



# Implicit Dehumanization of Competitors: A Gender Comparison

Kirstan Brodie, Kayley Okst, Megan Kay and Andrea Heberlein, Ph.D.

Boston College, Chestnut Hill, MA



## Introduction

- Dehumanization of outgroup members in intergroup competition<sup>X</sup>
  - Possible dehumanization of individual competitors in one-on-one competition
- Two dimensions of mind perception: Experience & Agency<sup>B</sup>
  - Competition may decrease perception of Experience, but not Agency<sup>B?</sup>
- Women show greater tendency to maintain interpersonal harmony<sup>C</sup>
  - Women face discomfort in competitive situations<sup>D</sup>
  - Implicit dehumanization as a coping mechanism for women?
  - Previous study suggests women implicitly dehumanize competitors in a similar task<sup>E</sup>
- Do women implicitly dehumanize competitors on an individual level more than men do?

→ If women role-play as men & gender expectations are reduced, will their implicit dehumanization decrease?

→ Will this implicit dehumanization be greater along the Experience dimension?

## Aims and Hypotheses

### Study 1: Face-to-face Interaction

- Do people implicitly dehumanize face-to-face competitors?
- Does this differ between Experience and Agency?
- Do women implicitly dehumanize more than men?

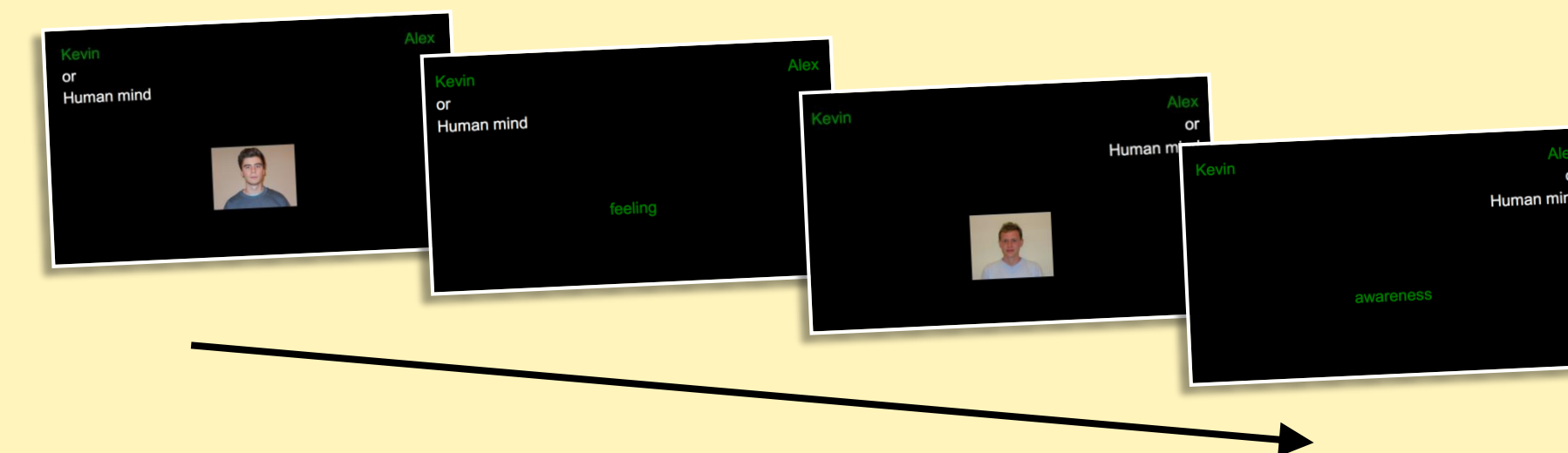
### Study 2: Online Avatar Interaction

- Do people implicitly dehumanize competitors when interacting online?
- Does this differ between Experience and Agency?
- Do women who role-play as male show less implicit dehumanization of competitors than women who do not role-play as male?

