

Impact case study (REF3b)

<p>Institution: University of Sheffield</p>
<p>Unit of Assessment: 32 - Philosophy</p>
<p>Title of case study: Fighting Implicit Bias in Academia</p>
<p>1. Summary of the impact</p> <p>Jennifer Saul's research on implicit bias in academia has directly affected practises and policies within philosophy in several countries, leading to changes in journal refereeing procedures, conference organisation, and admissions and hiring procedures. It has also become part of larger discussions in the media and elsewhere regarding gender bias and barriers to the advancement of women.</p> <p>2. Underpinning research</p> <p>As an academic discipline, Philosophy is overwhelmingly male, with a gender ratio that more closely resembles the physical sciences than the humanities (76-83% depending on country).</p> <p>Professor Jennifer Saul has argued (drawing on research from social psychology) that implicit bias and stereotype threat are likely to play a key role in the under-representation of women in philosophy. Implicit biases are unconscious, automatic biases against members of stigmatised groups that are often contrary to the genuine conscious commitments of those who hold them; stereotype threat is a psychological phenomenon that causes members of under-represented groups to underperform. Implicit biases can, for example, lead assessors to rate a CV as less impressive if it has a woman's rather than a man's name at the top of it. Stereotype threat can cause a woman to underperform in high-stakes situations when she is one of very few women in the room.</p> <p>Saul's research has also suggested various strategies that could be used to improve the situation for women in philosophy in the face of the problems of implicit bias and stereotype threat. One paper on this topic [R1] was widely circulated online starting September 2010: http://tinyurl.com/lmo6ply (The name of this paper was later changed). Saul's research has also resulted in a co-authored report for the British Philosophical Association and the Society for Women in Philosophy. Both the paper and the report argue that implicit bias and stereotype threat are likely to play a role in perpetuating the under-representation of women in philosophy. They also argue that philosophers have very good reasons—moral, political and academic—to combat these two issues.</p> <p>A related strand of Saul's research explores the implications of implicit bias for knowledge, and in particular for expert knowledge—a topic that has been of great interest to forensics professionals. Here she has argued that implicit bias is in some ways a greater threat to knowledge (including expert knowledge) than traditional scepticism is. This work makes crucial use of Christopher Hookway's idea (R5 and R6) that the most interesting way to understand scepticism is as what he calls a challenge to the reliability of our cognitive instruments. Saul argues that implicit biases in some ways pose a far more powerful challenge to our cognitive instruments than does traditional scepticism.</p> <p>Saul's research includes not just her own single authored papers (and one co-authored report), but also the Leverhulme International Research Network on Implicit Bias and Philosophy, which brought together philosophers, psychologists and practitioners from several countries to work through a variety of philosophical issues related to implicit bias. This both informed her research and aided in its dissemination.</p>

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3. References to the research

- R1. Jennifer Saul: 'Implicit Bias, Stereotype Threat and Women in Philosophy', forthcoming in *Women in Philosophy: What Needs to Change?* Edited by Fiona Jenkins and Katrina Hutchison. Oxford: Oxford University Press 2013. (Circulated online starting in 2010.)
- R2. Jennifer Saul: 'Rankings of Quality and Rankings of Reputation: Problems for both from Implicit Bias', in *Journal of Social Philosophy* 2012, 43:3, 1-18. (Presented at Central Division Conference of the American Philosophical Association in February 2012.)
- R3. Helen Beebe and Jennifer Saul: 'Women in Philosophy in the UK: A Report by the British Philosophical Association and the Society for Women in Philosophy in the UK', September 2011
- R4. Jennifer Saul: 'Implicit Bias and Scepticism', forthcoming in *Disputatio*. Versions of this paper have been presented to a wide variety of audiences, including the Forensic Science Society.
- R5. Christopher Hookway: *Truth, Rationality, and Pragmatism: Themes From Peirce*. Oxford: Oxford University Press 2000.
- R6. Christopher Hookway: 'Some Varieties of Epistemic Injustice: Response to Fricker', *Episteme* 2010, 7:2, 151-163.

Indications of quality:

[R1] Oxford University Press is the leading philosophy publisher, and the paper was anonymously peer-reviewed.

[R2] The paper was invited by the American Philosophical Association, and anonymously peer-reviewed by the *Journal of Social Philosophy*.

[R3] This report was commissioned by the British Philosophical Association and the Society for Women in Philosophy UK

[R4] This paper was the keynote *Disputatio* lecture at the 2012 Portuguese Society for Analytic Philosophy, and will be published in *Disputatio*.

[R5] This book was published by Oxford University Press, the leading publisher of philosophy books, following a peer review process.

[R6] This paper was an invited paper at the APA, and was then chosen for publication by *Episteme*, the leading international journal for social epistemology.

Saul was awarded a Leverhulme International Network Grant (April 2011-June 2013) for the *Implicit Bias and Philosophy Research Network* (£107,003) for an interdisciplinary network to explore philosophical issues raised by implicit bias. There are now two volumes of papers from this network (co-edited with Michael Brownstein) under contract with Oxford University Press, the leading philosophy publisher.

