias in:
 1. Callbacks for interviews
 2. Hireability
 3. Access
 4. Differential evaluation

Findings from Research on Unconscious Biases (Bertrand and Mullainathan, 2004)

- ▶ Emily and Greg got 50% more callbacks than Lakisha and Jamal, across industries and occupations.
- ▶ More pronounced in higher status jobs.
- ▶ “Equal Opportunity Employers” also did it.

Findings from Research on Unconscious Biases

(Steinpreis et al. 1999)

- ▶ 238 Psychology faculty rated same CVs
- ▶ ½ CVs had woman's names, ½ had man's names
- ▶ 73% said "hireable" with man's name, 45% with woman's
- ▶ more unsolicited comments on woman's CVs:
 - ▶ "I would need to see evidence that she actually got those grants on her own"

Findings from Research on Unconscious Biases

(Goldin and Rouse, 2000)

- ▶ 5 major orchestras switched to 'blind' auditions
- ▶ Women musician's ratings shot up immediately
- ▶ Female musicians were 5% of players in 1970 and about 25% a couple of decades later

Findings from Research on Unconscious Biases

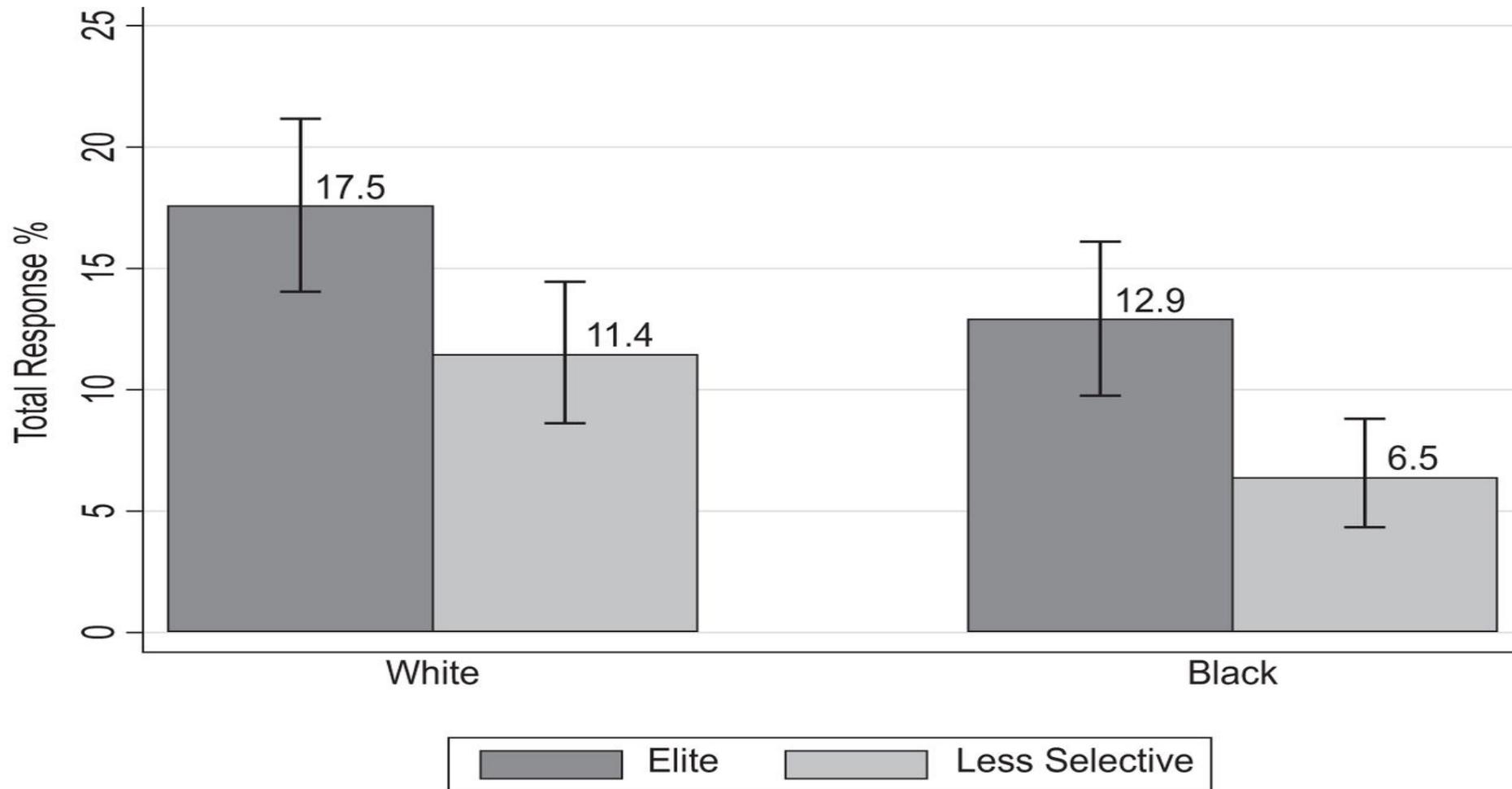
(Milkman et al. 2012)

