

# Types of Unconscious Bias

## In-Group / Affinity Bias

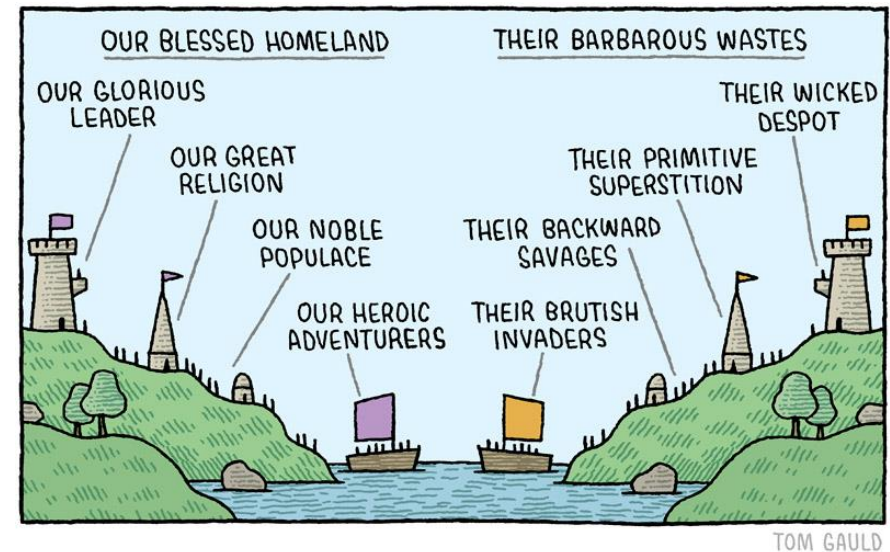
We are attracted to those who look and sound like us, share our interests, education and social background.

Studies show that, in general, people extend greater trust, positive regard, cooperation, and empathy to ingroup members compared with outgroup members.

A preference for the company of people similar to ourselves creates psychological and physical distance between social groups.

### EXAMPLES:

- A tendency to withhold praise or rewards from outgroup members
- Attributing the successes of ingroup members to positive character traits rather than to external causes and by contrast, attributing failures of ingroup members to situational causes rather than to character traits.
- Preference for the ingroup manifests as swifter condemnation of outgroup behaviours that breach social codes, and conversely, a greater tolerance of ingroup deviance.
- Intergroup threat occurs when one group's well-being is challenged by another group's actions, beliefs, or characteristics. **EG.** competition over scarce resources, or symbolic threats to a group's worldview or cultural values. Under these conditions, ingroup bias might manifest as negative emotions towards outgroup members (for example, hostility, anger, resentment)
- When intergroup bias occurs across cultures or ethnic groups, it can manifest as ethnocentrism due to the belief that one group's ways are superior to others.



# Types of Unconscious Bias

## Anchoring Bias

The situation where there is an over-reliance on the first piece of information obtained (the anchor) and using it as the baseline for comparison, making further judgments and/or making decisions.

It also operates when we judge the likelihood of an event using the starting point (the anchor) and then making adjustments.

It can also create an unconscious ascribed causality.

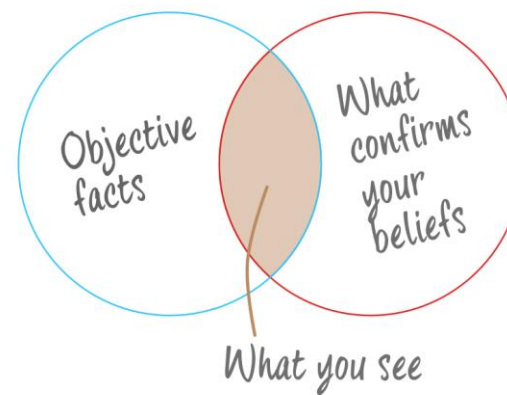
### EXAMPLES:

- If the first applicant for a job has an unusually high graduating test score, it can set the bar higher for other applicants who have more normal scores.
- “Her parents lived into their 90’s and she probably will as well, given she inherited those healthy genes.”
- Buying a used car based on the year of manufacture and odometer reading rather than the condition of the engine and it’s history (e.g. Has it been in an accident in the past)
- The first T-shirt you look at has a price tag of \$450 and the second \$35. You judge the second as being cheap and shoddy.
- You see a stock for \$5 and buy 1,000 of them. However, after a few months, the price falls to \$4.50. You believe they are worth \$5 so keep hold of them. The price continues to fall to \$3. Nevertheless, you still believe they are worth \$5 (the anchor value), despite the company’s continued poor performance.



