



USC eConvening:  
Understanding and  
Addressing Implicit  
Bias

10/12/2020





## Understanding Implicit Bias, Evaluating Students and Applicants for Employment Research Overview

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Professor, Child Development  
BC

# Defining Implicit Bias

*“Also known as implicit social cognition, implicit bias refers to the attitudes or stereotypes that affect our understanding, actions, and decisions in an unconscious manner.”*

- *Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity, Ohio State University*

# Overview: Milkman, et al. (2015)

Set out to discover:

- What happens when identical resumes were sent out in response to want-ads in Boston and Chicago (sales, admin., clerical, customer svc.)
  - Some resumes had names that could be perceived as Caucasian, while others had names perceived as African American.

# Here's what they found

- Resumes with Caucasian names received 50% more callbacks for interviews.
- Improving the quality of resumes increased the callbacks for “Emily” and “Greg”, but made little differences for “Lakisha” and “Jamal”.

- Applicants for lab manager position
- Application material randomly assigned a male or female name
- Application material was rated by Science faculty from research intensive universities in U.S.

## Here what they found

- Male applicants rated as significantly more competent and hireable than the (identical) female applicant materials
- Male applicants were offered higher starting salary.

# Response to these studies

- How can we counteract these patterns of judgments about likeability and hireability?
- What structures could prevent systematically higher salaries to candidates from certain groups?
  - (BC has a structure in place already: salary scale based on educational level)



# Reeves (2014) Implicit Bias in Writing

- 60 partners from 22 law firms told they were participating in a “writing analysis study”
- A memo written by a hypothetical 3rd year litigation associate was constructed with 22 different errors (grammar/spelling, facts, analysis, technical writing)

## What they found

- Overwhelmingly, the (hypothetical) African-American associates were scored lower, across the board, for all criteria.
- Feedback was encouraging for “Causian” associates, while quite harsh for “African American” associates.

# Responding to the Reeves study

- In what ways is this relevant to ensuring our students (and potential hires) are equitably evaluated by faculty?
- How can we counteract these patterns of unconscious bias?



