

Friday April 10, 2015

2:00-3:30 PM

Meyer Building (Department of Psychology)

6 Washington Place, Room 551

New York University



DR. ITIEL DROR

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Bias in the Criminal Justice System: Psychological Contamination of Experts

Discussants:

Professor Eric Dickson

(Department of Politics)

Professor Jo Dixon

(Department of Sociology)

Abstract. Psychological models of judgment and decision-making demarcate processes that contribute to error. Theories and evidence create the expectation that judgments include error. However, models have been developed mainly by studying laypeople, and as a result reference decision-making among laypeople. In contrast to the expectations for error inherent in layperson decision-making, the expectations for expert decision-makers, particularly of scientists, are that error is minimized and perhaps non-existent. In the criminal justice system experts are highly valued and regarded to provide impartial and objective evidence. In this talk, I will review real casework documenting psychological contaminations that affect experts in the criminal justice system, including fingerprinting and DNA forensic examiners. I will review theories and provide evidence articulating the psychological mechanisms by which forensic and other experts make biased and erroneous decisions. Research can help identify such weaknesses and provide practical ways to mitigate them.

Dr. Itiel Dror is a cognitive neuroscientist, having received his Ph.D. from Harvard University. His work focuses on the cognitive architecture that underpins expertise. He researches expert performance in the real world, examining medical surgeons, military fighter pilots, frontline police, and forensic examiners. Dr. Dror's research provides insights into the inherent trade-offs of being an expert. He has published over 100 research articles, and has been extensively cited in the U.S. National Academy of Sciences Report on Forensic Science and the United Kingdom Fingerprint Public Inquiry. He currently is the Chair of the Forensic Human Factor Group recently established by Department of Justice & the National Institute of Standards and Technology, and is on the AAAS Scientific Advisory Board on Forensic Science. Dr. Dror has been working with police forces and agencies in the United States (e.g., FBI, NYPD, LAPD, etc.) as well as in other countries (e.g., The Netherlands, Finland, United Kingdom, and Australia). He provides training in implementing cognitively-based best practices in police investigations and evaluating expert evidence

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