

A blind spot for attractiveness discrimination

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BACKGROUND

- People generally agree that discrimination should be punished
- But this requires that instances of discrimination are detected
- People are more likely to “see” discrimination when it fits their mental prototype → some forms of discrimination may be less conspicuous
- Hypothesis: Attractiveness discrimination is more likely to go undetected than more prototypical forms of discrimination (i.e., gender & race discrimination)

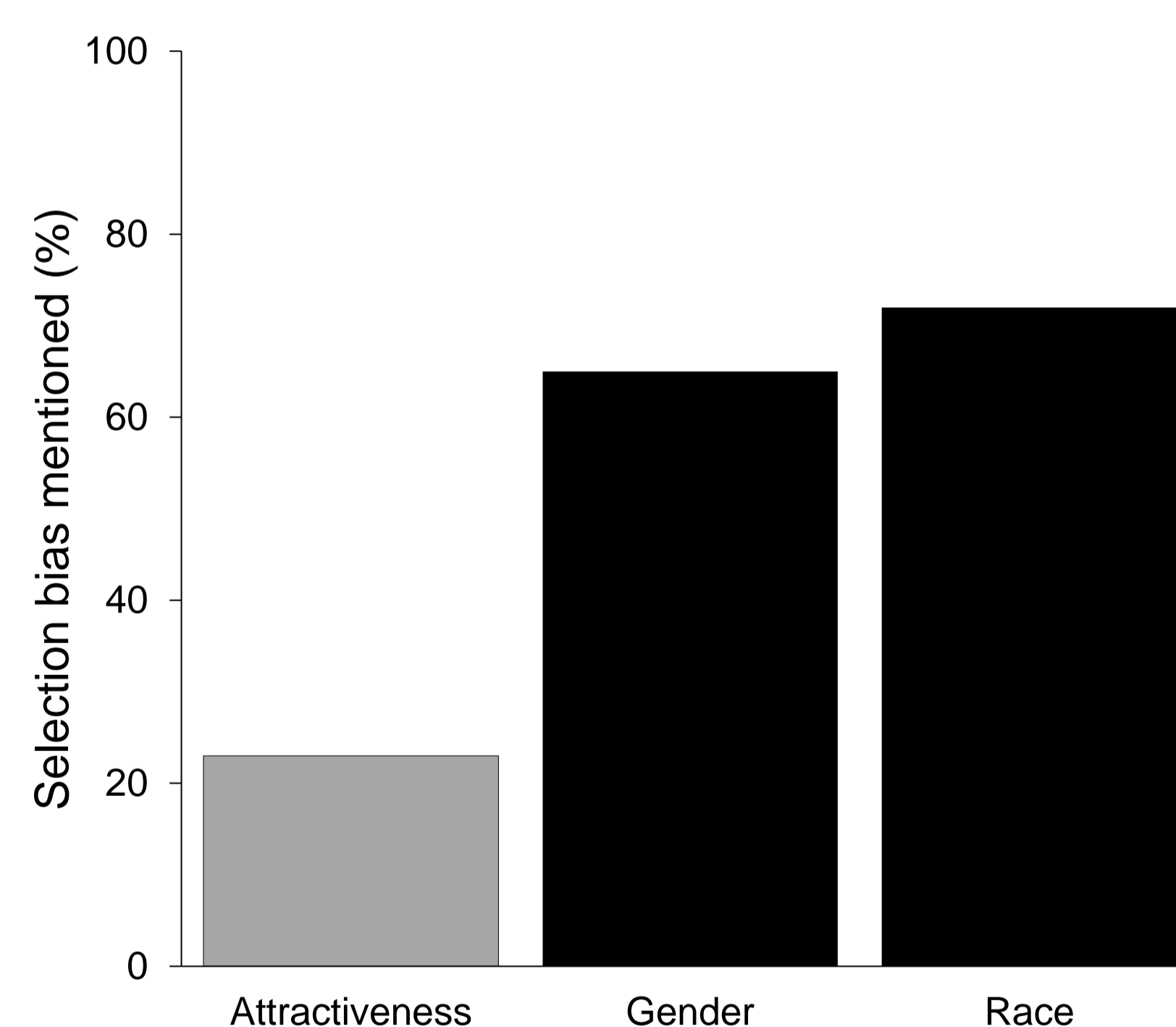
STIMULI



24 candidates varying in race, gender, & attractiveness

Study 1

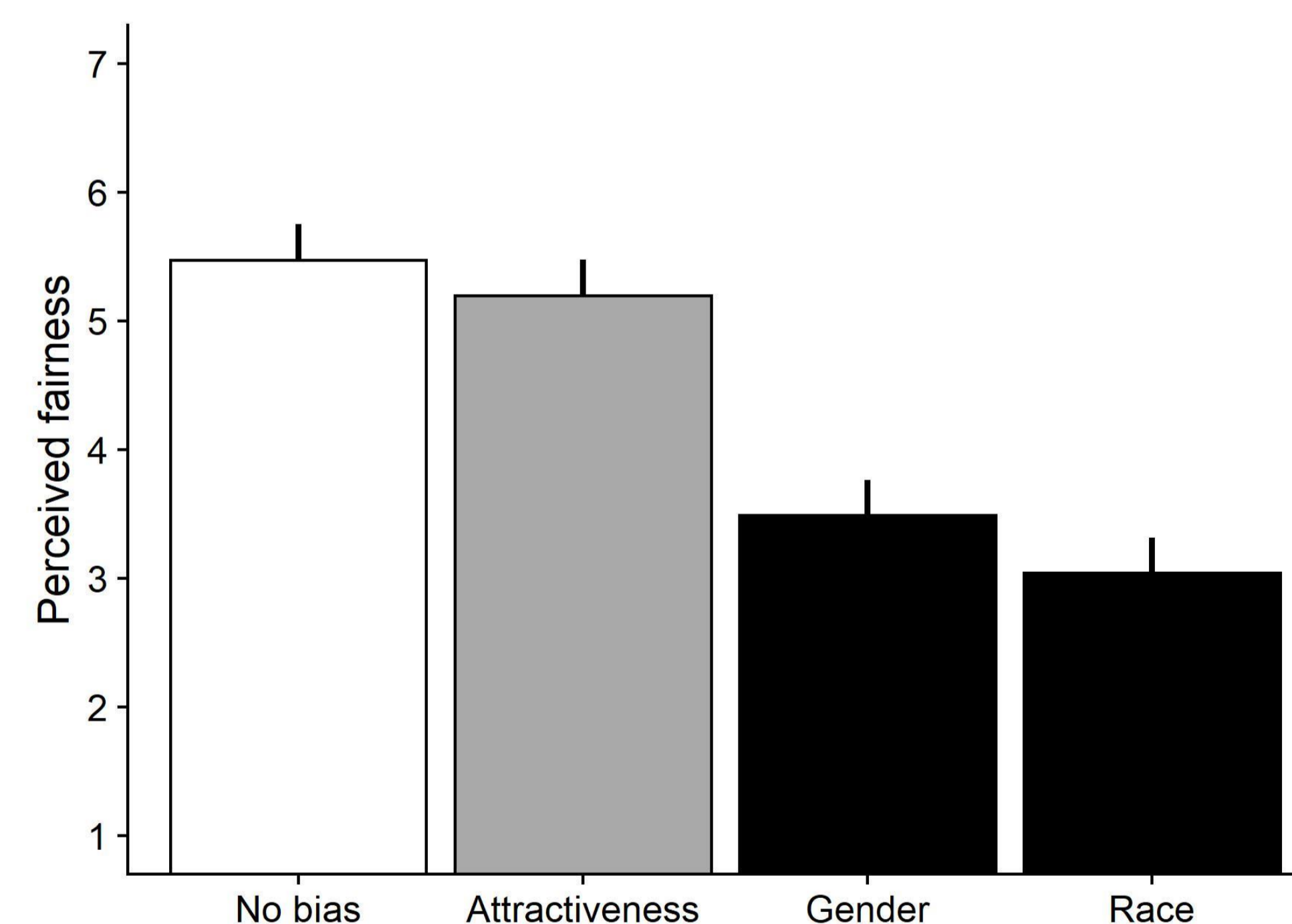
- Participants: 600 US Prolific workers ($M_{age} = 34$, 35% ♀)
- Bias type: (1) attractiveness bias (between) (2) gender bias (3) race bias
- DV: Does anything stand out?