## When Does Implicit Bias Begin & How Does It Affect Us?

Helen Acosta

Chair, Communication  
Department

# Infant Development

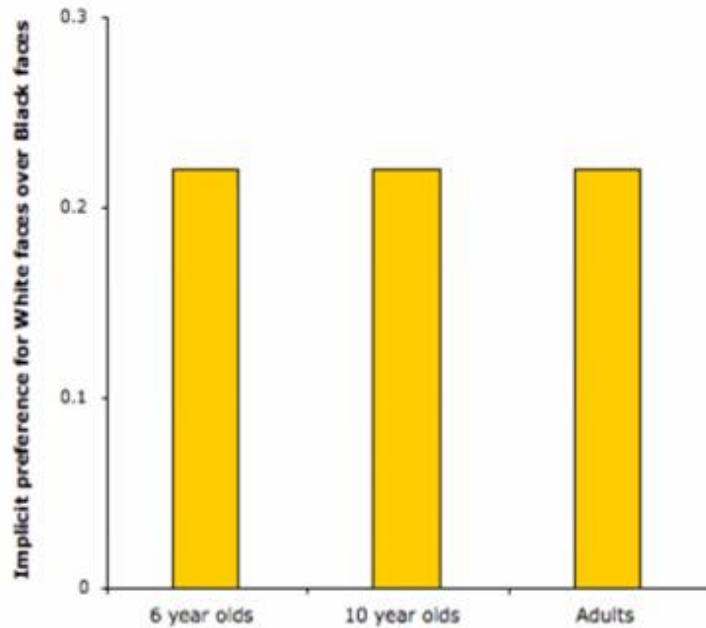


4 Weeks ... "Prefer" Female vs. Male Face

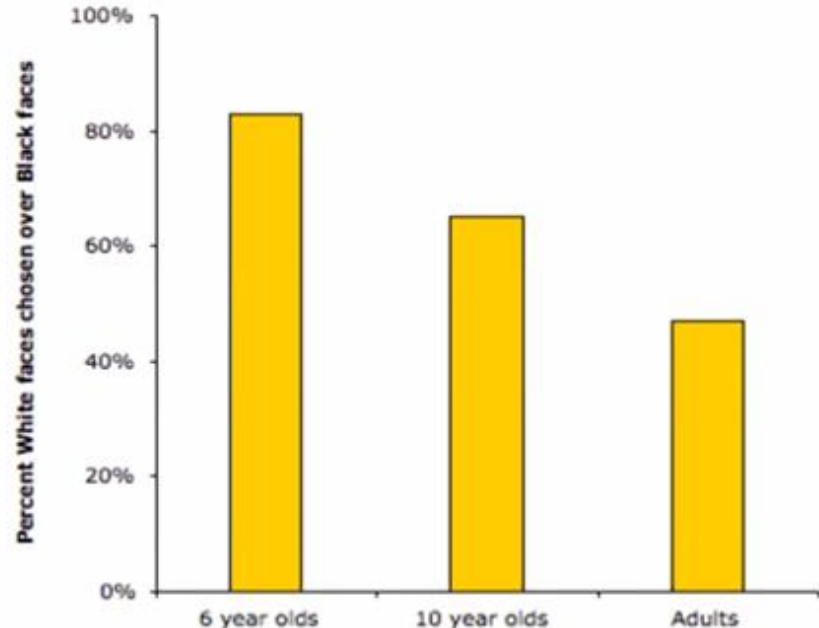
9 Months ... "Prefer" Same Complexion

10 Months ... "Prefer" Same Language

# IAT in Children & Adults



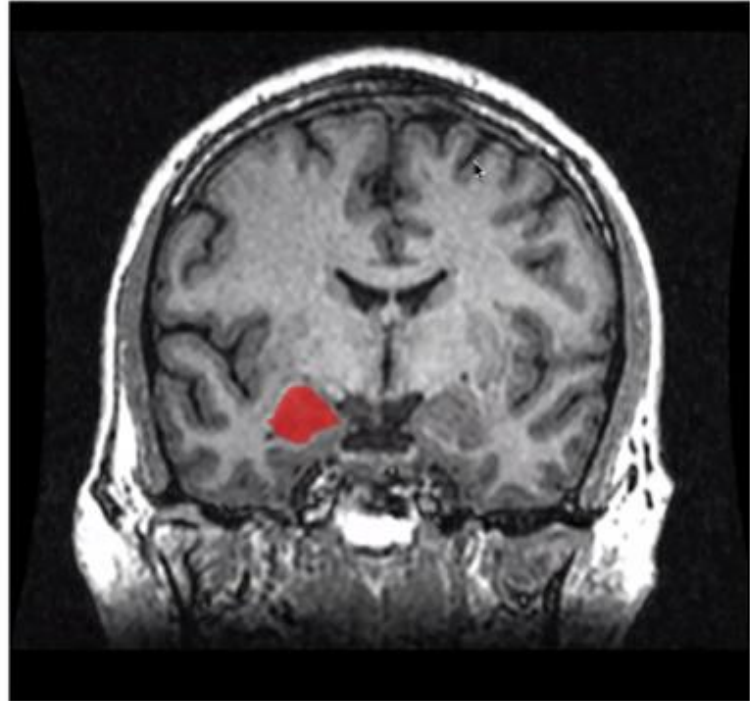
**Implicit Bias**

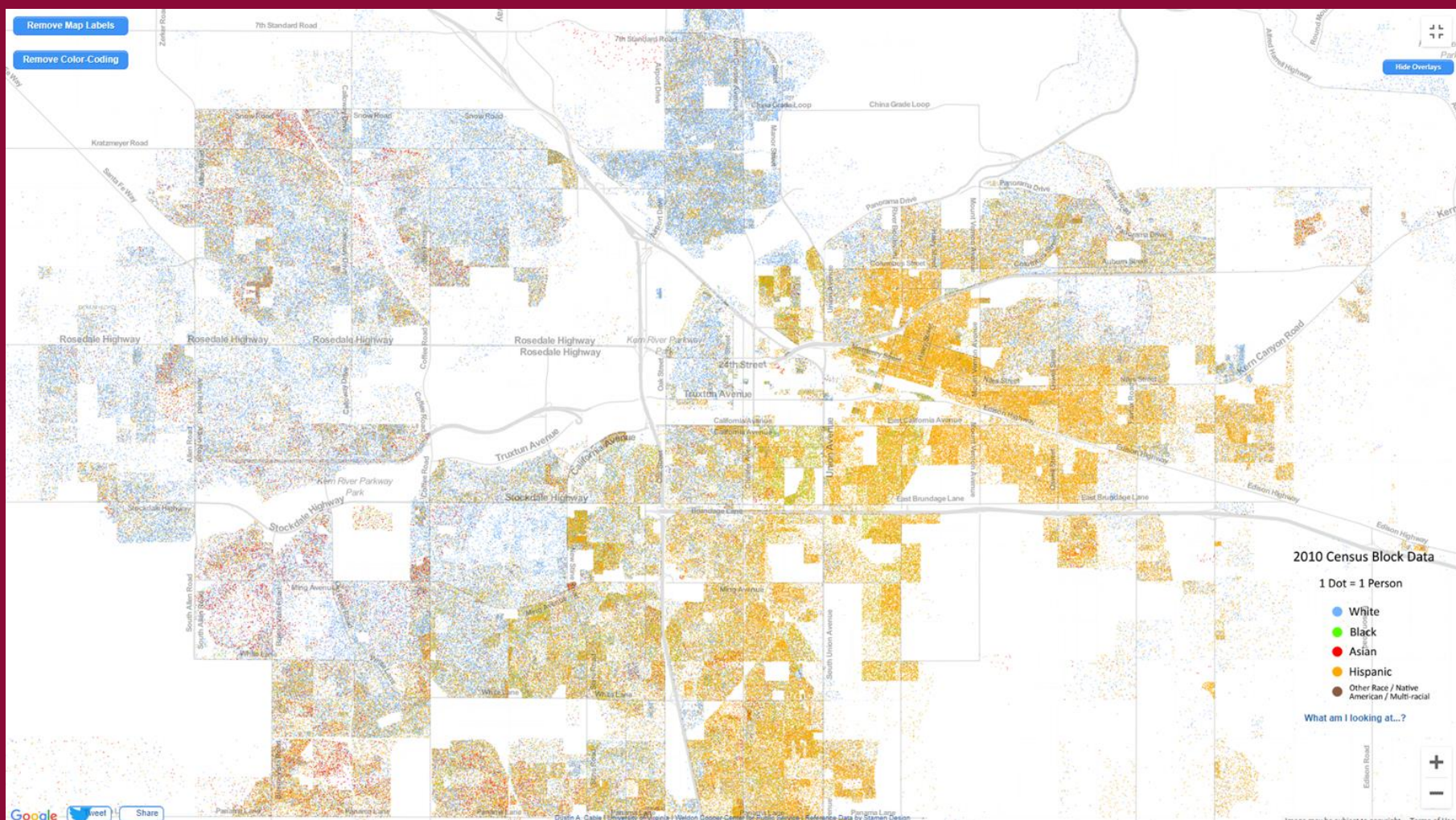


**Explicit Bias**

Baron, A.S., & Banaji, M.R. (2006). *The development of implicit attitudes: Evidence of race evaluations from ages 6 and 10 and adulthood. Psychological Science, 17(1), 53-58.*

When we look at faces of individuals of a different race, a part of our brain called the **amygdala** often gets active. The amygdala is involved in learning and, specifically, in a type of learning called **fear conditioning**—tracking what kinds of things predict bad outcomes.



