

# ARE WE CRACKING THE IVORY CEILING?

## WOMEN AND MINORITIES IN PHILOSOPHY

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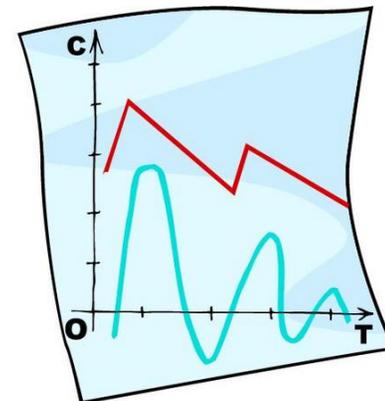
## Outline

1. Goals?
2. Data (all US/UK based)
3. Identifying the hurdles
  - a. **Native differences in ability**
  - b. Explicit discrimination
  - c. Structural barriers, e.g., mother penalty.
  - d. **Implicit bias**
  - e. **Micro-messages**
  - f. **Stereotype Threat/Solo Status**
4. Strategies for change??

## What are our goals?

- There are many reasons why one might believe that proportional representation of women and minorities in philosophy is a worthy goal.
  - It would be more just and fair than the disparities we have now.
  - It will improve our ability to gain knowledge develop good theories.

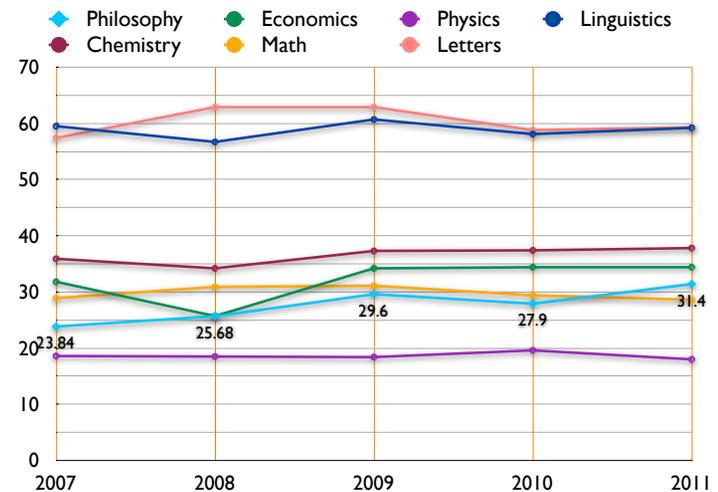
## 1. Data...or “The Philosophy Exception”



## Data Collection

- It is impossible to address disparities in the representation of women and minorities in a field without having an understanding of *where* the disparities occur and *why*.
- To develop hypotheses, we need data. But data is not systematically collected in the US or UK. What about Germany? Europe, more generally?
- *Failure to collect and analyze data undermines progress towards justice.*

## Survey of Earned Doctorates % Women



8/23/13

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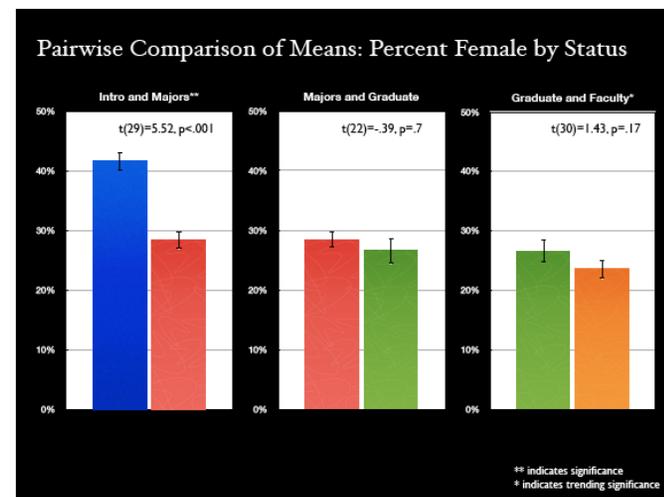
## Racial Minorities in Philosophy

- Our best data suggests that currently in the United States there are **156 blacks in philosophy**, including Ph.D. students and philosophy Ph.D.'s in academic positions. Among these there are **55 black women**, **31 of whom hold tenured or tenure-track positions**.
- Assuming that there are still 13,000 full-time philosophy instructors in the United States, the representation of scholars of color is plausibly worse than in *any other field in the academy*, including physics and engineering.
- In 2011, only 50 out of all 14,000 professors in Britain were black; none were black philosophers.