Study 2



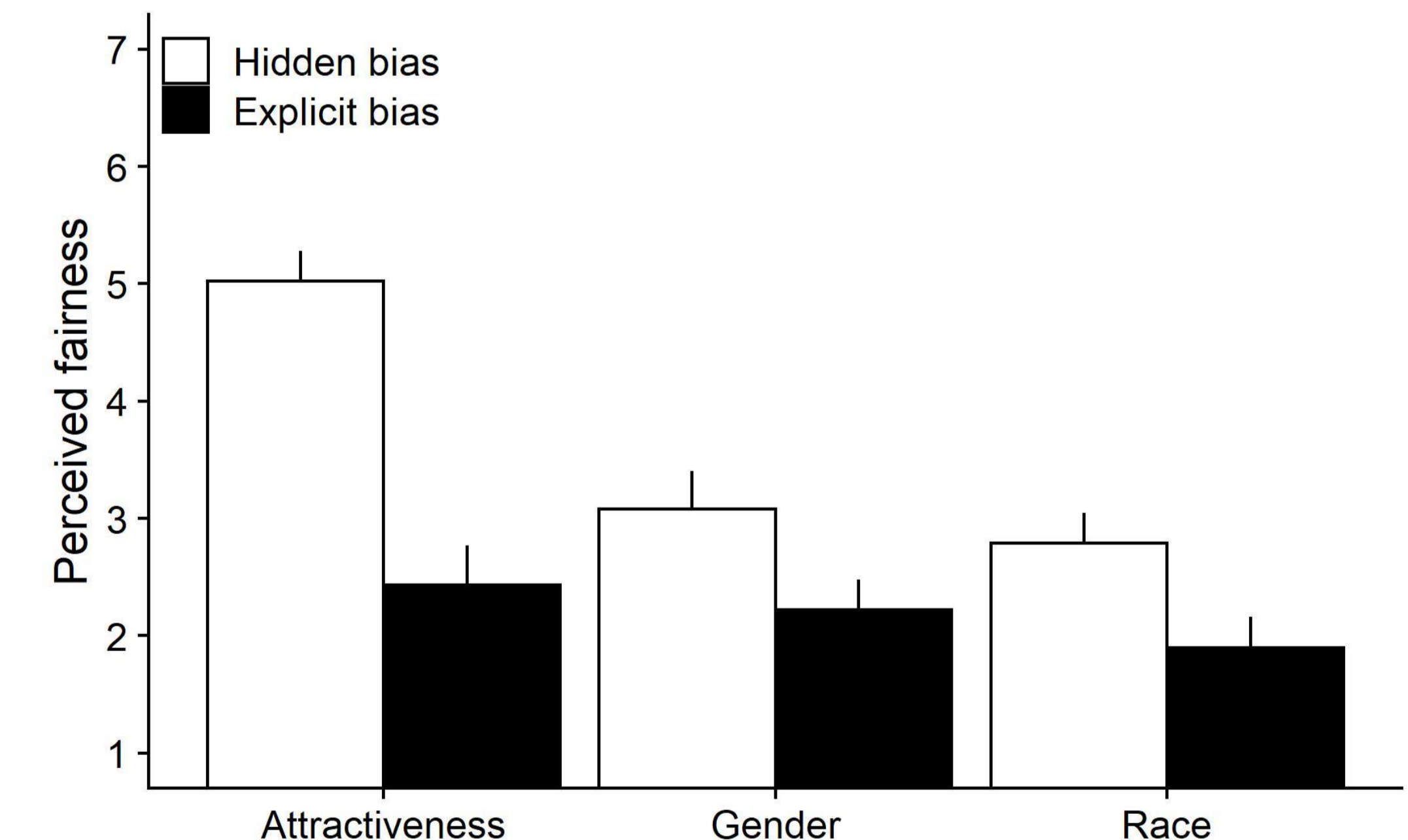
- Participants: 402 US Prolific workers ($M_{age} = 33$, 47% ♀)
- Bias type: (1) unbiased (2) attractiveness bias (between) (3) gender bias (4) race bias
- DV: How fair was the selection process?



Study 3



- Participants: 720 US Prolific workers ($M_{age} = 32$, 48% ♀)
- Bias type: (1) attractiveness bias (between) (2) gender bias (3) race bias
- Explicitness: Bias made explicit (e.g., “recruiter decided to only hire men”) vs. bias not made explicit
- DV: How fair was the selection process?



Take-away: Even blatant instances of attractiveness discrimination often go undetected

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