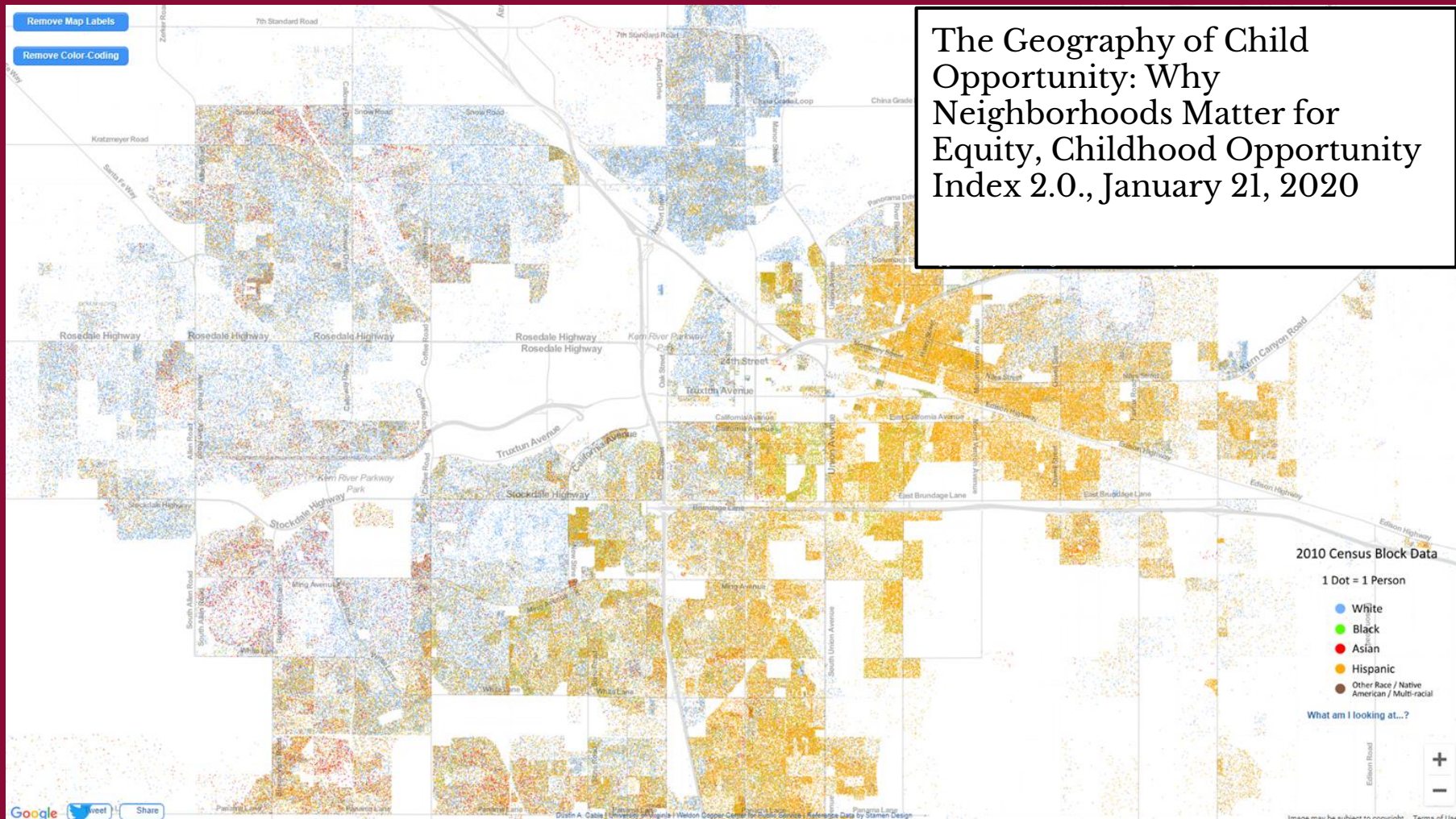




Remove Map Labels

Remove Color-Coding

# The Geography of Child Opportunity: Why Neighborhoods Matter for Equity, Childhood Opportunity Index 2.0., January 21, 2020



2010 Census Block Data

1 Dot = 1 Person

- White
- Black
- Asian
- Hispanic
- Other Races / Native American / Multi-racial

What am I looking at...?

