

Beauty & The Beast

What does it mean to be beautiful, and what it means for
your life

Can beauty be objective?



„But she warned him not to be deceived by appearances, for the beauty is found within...” – *Beauty and the Beast*

Beauty standards change



Facial attractiveness

- Many **facial features** were found to correlate very well with human's notion of attractiveness
- In particular, **symmetric faces** are considered more attractive and **people with symmetric faces are considered more attractive**

The meta-analyses showed that, both within and across cultures, people agreed about who is and is not attractive. Furthermore, attractiveness is an advantage in a variety of important, real-life situations. We found not a single gender difference and surprisingly few age differences, suggesting that attractiveness is as important for males as for females and for children as for adults.

Langlois et al (2000)



Chickens prefer beautiful humans*

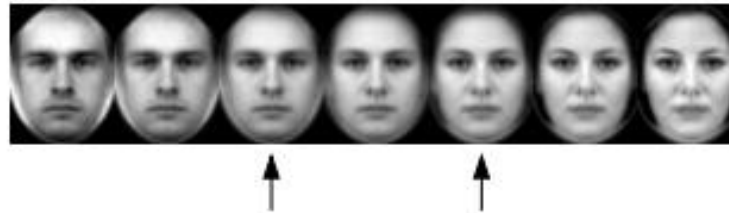
Stefano Ghirlanda¹, Liselotte Jansson², and Magnus Enquist^{1,2}

¹Group for interdisciplinary cultural research, Stockholm University

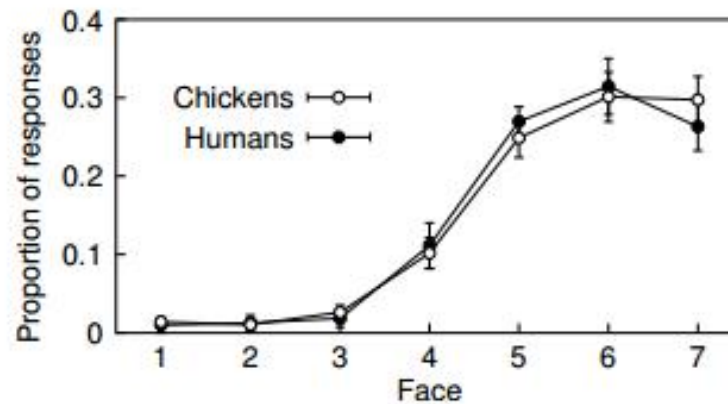
²Zoology Institution, Stockholm University

—Reprint of April 15, 2004—

a



b



How important is attractiveness?

Attractive people are
judged and treated
much better than less
attractive ones

Perception of children



Attractive children are considered more competent and well-adjusted, both by people they know and by strangers (75% - 25%)

Other correlations

- Attractive people are thought to be doing their work better (70%-30%)
- Attractive people are more successful, both professionally (59% - 41%) and in personal life (63%-37% in dating experience)
- Attractive men are more likely to get a job if they include a photo in their CV. Attractive woman shouldn't do that.
- **All in all, attractive people are judged and treated much better.**

What a massive discrimination!



- Replace „asymmetric” with „black”, and end up with **racism**
- **Is there a similar mechanism behind these perceptions?**

Minorities discrimination

- „The basic distinctiveness-based **illusory correlation effect** is highly significant, and of moderate strength” (Mullen, Johnson, 2011)
- „The pseudo-contingency approach integrates **true contingency learning from finite samples** of the environment and **fallacious inferences from those contingencies** resulting from a deficit of metacognitive skills in inductive reasoning” (Meister, Thorsten, 2006)
- „ The **strength of illusory correlations increased with decreasing working-memory capacity**, operationalized either by an interpersonal differences measure or a cognitive-load manipulation” (Eder *et al*, 2011)

Minorities discrimination

- „Minority stereotypes result from bad statistics of stupid people”
(Malinowski, 2013)

Beauty and intelligence

Why beautiful people are more intelligent

Satoshi Kanazawa^{a,*}, Jody L. Kovar^b

^a*Interdisciplinary Institute of Management, London School of Economics and Political Science,
Houghton Street, London WC2A 2AE, UK*

^b*Department of Sociology, Indiana University of Pennsylvania, USA*

Received 22 September 2003; received in revised form 20 March 2004; accepted 26 March 2004

