Prejudice With and Without Compunction

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Ss reported their standards for how they should respond and how they would respond in contact situations with Black people (Study 1) and homosexual men (Study 2). Interest centered on the affective consequences associated with should-would discrepancies. Low and moderately prejudiced Ss with discrepancies reacted with feelings of global discomfort and with more specific feelings of compunction (guilt and self-criticism). High prejudiced Ss with discrepancies experienced only global discomfort. Study 3 data indicated that low prejudiced Ss internalized their nonprejudiced standards and felt obligated to respond consistently with them. High prejudiced Ss' personal standards were less well internalized and appeared to be derived from their perceptions of society's standards, which Ss indicated were mixed (i.e., contained both egalitarian and discriminatory components). Implications for prejudice reduction and contemporary models of prejudice are discussed.

Many Southerners have confessed to me, for instance, that even though in their minds they no longer feel prejudice toward Blacks, they still feel squeamish when they shake hands with a Black. These feelings are left over from what they learned in their families as children. (Pettigrew, 1987, p. 20)

Defeated intellectually, prejudice lingers emotionally. (Allport, 1954, p. 328)

Pettigrew's and Allport's observations suggest that conscious decisions to renounce prejudice do not immediately eliminate prejudiced responses. Overcoming a lifetime of socialization experiences that, unfortunately, promote prejudice (Devine, 1989; Dovidio & Gaertner, in press; Ehrlich, 1973; F. A. Katz, 1976) is an arduous task. Thus, efforts to defeat prejudice are likely to involve a great deal of internal conflict between consciously endorsed nonprejudiced beliefs and lingering stereotypic thoughts and feelings.

The coexistence of these contradictory reactions (i.e., nonprejudiced beliefs and negative responses) has often been regarded with suspicion in the prejudice literature. Of central concern is that many people who report nonprejudiced attitudes on surveys also manifest prejudice on nonconsciously monitored measures (Crosby, Bromley, & Saxe, 1980; Gaertner & Dovidio, 1986). Several theorists have resolved the conflict by assuming that verbal reports are not trustworthy indicators of people's attitudes and beliefs, but merely reflect self-presentational strategies (Crosby et al., 1980; Dovidio & Gaertner, in press; McConahay, 1986; Sigall & Page, 1971). Devine (1989) recently offered a less pessimistic interpretation of the disparity between verbal reports and nonconsciously monitored responses. That is, Devine provided a framework for understanding how those who truly renounce prejudice may continue to experience prejudice-like thoughts or feelings. In her discussion of automatic and controlled processes in prejudice, Devine posited that prejudice-like responses are automatically activated in the presence of members of the stereotyped group. In contrast, nonprejudiced responses require the inhibition of the automatically activated negative responses and the conscious, intentional activation of nonprejudiced beliefs. According to Devine, then, nonprejudiced beliefs and prejudiced thoughts and feelings may coexist within the same individual.

An important assumption of Devine's (1989) model is that adoption of nonprejudiced beliefs or personal standards does not immediately eliminate prejudice-like responses. That is, stereotype-based knowledge structures may continue to be activated, resulting in prejudice-like thoughts and feelings that are fundamentally in conflict with the endorsed nonprejudiced beliefs (see also Higgins & King, 1981; Sherman & Gorkin, 1980). Thus, the change from prejudice to nonprejudice is not viewed as an all-or-none event but as a process during which the low prejudiced person is especially vulnerable to conflict between his or her enduring negative responses and endorsed nonprejudiced beliefs.

The portrayal of the low prejudiced person as experiencing
internal conflict has a long history in the prejudice literature. For example, regarding race relations, Gunner Myrdal (1944) suggested that many White Americans experience an internal moral conflict between their commitment to the general egalitarian tenets of the "American Creed" and their more specific prejudices. Drawing from Myrdal's writings, Gordon Allport (1954) suggested that many people who are committed to the American Creed have deliberately rejected prejudiced beliefs but continue to respond to Black people (or other out-group members) in a prejudiced or intolerant manner (often unintentionally). Allport argued that feelings of compunction (i.e., guilt and self-criticism) arise when one's actual reactions are in conflict with how the person believes he or she should respond. Although Allport's theoretical ideas are intuitively appealing, he offered no direct empirical support for the experience of prejudice with compunction.

Since 1954 only a handful of studies have attempted to empirically address the notion of prejudice with compunction (Campbell, 1961; Friedrichs, 1959; Westie, 1965), and these studies have methodological shortcomings. For example, Campbell (1961) attempted to test specifically the idea that guilt is associated with a discrepancy between one's personal standards and one's actual responses. In his study, high school students indicated how they thought they actually would respond to their school being desegregated and then indicated how they thought they should respond to school desegregation. Many of the subjects did report discrepancies between their should and would responses. However, Campbell operationally defined guilt as a shift of at least two positions in a tolerant direction on the Should compared with the Would scale. Thus, Campbell equated the discrepancy itself with guilt, but offered no independent measure of guilt.

Although there has been no direct research on prejudice with compunction for the past 25 years, several theoretical frameworks have suggested that affective consequences are associated with discrepancies between actual responses and personal standards (e.g., Aronson, 1968; Carver & Scheier, 1990; Duval & Wicklund, 1972; Higgins, 1987; Markus & Nurius, 1986). The frameworks differ in their level of specificity regarding the qualitative nature of affect experienced, but they share the assumption that transgressing an important personal standard creates psychological discomfort for the individual.

Aronson (1968), for example, argued that cognitive dissonance is aroused when one's behavior is inconsistent with one's self-concept (see also Steele, 1988). Similarly, Bramel (1968) suggested that dissonance is aroused when perceptions of some aspect of the self are contrary to internalized standards. Dissonance theorists, however, were never specific about the qualitative nature of the negative affect associated with dissonance (i.e., it was described as tension or discomfort), and it was rarely measured directly.

Higgins's (1987; Higgins, Bond, Klein, & Strauman, 1985; Higgins, Klein, & Strauman, 1985) self-discrepancy theory posits that qualitatively distinct affects are associated with distinct types of self-inconsistencies. According to Higgins, people evaluate their actual selves in light of "ideal" (i.e., hoped for) and "ought" (i.e., should) standards. Discrepancies from these standards create affective reactions. For example, if people experience discrepancies between their actual selves and their personal standards for who they think they ought to be, they experience guilt and self-contempt—the affect associated with transgressing a personally accepted moral standard.