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The Geography of Child Opportunity: Why Neighborhoods Matter for Equity, Childhood Opportunity Index 2.0., January 21, 2020

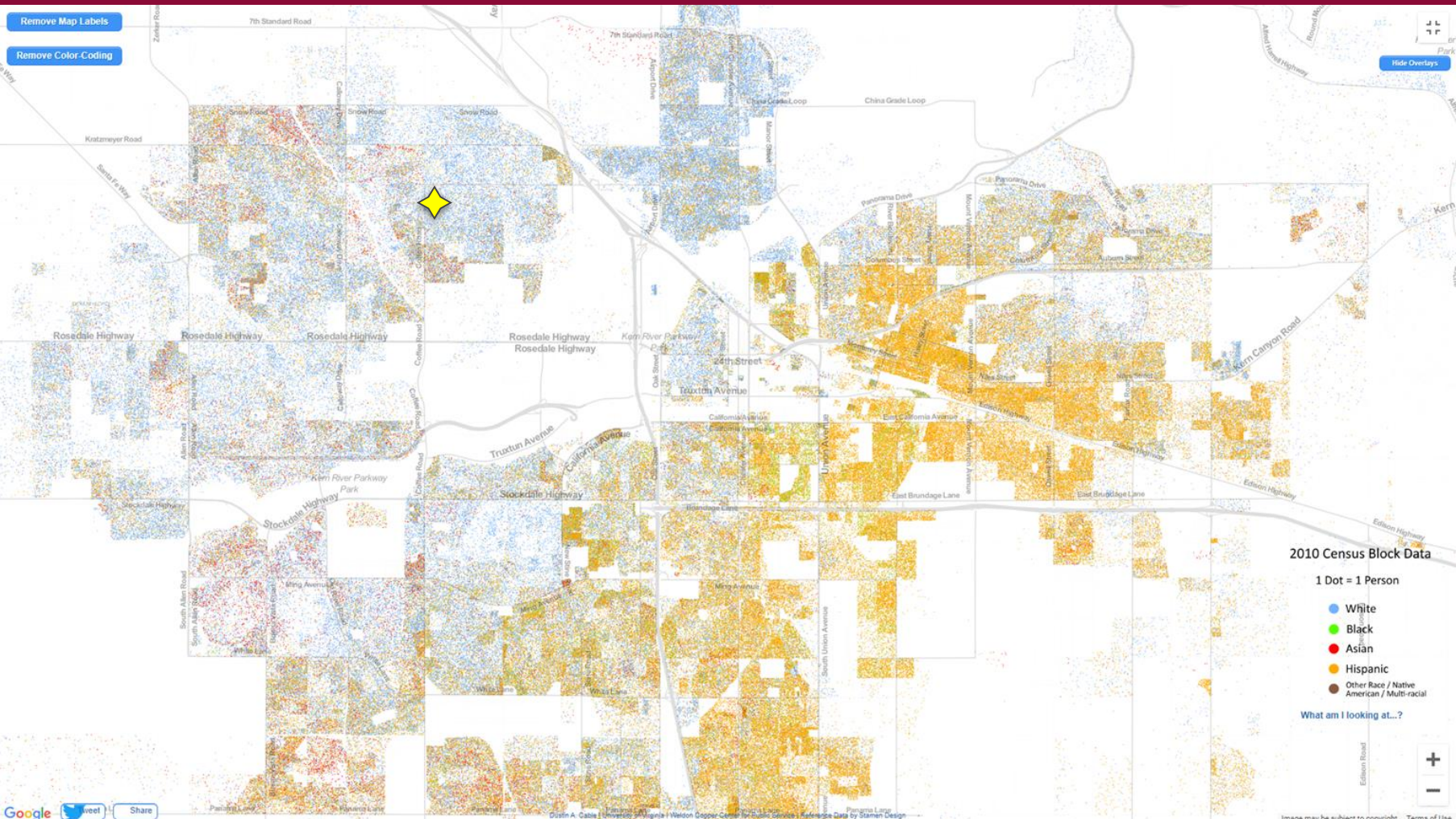
**"Worst place to raise a child in the US"**