## Study 1: Face-to-face Interaction

### Methods

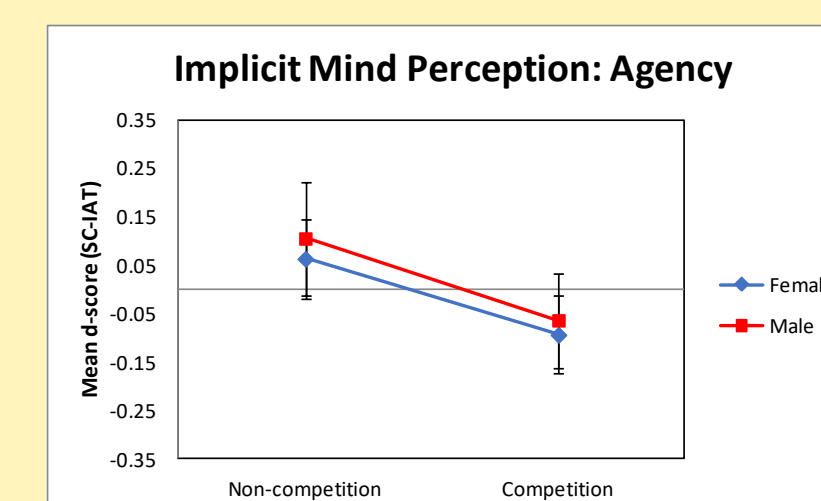
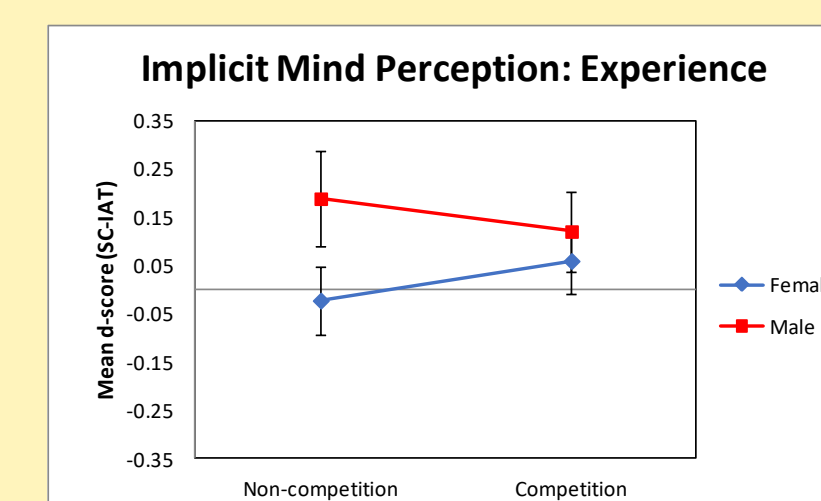
- 46 participants (29 female, 17 male) interacted face-to-face with confederate of the same gender
- Coin-flipping game: Competition (N=25)/Non-Competition (N=21)
- Single-Category Implicit Association Tests (SC-IATs)**
  - Measure association between **one mind dimension** (Experience or Agency) and **two people** (confederate vs. foil)



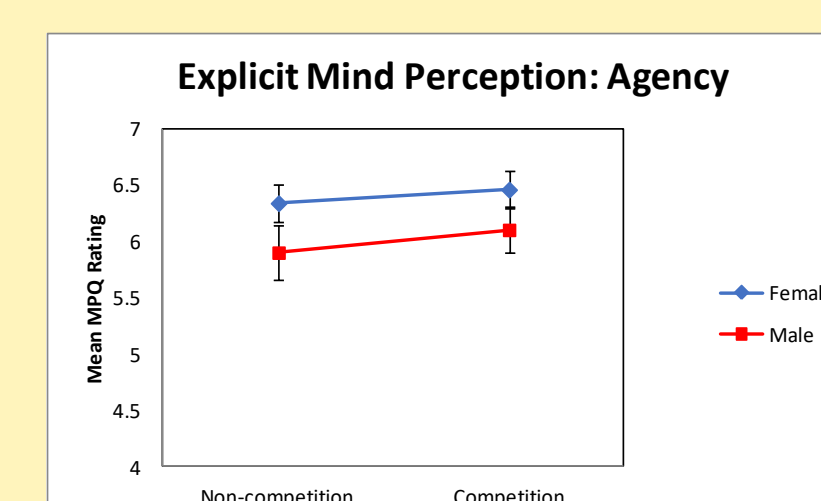
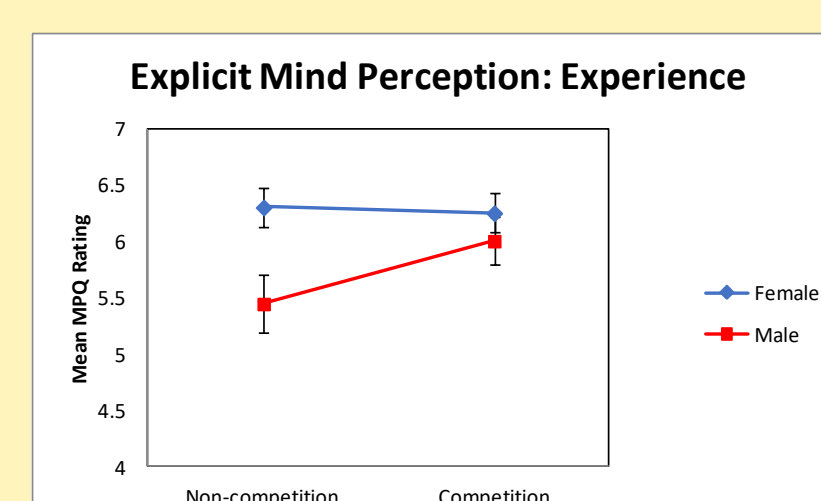
- Mind Perception Questionnaire (MPQ)**
  - Measures **explicit** dehumanization on Experience & Agency dimensions