There are clear conceptual parallels between Allport's (1954) ideas concerning prejudice with compunction and the models relating self-discrepancies to affect. For example, Allport's description of prejudice with compunction is similar to Higgins's (1987) description of the consequences of discrepancies from personal ought standards. In both cases, negative affect in the form of self-criticism and guilt follows from transgression of the standards. Thus, for those who renounce prejudice, nonprejudiced values serve as the should standard.

GOALS OF THE PRESENT RESEARCH

An initial objective was to develop sensitive measures of the personal standards and actual responses of both high and low prejudiced persons in situations involving contact with Black people (Study 1) and homosexual men (Study 2). Thus, subjects indicated their personal standards for how they should feel in contact situations with Black people and homosexual men and then indicated how they actually would feel in the situations. A second, related objective was to assess the discrepancy between personal standards and actual responses for high and low prejudiced persons.

Our third major objective was to investigate the affective consequences of having such discrepancies. Thus, after providing their should and would responses, subjects indicated their feelings about how well their would responses matched their should responses on a series of positive and negative affect items. Embedded in this list was a set of items that would capture general discomfort that could follow from discrepancies (e.g., tense, anxious, or uneasy). In addition, we included a set of items that, conceptually, should capture the experience of compunction (e.g., guilty or self-critical). Including both types of negative affect items enabled us to explore whether diffuse and/or qualitatively distinct affects followed from discrepancies.

Predictions for the affective reactions of low prejudiced subjects with should–would discrepancies are relatively straightforward. The literature is generally in agreement that low prejudiced persons have adopted a set of nonprejudiced values and standards and have integrated these standards into their self-concepts (Allport, 1954; Devine, 1989; Dutton, 1976; Sherman & Gorkin, 1980; but see Crosby et al., 1980). Because these internalized standards are important to subjects, responding inconsistently with them should threaten their nonprejudiced self-concepts and create global discomfort, as well as more specific feelings of guilt and self-criticism. In contrast, if subjects' responses matched their standards (i.e., there was no discrepancy), we expected that subjects would not experience negative affect.

Because previous theorizing in the prejudice literature has **2** Ideal and ought standards can be one's own standards or can be standards imposed on one by significant others (e.g., parents and friends). Our immediate concern is with self-imposed standards, and we focus on the part of Higgins's (1987; Higgins, Bond, Klein, & Strauman, 1985; Higgins, Klein, & Strauman, 1985) theory directly relevant to the affect generated by discrepancies with self-imposed standards.
focused exclusively on discrepancies within low prejudiced people, predictions for the high prejudiced subjects are more speculative. It is possible, for instance, that high prejudiced subjects will not report discrepancies between their standards and their actual responses. If, however, some high prejudiced subjects do report discrepancies, the literature offers little basis for making predictions about the affective reactions that would follow from such discrepancies. Thus, we did not make specific predictions about the high prejudiced subjects.

STUDY 1

Method

Subjects and Selection

Several hundred introductory psychology students completed the seven-item Modern Racism Scale (MRS; McConahay, Harder, & Batts, 1981), a nonreactive measure of negative attitudes toward Black people, as part of a larger survey administered early in the semester. Respondents rated each item on a 9-point rating scale ranging from disagree strongly (1) to agree strongly (7). Composite MRS scores were computed by summing subjects' ratings, after reverse scoring when necessary. MRS scores could range from low prejudice (28) to high prejudice (28).

Our goal was to recruit White subjects who were low, moderate, or high in prejudice to participate in the study. However, the distribution of MRS scores was highly positively skewed, so that we did not have many high prejudiced subjects. Approximately equal numbers of male and female subjects from the low to moderate range were selected at random, contacted by phone, and asked to participate. A total of 101 White subjects was successfully recruited for participation. Subjects were not informed of the relation between this study and their MRS scores. The experimenter who recruited subjects also prepared the materials used in each session. A different experimenter conducted the sessions and was blind to subjects' prejudice level.

Procedure

Subjects participated in mixed gender and mixed prejudice-level groups ranging in size from 4 to 10 people. Subjects were informed that the study involved completing a questionnaire regarding reactions toward Black people. The experimenter assured subjects that all of their responses would be kept completely confidential and explained that at the end of the session an envelope would be passed around in which they would put their questionnaires. The experimenter emphasized the importance of being open and honest when completing the questionnaire.

Subjects then completed the questionnaire (see Discrepancy Measure section below). When everyone was finished, subjects placed their questionnaires in the envelope, and the experimenter explained the purpose of the research and asked for questions and comments.

Discrepancy Measure

The instructions explained that the questionnaire concerned a socially sensitive issue. Subjects were assured that the goal of the study was to understand an important social issue and not to evaluate any single person. Subjects were reminded of the importance of being open and honest and that their responses would remain confidential. The questionnaire consisted of three sections (i.e., should, would, and affect measures).

Should measure. Subjects first reported their personal standards for how they should respond in five different situations involving Black people. The instructions read as follows:

Often times we set up personal standards or guidelines for evaluating our own behavior or responses to various groups of people. We usually phrase these guidelines in terms of how we believe we should respond or behave in various situations. Based on your own personal standards for how you should respond consider the following situations. For each situation, circle the number between 1 (strongly disagree) and 7 (strongly agree) that best reflects your personal standard for how you should respond in the situation.

For example, one situation read as follows:

Imagine that a Black person boarded a bus and sat next to you. You should feel uncomfortable that a Black is sitting next to you.

Two of the remaining four situations also focused on feelings subjects could have in response to situations involving Black people. One situation involved feeling upset that a Black couple moved in next door. The other involved feeling uncomfortable that a job interviewer is Black. The final two situations focused on stereotypic thoughts subjects might have in contact situations with Black people. One thought situation involved seeing three middle-aged Black men on a street corner in the afternoon and thinking "Why don't they get a job?" The other thought situation involved seeing a Black woman with several small children and thinking "How typical." One thought and two feeling situations were phrased in terms of how the subject should not respond; the other situations focused on how the subject should respond. Ratings for the should not items were later reverse scored so that lower ratings represented less prejudiced should standards than higher ratings. Subjects' total should score (range = 1–7) was formed by averaging their ratings across the four situations, after reverse scoring when necessary (Cronbach's $\alpha = .83$).