# Types of Unconscious Bias

## Confirmation Bias



Favouring information that confirms prior existing beliefs by processing or interpreting new information through that lens and rejecting anything that counters or goes against what is already considered the truth. This includes searching for and recalling information that confirms or supports prior beliefs or values, and rejecting any other perspectives. This type of bias can prevent us from looking at situations objectively. It can also influence the decisions we make and lead to poor or faulty choices.

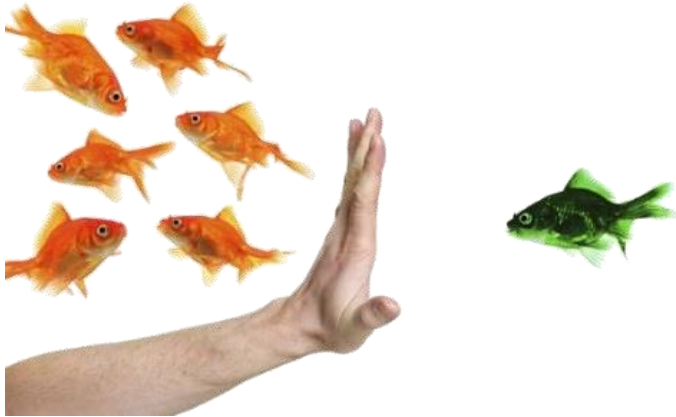
Even the most open-minded person will also have confirmation bias. When we know about confirmation bias and accept the fact that it does exist, we can make an effort to recognise it by being curious about opposing views and really listening to what others have to say and why.

### EXAMPLES:

- Believing left handed people are more creative than right handed, and whenever a person that is left-handed and creative appears, greater importance is placed on this "evidence" as it that supports what they already believe.
- People who support or oppose a particular issue or cause, will not only actively seek information to support it, but they will also interpret news stories in a way that upholds their existing ideas.
- A doctor who has jumped to a particular hypothesis as to what disease a patient has may then only ask questions and look for evidence that confirms that diagnosis while overlooking any evidence that would tend to dispute it.

# Types of Unconscious Bias

## Stereotype Bias



Attributing assumed or learned characteristics of a group to individual members of the group, whether or not they share the characteristic.

Stereotype bias is the phenomenon of a memory aberration that gets generalised and distorted, based on unfounded beliefs regarding particular groups. This can be based on any shared attribute such as race, gender, ethnicity, language, social status etc.

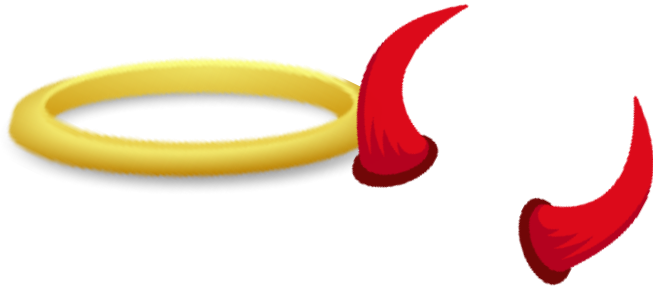
Stereotype bias can exult as well as diminish. This means there can also be a positive stereotype that refers to a subjectively favourable belief held about a social group

## EXAMPLES:

- The misremembering of ethnic-sounding names as being the names of criminals.
- Assuming that all members of certain racial groups are belonging to a lower social class.
- Erroneously remembering and labelling an individual is a terrorist just because their name resembles a certain nationality.
- All Asian peoples excel at math
- Any judgement that people from a particular place are better or worse than, more hard working or lazier than, more handsome or uglier than, smarter and more talented or dumber than and so on. This also applies to races, gender, different religions, particular schools of education, job roles .... In fact pretty much any factor of human existence is open to stereotype bias

# Types of Unconscious Bias

## Halo/Thorn Effect



Judging a person's qualities by other unrelated, usually physical, qualities.

**HALO:** The tendency to judge others similarly on all traits, assuming that because someone is good or bad at one thing they will be equally good or bad at another. Thinking well and attributing positive qualities.

**HORN:** The concept by which a person who is judged negatively on one aspect is automatically judged negatively on several other aspects without evidence. Thinking badly and attributing negative qualities. Clearly, this is the opposite of the halo effect.

### EXAMPLES: HALO

- During a job search, a candidate with strong education credentials results in the interview committee concluding that he/she is also a strong leader
- Assuming a handsome or beautiful person is a good person and holds good values or that they are wealthy and successful
- All Kenyans have the capacity to be successful distance runners

### EXAMPLES: HORN

- Overweight people, who unfortunately are often stereotyped as being lazy, slovenly or irresponsible
- Parents who allow their children to play outside without close supervision are irresponsible
- A young woman with an annoying giggle is not intelligent
- Looking at a not flattering photo on an on-line dating site and assuming the person is not 'your type'