

Oxford Bibliographies

Your Best Research Starts Here



Implicit Attitudes in Public Opinion

Efrén O. Pérez

LAST MODIFIED: 28 FEBRUARY 2017

DOI: 10.1093/OBO/9780199756223-0208

Introduction

Implicit attitudes are automatic evaluations of objects: political candidates and parties, racial and ethnic groups, national symbols and consumer products, and so on. These responses are spontaneously triggered hard to control and can operate subconsciously. Implicit attitudes stand in contradistinction to their explicit variety: self-reported attitudes that people actively direct, control, and are conscious of. Public-opinion scholars have overwhelmingly centered on explicit attitudes, painting a portrait of mass opinion formation as slow, deliberative, and often dispassionate. But psychological research since the late 1970s has agglomerated into the view that much of people's thinking is fast, automatic, and affectively charged—in a word, *implicit*. Heaped onto all this is the critical insight that implicit attitudes precede, and many times structure, their explicit counterparts. The implications for the study of public opinion are manifold. This article brings some order to all this by familiarizing readers with the conceptualization, measurement, and analysis of implicit attitudes in American public opinion.

General Overviews

First trickling in the late 1970s, then surging in the 1990s, several tributaries of research on implicit attitudes have sprung forth. These have cascaded into a deep and wide sea of accumulated discoveries about the implicit attitudes we all possess. Some researchers have channeled many of these results into works that broadly analyze the conceptualization, measurement, and application of implicit attitudes to social and political questions (Bargh 2007; Wittenbrink and Schwarz 2007; Petty, et al. 2009; Banaji and Heiphetz 2010; Gawronski and Payne 2010; Banaji and Greenwald 2013; Ksiazkiewicz and Hedrick 2013; Pérez 2013; Gawronski, et al. 2015), all of which are informative overviews of implicit attitudes along these lines.

Banaji, Mahzarin R., and Anthony G. Greenwald. *Blindspot: Hidden Biases of Good People*. New York: Delacorte, 2013.

A highly accessible book on implicit attitudes and the Implicit-Association Test (IAT), written for a popular audience by two psychologists who pioneered the study of this phenomenon.

Banaji, Mahzarin R., and Larisa Heiphetz. "Attitudes." In *Handbook of Social Psychology*. Vol. 1. 5th ed. Edited by Susan T. Fiske, Daniel T. Gilbert, and Gardner Lindzey, 353–393. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley, 2010.

A concise look at the conceptualization of "attitudes" and its evolution since the late 20th century, especially with respect to their implicit manifestations.

Bargh, John A., ed. *Social Psychology and the Unconscious: The Automaticity of Higher Mental Processes*. Frontiers of Social Psychology. New York: Psychology Press, 2007.

Implicit attitudes are distinguished by high degrees of automaticity. This volume examines automatic psychological processes in

domains such as person perception, evaluation, and stereotyping.

Gawronski, Bertram, Silvia Galdi, and Luciano Arcuri. “What Can Political Psychology Learn from Implicit Measures? Empirical Evidence and New Directions.” *Political Psychology* 36.1 (2015): 1–17.

A crisp review article emphasizing the promise of implicit-attitude measures for studying political preferences and political information processing.

Gawronski, Bertram, and B. Keith Payne, eds. *Handbook of Implicit Social Cognition: Measurement, Theory, and Applications*. New York: Guilford, 2010.

An impressive collection of cutting-edge reviews on key findings, theories, and applications of implicit attitudes, all identifying unanswered questions and pointing to future research directions.

Ksiazkiewicz, Aleksander, and James Hedrick. “An Introduction to Implicit Attitudes in Political Science Research.” *PS: Political Science & Politics* 46.3 (2013): 525–531.

An introductory article capping a collection of short essays on implicit attitudes and political science, it lays bare some implications of the former for the latter.

Pérez, Efrén O. “Implicit Attitudes: Meaning, Measurement, and Synergy with Political Science.” *Politics, Groups, and Identities* 1.2 (2013): 275–297.

The first political-science review to examine the conceptualization of implicit attitudes, the mechanics of implicit-attitude measures, and theoretical implications for implicit political attitudes.

Petty, Richard E., Russell H. Fazio, and Pablo Briñol, eds. *Attitudes: Insights from the New Implicit Measures*. New York: Psychology Press, 2009.

Engages major issues concerning implicit attitudes, including implicit-explicit attitude relations and alternate measures of implicit attitudes such as the Affect Misattribution Procedure (AMP).

Wittenbrink, Bernd, and Norbert Schwarz, eds. *Implicit Measures of Attitudes*. New York: Guilford, 2007.

Implicit attitudes demand non-self-reported measures. This book explores the mechanics, strengths, and limitations of several implicit attitude measures, such as the Implicit-Association Test (IAT).

Conceptualizations of Implicit Attitudes

The study of implicit attitudes has made waves in nearly every part of psychology. These ripples are now reaching the shores of political science, where researchers are deploying implicit attitudes to study manifold aspects of public opinion. However, if political scientists are to continue moving forward from these initial beachheads, they will need to be on the same page about what implicit attitudes are (see Greenwald and Banaji 1995, Gawronski and Bodenhausen 2006, and Fazio 2007, all cited under What Are Implicit Attitudes?), what makes them implicit (see Bargh 1994; Bargh, et al. 1996; Correll, et al. 2002; Payne, et al. 2002; Kim 2003; and Conrey, et al. 2005, all cited under What Makes Implicit Attitudes Implicit?), and where they originate from, in the first place (see Olson and Fazio 2001, Olson and Fazio 2002, and Rydell and McConnell 2006, all cited under Where Do Implicit Attitudes Come From?). These studies

provide solid conceptual footing on which to better understand these points.

