Shooter Biases in the Police Officer's Dilemma – Effects of multiple Targets, Bystanders, or Crowds

Theoretischer Hintergrund: The term *shooter bias* refers to a racial bias that has been consistently documented in experimental social cognition research. In the widely used *Police Officer's Dilemma* task, participants must decide whether to "shoot" or "not shoot" a target person depending on whether that person is armed (i.e., carrying a gun) or unarmed (i.e. carrying non-dangerous object like a wallet or mobile phone). A large body of studies has shown that the target's racialized group membership significantly influences both the speed and the accuracy of these decisions. Typically, unarmed Black targets elicit faster and more accurate "shoot" responses than unarmed White targets, while armed Black targets are judged with lower accuracy than armed White targets.

To date, most of this research has been conducted in simplified computer experiments, presenting only a single, clearly identifiable target on each trial. The current project aims to extend this work by examining shooter bias in more complex social scenes. For example, we investigate whether and to what extent the racialized group membership of an additional target person modulates the bias. This opens up a range of further research questions: How does the presence of others influence shooter bias when they are shown as close associates of the target (e.g., acquaintances, accomplices) compared to unrelated bystanders or victims? What effects do cues to target behavior (e.g., suggesting imminent attacking, freezing, or fleeing) have on the bias? What role do larger crowds play in shaping these judgements? Pursuing such questions may substantially increase the ecological validity of shooter bias research and help us understand how these biases operate in more realistic social contexts.

Vorgehensweise: This project involves developing and indipendent research question grounded in the above rationale, pre-registering and programming an individual experiment to be conducted either online or in our laboratory.

Spezifische Kenntnisse & Besonderheiten: This project is best suited for students of the Research Master who have completed the class on intergroup bias, have a strong interest in social cognition research and indirect measures.

Note.
Due to the currently limited supervision capacities of the Department of Social Psychology, students are expected to work very independently.
Please also note the special instructions for working on final topics on the website of the Department of Social Psychology.

Literatur:

Correll, J., Hudson, S. M., Guillermo, S., & Ma, D. S. (2014). The police officer's dilemma: A decade of research on racial bias in the decision to shoot. *Social and Personality Psychology Compass*, *8*(5), 201-213.

Kahn, K. B., & Davies, P. G. (2017). What influences shooter bias? The effects of suspect race, neighborhood, and clothing on decisions to shoot. *Journal of Social Issues*, *73*(4), 723-743.

Frenken, M., Hemmerich, W., Izydorczyk, D., Scharf, S., & Imhoff, R. (2022). Cognitive processes behind the shooter bias: Dissecting response bias, motor preparation and information accumulation. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, *98*, 104230.

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Kapazität:
Das Thema kann von einer:m oder mehreren Masterstudierenden (u.a. auch im Team) bearbeitet werden.