

SEAN FATH

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EDUCATION

- 2020 (Expected) Duke University, Fuqua School of Business
Ph.D. Candidate, Management & Organizations
- Dissertation: Exploring preferences for ‘blinding’ one’s own judgment: Consequences for hiring and performance evaluation.
 - Committee: Rick Larrick & Aaron Kay (Co-Chairs), Ashleigh Shelby Rosette, Jane Risen
- 2011 DePaul University
B.A. (Magna Cum Laude), Psychology

RESEARCH INTERESTS

Broadly, my research explores (1) the ways in which decision makers use different types of information when evaluating others and (2) people's lay beliefs about social and organizational stratification.

JOB MARKET PAPER

“Blinding”—purposefully restricting the information one sees in order to try to form a more accurate evaluation—has been useful as a structural solution to bias in many domains, from clinical trials of new drugs to peer review in academia. In these cases, an external party adopts or imposes a system of blinding to combat bias. However, in many evaluative domains (e.g., hiring), blinding policies are not commonplace, and evaluators choose for themselves what information to incorporate into their evaluations. This raises important questions about the psychology of blinding: Will people choose for themselves to be “blind” to information that might bias them? For example, will a manager choose to have names and/or photos removed from job applications before evaluating them? We perform the first tests of individual-level blinding preferences across four pre-registered studies (N = 3,268). We predict that, while most people will consider blinding the appropriate choice in hypothetical evaluation contexts, fewer will choose to be blind when placed in real evaluation contexts. We demonstrate this “want vs should” discrepancy—and its consequences for decision bias—in performance evaluation and hiring domains. Moreover, we present evidence that curiosity, accuracy, and fairness are competing motivations in blinding decisions and test the effectiveness of two interventions to increase people’s preference for blinding. We close with a discussion of future directions and implications for policy makers in organizations and beyond.

PUBLICATIONS

1. **Fath, S.** & Kay, A. C. (2018). “If hierarchical, then corrupt”: Exploring people’s tendency to associate hierarchy with corruption in organizations. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, 149, 145-164.

*Data and materials available at osf.io/pe4na

2. **Fath, S.**, Proudfoot, D., & Kay, A. C. (2017). Effective to a fault: Organizational structure predicts attitudes toward minority organizations. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology, 73*, 290-297.
*Data and materials available at osf.io/gdtpm
3. Crum, A. J., Akinola, M., Martin, A., & **Fath, S.** (2017). The role of stress mindset in shaping cognitive, emotional, and physiological responses to challenging and threatening stress. *Anxiety, Stress & Coping, 30*(4), 379-395.

WORKING PAPERS

4. **Fath, S.**, Larrick, R. P., & Soll, J. B. Blinding curiosity: Exploring preferences for “blinding” one’s own judgment. (*Working Paper*)
*Job Market Paper
*Dissertation Essay 1
5. **Fath, S.***, Ma, A.*, & Rosette, A. S. Exploring perceptions of disadvantage and success as interwoven antecedents to White privilege acknowledgement. (*Working Paper*)
*Denotes equal contribution
6. **Fath, S.**, Kay, A. C., & Jost, J. T. Business as usual? Why hierarchical organizations inspire confidence. (*Working Paper*)
7. Proudfoot, D. & **Fath, S.** The “lone genius” myth: How perceived social connectedness influences judgments of creative potential. (*Working Paper*)

SELECTED RESEARCH IN PROGRESS

- Fath, S.** & Larrick, R. P. I know best: Subjective and objective domain expertise as moderators of blinding preferences. (*Data Collection*)
*Dissertation Essay 2
- Fath, S.**, Larrick, R. P., & Soll, J. B. On the efficacy of interventions to encourage self-blinding. (*Data Collection*)
*Dissertation Essay 3
- Fath, S.**, Larrick, R. P., & Soll, J. B. Poorly calibrated: Blinding preferences with obviously vs. non-obviously contaminative information. (*Data Collection*)
- Fath, S.**, Wingrove, S., Kay, A. C., Payne, K., & Fitzsimons, G. Social class, network composition, and lay beliefs about network usage. (*Data Collection*)
- Fath, S.** & Kay, A. C. Steep and efficient; flat and innovative: Evidence for a lay contingency theory. (*Data Collection*)
- Fath, S.** & Kay, A. C. Social dominance orientation predicts a preference for hierarchy in organizations. (*Data Collection*)

Matusik, J. G., Hays, N. A., **Fath, S.**, Mitchell, R. L., Cornfield, B. L., & Hollenbeck, J. R.
Hierarchy vs. egalitarianism in multi-team systems. (*Data Collection*)

CHAired SYMPOSIA

Fath, S. & Proudfoot, D. (August 2016). Antecedents to inequality: Exploring links between ideology and maintenance of social hierarchy. *Annual Academy of Management Meeting*, Anaheim, California.