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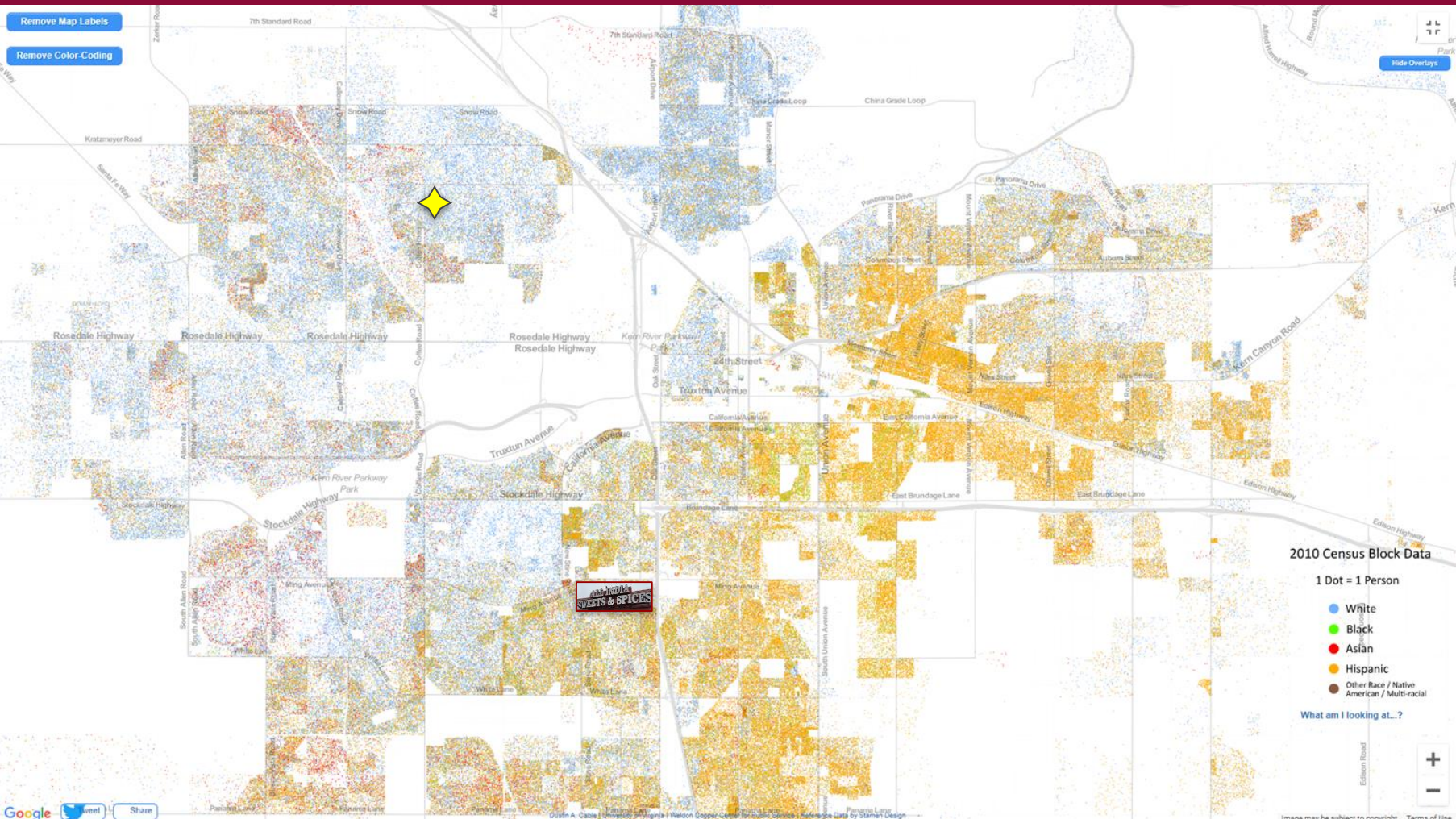
Hide Overlays

