

# Mitigating the impact of implicit bias

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# Programme

1. The main gender differences
2. The origins of biases: how does our brain work?
3. Shedding light on biases: how to mitigate their impact
4. Q&A

The genders or when 100%  
does not equal 100%

# What is sex and what is gender?

## Definitions!

- The sex-specific differences: anatomy, physiology and hormones
- The gender-specific differences: socialization, education (up-bringing) and experience

The gender tendencies of a person can evolve over time. In comparison, 'sex' denotes biologically determined, thus unchangeable, difference between men and women.

The genders are, so to speak, the social construction of the sexes. It means that 100% sometimes = 70-80%.

- Female socialisation is based on relationship
- Male socialisation is based on independence and power

# Differences “across the board”

- Basic orientation: vertical  $\leftarrow \rightarrow$  horizontal
- Basic movement (behaviour): hierarchical  $\leftarrow \rightarrow$  circular
- Status/rank: increase  $\leftarrow \rightarrow$  downplay
- Self-awareness/self-knowledge: overestimate  $\leftarrow \rightarrow$  underestimate
- With others in groups: want to lead  $\leftarrow \rightarrow$  want to belong to
- Core motivation: want to win  $\leftarrow \rightarrow$  want to be liked
- Attitude towards risks: taking  $\leftarrow \rightarrow$  mitigating

Sources: various

The origins of bias: how does our brain work?

# Introduction

- We are all vulnerable to the influence of deeply held views and ideas which create unconscious bias.
- Unconsciously, we tend to like people who look like us, think like us and come from backgrounds similar to ours.
- Unconscious bias affects every area of our lives
- The challenge is recognising bias when it happens, particularly in the workplace.

Source: Howard Ross, Daniel Kahneman, wikipedia.com

We are human. Having bias is human.

# How do bias arise?

Bias arises from various processes that are difficult to distinguish, e.g.

- brain's limited information processing capacity
- social influence as well as emotional and moral motivation

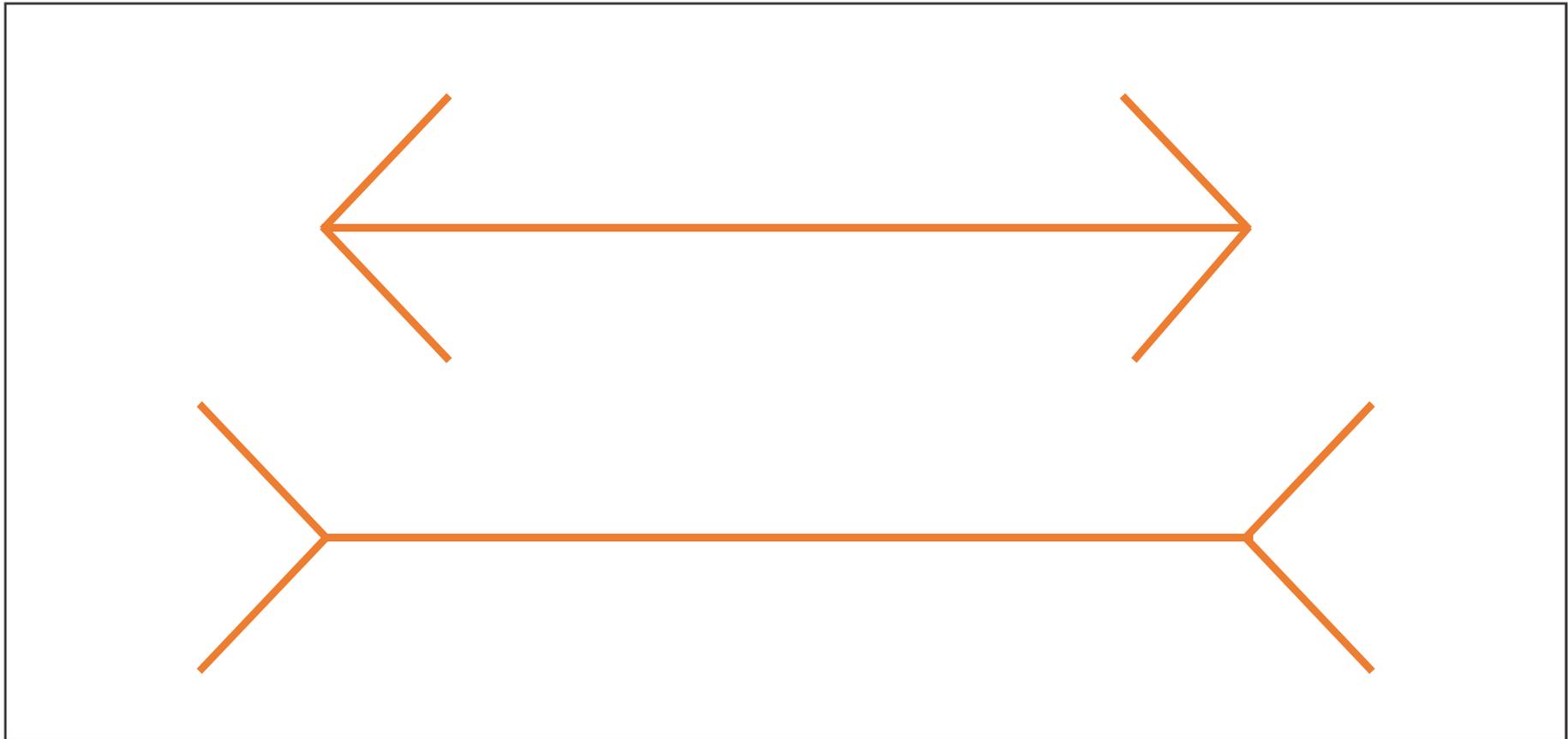
Scientists estimate that we are exposed to as many as 11 million pieces of information at any one time. Our brains can only functionally deal with about 40.