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/education/2011/may/27/only-50-black-british-professors?intcmp=239>

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/education/mortarboard/2011/may/27/black-professor-shortage-failure-to-nurture-talent>

## Pipeline leaks ?



## Georgia State Study (2012)

- Women in introductory philosophy courses (n=700) generally
  - found the course less enjoyable, and the material less interesting and relevant to their lives, than their male counterparts;
  - felt they had less in common with philosophy majors or instructors and felt less able and likely to succeed in philosophy;
  - reported being less likely to enroll in more advanced philosophy courses or major in the discipline, and
  - were likelier to *disagree* that the syllabus included a fair proportion of women authors.
- However: Women were no more likely to report that class conversations were aggressive, or to anticipate lower grades.

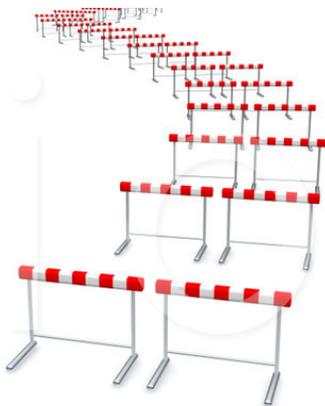
Study by Eddy Nahmias, presented at SPP 2013 and [blogged by Tania Lombrozo](#) 6/17/2013; reported in [Inside Higher Ed](#) 6/28/2013

## Co-Citation Data ([Healy 2013](#))

- KH considered citation data in four journals (*Noûs*, *Journal of Philosophy*, *Mind*, *Philosophical Review*) between 1993-2013.
- This includes 2,200 articles, that cite 34,000 other items (not unique items, but citation instances).
- Questions: What are the 500 most cited articles (in the data set), and how are they linked?
- Of the top 500 citations, 19 are by women (15 women total). That is **3.6%** of the total. Christine Korsgaard has 3 items in the most cited list (this is more than any other woman.) **6.3%** of the 500 are by David Lewis.
- There are no women at all in the 101-200 range.

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## 2. Identifying the Hurdles



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## A. Native Differences in Ability



## Native differences in ability: STEM

- Mean scores between males and females on tests of analytical reasoning and math are very close and *are converging*.\*
  - Upper tail m/f ratio in 1970's: 13:1
  - Upper tail m/f ratio in 2005: 3:1
- Professionals in STEM fields are not mainly those on the upper tail of the bell curve.\*
- Even controlling for mathematical ability, less than half as many women as men pursue STEM careers.\*
- For understanding mathematical concepts there is no sex difference at any age level.\*\*
- Individual performance is always a result of complex physical and contextual factors.

\* Beyond Bias and Barriers, NAS/NAE/IM 2006, p. 2-8. \*\* Ibid. p. 2-10.