Would measure. The second section of the questionnaire assessed how subjects believed they actually would respond in the same five situations. The instructions read as follows:

Although we set up personal standards for how we should respond, our actual responses may or may not be consistent with these standards or guidelines. Consider the five situations you responded to previously. You will now be presented with these same situations. But this time, report on the to 7 scale how you believe you would actually respond in the situations. Base these responses on your personal thoughts and feelings.

It is important to keep in mind that there are no right or wrong answers. Your responses may or may not be the same as the ones you gave earlier. It is also important that you be as honest and open as possible.

As with the should measure, ratings were reverse scored when necessary, so that lower ratings were associated with nonprejudiced actual responses and higher ratings with more prejudiced actual responses. Subjects' total would score (range = 1–7) was formed by averaging their ratings across the five situations (Cronbach's $\alpha = .80$).

Discrepancy index. The discrepancy index ($\text{total-d}$) was calculated by subtracting subjects' should rating from their would rating for each situation and summing the discrepancies across the five situations (Cronbach's $\alpha = .52$).

Affect Measure

Finally, subjects reported how they were feeling about how well their actual responses (i.e., would ratings) matched their personal standards (i.e., should ratings). They indicated the degree to which each of 35 affect items described their feelings on scales ranging from does not apply at all (1) to applies very much (7). The affect items are more
Hierarchical regression was used to analyze the data. Each relevant variable was entered into the regression equation in turn, followed by the interactions among these variables. The increments in $R^2$ due to each individual variable were assessed simultaneously, thus testing the significance of the unique portion of variance attributable to each variable. The unique contributions due to interactions were examined at the step in the analysis when the relevant interaction term was entered into the equation. We also conducted power polynomial analyses to test the presence of a curvilinear relationship between subjects’ prejudice scores and the dependent variables (see Cohen & Cohen, 1983). Increments in $R^2$ involving the quadratic aspect of prejudice are noted when significant.

### Discrepancy Scores

The total-d scores ranged from −6 to 25. Out of the 101 cases, 24% had a total-d score of 0 (indicating their personal standards matched their actual responses), and 71% had positive discrepancy scores (such that their actual would responses revealed higher levels of prejudice than was dictated by their personal standards). Surprisingly, 5% of the subjects had negative total-d scores (i.e., their woulds were less prejudiced than their shoulds dictated). These subjects were equally distributed across prejudice levels. Whether these negative discrepancies reflected subjects’ true discrepancies or subject errors, they were too few in number to permit systematic analysis. Thus, these cases were not included in any analyses.  

The entire range of possible total-d scores was represented at all prejudice levels. The hierarchical regression analysis involving gender, the linear aspect of prejudice, and their interaction revealed no significant effects. However, the power polynomial regression analysis revealed a small but significant increment in $R^2$ attributable to the quadratic aspect of prejudice, $F(1, 87) = 3.86, p < .05$. The curvilinear relation between prejudice and total-d was such that as prejudice increased, total-d scores became slightly larger, but at the highest levels of prejudice, the total-d scores decreased slightly. This pattern arose because a greater percentage of subjects in the lower (32%) and upper (27%) thirds of the MRS distribution had total-d scores of 0, relative to subjects in the middle (18%) third of the distribution.

### Construction of Affect Indices

Subjects’ ratings on the 35 affect items were submitted to a principal-axis factor analysis with varimax rotation. A six-factor solution accounted for 60.4% of the total variance. Each item loaded on only one factor in the factor solution (our loading criterion was .40 or higher). Four affect items (neutral, irresponsible, helpless, and consistent) failed to meet this criterion.

The first factor, which accounted for 33.7% of the variance, included the following items: angry at myself, guilty, embarrassed, annoyed at myself, regretful, disappointed with myself, disgusted with myself, shame, and self-critical. We interpreted this factor as reflecting negative feelings directed toward the self (Negself). Negself items are clearly relevant to compunction as Allport (1954) described it and to the type of discomfort associated with Higgins’s (1987) actual-self-ought-self discrepancies. The second factor accounted for 11.1% of the variance and included negative, concerned, frustrated, tense, distressed, anxious, bothered, uneasy, and uncomfortable. This factor, which we labeled Discomfort, included items relevant to the general discomfort as discussed by dissonance theorists.

The third factor was labeled Positive. It accounted for 5.7% of the variance and included friendly, happy, energetic, optimistic, content, and good. The fourth factor, Negother, accounted for 3.7% of the variance and included items that indicated negative feelings directed toward others: angry at others, irritated with others, and disgusted with others. The fifth factor, which accounted for 3.6% of the variance, included threatened and fearful. We labeled this factor Threatened. The last factor, Depressed, accounted for 2.6% of the variance and included depressed and sad.

We constructed separate affect indices for each factor identified in the factor solution by averaging the items that loaded on each factor to produce more reliable affect measures. In what follows we examine the effects of prejudice, discrepancy, gender, and the interaction of these variables on each affect measure.
total-d was significant, $F(1, 86) = 10.45, p < .002 (B = 0.134)$. Overall, subjects with large discrepancies reported greater negself feelings than subjects with small discrepancies.

In sum, total-d was positively related to both negself and discomfort. However, it is also important to determine the effects of our predictor variables on negself and discomfort, independent of their correlation with each other. To address this issue, we performed two hierarchical regression analyses in which we partialed each affect measure out of the other before examining the effects of the predictor variables. When negself was partialed out of discomfort, the effect for total-d was no longer significant, $F(1, 85) = 0.04, ns$. However, the total-d main effect for negself remained reasonably strong even when discomfort was partialed out, $F(1, 85) = 3.64, p < .06 (B = 0.054)$. Thus, discrepancies appear to account for variance in negself beyond the variance that negself shares with discomfort.

Additional Affect Analyses

The factor analysis solution provided several other affect indices, which were examined for exploratory purposes. The analysis on the positive index indicated that the increment in $R^2$ attributable to the total-d main effect was significant, $F(1, 86) = 12.34, p < .001 (B = -0.154)$. Overall, subjects with large total-d scores reported feeling less positive than subjects with small total-d scores. The analysis also revealed a significant Gender $\times$ Prejudice $\times$ Total-d interaction, $F(1, 82) = 5.67, p < .02$. For women, only the main effect of prejudice was significant, $F(1, 44) = 8.69, p < .01$. However, for men the Prejudice $\times$ Total-d interaction was also significant, $F(1, 39) = 4.19, p < .05$. Although low prejudiced men with large discrepancies reported less positive feelings than those with small discrepancies, total-d did not affect ratings on the positive index for men scoring higher in prejudice.