How do we “manage” those 11 million pieces of information?

- We make assumptions and shortcuts
- We believe that what we see, is what we see.
- And we believe that what we see is real.

Source: Howard Ross, Daniel Kahneman, wikipedia.com

We naturally believe what we see



Source: the famous Müller-Lyer illusion.

# How does the brain work?

$$2+2=?$$

$$19 \times 23 = ?$$



# System 1 and System 2

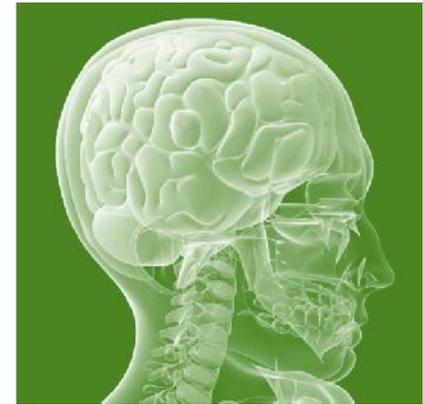


## System 1

- Automatic
- Intuitive
- Instinctive
- Primary
- Rapid
- Blind

## System 2

- Considered
- Effortful
- Focused
- Secondary
- Slower
- Lazy



Source: Daniel Kahneman

# How do system 1 and 2 interact?

- Systems 1 and 2 are both active whenever we are awake.
- System 1 continuously generates suggestions for System 2: impressions, intuitions, intentions, and feelings. If endorsed by System 2, impressions and intuitions turn into beliefs, and impulses turn into voluntary actions.
- System 2 is activated when an event is detected that violates the model of the world that System 1 maintains.
- System 2 is to overcome the impulses of System 1. In other words, System 2 is in charge of self-control.

The division of labor between System 1 and System 2 is highly efficient: it minimizes effort and optimizes performance.

Source: Daniel Kahneman

How to mitigate the impact of bias at work?

# Every journey begins with a first step

“The first step to defeating our hidden biases is to be honest with ourselves about the blind spots we have. Having a bias is only human. The only shame is in making no effort to improve. And human beings are an improving species – we have been improving ourselves in every way over millennia.”

Dr. Mahzarin Banaji, Harvard University



Image. Nasa

Triple A

Awareness

Acknowledge

Act

# Questions & Answers

# Thank you

Your partner in prosperity –  
guiding you from vision  
to reality

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*"If you have forgotten where you want to go, then remember where you came from and how you got here." Senegalese proverb*