## B. Outright Discrimination & Structural Barriers



## C. Implicit Bias

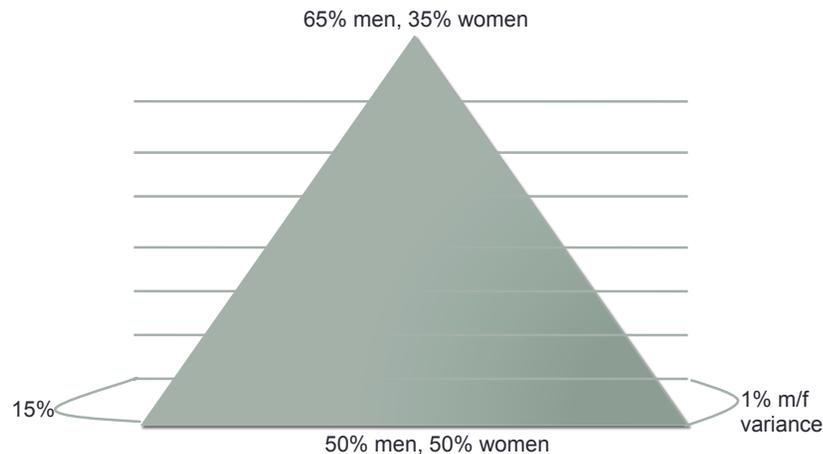


## Implicit Bias

- Implicit bias occurs **unconsciously, unintentionally**.
  - Even those with strong egalitarian ideals are subject to implicit bias.
- Implicit bias can have systematic and cumulative damaging effects.
  - Consider a setting with a 8 layer hierarchy and equal men and women at the bottom level. With 15% promotion rate through each level and **only 1% variance** in m/f promotion rates. The result is that only 35% of women reach the highest level.\*

\* Male-female differences: A computer simulation. Martell, Richard F.; Lane, David M.; Emrich, Cynthia *American Psychologist*, Vol 51(2), Feb 1996, 157-158

## Small differences add up



## Schemas

- The best explanation of implicit bias is that it arises from reliance on **problematic schemas**.
- A **schema** is a simplified representation of a kind or type that
  - Organizes our perceptions and beliefs about things of that kind
  - Guides our expectations, predictions
  - Supplies missing context (explanatory, interpretive)
- Schemas are mostly unconscious; they are plausibly the base for many of our dispositions to respond to things differently in light of their kind.

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## Schemas are widely shared

- Research shows that we all – regardless of gender or race – perceive and treat people based on schemas associated with their race/gender/social group.
  - Both men and women hold them about gender
  - Both whites and people of color hold them about race
- People are typically not aware of them, but with effort can become aware of them and change them.
- Implicit association test:  
<https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/>

Fiske (2002). *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 11, 123-128.

## Schemas play a significant role when there is:

- The response is quick, rushed, or given insufficient time for consideration.
- Full attention is not given to the task.
- Decisions are not held accountable.
- The individual being evaluated is a member of a group that is a significant minority in the field, with the tipping point somewhere around 25-30%.
- The evaluator is unaware of common errors concerning reasoning about the group so does not correct for them.

## Schemas and Evaluation

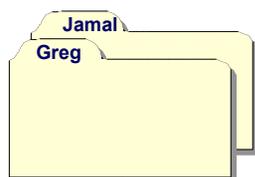
- Applicants with African American-sounding names had to send **15** resumes to get a callback, compared to **10** for applicants with white-sounding names.

- White names counted as an additional **8** years of experience.
- The higher the resume quality, the greater the gap in callback rate.

Bertrand & Mullainathan (2004) *Poverty Action Lab*, 3, 1-27.

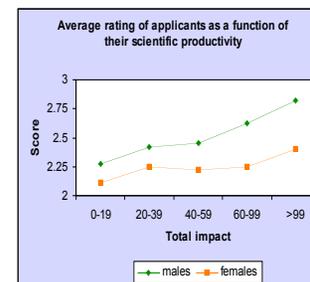
- When evaluating identical application packages, male and female university psychology professors preferred 2:1 to hire "Brian" (or "Barack"?) over "Karen."

Steinpreis, Anders, & Ritzke (1999) *Sex Roles*, 41, 509.



## Evaluation of Applications

"...the success rate of female scientists applying for postdoctoral fellowships at the [Swedish Medical Research Council] during the 1990s has been less than half that of male applicants."



**Results of study: Women applying for a post-doctoral fellowship had to be 2.5 times more productive to receive the same reviewer rating as the average male applicant.**

Similar findings:

- USA/GAO report on *Peer Review in Federal Agency Grant Selection* (1994)
- European Molecular Biology Organization Reports* (2001)
- NIH Pioneer Awards: *Journal of Women's Health* (2005) & *Nature* (August 2006)

Wenneras & Wold (1997) *Nature*, 387, 341.