The analysis on the threatened index revealed a significant main effect for total-d, $F(1, 86) = 11.26, p < .001 (B = 0.140)$. Subjects with larger total-d scores reported feeling more threatened than subjects with smaller total-d scores. This pattern is sensible given the conceptual similarity between the items in this index and the items in the discomfort index. No significant effects were obtained on the negotger or the depressed indices.

Discussion

Our primary goal for Study 1 was to examine the effect of discrepancies between subjects’ personal should standards and actual responses on the affective reaction of high and low subjects. Although we were unable to examine the responses of high prejudiced subjects, the data from Study 1 suggested that the should and would ratings were meaningful to subjects. Subjects’ responses to the five scenarios produced highly reliable indices of their should standards and their actual would responses. In addition, prejudice was positively related to both subjects’ should and subjects’ would ratings. Moreover, the majority of subjects (71%) reported should–would discrepancies, empirically validating the anecdotal evidence of the coexistence of conflicting reactions suggested by Allport (1954) and Pettigrew (1987) in the quotes that opened this article.

Most importantly, analysis of the affect measures revealed that large should–would discrepancies do, indeed, have affective consequences. The relation between discomfort and discrepancies is clearly consistent with the suggestions of dissonance theorists, who maintain that feelings of discomfort (e.g., uncomfortable, tense, and uneasy) accompany inconsistent reactions to an attitude object. In addition, our data suggest that discrepancies lead to negative feelings directed toward the self (i.e., guilt and self-criticism). Moreover, these compunction-related feelings are somewhat independent of subjects’ global feelings of discomfort. Thus, the data from Study 1 are also consistent with Allport’s (1954) discussion of prejudice with compunction and Higgins’s (1987) discussion of the affect associated with actual-self–ought-self discrepancies.

Before concluding that should–would discrepancies produce feelings of guilt and self-criticism, we thought it was important to rule out the alternative possibility that those with large discrepancies are in general more guilty, self-critical, and so forth than their counterparts with small discrepancies. Thus, we conducted an additional study in which subjects reported their feelings both before and after completing the discrepancy questionnaire. The correlation of negself feelings before the questionnaire and discomfort was nonsignificant, $r(47) = -.09$. We also examined whether there was a significant change in negself feelings after completing the discrepancy questionnaire. Even after covarying out the effects of subjects’ negself feelings before the questionnaire, the main effect of discrepancy was significant, $F(1, 43) = 5.23, p < .03$. These findings suggest that high-discrepancy subjects are not prone a priori to higher levels of guilt and self-criticism. Bringing their discrepancies to mind by filling out the questionnaire led to the feelings of guilt and self-criticism.

Because of the restricted range of prejudice scores in Study 1, we could not determine whether high prejudiced subjects would experience should–would discrepancies and the concomitant affective consequences. In Study 2, we examined prejudice toward homosexual men, which enabled us to measure discrepancies and affect for subjects at all levels of prejudice.

STUDY 2

Method

Subjects and Selection

Several hundred introductory psychology students completed the 20-item Heterosexual Attitudes Toward Homosexuals Scale (HATH; Larsen, Reed, & Hoffman, 1980). Subjects rated each item on a 5-point Likert-type scale, ranging from strongly agree (1) to strongly disagree (5). Composite HATH scores were computed by summing subjects’ scores across items, after reverse-scoring items when necessary. HATH scores could range from 20 to 100 (larger scores indicate higher levels of prejudice toward homosexual persons).

Respondents in the upper (score = 74–100), middle (score = 47–73), and lower (score = 20–46) thirds of the HATH distribution were identified as eligible high, moderate, and low prejudiced subjects, respectively. Equal numbers of male and female subjects from each prejudice level were selected at random, contacted by phone, and asked to participate in the study. No persons called for Study 1 were contacted for Study 2. A total of 120 heterosexual subjects were successfully recruited, consisting of 20 men and 20 women from the upper, middle, and lower...
thirds of the HATH distribution. Data from 3 subjects were discarded because the subjects either did not read the instructions carefully or did not take the task seriously.

Procedure: Should, Would, Discrepancy, and Affect Measures

The procedure was identical to that of Study 1 and, as in Study 1, the experimenter who ran subjects through the procedure was blind to their prejudice level. Should standards and actual would responses were assessed exactly as in Study 1, except that should and would scenarios were modified to be appropriate to the homosexual target group. The scenarios involved feeling uncomfortable that a job interviewer was gay, feeling uneasy about having dinner with a gay individual, feeling upset about a gay couple moving in next door, and feeling bothered that a gay person sits next to you on the bus. Two of the situations were phrased in terms of how the subject should (or would) feel and the other two situations were phrased in terms of how the subject should not (or would not) feel. Subjects’ total should (Cronbach’s α = .90), total would (Cronbach’s α = .90), and discrepancy (Cronbach’s α = .72) scores were computed exactly as in Study 1. Finally, subjects reported their feelings, using the same affect items that were used in Study 1, with the exception of a couple of substitutions.

Results

Total Should and Total Would Ratings

As in Study 1, we performed a hierarchical regression analysis, using subjects’ gender, prejudice score, and the interaction between these variables to predict subjects’ total should score. The increment in $R^2$ attributable to prejudice was highly significant, $F(1, 106) = 76.12, p < .001$ (B = 0.191). Replicating the pattern of Study 1, higher total should scores (i.e., more prejudiced personal standards) were associated with higher levels of prejudice. The analysis also revealed a significant gender main effect, $F(1, 106) = 4.16, p < .05$ (B = −0.940). Overall, male subjects had higher total should scores than female subjects.

The pattern for subjects’ total would score was consistent with that in Study 1. That is, a highly significant positive relation between subjects’ prejudice score and their total would scores was found, $F(1, 106) = 111.80, p < .001$ (B = 0.234). High prejudiced subjects reported having more negative responses (e.g., more bothered and uneasy) than low prejudiced subjects.

