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An Inkblot for Unconscious Thought: Examination of Nonconscious Implicit Attitude Change

A body of literature has been building in the past seven years examining the deliberation-without attention effect. This literature has focused solely on the final explicit output of the unconscious thought process and has thus far ignored its potential impact on implicit cognition. The present study seeks to begin elucidating the relationship between unconscious thought and implicit cognition by testing the prediction that implicit attitudes will vary as a function of the relative use of conscious or unconscious thought in the decision-making process. To do this, we utilize the Affect Misattribution Procedure indirect measure of attitudes within the classic unconscious decision-making paradigm. Results indicate that, like explicit preferences, implicit attitudes towards targets are more accurate following a period of unconscious thought. This provides suggestive evidence supporting the idea that unconscious processing and integration of complex information is reflected in implicit measures of attitude in addition to conventional explicit choice tasks.