- ▶ Emails sent to 6,548 faculty members from fictional students
 - ▶ Names signaled race and gender
- ▶ Same day, no difference in access
- ▶ Meeting in 1 week:
 - ▶ White males granted access 26% more often than women and students of color
 - ▶ White males received faster responses

Study of Race and College Selectivity in the Labor Market (Gaddis, 2014)

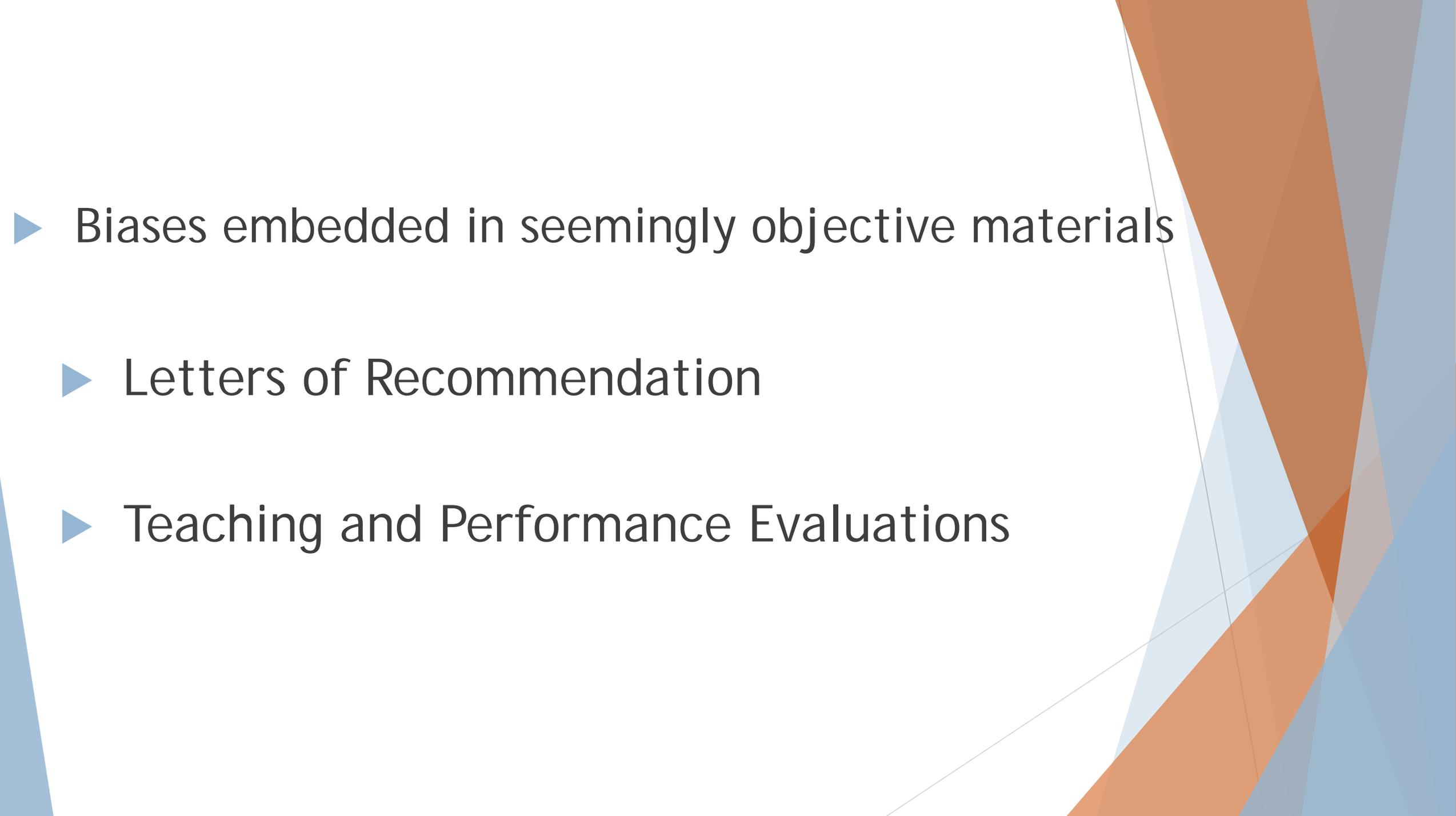
- ▶ Resumes indicated race and university selectivity
 - ▶ Elite university results in more employer responses for all candidates;
 - ▶ Black candidates from elite universities only do as well as white candidates from less selective universities.