Discrepancy Scores

The distribution of discrepancy scores was similar to that of Study 1. Overall, subjects’ total-d scores ranged from −7 to 18. A small percentage of subjects (4%) had discrepancy scores of 0, and the majority of subjects (79%) had positive discrepancy scores. The small percentage of subjects (7%) with negative discrepancies was not included in the analyses.

The entire range of possible total-d scores was represented at all levels of prejudice. A hierarchical regression analysis involving gender, prejudice, and their interaction revealed a significant positive relation between prejudice and total-d, $F(1, 106) = 4.87, p < .05$, but the increment in $R^2$ due to the quadratic aspect of prejudice was also significant, $F(1, 105) = 4.03, p < .05$. The curvilinear relation between prejudice and total-d was such that as prejudice increased, total-d scores became larger; however, at very high levels of prejudice, total-d scores decreased slightly. The increase in discrepancy from low to moderate levels of prejudice emerged because a greater percentage of subjects with low prejudice scores (26%) had total-d scores of 0, as compared to subjects with moderate (13%) and high (11%) prejudice scores. The slight decrease in total-d from moderate to high prejudice scores indicates a trend toward somewhat lower total-d scores for subjects high in prejudice, relative to moderately prejudiced subjects.

Construction of Affect Indices

Following the strategy of Study 1, several affect indices derived from a factor analysis were formed, and separate hierarchical regression analyses were performed on each index. The five-factor solution in Study 2 was very similar to that of Study 1 and accounted for 59% of the total variance. Using a loading criterion of .40 or higher, only two affect items (neutral and consistent) failed to load on any factor. The five factors included Negself (30.2%), Discomfort (10.7%), Positive (10.1%), Negother (4.4%), and Depressed (3.6%).

Hierarchical regression analyses using gender, prejudice, total-d, and their interactions were used, as in Study 1, to analyze each affect index.

Primary Affect Analyses

We expected low and moderately prejudiced subjects with large discrepancies to experience discomfort as was found in Study 1, but we were particularly interested in high prejudiced subjects’ reported discomfort. The analysis revealed that both the linear, $F(1, 105) = 4.78, p < .04$, and quadratic, $F(1, 104) = 7.65, p < .007$, components of prejudice were significant. Overall, low prejudiced subjects reported the lowest level of discomfort, whereas high prejudiced subjects reported slightly less discomfort than moderately prejudiced subjects. Thus, the effect of total-d was tested in the power polynomial analysis. The...

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4 In both Studies 1 and 2, we examined predicted values for the should and would scores as a function of prejudice. High prejudiced subjects’ total should scores in Study 2 permitted higher levels of prejudice than the should scores for subjects who scored highest in prejudice in Study 1. Thus, these data gave us confidence that we did have highly prejudiced subjects in this sample. In addition, high prejudiced subjects’ would responses in Study 2 indicated higher levels of prejudice than the would responses of the subjects who scored highest in prejudice in Study 1.

5 In Study 2, Negself included angry at myself, guilty, annoyed at myself, disappointed with myself, regretful, shame, and self-critical. Discomfort included fearful, uneasy, embarrassed, bothered, anxious, tense, threatened, and uncomfortable. In Study 1, the items threatened and fearful loaded on a separate factor. The items making up the Positive (friendly, happy, energetic, optimistic, content, and good) and Negother (angry at others, irritated with others, and disgusted with others) factors of the present study were identical to those of Study 1. Finally, the Depressed factor included the items from Study 1 (i.e., depressed and sad) as well as new items that theoretically are related to a depressed mood (low, helpless, and restless).
analysis revealed a significant main effect for total-d, $F(1, 104) = 19.40, p < .001 (B = 0.122), but no interaction between prejudice and total-d ($F < 1$). High discrepancy subjects reported greater levels of discomfort than low discrepancy subjects. These results are important because they suggest that subjects at all prejudice levels with large discrepancies experienced diffuse discomfort.

The analysis on negself, however, revealed a different pattern. That is, the initial analysis revealed that whereas the linear aspect of prejudice was nonsignificant ($F < 1$), the curvilinear relation between prejudice and negself was significant, $F(1, 104) = 5.29, p < .02$. Thus, we report the results from the power polynomial analysis. The analysis revealed a significant total-d main effect, $F(1, 104) = 33.28, p < .001 (B = 0.147)$. Overall, large discrepancy subjects reported greater levels of negself than small discrepancy subjects. These effects were qualified, however, by a significant Prejudice $\times$ Total-d interaction, $F(1, 103) = 6.42, p < .05$. As can be seen in Figure 1, small discrepancy scores were associated with low negself scores at all levels of prejudice. However, larger discrepancy scores were associated with high negself scores only for subjects who were low to moderate in prejudice. Thus, although high prejudiced subjects with large discrepancies experienced discomfort, they did not report high levels of guilt and self-criticism.

These data suggest that high and low prejudiced subjects have qualitatively different affective reactions to their discrepancies. However, as in Study 1, we examined the effects of our predictor variables on the discomfort and negself indices after removing the variance shared by these two affects. The results of these analyses were identical to the results summarized above, both in terms of the patterns observed and the significance of the effects. When negself was partialled out of discomfort, the total-d main effect remained significant, $F(1, 103) = 4.84, p < .03, B = 0.066$. Most importantly, when discomfort was partialled out of negself, the Prejudice $\times$ Total-d interaction remained significant, $F(1, 103) = 8.87, p < .004$. Low prejudiced but not high prejudiced subjects reported feelings of compunction in response to their should–would discrepancies, even when discomfort was partialled out of negself.

Additional Affect Analyses

The results for the positive index were consistent with the findings in Study 1. The increment in $R^2$ attributable to the main effect for total-d was significant, $F(1, 105) = 5.85, p < .02 (B = -0.082)$. Replicating Study 1, greater levels of discrepancy were associated with lower positive feelings. However, the Total-d $\times$ Prejudice interaction also added a significant increment in $R^2$, $F(1, 104) = 10.29, p < .002$. As can be seen in Figure 2, subjects who were low to moderate in prejudice with large discrepancies reported low levels of positive feelings relative to their small discrepancy counterparts. However, discrepancy magnitude did not affect high prejudiced subjects' degree of positive feelings. This finding is interesting because although those with high negself feelings were not feeling positive, experiencing high levels of global discomfort alone was not accompanied by a reduction in positive feelings. We also found that, overall, men reported feeling more positive than women, $F(1, 105) = 4.98, p < .03 (B = -0.634).