What Are Implicit Attitudes?

Implicit attitudes are deemed to be starkly different from their self-reported counterparts, in large part because the former are said to be automatically activated. But there is more to implicit attitudes than just their automaticity (Greenwald and Banaji 1995, Gawronski and Bodenhausen 2006, Fazio 2007). The articles in this subsection speak to the main signature traits that implicit attitudes display.

Fazio, Russell H. "Attitudes as Object-Evaluation Associations of Varying Strength." *Social Cognition* 25.5 (2007): 603–637.

Treats implicit attitudes as object evaluations that are automatically activated in light of fitting stimuli. Views implicit attitudes as prior to and further "upstream" from explicit attitudes.

Gawronski, Bertram, and Galen V. Bodenhausen. "Associative and Propositional Processes in Evaluation: An Integrative Review of Implicit and Explicit Attitude Change." *Psychological Bulletin* 132.5 (2006): 692–731.

Views implicit attitudes as associative evaluations that are deeply affective and automatically activated. Suggests that implicit attitudes are "independent of the assignment of truth values."

Greenwald, Anthony G., and Mahzarin R. Banaji. "Implicit Social Cognition: Attitudes, Self-Esteem, and Stereotypes." *Psychological Review* 102.1 (1995): 4–27.

A classic conceptualization of implicit attitudes as traces of past experience, unavailable to introspection, that influence feelings, thoughts, or actions toward relevant objects.

What Makes Implicit Attitudes Implicit?

A hallmark of implicit attitudes is their basis in automaticity; that is, mental processes that are unintentional, uncontrollable, efficient, and below awareness (Bargh 1994; Bargh, et al. 1996; Correll, et al. 2002; Payne, et al. 2002; Kim 2003; Conrey, et al. 2005). The research cited in this subsection brings to light these automatic processes and their implications for implicit attitudes.

Bargh, John A. "The Four Horsemen of Automaticity: Awareness, Intention, Efficiency, and Control in Social Cognition." In *Handbook of Social Cognition*. Vol. 1, *Basic Processes*. 2d ed. Edited by Robert S. Wyer Jr. and Thomas K. Srull, 1–40. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum, 1994.

A masterfully concise discussion and explanation of automaticity, its components, and its operation in human cognition.

Bargh, John A., Mark Chen, and Lara Burrows. "Automaticity of Social Behavior: Direct Effects of Trait Construct and Stereotype Activation on Action." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 71.2 (1996): 230–244.

A seminal piece on the lack of awareness in implicit processes. It shows, *inter alia*, that subliminal priming of an elderly stereotype causes student subjects to unwittingly walk more slowly down a hall.

Conrey, Frederica R., Jeffrey W. Sherman, Bertram Gawronski, Kurt Hugenberg, and Carla J. Groom. "Separating Multiple Processes in Implicit Social Cognition: The Quad Model of Implicit Task Performance." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 84.2 (2003): 296–311.

Psychology 89.4 (2005): 469–487.

Proposes a model disentangling automatic from controlled processes involved in the performance of implicit-attitude measures.

Correll, Joshua, Bernadette Park, Charles M. Judd, and Bernd Wittenbrink. “The Police Officer’s Dilemma: Using Ethnicity to Disambiguate Potentially Threatening Individuals.” *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 83.6 (2002): 1314–1329.

Shows the efficiency underlying implicit responses through the relatively effortless way in which racial stereotypes influence the decision to shoot or not to shoot black or white targets in a video game.

Kim, Do-Yeong. “Voluntary Controllability of the Implicit Association Test (IAT).” *Social Psychology Quarterly* 66.1 (2003): 83–96.

Underlines the uncontrollability of implicit attitudes by demonstrating that subjects completing Implicit-Association Tests (IATs) find it exceedingly difficult to alter their responses on the test, even if asked to by researchers.

Payne, B. Keith, Alan J. Lambert, and Larry L. Jacoby. “Best Laid Plans: Effects of Goals on Accessibility Bias and Cognitive Control in Race-Based Misperceptions of Weapons.” *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology* 38.4 (2002): 384–396.

Illustrates the unintentional aspect of automaticity, by establishing that black primes cause individuals to misidentify objects as weapons, even when explicitly encouraged to avoid this influence.

Where Do Implicit Attitudes Come From?

The origin of implicit attitudes is one of the least understood questions, but also one of the more exciting areas of research on this topic. One major thread of research theorizes that implicit attitudes reflect the slow accrual of information regarding an attitude object, via the mechanism of classical conditioning (Olson and Fazio 2001; Olson and Fazio 2002; Rydell and McConnell 2006; Dunham, et al. 2013; Gawronski, et al. 2014). The articles in this subsection provide a firm sense of this general framework’s beginnings, as well as the leading edge of research taking this theoretical view.

Dunham, Yarrow, Eva E. Chen, and Mahzarin R. Banaji. “Two Signatures of Implicit Intergroup Attitudes: Developmental Invariance and Early Enculturation.” *Psychological Science* 24.6 (2013): 860–868.

Contra the view of implicit attitudes as arising from slow information accrual, this study detects them in samples of very young children.

Gawronski, Bertram, Robert Balas, and Laura A. Creighton. “Can the Formation of Conditioned Attitudes Be Intentionally Controlled?” *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin* 40.4 (2014): 419–432.

Finds, in part, that evaluative-conditioning (EC) effects on implicit-attitude measures are hard to control, but EC effects on self-reported measures can be manipulated to a degree.

Olson, Michael A., and Russell H. Fazio. “Implicit Attitude Formation through Classical Conditioning.” *Psychological Science* 12.5 (2001): 413–417.