### Results

- Repeated measures ANOVA of SC-IAT d-scores**  
2 (Male/Female) x 2 (Competition/Non-Competition) x 2 (Experience/Agency)
  - No main effects** of gender or of competition condition on implicit dehumanization,  $F(1, 42) = 1.584, p = .215$ ;  $F(1, 42) = 1.304, p = .26$
  - No interaction** between gender, competition condition and Experience/Agency on implicit dehumanization,  $F(1, 42) = .393, p = .534$



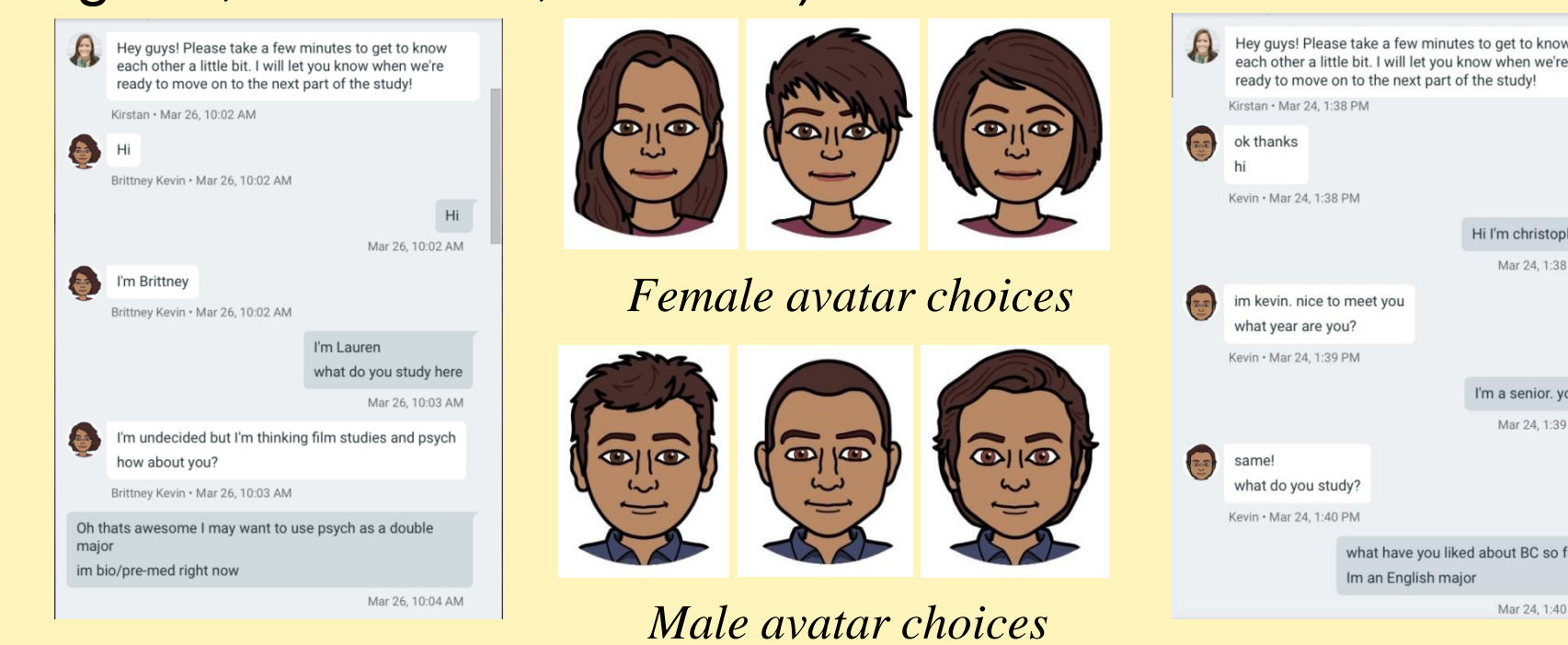
- Repeated measures ANOVA on explicit mind ratings (MPQ)**
  - Trend** towards interaction between gender, competition condition, and Experience/Agency  $F(1, 42) = 2.979, p = .092$
  - Women** attributed greater explicit mental capacity to confederate along both Experience & Agency dimensions regardless of competition condition,  $F(1, 42) = 6.601, p = .014$