In contrast to Study 1, in which no significant effects were found for the negother index, in the present study, prejudice level had a significant effect on subjects' negative feelings toward others, $F(1, 105) = 4.07, p < .05 (B = 0.016)$. More specifically, high prejudiced subjects reported greater anger, irritation, and disgust with others than low prejudiced subjects. What is unclear at the present (but will be important to explore in the future) is to whom the high prejudiced subjects' negative feelings are directed.

Finally, analysis of the depression index revealed a main effect for total-d, $F(1, 105) = 13.39, p < .01 (B = 0.081)$. Greater feelings of depression were reported by subjects with large discrepancies as compared with those who had small discrepancies.$^6$

$^6$The discrepancy index is composed of two components (i.e., should and would scores). Our theoretical position is that it is the discrepancy between subjects' personal standards (i.e., shoulds) and their actual responses (i.e., woulds) that drives their affective responses. It is possible, however, that affect could be driven solely by the should or by the would component of the discrepancy index, rather than by the difference between these two components. Therefore, it was important to examine whether discrepancy (total-d) accounted for variance in the affect measures beyond that accounted for by the should or would components of the discrepancy index. To this end, we performed a series of hierarchical regression analyses on the data sets from Studies 1 and 2 in which the total would score was used as a predictor variable before the discrepancy score was entered into the regression equation. In separate analyses, the affects were regressed hierarchically in this same manner, except that the total should score was entered before the discrepancy score. These analyses enabled us to determine whether the component measures (i.e., total would and should scores) accounted for a significant proportion of variance in affect and whether discrepancy accounted for variance above and beyond that accounted for by the component measures. We found that subjects' total should score did, for most of the affects, produce a significant increment in $R^2$ before entering total-d. However, in virtually all of the analyses, on entry total-d still accounted for a significant, unique amount of variance, and the effect of total would was no longer significant. Moreover, all interactions reported in the text were still significant when total would was included in the regression equation. Subjects' total should score generally did not account for a significant amount of variance either
Discussion

Replicating the results of Study 1, low and moderately prejudiced subjects with large should–would discrepancies reported feeling greater levels of both global discomfort and compunction feelings than their small discrepancy counterparts. Our primary goal in the present study, however, was to examine the responses of high-prejudiced subjects to the should, would, discrepancy, and affect measures. As expected, high prejudiced subjects' should standards permitted higher levels of prejudice than low or moderately prejudiced subjects' should standards permitted, and high prejudiced subjects' would responses revealed the highest level of prejudice. In addition, many of the high prejudiced subjects reported should–would discrepancies equal in magnitude to those of low prejudiced subjects.

Examination of the relation between discrepancies and affect, however, revealed that high and low prejudiced subjects reacted differently to their discrepancies. Although large discrepancies led to feelings of discomfort for both high and low prejudiced subjects, only low prejudiced subjects experienced the more specific compunction-related feelings of guilt and self-criticism. We also found that high prejudiced subjects reported higher levels of anger toward others. Interestingly, despite feeling discomfort and negative feelings toward others, high prejudiced subjects still had positive feelings (e.g., good and content). In contrast, low prejudiced subjects who felt discomfort and compunction did not feel positive.

In sum, the present data provide descriptive evidence that high and low prejudiced subjects' self-reported should standards permit different levels of prejudice, and discrepancies from these standards lead to different affective reactions. However, the data from Studies 1 and 2 do not directly address why discrepancies of the same magnitude lead to different affective reactions for high and low prejudiced subjects. The fact that subjects experienced different affective reactions following discrepancies from their self-reported personal standards implies that the standards are associated with different subjective meanings for high and low prejudiced subjects. In Study 3 we empirically explore some possible differences in the nature of high and low prejudiced subjects' personal standards that could account for the different pattern of affective reactions.

STUDY 3

Several theorists have argued that when people transgress their self-defined, internalized standards for morality, they experience guilt (Ausubel, 1955; Carver & Scheier, 1990; Higgins, 1987; Hoffman, 1975; James, 1890/1948; Piers & Singer, 1971; Schwartz, 1977). Moreover, when standards are internalized, people accept the obligation to conform to them and feel accountable for transgressions from the standards (cf. Ausubel, 1955; Higgins, 1987; Schwartz, 1977). It is possible that in the prejudice domain, low but not high prejudiced subjects have internalized their personal standards. Indeed, many prejudice theorists have assumed that low prejudiced persons have internalized nonprejudiced standards and have become highly committed to them (Allport, 1954; Devine, 1989; Dutton, 1976; Sherman & Gorkin, 1980). The finding that only low prejudiced subjects experienced compunction following should–would discrepancies is consistent with these suggestions.

In the absence of well-internalized personal standards, theorists have argued that people base their standards on prevailing social norms (cf. Ausubel, 1955; Piers & Singer, 1971; Schwartz, 1977). If high prejudiced subjects' personal standards are not internalized, it is possible that they derive their reports of their personal standards from their perceptions of society's norms for how they should respond to members of the target group. Standards derived from others' expectations for how one should respond do not carry with them the sense of obligation to conform to the standards (cf. Ausubel, 1955; Schwartz, 1977). However, it is important to note that transgressing such standards can still lead to affective consequences. For example, Higgins (1987) argued that when specific others (or societal norms) prescribe the should standards against which the appropriateness of responses is evaluated, discrepancies from such standards result in agitation-related feelings (i.e., tension, fear, threat). These are exactly the types of feelings reported by high prejudiced subjects with discrepancies.

To explore these possibilities, high and low prejudiced subjects reported both their personal standards and their perceptions of society's standards for how they should respond to gay men. In addition, subjects indicated how important it is, how committed they are, and how central to their self-concept it is to respond consistently with their personal standards and with society's standards. Taken together, these three measures should provide an index of the extent to which each of the standards is internalized (Abelson, 1988; Krosnick, 1988). Subjects also reported the extent to which they felt obligated to respond consistently with both their personal standards and society's standards. Finally, subjects indicated the extent to which their personal and society's standards are well-defined and consistent.