Establishes the role of classical conditioning in the development of individual implicit attitudes.

Olson, Michael A., and Russell H. Fazio. "Implicit Acquisition and Manifestation of Classically Conditioned Attitudes." *Social Cognition* 20.2 (2002): 89–103.

Reveals that the learning and expression of classically conditioned attitudes can occur without a person's awareness of either one.

Rydell, Robert J., and Allen R. McConnell. "Understanding Implicit and Explicit Attitude Change: A Systems of Reasoning Analysis." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 91.6 (2006): 995–1008.

Uses a "systems of reasoning" approach to pinpoint the origins of implicit attitudes in associative reasoning, characterized by slow, repeated pairings of attitude objects and evaluative information.

Classic Articles on Measuring Implicit Attitudes and Related Responses

Across the vast and expanding landscape of implicit attitudes research, a handful of studies jut out for their ability to set new research agendas. These articles have done so by introducing measures of implicit attitudes—or by applying these measures to new social problems (Fazio, et al. 1995; Greenwald, et al. 1998; Payne 2001; Greenwald, et al. 2003; Devos and Banaji 2005; Payne, et al. 2005; Sriram and Greenwald 2009).

Devos, Thierry, and Mahzarin R. Banaji. "American = White?" *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 88.3 (2005): 447–466.

Adapts the Implicit Association Test (IAT) to measure associations between American identity and racial groups, further demonstrating the IAT's versatility in measuring other responses besides attitudes.

Fazio, Russel H., Joni R. Jackson, Bridget C. Dunton, and Carol J. Williams. "Variability in Automatic Activation as an Unobtrusive Measure of Racial Attitudes: A Bona Fide Pipeline?" *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 69.6 (1995): 1013–1027.

Introduces the bona fide pipeline, a computerized task priming people (subliminally) with racially varied face photos, then asking them to judge subsequent words as good or bad. It yields facilitation scores reflecting the degree to which the race of people in photos (black) matches the valence of adjectives (bad).

Greenwald, Anthony G., Debbie E. McGhee, and Jordan L. K. Schwartz. "Measuring Individual Differences in Implicit Cognition: The Implicit Association Test." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 74.6 (1998): 1464–1480.

Presents the IAT, which times people's sorting of stimuli on a computer while using matched and mismatched schemes. It yields millisecond scores reflecting strength of associations between objects (e.g., black) and valence (e.g., bad).

Greenwald, Anthony G., Brian A. Nosek, and Mahzarin R. Banaji. "Understanding and Using the Implicit Association Test I: An Improved Scoring Algorithm." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 85.2 (2003): 197–216.

Lays out a scoring procedure and D-score metric designed to enhance the relationship between IAT scores and relevant outcomes, which many IAT users often employ.

Payne, B. Keith. "Prejudice and Perception: The Role of Automatic and Controlled Processes in Misperceiving a Weapon."

Journal of Personality and Social Psychology 81.2 (2001): 181–192.

Puts forth a measure of implicit associations among blacks, whites, weapons, and tools, revealing that people are quicker to associate blacks with weapons than with tools.

Payne, B. Keith, Clara Michelle Cheng, Olesya Govorun, and Brandon D. Stewart. “An Inkblot for Attitudes: Affect Misattribution as Implicit Measurement.” *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 89.3 (2005): 277–293.

Submits the Affect Misattribution Procedure (AMP) as an implicit measure. AMP primes people with stimuli (racially varied photos) then asks them to judge unrelated stimuli (Chinese pictographs). AMP scores reflect the degree to which affect toward primes is misattributed to unrelated stimuli.

Project Implicit.

A nonprofit demonstration website revolving around the IAT. It seeks to educate the public about implicit biases and to provide a platform for online data collection.

Sriram, N., and Anthony G. Greenwald. “The Brief Implicit Association Test.” *Experimental Psychology* 56.4 (2009): 283–294.

Introduces a shorter version of the IAT and provides validating evidence for this procedure.

Relationships between Implicit and Explicit Attitudes

One of the often-replicated patterns in implicit-attitude research is the varied correlation between implicit and explicit attitudes, which ranges from anemic to robust (Nosek, et al. 2002; Nosek 2005; Nosek 2007; Greenwald and Nosek 2009). This variability in the correspondence between implicit attitudes and their self-reported counterparts has both puzzled and intrigued researchers, leading to a variety of theoretical and methodological perspectives as to what these empirical patterns imply (Gawronski and Strack 2004; Nosek and Smyth 2007; Payne, et al. 2008; Ranganath, et al. 2008). The articles in this section detail some of these many viewpoints.

Gawronski, Bertram, and Fritz Strack. “On the Propositional Nature of Cognitive Consistency: Dissonance Changes Explicit, but Not Implicit Attitudes.” *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology* 40.4 (2004): 535–542.

Offers a theoretically driven account of the varied association between implicit and explicit attitudes, by centering on the role that cognitive consistency plays.

Greenwald, Anthony G., and Brian A. Nosek. “Attitudinal Dissociation: What Does It Mean?” In *Attitudes: Insights from the New Implicit Measures*. Edited by Richard E. Petty, Russell H. Fazio, and Pablo Briñol, 65–82. Ohio State University Volume on Attitudes and Persuasion. New York: Psychology Press, 2009.

Focuses on the oft-observed divergence between explicit and implicit attitude reports and its implications for, inter alia, dual-process models of attitudes and the unawareness of implicit attitudes.

Nosek, Brian A. "Moderators of the Relationship between Implicit and Explicit Evaluation." *Journal of Experimental Psychology: General* 134.4 (2005): 565–584.