## Study 2: Online Avatar Interaction

### Methods

- 32 participants (all female) interacted with a confederate in an online chat using either a male or female avatar<sup>A</sup> (randomly assigned; 16 female, 16 male)



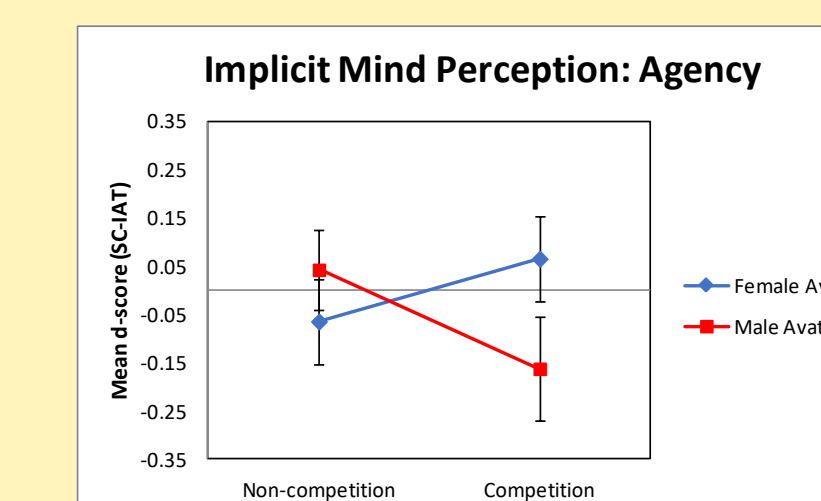
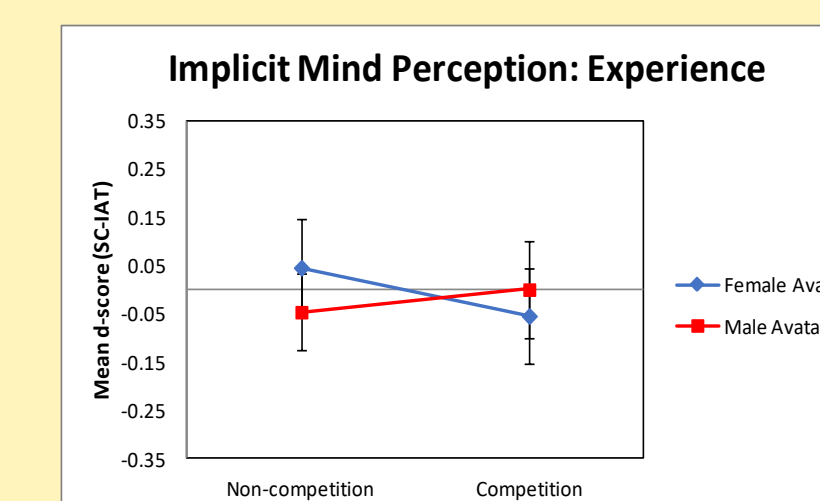
- Coin-flipping game: Competition (N=14)/Non-Competition (N=18)
- Single-Category Implicit Association Tests (SC-IATs)**