Available online 1 June 2004

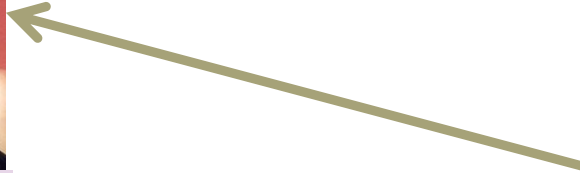
Abstract

Empirical studies demonstrate that individuals perceive physically attractive others to be more intelligent than physically unattractive others. While most researchers dismiss this perception as a “bias” or “stereotype,” we contend that individuals have this perception because beautiful people indeed *are* more intelligent. The conclusion that beautiful people are more intelligent follows from four assumptions. (1) Men who are more intelligent are

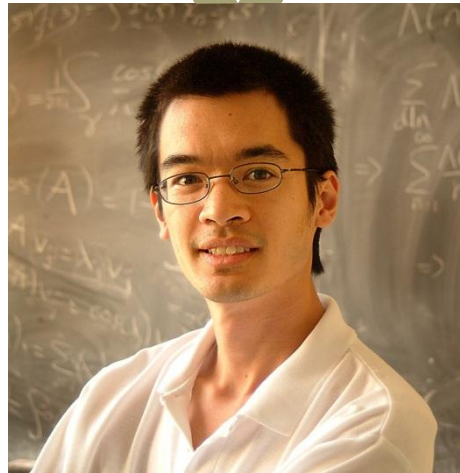
- There is evidence for higher intelligence of attractive people



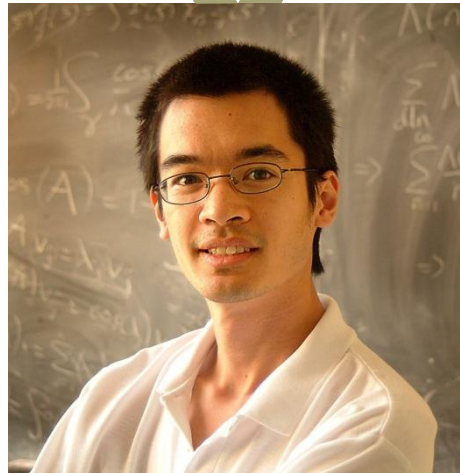
- Woman prefer men of high status as their mates (Buss, 1994), and men of high status are more intelligent (Jensen, 1980)



- Men prefer more attractive women as their mates (Buss, 1994), because it increases the chances of offspring being healthy (Thornhill, Møller, 1997)



- Beauty is heritable (McGovern *et al*, 1996) and intelligence is heritable (eg. Neisser *et al*, 1995, but numbers are questioned now)



- Attractiveness and intelligence should get correlated in the course of evolution!

Empirical evidence

- Intelligence and attractiveness correlate strongly in children and weakly (but significantly) in adults
- However, actual correlation is considerably weaker than the one we perceive



- Judgement of intelligence: 74% - 26%
- Actual intelligence distribution: 60% - 40%

Explanations of physical attractiveness stereotypes

- **Good genes** – attractiveness measures health
 - **Mate selection** – but gender and age symmetry observed
 - **Parental solicitude** – parents invest more in children with higher fitness and potential (measured by attractiveness)
- **Research suggest that Physical Attractiveness Stereotype is in-built and evolutionary, and may be partially based on true correlations**

Political correctness

Beautiful people are more intelligent

Mr Sociologist

1 Abstract

We performed a meta-analysis of available results on correlation between Physical Attractiveness (as measured inversely by FA) and Intelligence Quotient (IQ) to conclude that attractive people display greater intelligence than non-attractive ones

- But what if...

Political correctness

Homosexual people are more intelligent

Mr Sociologist-Risktaker

1 Abstract

We performed a meta-analysis of available results on correlation between sexual orientation and Intelligence Quotient (IQ) to conclude that homosexual people of both sexes display greater intelligence than heterosexual ones

Homosexual people are less intelligent

Mr Sociologist-Suicidal

1 Abstract

We performed a meta-analysis of available results on correlation between sexual orientation and Intelligence Quotient (IQ) to conclude that heterosexual people of both sexes display greater intelligence than homosexual ones

Problems

- We were shaped to be **very unfair and biased**, probably to increase our evolutionary advantage
- We find it very **difficult to acknowledge the real state of affairs**: individuals don't consider themselves discriminatory
- We have **trouble interpreting data correctly**, which leads to the problem of political correctness in social sciences

Way to go...

- We were shaped to be **very unfair and biased**, probably to increase our evolutionary advantage
- Standardised procedures at school and at work
- Diverse groups (this case: both sexes)
- Internal statistics

Way to go...

- We find it very **difficult to acknowledge the real state of affairs**: individuals don't consider themselves discriminatory
- **Education about evolution?**

Way to go...

- We have **trouble interpreting data correctly**, which leads to the problem of political correctness in social sciences
- **Maths education!**
- **Data-oriented education**