A data-intensive consideration of sundry moderators of the relationship between implicit and explicit attitudes, revealing that under clear conditions, the link between the two is enhanced.

Nosek, Brian A. "Implicit-Explicit Relations." *Current Directions in Psychological Science* 16.2 (2007): 65–69.

Discusses the varied association between implicit and explicit attitudes and why it emerges conceptually, theoretically, and methodologically.

Nosek, Brian A., Mahzarin R. Banaji, and Anthony G. Greenwald. "Harvesting Implicit Group Attitudes and Beliefs from a Demonstration Web Site." *Group Dynamics: Theory, Research, and Practice* 6.1 (2002): 101–115.

Reveals that implicit and explicit attitudes toward political figures are robustly correlated, which contrasts with the often-weak correlation observed between implicit and explicit attitudes.

Nosek, Brian A., and Frederick L. Smyth. "A Multitrait-Multimethod Validation of the Implicit Association Test." *Experimental Psychology* 54.1 (2007): 14–29.

Uses factor analysis to demonstrate that, net of method artifact, self-reports and parallel implicit measures yield two related (but distinct) latent variables: explicit and implicit attitudes.

Payne, B. Keith, Melissa A. Burkley, and Mark B. Stokes. "Why Do Implicit and Explicit Attitude Tests Diverge? The Role of Structural Fit." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 94.1 (2008): 16–31.

Attitude measures vary by how they actually tap their intended constructs. This paper shows how these structural differences can affect the association between implicit and explicit attitude reports.

Ranganath, Kate A., Colin Tucker Smith, and Brian A. Nosek. "Distinguishing Automatic and Controlled Components of Attitudes from Direct and Indirect Measurement Methods." *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology* 44.2 (2008): 386–396.

Uses factor analysis to show that, empirically, classifying attitudes by whether they are (un)controllable is more useful than classifying them by whether they are measured (in)directly.

Neurological Insights into Implicit Attitudes

Some of the most exciting developments related to implicit attitudes have emerged from studies examining their neurological substrates (Phelps, et al. 2000; Cunningham, et al. 2003; Lieberman, et al. 2003; Stanley, et al. 2008). This research has exposed the roots of implicit attitudes in identifiable parts of the brain that imply clear responses or action tendencies. The role of fear in expression of implicit racial attitudes has especially garnered the attention of neuroscientists interested in implicit-attitude measures (Cunningham, et al. 2004a; Cunningham, et al. 2004b; Amodio, et al. 2006; Kubota, et al. 2012; Schreiber and Iacoboni 2012). More generally, neuroscientific research has unearthed important insights with implications for how we understand the operation of implicit attitudes.

Amodio, David M., Jennifer T. Kubota, Eddie Harmon-Jones, and Patricia G. Devine. "Alternative Mechanisms for Regulating

Racial Responses According to Internal vs External Cues.” *Social Cognitive and Affective Neuroscience* 1.1 (2006): 26–36.

Produces evidence for the neural circuits engaged in people's regulation of racial bias, depending on whether the impetus for such control is internal or external to the individual.

Cunningham, William A., Marcia K. Johnson, J. Chris Gatenby, John C. Gore, and Mahzarin R. Banaji. “Neural Components of Social Evaluation.” *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 85.4 (2003): 639–649.

Utilizes functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) technology to throw light on the neural substrates of the automatic and controlled components of individual evaluations.

Cunningham, William A., Marcia K. Johnson, Carol L. Raye, J. Chris Gatenby, John C. Gore, and Mahzarin R. Banaji. “Separable Neural Components in the Processing of Black and White Faces.” *Psychological Science* 15.12 (2004a): 806–813.

Provides additional evidence that amygdala activation is greater when subjects are primed with black faces than with white faces.

Cunningham, William A., Carol L. Raye, and Marcia K. Johnson. “Implicit and Explicit Evaluation: fMRI Correlates of Valence, Emotional Intensity, and Control in the Processing of Attitudes.” *Journal of Cognitive Neuroscience* 16.10 (2004b): 1717–1729.

Further illuminates the neural circuits involved in implicit and explicit evaluation via fMRI.

Kubota, Jennifer T., Mahzarin R. Banaji, and Elizabeth A. Phelps. “The Neuroscience of Race.” *Nature Neuroscience* 15.7 (2012): 940–948.

An overview of the latest insights regarding brain structure and implicit racial biases, especially the latter's activation and control.

Lieberman, Matthew D., Darren Schreiber, and Kevin N. Ochsner. “Is Political Cognition Like Riding a Bicycle? How Cognitive Neuroscience Can Inform Research on Political Thinking.” *Political Psychology* 24.4 (2003): 681–704.

Argues for and illustrates the relevance of neuroscience for deepening understandings of political cognition, especially its automatic and subconscious components.

Phelps, Elizabeth A., Kevin J. O'Connor, William A. Cunningham, et al. “Performance on Indirect Measures of Race Evaluation Predicts Amygdala Activation.” *Journal of Cognitive Neuroscience* 12.5 (2000): 729–738.

Establishes that performance on the Implicit-Association Test (IAT) is correlated with activity in the amygdala, a brain structure playing a role in emotional learning and evaluation.

Schreiber, Darren, and Marco Iacoboni. “Huxtables on the Brain: An fMRI Study of Race and Norm Violation.” In *Special Issue: The Political Psychology of Biology, Genetics and Behavior*. *Political Psychology* 33.3 (2012): 313–330.

Uses brain-imaging technology to explore the neurological circuits involved in thinking about race and social norms.