*Selected as a Showcase Symposium

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

Fath, S.*, Ma, A.*, & Rosette, A. S. (August 2019). Exploring perceptions of disadvantage and success as interwoven antecedents to White privilege acknowledgement. Talk to be presented at the *Annual Academy of Management Meeting*, Boston, Massachusetts

Fath, S. Larrick, R. P., & Soll, J. B. (November 2018). Blinding curiosity: Exploring whether and when people favor “blinding” when evaluating performance. Poster presented at the *Annual Society for Judgment and Decision Making Meeting*, New Orleans, Louisiana.

Fath, S. Larrick, R. P., & Soll, J. B. (August 2018). The curious and the blind: Exploring whether and when people favor “blinding” when evaluating performance. Talk presented at the *Annual Academy of Management Meeting*, Chicago, Illinois.

Fath, S. Larrick, R. P., & Soll, J. B. (March 2018). The curious and the blind: Exploring whether and when people favor “blinding” when evaluating performance. Poster presented at the *Annual Meeting for the Society for Personality and Social Psychology*, Atlanta, Georgia.

Fath, S. & Kay, A. C., (August 2017). Exploring the effect of perceived normalcy on the endorsement of hierarchy. Talk presented at the *Annual Academy of Management Meeting*, Atlanta, Georgia.

Fath, S., Proudfoot, D., & Kay, A. C., (April 2017). Effective to a fault: Organizational structure predicts attitudes towards minority organizations. Talk presented at the *Carolina Research in Social and Personality Psychology Conference*, Durham, North Carolina.

Fath, S. & Kay, A. C., (January 2017). On the self-reinforcing nature of hierarchy: Exploring the effects of perceived normalcy on the endorsement of hierarchy. Poster presented at the *Annual Meeting for the Society for Personality and Social Psychology*, San Antonio, Texas.

Fath, S., Proudfoot, D., & Kay, A. C., (August 2016). Effective to a fault: Organizational structure predicts attitudes towards minority organizations. Talk presented at the *Annual Academy of Management Meeting*, Anaheim, California.

Fath, S., Proudfoot, D., & Kay, A. C., (January 2016). Effective to a fault: Organizational structure predicts attitudes towards minority organizations. Talk presented at the *Annual Meeting for the Society for Personality and Social Psychology*, San Diego, California.

Fath, S., & Kay, A. C., (January 2016). Effects of hierarchical structure on system confidence and justification. Poster presented at the *Annual Meeting for the Society for Personality and Social Psychology*, San Diego, California

Fath, S. & Kay, A. C., (April 2015). Effects of hierarchical structure on system confidence and justification. Talk presented at the *Carolina Research in Social and Personality Psychology Conference*, Durham, North Carolina.

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

Academy of Management	2015 – present
Society for Personality and Social Psychology	2015 – present
Society for Judgment and Decision Making	2018 – present
Society for Human Resource Management	2018 – present

TEACHING ASSISTANT EXPERIENCE

Duke University, Fuqua School of Business	
<i>Negotiations</i> , Daytime MBA	2015
<i>Negotiations</i> , Weekend Executive MBA	2016
<i>Power and Politics</i> , Daytime MBA	2015 – 2016, 2019
<i>Leadership</i> , Weekend Executive MBA	2015 – 2017, 2019
<i>Decision Making</i> , Daytime MBA	2016
<i>Managerial Effectiveness</i> , Weekend Executive MBA	2017
<i>Culture, Civilization, and Leadership</i> , Cross-Continent MBA	2018

SERVICE

Ad hoc Reviewer
 Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes
 Academy of Management Annual Meeting

REFERENCES

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