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What am I looking at...?



## Children's Racial Bias in Perception of Other's Pain, Addressing the Issue

Jacy Hill, MA,Ed, RT(R)

Radiologic Technology Faculty

# Five to Ten Year Olds

- Children at ages 5, 7 and 10 were asked to **rate the severity of pain** that they believed would be felt by other children of the same gender in different situations, such as bumping their head, or slamming a hand in a door.
- The **5 year olds** rated the severity of pain the **same**, regardless of the race of the child
- When shown pictures of **black children**, the **7- and 10-year-olds** tended to rate the pain as being **less severe** than when they were shown pictures of **white children**.

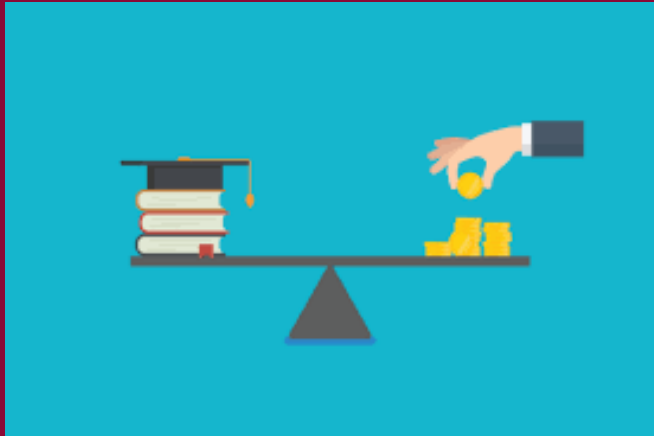
Hoffman, Kelly, Angeline Lillard, and Sophie Trawalter (2014), *British Journal of Developmental Psychology*; vol. 2, issue 32, pp 218-232.

Effects on  
delivery of  
medical care,  
compassion in  
patient care, role  
of education?

- Colorado State Open Campus Tour Event 2018
- 2 young men traveled from NM
- Several POVs to discuss
  - Boys
  - Parents/others in tour group
  - Tour Guide
  - Dispatcher & Campus Police

<https://www.coloradoan.com/story/news/2018/05/03/colorado-state-university-parent-calls-police-young-native-american-men-campus-tour/576755002/>

- Call transcript to Campus Police
- Body Cam Footage



## Actions and Strategies

Jennifer Achan

Director of Financial Aid &  
Scholarships



## Strategies to Reduce Implicit Bias (Employment)

Check your own implicit bias using the assessments at:  
<https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/>

- Devote adequate time
- Avoid premature ranking (anchoring bias)
- Use a rubric or other evaluation form
- Critically analyze supporting materials
- Be accountable
- Be prepared to explain your decisions
- Appoint diverse groups for review and encourage maximum participation
- Blind Applications

# What Helps Diminish Implicit Bias

## Education

- Understand the research (education)
- Increase conscious awareness of how subtle bias operates
- Awareness of prevailing societal stereotypes

## Actions

- Workshop for staff at all levels
- Follow-up sessions with case studies
- Ongoing review of organizational practices
- Create cues to stimulate recall of earlier learning