Stanley, Damian, Elizabeth Phelps, and Mahzarin Banaji. “The Neural Basis of Implicit Attitudes.” *Current Directions in Psychological Science* 17.2 (2008): 164–170.

Reviews research on the neural components of implicit evaluation, while sketching a tripartite model of automatic activation and control

of implicit attitudes.

Controversies regarding Implicit Attitudes

When something unorthodox is done in science, controversy is likely to follow. Fledgling research on implicit attitudes was one of those times. Against a thick wall of self-reports, some scholars proposed new and indirect ways to measure people's attitudes, none of which asked people anything. Several questions arose, but two have persisted in some quarters. First, Are Implicit Attitudes Really Attitudes? Second, Are Implicit Attitudes Subconscious? The articles in these subsections either raise these questions or provide data and argumentation against them.

Are Implicit Attitudes Really Attitudes?

Measures of implicit attitude gauge people's evaluations indirectly, often by performing a sorting task or comparable exercise on a computer. Researchers then draw inferences about people's attitudes on the basis of response times or related data. Not a word is ever spoken by individuals completing these implicit measures. Are they really capturing attitudes, then? One answer is "no": that what these indirect measures really capture is knowledge or awareness of information in one's culture, but not one's personally endorsed attitude proper (Karpinski and Hilton 2001, Arkes and Tetlock 2004, Olson and Fazio 2004). Some of the following articles rehearse this alternative explanation, while others provide counterarguments and evidence to the contrary (Ashburn-Nardo, et al. 2003; Nosek and Hansen 2008; Greenwald, et al. 2009; Uhlmann, et al. 2012).

Arkes, Hal R., and Philip E. Tetlock. "Attributions of Implicit Prejudice, or 'Would Jesse Jackson "Fail" the Implicit Association Test?'" *Psychological Inquiry: An International Journal for the Advancement of Psychological Theory* 15.4 (2004): 257–278.

Contends that implicit attitudes, in the specific form of prejudice, are not attitudes at all, but rather reflections of people's cultural knowledge (e.g., "I know that society holds blacks in low regard").

Ashburn-Nardo, Leslie, Megan L. Knowles, and Margo J. Monteith. "Black Americans' Implicit Racial Associations and Their Implications for Intergroup Judgment." *Social Cognition* 21.1 (2003): 61–87.

Building on work suggesting that blacks hold mildly prowhite implicit attitudes, it shows that individual differences in these attitudes meaningfully predict blacks' personal choices in an intergroup task.

Greenwald, Anthony G., T. Andrew Poehlman, Eric Luis Uhlmann, and Mahzarin R. Banaji. "Understanding and Using the Implicit Association Test III: Meta-analysis of Predictive Validity." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 97.1 (2009): 17–41.

Reports a trove of evidence that individual differences in Implicit Association Test (IAT) scores reliably predict a host of individual attitudes and behaviors, thus suggesting that implicit attitudes are people's own evaluations.

Karpinski, Andrew, and James L. Hilton. "Attitudes and the Implicit Association Test." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 81.5 (2001): 774–788.

Early criticism of the IAT as capturing not personally endorsed attitudes but, rather, information gleaned from one's environment.

Nosek, Brian A., and Jeffrey J. Hansen. "The Associations in Our Heads Belong to Us: Searching for Attitudes and Knowledge

in Implicit Evaluation.” *Cognition and Emotion* 22.4 (2008): 553–594.

Mounts an alternative theoretical framework supported by empirical evidence, explaining why implicit attitudes are attitudes and not just cultural residue.

Olson, Michael A., and Russell H. Fazio. “Reducing the Influence of Extrapersonal Associations on the Implicit Association Test: Personalizing the IAT.” *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 86.5 (2004): 653–667.

Provides evidence that the IAT partly captures extrapersonal associations—that is, information one knows about but does not necessarily endorse.

Uhlmann, Eric Luis, T. Andrew Poehlman, and Brian A. Nosek. “Automatic Associations: Personal Attitudes or Cultural Knowledge?” In *Ideology, Psychology, and Law*. Edited by Jon Hanson, 228–260. *Series in Political Psychology*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012.

Reviews accumulated work to show that implicit attitudes are, indeed, personal attitudes rather than reflections of cultural knowledge about relevant objects.

Are Implicit Attitudes Subconscious?

The very adjective “implicit” in implicit attitudes connotes a personal lack of awareness about these evaluations. Not surprisingly, then, many scholars have attributed a lack of consciousness to implicit attitudes, sometimes with little or weak evidence in favor of this assertion. The literature has now evolved into a state where the unconsciousness of implicit attitudes is treated as a theoretical and empirical matter, rather than a given (Gawronski, et al. 2006; Gawronski, et al. 2007; Hahn and Gawronski 2014). The three articles in this subsection provide some reason for pause about whether people are always unaware that they hold implicit attitudes.

Gawronski, Bertram, Wilhelm Hofmann, and Christopher J. Wilbur. “Are ‘Implicit’ Attitudes Unconscious?” *Consciousness and Cognition* 15.3 (2006): 485–499.

Suggests that claims about “unawareness” of implicit attitudes should be empirically tested, not just asserted. Distinguishes among the content, impact, and source awareness of implicit attitudes.

Gawronski, Bertram, Etienne P. LeBel, and Kurt R. Peters. “What Do Implicit Measures Tell Us? Scrutinizing the Validity of Three Common Assumptions.” *Perspectives on Psychological Science* 2.2 (2007): 181–193.

Reviewing published work on implicit attitudes, the authors briefly reaffirm and extend the notion that individuals might be at least partially aware of their implicit attitudes.

Hahn, Adam, and Bertram Gawronski. “Do Implicit Evaluations Reflect Unconscious Attitudes?” *Behavioral and Brain Sciences* 37.1 (2014): 28–29.