4. Details of the impact

Saul's work on this subject has reached large audiences due to online circulation of papers R1 and R2 above, and the Gendered Conference Campaign online at Feminist Philosophers Blog (up to 20,000 hits/day), which has drawn heavily on Saul's research (see below). The BPA report (item R3) has also been widely circulated to departments and related bodies. As a result of this, Saul's work has brought about the following significant changes:

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1. Impact on the policies of departments (a few examples, others are available):
 - a. Many Philosophy Departments have formed Climate, or Equity, or Women in Philosophy committees as a result of Saul's papers on implicit bias. At Sussex, for example, a key causal driver for this impact was the BPA/SWIP report that Saul co-authored with Helen Beebee, which was endorsed by the BPA, and presented to a meeting of all UK department heads with a request to implement its recommendations (S4).
 - b. At UCL, a member of the Philosophy Department reports '*[Saul's] paper, which many on the Widening Participation committee have read, was influential in shaping our ideas about how we should make appointments to staff posts. When we advertised some temporary lectureships a year ago, we trialled a new procedure, whereby we anonymised the applications before circulating them to the committee. This was in consequence of a conviction that gender bias (as well as other biases) were likely operating, and that a helpful countermeasure would be anonymity. More generally, the committee has been monitoring statistics for undergraduate and graduate applications, success in admission, and achievement and this too has been influenced by the attention drawn by your work to unconscious biases.*'
 - c. As a result of the circulation and discussion of Saul's papers on implicit bias, Rutgers University Philosophy Department has launched a mentoring scheme; and added online resources about implicit bias and stereotype threat.
 - d. Saul's paper on implicit bias and stereotype threat is affecting the pedagogical training of PhD students teaching philosophy at the University of California at Berkeley (S2).
 - e. Research presented at the Implicit Bias and Philosophy Research Network has led the Philosophy Department at Trent University in Canada to adopt policies aimed at overcoming implicit bias and stereotype threat.
2. Impact on journals: As a result of Saul's work on implicit bias and philosophy, *Analysis* has moved to triple-anonymous review (S3) and *The Journal of Philosophy* has moved to double-anonymous review.
3. Impact on conference organising: Saul's research provided the theoretical underpinning for the Gendered Conference Campaign (<http://feministphilosophers.wordpress.com/gendered-conference-campaign/>), of which Saul was one of the organisers. This campaign calls attention to all-male conferences in philosophy, and argues that philosophers should try to avoid organising such conferences in order to reduce stereotype threat and implicit bias. This campaign has had several impacts:
 - Impact on organisations such as the British Society for Ethical Theory, which as a result has instituted a policy of seeking out women invited speakers and has improved its anonymous review process for submitted papers.
 - Impact on individuals: many individual conference organisers have been in touch to tell Saul that they have changed their conference organisation practices as a result of the Gendered Conference Campaign.
 - [text removed for publication]
 - There are three online petitions against all-male conferences (two within philosophy and one in the sciences), which have their causal origin in the Gendered Conference Campaign. Together, they have more than 2500 signatures.
4. Impact on the REF: As a result of Saul's research, a member of the REF organisation asked her for advice regarding ways for the Philosophy REF panel to improve their practices with regard to gender equity, and the panel will be implementing some of the

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recommendations, including the raising of awareness about implicit bias, the use of excellent papers by women in the calibration phase and checking ratings statistics against gender data for possible evidence of implicit bias.

5. Impact outside philosophy:

- a. The University of Massachusetts Amherst has now made it possible for work to be anonymously marked, as a result of Saul's research (S1).
- b. Forensic Sciences: as a result of Saul's research on bias, she was asked to speak at a conference of the Forensic Science Society. She has continued consulting with a representative of LGC Forensics, who reports that Saul's paper has led her to include bias in discussions regarding DNA interpretation and as a potential factor in cases subject to appeal. She has just accepted an invitation to join the Advisory Board of the Laboratory of Forensic Anthropology at the University of North Texas.
- c. A member of the Psychology Department at Hunter College, who works with universities around the world to improve gender equity, makes use of the Gendered Conference Campaign and its resources in this work (S5).
- d. The Central European University in Bucharest has now adopted a gender equity policy for conference organisation, linking to the Gendered Conference Campaign for advice on how to avoid all-male conferences.
- e. As a result of a paper Saul gave to launch the Women at the University of Sheffield network, the decoration of a major hall used for examinations is being reassessed with particular attention to issues of stereotype threat.
- f. The Gendered Conference Campaign inspired a song, 'I Like to See the Ladies' by the band the 20th Century Monads.

6. Media: Article in *The Philosophers Magazine* (S6); discussion in *Washington Post* blog (S7); interview in *Times Higher Education Supplement*. In its first 48 hours online, the article in *The Philosophers Magazine* was accessed nearly 10,000 times, shared on Facebook 500 times, and tweeted over 70 times.

5. Sources to corroborate the impact

- S1. Professor of Philosophy, University of Massachusetts Amherst (move to anonymous marking)
- S2. Professor of Philosophy, University of California at Berkeley (pedagogical training)
- S3. *Analysis* Secretary (impact on *Analysis* refereeing and editing policies)
- S4. Reader in Philosophy, University of Sussex (impact on Women in Philosophy Group)
- S5. Distinguished Professor of Psychology, Hunter College (impact on equity work in academia)
- S6. Article in *The Philosophers Magazine* <http://philosophypress.co.uk/?p=1079>
- S7. Discussion in *Washington Post* blog <http://tinyurl.com/7cl4xvv>