Study of Race and College Selectivity in the Labor Market (Gaddis, 2014)



Study of Race and College Selectivity in the Labor Market (Gaddis, 2014)

- ▶ Black candidates face a double penalty
 - 1.) Less likely to receive a response than white candidates, *and*
 - 2.) Approximately 10 percent lower starting salary ranges

- 
- ▶ Biases embedded in seemingly objective materials
 - ▶ Letters of Recommendation
 - ▶ Teaching and Performance Evaluations

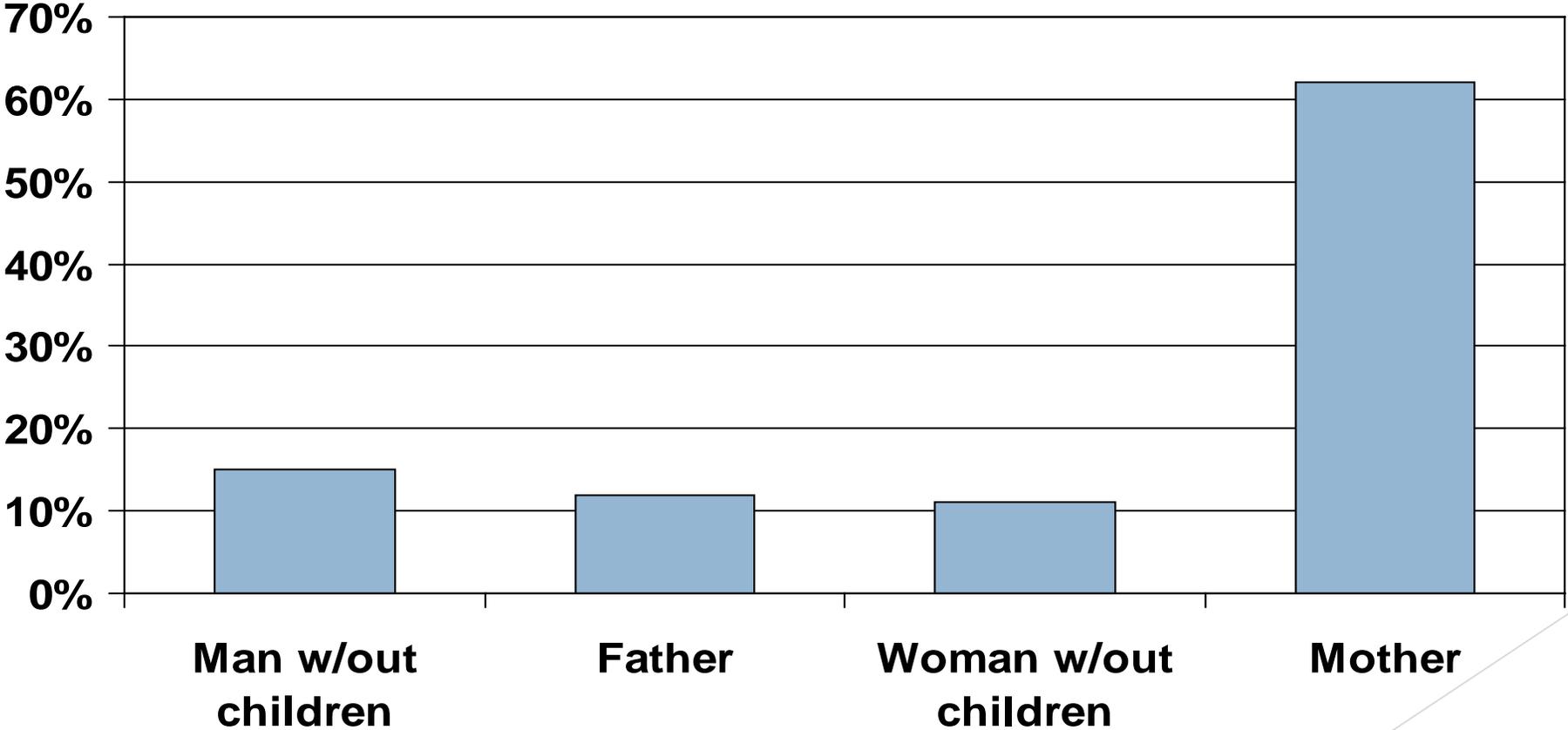
- ▶ **Double standards** for assessing competence and ability
 - ▶ Shifting criteria and heavier scrutiny
- ▶ Successful women are seen as unfeminine or difficult
 - ▶ **Double Bind**: Can be competent OR likeable
- ▶ Stereotyping can result in harsher biases against women who are mothers