Briefly extends the conceptual argument that individuals might have some awareness of their implicit attitudes.

Implicit Political Attitudes

The intellectual roots of implicit attitudes, it should be clear by now, are firmly in social psychology. Unsurprisingly, then, most theorizing

about and applications of implicit attitudes have occurred in that discipline. But these roots are rapidly branching out into many related fields, very much including political science. There, many scholars have dedicated themselves to culling new insights about when, how, and among whom implicit attitudes pack a political punch. This scholarship can be usefully classified into five general areas; namely, Automaticity and Motivated Political Reasoning, Candidate Judgment and Choice, Moral Psychology, Political Identity and Information Processing, and Race, Ethnicity, Gender, and Politics.

Automaticity and Motivated Political Reasoning

A major offshoot of research on implicit political attitudes involves their spontaneous activation and what downstream consequences this has for the nature of political judgment and choice (Lodge and Taber 2005; Burdein, et al. 2006; Taber and Lodge 2006; Hawkins and Nosek 2012; Erisen, et al. 2014; Taber and Lodge 2016). These studies illuminate one of these effects—motivated reasoning—and some of the cognitive mechanisms through which it operates, such as hot cognition, affect transfer, and affective contagion.

Burdein, Inna, Milton Lodge, and Charles Taber. “Experiments on the Automaticity of Political Beliefs and Attitudes.” *Political Psychology* 27.3 (2006): 359–371.

Lays out an implicit experimental approach as a way to measure those considerations—beliefs, identities, values, etc.—that shape citizens’ political thinking outside conscious awareness.

Erisen, Cengiz, Milton Lodge, and Charles S. Taber. “Affective Contagion in Effortful Political Thinking.” *Political Psychology* 35.2 (2014): 187–206.

Reports experiments supporting affective contagion: the notion that split-second, subconscious feelings triggered at the outset of information processing bias subsequent evaluations.

Hawkins, Carlee Beth, and Brian A. Nosek. “Motivated Independence? Implicit Party Identity Predicts Political Judgments among Self-Proclaimed Independents.” *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin* 38.11 (2012): 1437–1452.

Administers Republican/Democrat Implicit Association Tests (IATs) to reveal that implicit partisanship influences the political judgments that self-reported independents make.

Lodge, Milton, and Charles S. Taber. “The Automaticity of Affect for Political Leaders, Groups, and Issues: An Experimental Test of the Hot Cognition Hypothesis.” *Political Psychology* 26.3 (2005): 455–482.

Provides empirical support for a “hot cognition” hypothesis—namely, that all sociopolitical concepts are affectively charged, and that this affect is automatically triggered on mere exposure to concepts.

Taber, Charles S., and Milton Lodge. “Motivated Skepticism in the Evaluation of Political Beliefs.” *American Journal of Political Science* 50.3 (2006): 755–769.

Draws, in part, on insights regarding automatic affective responses to show how these propel the partisan goals undergirding motivated political reasoning.

Taber, Charles S., and Milton Lodge. “The Illusion of Choice in Democratic Politics: The Unconscious Impact of Motivated Political Reasoning.” In *Special Issue: Advances in Political Psychology*. *Political Psychology* 37.S1 (2016): 61–85.

Reviews evidence on the impacts of unconscious influences on more-deliberative aspects of political judgments, highlighting hot cognition, affect transfer, affect contagion, and motivated bias as mechanisms.

Candidate Judgment and Choice

Another major arm of research on implicit political attitudes examines their influence on candidate evaluation, throwing light on when implicit political attitudes matter (Kam 2007; Kam and Zechmeister 2013; Kalmoe and Piston 2013; Pasek, et al. 2009) and among whom they exert an influence (Arcuri, et al. 2008; Galdi, et al. 2008; Payne, et al. 2010).

Arcuri, Luciano, Luigi Castelli, Silvia Galdi, Cristina Zogmaister, and Alessandro Amadori. “Predicting the Vote: Implicit Attitudes as Predictors of the Future Behavior of Decided and Undecided Voters.” *Political Psychology* 29.3 (2008): 369–387.

Demonstrates that implicit candidate preferences, measured one month before an actual election among self-reported undecided voters, reliably predicted actual vote choices on election day.

Galdi, Silvia, Luciano Arcuri, and Bertram Gawronski. “Automatic Mental Associations Predict Future Choices of Undecided Decision-Makers.” *Science* 321.5892 (2008): 1100–1102.

Further extends the finding that implicit attitudes predict changes in future choices among individuals who self-report being “undecided.”

Kalmoe, Nathan P., and Spencer Piston. “Is Implicit Prejudice against Blacks Politically Consequential? Evidence from the AMP.” *Public Opinion Quarterly* 77.1 (2013): 305–322.

Reanalyzes the data used in Pasek, et al. 2009 and extends its analyses to provide evidence that implicit antiblack attitudes measured by the Affect Misattribution Procedure (AMP) are politically inconsequential.

Kam, Cindy D. “Implicit Attitudes, Explicit Choices: When Subliminal Priming Predicts Candidate Preference.” *Political Behavior* 29.3 (2007): 343–367.

Utilizes a subliminal-priming task to establish a conditional effect of implicit racial attitudes on candidate choice.

Kam, Cindy D., and Elizabeth J. Zechmeister. “Name Recognition and Candidate Support.” *American Journal of Political Science* 57.4 (2013): 971–986.

In one of a series of experiments, uses a subliminal-priming task to show that unconscious exposure to candidate names reliably boosts candidate support.