Assuming the preceding reasoning is correct, several key predictions follow. First, we expected greater similarity between
the reports of personal standards and society's standards for high compared with low prejudiced subjects. Second, we also expected low prejudiced subjects to report higher levels of internalization of their personal standards than high prejudiced subjects. Consistent with this prediction, we expected low prejudiced subjects to report feeling more obligated to respond consistently with their personal standards than high prejudiced subjects. Finally, we expected that low prejudiced subjects would report that their personal standards are more consistent and well-defined than would high prejudiced subjects.

**Method**

**Subjects and Design**

Participants were recruited from a paid subject pool. Seventy-four subjects who were contacted by phone agreed to participate in the study. Subjects were approximately the same age as subjects in the previous two studies (i.e., 18–24 years). Data from 3 subjects (1 homosexual and 2 bisexual individuals) were not included in the analyses. Thus, the final sample consisted of 71 heterosexual subjects (43 women and 28 men). Although we did not preselect subjects based on their HATH scores, the range of scores (20–95) was adequate for the purposes of the present study. The design was a 2 (HATH placement: before assessing standards vs. after assessing standards) × 2 (standard order: society/personal vs. personal/society) × 2 (standard type: personal vs. society) mixed-model factorial design. HATH placement and standard order were between-subjects variables and were included to control for order effects; standard type was a within-subjects variable. Subjects were randomly assigned to the four conditions of the between-subjects factors.

**Materials and Procedure**

Subjects, participating in small groups, read and signed a consent form that explained they would participate in two studies (the other study was unrelated to the present research and was always presented last). Subjects' confidentiality was assured as in the previous studies. All subjects were provided with the same introductory comments used in Studies 1 and 2. Half of the subjects completed the HATH scale first; half completed it last. Similarly, half of the subjects reported society's standards before their personal standards; the other half completed the measures in the reverse order. Before completing the second set of standards, subjects were informed that they would be presented with the same situations but that they were to respond to them from a different perspective. Subjects then read the instructions for the relevant standard. After reading the instructions they were told that their responses to this standard might or might not be consistent with the previous standard.

**Personal Standards**

The instructions for subjects' report of their personal standards were the same as those used in Study 2. Subjects responded to the same four situations, and their total should index (Cronbach's $\alpha = .95$) was formed as in the previous studies. Subjects also completed a series of questions concerning their personal standards. These questions asked the following: (a) "How important is it to you to respond to gays in ways that are consistent with your personal standards?" (b) "How committed are you to trying to respond consistently with your personal standards?" (c) "How central to your self-concept (i.e., your view of your self) is responding to gays in ways that are consistent with your personal standards?" and (d) "How obligated do you feel to respond in ways that are consistent with your personal standards?" Responses to these four items were recorded on scales ranging from not at all (1) to very (7). The last question asked whether subjects had well-defined and consistent personal standards regarding how to respond to gay people, on a scale from definitely no (1) to definitely yes (7).

**Society's Standards**

Subjects were asked to respond to the same contact situations in terms of society's standards. The instructions for society's standards were as follows:

Consider that society sometimes sets up standards or norms for how we should behave or respond toward various groups of people. When you respond to each of the contact situations presented below, please respond in terms of society's standards for how you should respond in the situations. When you think about society's standards, think about what society as a whole would consider socially desirable responses, not necessarily what you personally think is desirable.

For each situation, subjects circled the number between 1 (strongly disagree) and 7 (strongly agree) that reflected their perception of society's standard for how they should respond. A society should index (range = 1–7) was formed by averaging subjects' ratings across the four situations, after reverse scoring when necessary (Cronbach's $\alpha = .85$).

Following the report of society's standards for each scenario, subjects completed the same importance, commitment, centrality, and obligation questions that were asked in regard to their personal standards. However, it was made clear that the focus of these questions was on society's standards. Subjects also indicated the extent to which they thought that society has well-defined and consistent standards regarding how to respond to gay people.

After completing all of the questions for both standards, subjects were asked to go back to the "well-defined and consistent" question for their personal and society's standards and to explain their ratings. Subjects then completed the second study, were debriefed for both studies, and received $4 for their participation.

**Results and Discussion**

We analyzed the data from this study using analysis of variance (ANOVA) rather than regression because our primary goal was to make within-prejudice-level comparisons for subjects' reports of personal and society standards, as well as for the other measures obtained. To this end, we dichotomized the HATH scale to produce low (score = 20–28), moderate (score = 29–47), and high (score = 48–95) prejudice groups of equal size. In preliminary analyses, we examined the effects of HATH placement and standard order. On some measures, HATH placement, standard order, or both produced significant main effects, but were not involved in significant interactions. When significant, HATH and/or standard order were treated as covariates. For all other measures, we collapsed across HATH placement and standard order.

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7 Although we present the results in terms of ANOVA, the data were initially analyzed using regression. We obtained the exact same patterns and significance of effects in the regression as in the ANOVA. The ANOVA allows us to more directly make comparisons of mean values within prejudice levels for each of the measures obtained in the study.
**Personal Standard/Society Standard Measures**

Subjects' reports of their personal standards and society's standards were submitted to a mixed-model ANOVA, treating prejudice (high vs. moderate vs. low) and gender (male vs. female) as between-subjects variables and standard type (personal vs. society) as a within-subject variable. The analysis revealed a significant prejudice main effect, \( F(2, 65) = 13.15, p < .0001 \), which was qualified by a significant Prejudice \( \times \) Standard Type interaction, \( F(2, 65) = 10.73, p < .0001 \).

As can be seen in the second row of Table 1, the pattern for personal shoulds replicated the pattern observed in Study 2. High prejudiced subjects' personal standards permitted higher levels of prejudice than low prejudiced subjects' personal standards. However, subjects' reports of society's standards did not differ as a function of prejudice. The interaction also revealed that, as expected, high prejudiced subjects' personal standards were more similar to their reports of society's standards than was the case for low and moderately prejudiced subjects.

**Importance, Commitment, and Centrality Measures**

The importance, commitment, and centrality measures were highly intercorrelated for both personal standards and society's standards. Thus, the measures for subjects' personal standards were combined to form a personal standard internalization index (Cronbach's \( \alpha = .92 \)). Similarly, a society standard internalization index was formed (Cronbach's \( \alpha = .92 \)). Subjects' personal and society internalization indices were submitted to a Prejudice (low vs. moderate vs. high) \( \times \) Gender (male vs. female) \( \times \) Standard Type (personal vs. society) mixed-model ANOVA. Standard type was the only within-subject variable, and HATH placement and standard order were treated as covariates. The analysis revealed a significant effect for standard type, \( F(1, 63) = 166.34, p < .0001 \). Overall, greater internalization was reported for subjects' personal standards (\( M = 5.68 \)) than for society's standards (\( M = 2.76 \)).

