How We See Race: Using Eye Tracking Technology to Explore Racial Perception

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Overview

Volunteers frequently looked at forehead and hair when determining a person’s race.

Using GazePoint Eye Tracking Bar technology in the UAH VUE Lab, twenty participants had their eye movement tracked. There are two powerpoints of fifteen women’s selfies, one set of curly hair and one set of straight; each participant is shown one. Participants often looked at hair and large amounts of exposed skin, such as foreheads, which we hypothesized to be the participants looking at skin color. Future analysis will study differences by hairstyle and race. Four of the twenty participants were analyzed for the purpose of this poster.

Policy Implications

Knowing how people determine race can help create policies which help lessen race discrimination, such as the California CROWN Act or the New York Hair Discrimination Ban. In Alabama, it is currently legal to discriminate against people due to their hair.

References

2. Sims, Jennifer Patrice, Whitney Laster Pirtle, and Iris Johnson-Arnold. “Doing Hair, Doing Race: The influence of hairstyle on racial perception across the US.” (manuscript under review)

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