Pasek, Josh, Alexander Tahk, Yphtach Lelkes, et al. "Determinants of Turnout and Candidate Choice in the 2008 U.S. Presidential Election: Illuminating the Impact of Racial Prejudice and Other Considerations." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 73.5 (2009): 943–994.

Using national survey data, yields some evidence that implicit antiblack attitudes, gauged by the AMP, were reliably associated with US presidential vote choice in 2008, net of other predictors.

Payne, B. Keith, Jon A. Krosnick, Josh Pasek, Yphtach Lelkes, Omair Akhtar, and Trevor Tompson. "Implicit and Explicit Prejudice in the 2008 American Presidential Election." *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology* 46.2 (2010): 367–374.

Reveals that implicit antiblack attitudes, gauged via the AMP, were significantly correlated with US presidential vote choice in 2008, both directly and indirectly (via explicit antiblack attitudes).

Moral Psychology

Another expanding limb of implicit-attitudes research with growing import for the study of politics centers on the nature of moral reasoning, arguing that such thinking is automatic, fast, and intuitive, with our more-deliberative thoughts serving to justify or rationalize our moral impulses (Haidt 2001; Haidt and Graham 2007; Graham, et al. 2009).

Graham, Jesse, Jonathan Haidt, and Brian A. Nosek. "Liberals and Conservatives Rely on Different Sets of Moral Foundations." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 96.5 (2009): 1029–1046.

Provides empirical evidence, some of it drawn from implicit measures, for moral-foundations theory.

Haidt, Jonathan. "The Emotional Dog and Its Rational Tail: A Social Intuitionist Approach to Moral Judgment." *Psychological Review* 108.4 (2001): 814–834.

Proposes that moral judgment is driven by quick, automatic evaluations—intuitions—rather than slow, deliberative thought.

Haidt, Jonathan, and Jesse Graham. "When Morality Opposes Justice: Conservatives Have Moral Intuitions That Liberals May Not Recognize." *Social Justice Research* 20.1 (2007): 98–116.

Introduces the idea that political liberals and conservatives automatically draw on varied cognitive foundations for moral judgments.

Political Identity and Information Processing

Some research on implicit political attitudes has reached into the realms of political identity and information processing, establishing that who "we" are (e.g., partisans, Americans, religious believers) can deeply structure political evaluations (Albertson 2011, Knoll 2013, Iyengar and Westwood 2015). Some of the more exciting work on this front is conceptual, urging scholars to further think through the theoretical possibilities that emerge from entertaining implicit forms of key determinants of information processing, including partisanship (Theodoridis 2013) and political knowledge (Ksiazkiewicz 2013).

Albertson, Bethany L. "Religious Appeals and Implicit Attitudes." *Political Psychology* 32.2 (2011): 109–130.

Utilizes a paper-and-pencil IAT to show that religious appeals shape implicit political attitudes among currently or previously identifying Christians.

Iyengar, Shanto, and Sean J. Westwood. "Fear and Loathing across Party Lines: New Evidence on Group Polarization." *American Journal of Political Science* 59.3 (2015): 690–707.

Utilizes a Democrat/Republican "brief" IAT to demonstrate, in part, that implicit partisan affect is strong, prevalent, deeply rooted, and automatic.

Knoll, Benjamin R. "Implicit Nativist Attitudes, Social Desirability, and Immigration Policy Preferences." *International Migration Review* 47.1 (2013): 132–165.

Develops an American- and Latino-culture IAT to gauge implicit nativist attitudes. Shows that these predict immigration policy preferences, even among those failing to self-report nativist attitudes.

Ksiazkiewicz, Aleksander. "Implicit Political Knowledge." *PS: Political Science & Politics* 46.3 (2013): 553–555.

Argues for a conceptualization of political knowledge as manifesting itself in explicit and implicit versions, with the latter amenable to measurement via indirect measures such as the IAT.

Theodoridis, Alexander George. "Implicit Political Identity." *PS: Political Science & Politics* 46.3 (2013): 545–549.

Lays out a conceptualization and measurement strategy for implicit political identification.

Race, Ethnicity, Gender, and Politics

A flourishing branch of research on implicit political attitudes documents their prevalence and impact in evaluative realms involving race, ethnicity, and gender (Pérez 2010; Winter 2010; Ditonto, et al. 2013; Malhotra, et al. 2013; Orey, et al. 2013; Lyle 2014; Mo 2015; Kinder and Ryan 2015; Banks and Hicks 2016; Pérez 2016), touching on substantive topics that include immigration policy preferences, racial-policy opinions, gender biases, and voter ID laws.

Banks, Antoine J., and Heather M. Hicks. "Fear and Implicit Racism: Whites' Support for Voter ID Laws." *Political Psychology* 37.5 (2016): 641–658.

Uses the IAT to establish that eliciting fear among whites, rather than anger or relaxation, amplifies the effect of implicit racism on their support for voter ID laws.

Ditonto, Tessa M., Richard R. Lau, and David O. Sears. "AMPing Racial Attitudes: Comparing the Power of Explicit and Implicit Racism Measures in 2008." *Political Psychology* 34.4 (2013): 487–510.

Based on the 2008 American National Election Study (ANES), this study shows implicit antiblack attitudes gauged by the AMP are unrelated to racial-policy opinions and judgments of President Obama, net of explicit prejudice and other factors.

Kinder, Donald R., and Timothy J. Ryan. "Prejudice and Politics Re-examined: The Political Significance of Implicit Racial Bias." *Political Science Research and Methods* (24 September 2015).

Uses a black/white brief IAT in a major national survey to show that, compared to self-reported racial resentment, implicit prejudice is largely unassociated with race-laden political outcomes.