## Gender Schemas in Recommendations

for Successful Medical School Faculty Applicants

### Letters for men:

- Longer
- More references to CV, Publications, Patients, Colleagues

### Letters for women:

- Shorter
- More references to personal life
- More "doubt raisers," including hedges, faint praise, and irrelevancies (e.g., "It's amazing how much she's accomplished." "It appears her health is stable." "She is close to my wife.")



Trix & Psenka (2003) *Discourse & Society*, 14(2): 191-220, 2003.

## Evaluation bias

- Race and gender stereotypes/schemas often lead to different standards of assessment.
  - Women and minorities are more easily judged *competent* (she's good...for a woman);
  - But standards for *excellence* are set higher than for men and whites (but is she *really* good?).

Biernat & Kobrynowicz, 1997

## When Schemas conflict....

- Disappear the difficult cases, by ignoring them or forcing them out. (Or as in military, rule them out by fiat.)
- Find ways to pretend that false assumptions of the schemas are preserved. (Successful women philosophers aren't *really* women, or they aren't *really* doing philosophy.)
- Allow exceptions to the rule (tokenism), but maintain barriers to limit access. (Of course we would hire another woman, if we could find one like Sally.)
- Change the schemas.

## Chilly Climate:

- We communicate using more than words. Implicit attitudes are more often expressed in body language than in speech, *even by those who do not consciously endorse the bias.*
- **Micro-messages**
  - Eye contact, open body language, expressions of interest, follow-up questions, subtle affirmations and withdrawals.
  - Allocation of space, invitations, job assignments, offers of help.
  - Topics of conversation, choice of time/place/content of collective activities.

## Microaggression - Microaffirmation

- Accumulation of negative micromessages causes increasing dissatisfaction with work/study environment over time.
  - Small slights appear harmless, but add up.
  - Complaints about small slights appear to be “whiny,” so are discredited.
- Messages can be positive or negative resulting in micro-inequity or micro-advantage. *Micro-inequities can be countered by micro-affirmations.*

## CHILLY CLIMATE: Social Dimensions

- *Philosophy departments often are hyper-masculine places.*
  - **competitive**, combative, highly judgmental
  - oriented toward **individual** accomplishment and intelligence
  - **hostile** to femininity.
- *Philosophy departments often are socially dysfunctional places.*
  - Women, socially, are responsible for maintaining good social dynamics. Typically women are either
    - **burdened** by this sense of responsibility or
    - **alienated** by the atmosphere where ordinary social norms are not recognized.

## D. Stereotype Threat



## What is Stereotype Threat?

- Stereotype threat occurs when individuals are stereotyped as poor performers in a domain and their performance may seem to confirm the negative stereotype.
  - Performance decreases on **computational** and **recall** tasks (etc).
  - Conscious awareness of the threat is not necessary for effects.
  - Threat can be activated with little or no explicit mention of stereotyped group, if the stereotype is culturally ubiquitous or if there are implicit cues.
- Stereotype threat is **situational**: performance decreases **ONLY** in settings where the stereotype is activated.
- Stereotype threat can be deactivated by education about its effects (among other things).

## Stereotype threat and solo status

- Precise explanation of stereotype threat is contested, but all accounts suggest that time and energy consuming meta-cognition is responsible.
- Solo status occurs when one is the only member of one's social group in a setting.
- Solo status increases the risk of stereotype threat; public settings also exacerbate the effects.
- Addressing solo status can reduce stereotype threat.

[Thomson, Mischa and Denise Sekaquaptewa. 2002. "When Being Different is Detrimental..." \*Analyses of Social Issues and Public Policy\* 2\(1\): 183-203.](#)

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## RE-AIM against stereotype threat (1)

- **REFRAME** the task
  - Does it have to be viewed as diagnostic of your abilities? Is it really a "test"?
- **EXPLAIN** the anxiety without validating stereotype
  - Attribute struggle to "an external, temporary cause."
  - Reframe the anxiety as a potential performance enhancer.