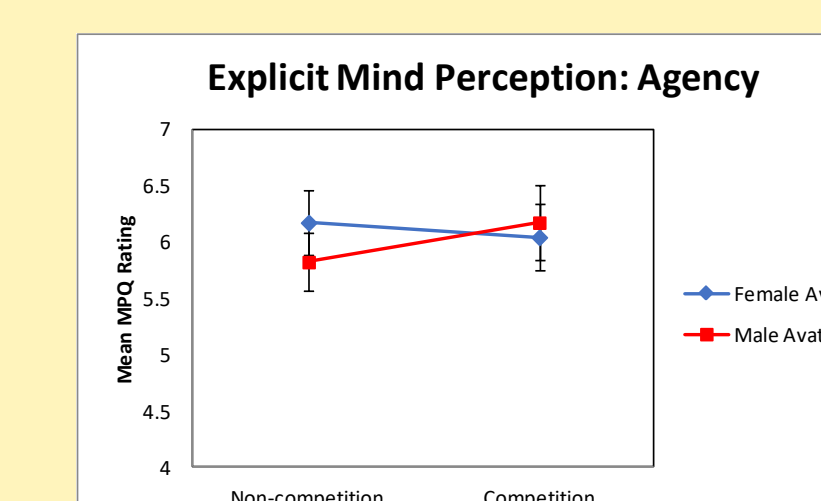
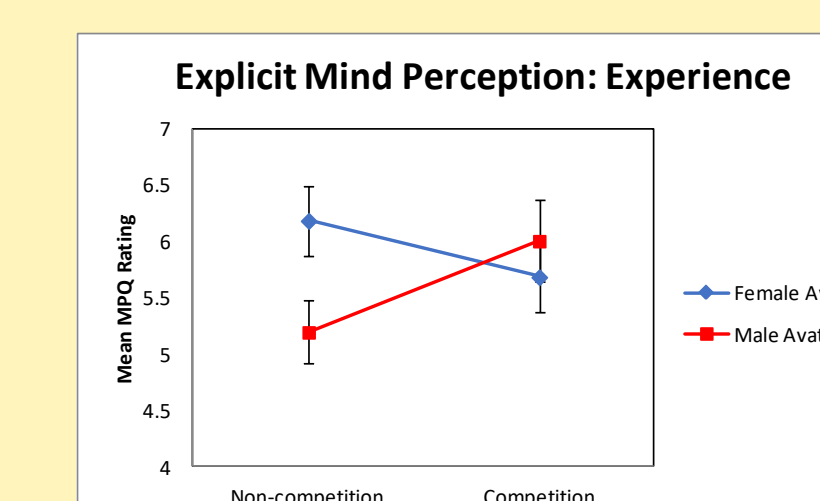
- Mind Perception Questionnaire (MPQ)**

### Results

- Repeated measures ANOVA of SC-IAT d-scores**
  - No main effects** of avatar gender or of competition condition on implicit dehumanization,  $F(1, 28) = .309, p = .582$ ;  $F(1, 28) = .208, p = .652$
  - Marginally significant interaction** between avatar gender, competition condition and Experience/Agency on implicit dehumanization,  $F(1, 28) = 3.916, p = .058$



- Repeated measures ANOVA on explicit mind ratings (MPQ)**
  - No main effects** of avatar gender or competition condition on explicit dehumanization,  $F(1, 28) = .671, p = .42$ ,  $F(1, 28) = .238, p = .63$
  - No interaction** between gender, competition condition, and Experience/Agency,  $F(1, 28) = 2.301, p = .14$



## Conclusions

- Women explicitly attributed greater mind capacity to game partner in all conditions in Study 1
- Women more motivated than men to attend to others' minds (perspective-taking)?
- Supports claim that women's interactions may be influenced by a drive to maintain interpersonal harmony
- SC-IAT as a method of measuring differences in attitudes towards individual others
- Allows dehumanization & bias to be measured on an individual, interpersonal level rather than an intergroup level
- Differences between Study 1 & Study 2?**
- Small groups and preliminary results; data collection will continue

## References

- A. Jamieson et al., *Psychological Science*, 2013
- B. Waytz et al., *Trends in Cog. Sciences*, 2010
- C. Lee, Kesebir & Pillutla, *J. Pers. & Soc. Psych.*, 2016
- D. Benenson et al., *Merrill-Palmer Quarterly*, 2002
- E, F. Cite Otten & Garinther studies

## Acknowledgements

Katherine McAuliffe, Ph.D.; Research Assistants  
Stephanie Wall, Cecilia Law, Brittney Kil, Kevin O'Hara, Mary Nanna, Eamon Atri & Wesley Ricketts

Contact: brodiek@bc.edu