Lyle, Monique L. "How Racial Cues Affect Support for American Racial Hierarchy among African Americans and Whites." *Politics, Groups, and Identities* 2.3 (2014): 350–367.

Uses a white/black IAT to examine, in part, how cues from political elites influence implicit support for a racial status quo.

Malhotra, Neil, Yotam Margalit, and Cecilia Hyunjung Mo. "Economic Explanations for Opposition to Immigration: Distinguishing between Prevalence and Conditional Impact." *American Journal of Political Science* 57.2 (2013): 391–410.

Designs a European American / Indian American IAT showing that implicit anti-Indian American attitudes boost immigration preferences, including opposition to visas for skilled immigrants.

Mo, Cecilia Hyunjung. "The Consequences of Explicit and Implicit Gender Attitudes and Candidate Quality in the Calculations of Voters." *Political Behavior* 37.2 (2015): 357–395.

Develops a new gender-leadership IAT to demonstrate, in part, that implicit antifemale attitudes erode individuals' propensity to vote for female candidates.

Orey, Byron D'Andra, Thomas Craemer, and Melanye Price. "Implicit Racial Attitude Measures in Black Samples: IAT, Subliminal Priming, and Implicit Black Identification." *PS: Political Science & Politics* 46.3 (2013): 550–552.

Reports evidence on the performance of several implicit-attitude measures, including the IAT, in samples of African Americans, thus further highlighting their validity and promise.

Pérez, Efrén O. "Explicit Evidence on the Import of Implicit Attitudes: The IAT and Immigration Policy Judgments." *Political Behavior* 32.4 (2010): 517–545.

Uses lab and national survey data to validate an original Latino/white IAT, showing that individual differences on this measure systematically predict preferences for illegal and legal immigration.

Pérez, Efrén O. *Unspoken Politics: Implicit Attitudes and Political Thinking*. Cambridge Studies in Public Opinion and Political Psychology. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2016.

Develops a dual-process view of explicit/implicit political cognition and uses lab and survey experiments to pinpoint the political effects of implicit attitudes on individual citizens.

Winter, Nicholas J. G. "Masculine Republicans and Feminine Democrats: Gender and Americans' Explicit and Implicit Images of the Political Parties." *Political Behavior* 32.4 (2010): 587–618.

Implements a lexical decision task (LDT) to show that Americans implicitly associate Democrats with femininity and Republicans with masculinity, a pattern also emerging at the explicit level.

Dual-Process Models of Implicit-Explicit Cognition

Before the explosion of implicit-attitudes research, studies of individual opinions revolved exclusively on self-reported, or explicit, attitudes. However, the avalanche of implicit-attitudes scholarship still raining down on us in the early 21st century has prompted many psychologists, and some political scientists, to identify and explain the circumstances under which explicit and implicit attitudes influence individual thinking (Lodge and Taber 2013, Fazio and Olson 2014, Gawronski and Bodenhausen 2014, McConnell and Rydell 2014, Strack and Deutsch 2014). The works in this section lay bare, in painstaking detail, some of the leading dual-process models of explicit-implicit cognition in social and political domains.

Fazio, Russell H., and Michael A. Olson. “The MODE Model: Attitude–Behavior Processes as a Function of Motivation and Opportunity.” In *Dual-Process Theories of the Social Mind*. Edited by Jeffrey W. Sherman, Bertram Gawronski, and Yaacov Trope, 155–171. New York: Guilford, 2014.

An updated view of the MODE model, one of the earliest dual-process models explaining the interplay between spontaneous and controlled processes in producing attitudes and behavior. Individual motivation and opportunity are key components of this model.

Gawronski, Bertram, and Galen V. Bodenhausen. “The Associative–Propositional Evaluation Model: Operating Principles and Operating Conditions of Evaluation.” In *Dual-Process Theories of the Social Mind*. Edited by Jeffrey W. Sherman, Bertram Gawronski, and Yaacov Trope, 188–203. New York: Guilford, 2014.

An overview of the associative-propositional evaluation (APE) model, its principles, and its procedures. APE’s focus is on the connection between implicit (associative) and explicit (propositional) attitudes. In APE, implicit attitudes are “gut reactions” that are (in)validated by propositional thinking.

Lodge, Milton, and Charles S. Taber. *The Rationalizing Voter*. Cambridge Studies in Public Opinion and Political Psychology. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013.

Assembles and validates John Q. Public (JQP), a model explaining implicit-explicit attitudes in political cognition. JQP treats implicit attitudes as prior to, and thus a structuring influence on, explicit attitudes. JQP also views explicit attitudes as rationalizations of implicit attitudes.

McConnell, Allen R., and Robert J. Rydell. “The Systems of Evaluation Model: A Dual-Systems Approach to Attitudes.” In *Dual-Process Theories of the Social Mind*. Edited by Jeffrey W. Sherman, Bertram Gawronski, and Yaacov Trope, 204–218. New York: Guilford, 2014.

Sketches, in detail, the systems-of-evaluation model: another dual-process model geared toward explaining the often-Janus-faced nature of implicit-explicit attitudes.

Strack, Fritz, and Roland Deutsch. “The Reflective–Impulsive Model.” In *Dual-Process Theories of the Social Mind*. Edited by Jeffrey W. Sherman, Bertram Gawronski, and Yaacov Trope, 92–104. New York: Guilford, 2014.

Outlines the mechanics of the reflective-impulsive model (RIM), which seeks to explain how impulsive (automatic) processes influence the more reflective (controlled) aspects of people’s thinking and evaluations.

[back to top](#)

You are browsing courtesy of: **OUP-USA Mirror**

Copyright © 2017. All rights reserved.