Are mothers evaluated differently? (Correll, Benard, and Paik 2007)

Group being rated:	Mothers	Childless women	Fathers	Childless men
Raters assessments of...				
Competence	5.19	5.75	5.51	5.44
Commitment	67	79.2	78.5	74.2
Salary recommended	\$137K	\$148K	\$150K	\$144K
Likelihood of promotion	2.74	3.42	3.3	3.11
% recommended for hire	47%	84%	73%	62%

Source: Table 1

Applicant pool elimination (Heilman and Okimoto, 2008)



Why Does This Happen?

- ▶ **Stereotypes function as cognitive shortcuts**

We look for ways to help us sort through material more quickly and efficiently

- ▶ **BUT: stereotypes introduce errors into decision making**

- ▶ **Stereotyping often occurs out of awareness**

- ▶ **Everyone is prone to biases**

Bias is most extreme when...

- ▶ Individuals are tired, rushed or cognitively burdened
- ▶ Individual demographic traits are rare in a unit ("tokens")
- ▶ Jobs are gender or race-typed
- ▶ Valid performance information is lacking
- ▶ Criteria are vague or ambiguous

But there is good news...

These biases *can* be reduced

What can be done?

Disrupt tendency to use stereotypes as
cognitive shortcuts



Think about your thinking

How do we disrupt cognitive shortcuts?

- Devote adequate time
- Avoid premature ranking of the applicants
- Critically analyze supporting materials
- Read or review applicants work (when possible)



Disrupting cognitive shortcuts, cont.

- Be accountable - Be prepared to explain decisions and rankings
- Be transparent
- Create diverse search committees
- Consider using an evaluation form



Other Resources

- ▶ www.implicit.harvard.edu
 - ▶ Social attitudes
- ▶ Bertrand, Marianne and Sendhil Mullainathan. 2004. "Are Emily and Greg more employable than Lakisha and Jamal? A field experiment on labor market discrimination." *The American Economic Review* 94(4):991-1013
- ▶ Goldin, Claudia and Cecilia Rouse. 2000. "Orchestrating impartiality: The impact of 'blind' auditions on female musicians." *The American Economic Review* 90: 715-741.
- ▶ Milkman, Katherine, Modupe Akinola, Dolly Chugh. 2012. "Temporal Distance and Discrimination: An Audit Study in Academia." *Psychological Science* 23(7):710-7.
- ▶ Steinpreis, Rhea E., Katie A. Anders and Dawn Ritzke. 1999. "The impact of gender on the review of curriculum vitae of job applicants and tenure Candidates: A national empirical study." *Sex Roles* 41: 509-528.