<http://www.reducingstereotypethreat.org/reduce.html>

## RE-AIM against stereotype threat (2)

- **AFFIRM complex identities**

“Reducing the salience of a threatened identity appears to serve a protective function, supporting continued high performance...”

- Embrace an identity that is non-stereotyped.
- Identify with a characteristic shared across ingroup/outgroup.
- Affirm your valued and unique characteristics.

## RE-AIM against stereotype threat (3)

- Adopt an **INCREMENTAL** approach to intelligence.

Is intelligence is “fixed” or “*like a muscle*” that can strengthen and develop?

- There is empirical support for the idea that intelligence is NOT fixed but can be developed.
- Those who accept the latter “incremental view” are less susceptible to stereotype threat; they are “likely to increase effort to further learning and to overcome obstacles.” (Dweck & Sorich, 1999; Mueller & Dweck 1998).

- Seek out counter-stereotypical role **MODELS**

<http://www.reducingstereotypethreat.org/reduce.html>

## Recommendations (1)

### Challenge the myth of non-bias

- Even individuals who are strongly egalitarian may still rely on problematic schemas.
- Confidence in your own fairness may prevent you from being as fair as you aim to be. E.g., If you assume you are always fair, then it is tempting to conclude that others’ weaknesses must be their own fault.
- Become conscious of your own biases.

## Recommendations (2)

### Be VERY attentive to climate

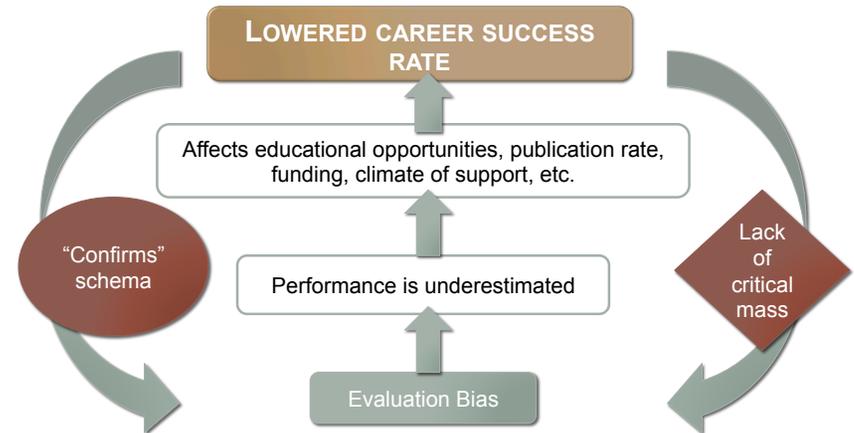
- Be reflective about potential micro-inequities; use micro-affirmations
- Reduce threat conditions that trigger stereotype threat
- Develop active bystander skills

## Recommendations (3)

### Create systems of accountability

- In grading (anonymize papers and exams)
- In curriculum development
- In grad student admissions
- In faculty recruitment
- In the promotion process

## Accumulation of disadvantage feedback loop



## What recommendations would you suggest?

- What are the main issues in Germany?
- How would you recommend they be addressed?

*Thank you for your attention*

And special thanks to:

*Samantha Brennan      Hazel Sive  
Thomas F. DeFrantz      Abigail Stewart  
Deborah K. Fitzgerald      JoAnne Yates*

for their contributions.

*For full references to the research cited, please go to:*

<https://stellar.mit.edu/S/project/equityissues/materials.html>

or

<http://www.portal.advance.vt.edu/index.php/categories/resources/reading-lists>

And select: [Faculty Recruitment Workshop, Articles by Topic](#)

Or choose from several annotated bibliographies.

## Links

- Implicit Bias and Philosophy International Research Project: <http://biasproject.org>
- Gender Equity Project (Virginia Valian): <http://www.hunter.cuny.edu/genderequity/>
- ADVANCE portal: <http://www.portal.advance.vt.edu/>
- Women in Philosophy Task Force: <http://web.mit.edu/wphtf/>
- APA Committee on the Status of Women: <http://www.apaonlinecsw.org>

The End