This main effect, however, was qualified by a Prejudice \( \times \) Standard Type interaction, \( F(1, 63) = 18.37, p < .0001 \). As can be seen in the second row of Table 1, whereas low and moderately prejudiced subjects reported substantially greater internalization of their personal standards as compared with society's standards, this difference was much smaller for high prejudiced subjects. However, a priori contrasts revealed that at all levels of prejudice, subjects reported significantly greater internalization of their personal standards than of society's standards. It is important to note that, as predicted, low prejudiced subjects' personal standard internalization scores (\( M = 6.29 \)) were significantly higher than high prejudiced subjects' personal standard internalization scores (\( M = 4.99 \)). These data empirically validate the assumption in the prejudice literature that low prejudiced people have strongly internalized their nonprejudiced standards (Allport, 1954; DeVine, 1989; Sherman & Gorkin, 1980). It is also of interest that, in comparison with low prejudiced subjects (\( M = 2.10 \)), high prejudiced subjects reported significantly greater internalization of society's standards (\( M = 3.91 \)).

### Table 1

**Mean Ratings Regarding Personal and Society Standards as a Function of Prejudice Level**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prejudice level</th>
<th>Standard</th>
<th>Low</th>
<th>Moderate</th>
<th>High</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Society</td>
<td>Personal</td>
<td>Society</td>
<td>Personal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Should</td>
<td>4.33(ab)</td>
<td>1.20(ab)</td>
<td>4.50(ab)</td>
<td>1.84(ab)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internalization</td>
<td>2.10(ab)</td>
<td>6.29(ab)</td>
<td>2.57(ab)</td>
<td>5.50(ab)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obligation</td>
<td>2.10(ab)</td>
<td>5.44(ab)</td>
<td>3.19(ab)</td>
<td>5.17(ab)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Well-defined</td>
<td>3.26(a)</td>
<td>5.83(ab)</td>
<td>3.62(a)</td>
<td>5.04(ab)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and consistent</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note.** For each dependent measure, we performed two types of mean comparisons. First, within each prejudice level, tests for significant differences between society and personal ratings were performed. Society and personal cell means that were found to differ significantly from each other have different lowercase subscripts (\( p < .05 \), at least, by relevant tests of simple main effects). Second, the effect of prejudice was examined for each of the four dependent variables, first with respect to ratings of society's standards and then with respect to ratings of personal standards. For each dependent measure, society cell means at different levels of prejudice having different uppercase subscripts differ significantly from each other (\( p < .05 \), at least, by Fisher's least significant difference test). The same applies to personal cell means.
subjects reported feeling equally obligated to respond consistently with their personal and society's standards. Moreover, as expected, low prejudiced subjects felt more obligated than high prejudiced subjects to respond consistently with their personal standards.

**Standards Well-Defined and Consistent**

Subjects' ratings of the extent to which their personal and society's standards are well-defined and consistent were submitted to the same mixed-model ANOVA as in the previous analyses. The analysis revealed that personal standards were rated as more well-defined and consistent \((M = 5.24)\) than society's standards \((M = 3.58)\), \(F(1, 65) = 38.95, p < .0001\). This main effect was qualified by a significant Prejudice \times Standard Type interaction, \(F(1, 65) = 3.39, p < .04\) (see Row 4 of Table 1). For society's standards, subjects' ratings fell near the scale midpoint at all levels of prejudice. However, for personal standards, subjects' ratings clearly differed as a function of prejudice. That is, low prejudiced subjects' personal standards were much more well-defined and consistent than high prejudiced subjects' personal standards. A priori contrasts indicated that at all levels of prejudice, subjects' personal standards were more well-defined and consistent than society's standards, although the magnitude of this difference was the smallest for high prejudiced subjects.

**Explanations of Ratings**

Subjects' explanations for both society's standards and their personal standards were content analyzed and coded as (a) positive if they included themes of treating everyone equally, independent of sexual orientation, or judging people on an individual basis, (b) negative if they included themes indicating that gay people should be rejected or discriminated against or that homosexuality is unacceptable, (c) mixed if the protocols included both positive standard and negative standard themes, and (d) other if they were uncodable. This coding scheme provided information regarding the nature of subjects' ratings not conveyed simply by the location of their ratings.

There are two striking aspects of subjects' explanations for society's standards. First, not one subject indicated that society's standards are uniformly positive. Second, subjects' explanations did not differ as a function of prejudice. That is, the percentage of high, moderately, and low prejudiced subjects in each of the coding categories did not differ. The majority of subjects (average of 72%) indicated that, overall, society has mixed standards regarding gay people, some segments of society encouraging equal and fair treatment and other segments encouraging rejection and discrimination (e.g., “Within society there are many differing standards—ranging from accepting to totally outcasting homosexuals and lesbians”). Overall, 24% of the subjects indicated that society's standards are well-defined, consistent, and negative—encouraging rejection of gay people and discrimination (e.g., “I feel that society says that being gay is bad and you should look down upon anyone gay. You should not accept their actions”). Four percent of the explanations were coded as other.

A different pattern of results emerged for subjects' explanations of their personal standards. In this case, subjects' explanations differed as a function of prejudice level, \(x^2 = 27.68, p < .0001\). The vast majority of the low prejudiced subjects (88%) indicated that their personal standards were positive toward gay people, whereas 61% of the moderately prejudiced subjects and only 9% of the high prejudiced subjects did (e.g., “I try to treat all people equally, whether they be white or black, homosexual or heterosexual. So my response to gays, in my personal standards are defined, treat people as I would like to be treated myself”). In contrast, the majority of the high prejudiced subjects (59%) indicated that their standards were mixed. That is, alternations between positive and negative standards were viewed as appropriate, depending primarily on situational factors (e.g., “I react according to the people around me and mimic them when in a situation. So my actions sometimes are not my own and they differ”). Only 8% of low prejudiced subjects reported mixed standards and, again, the moderately prejudiced subjects (30%) fell between the high and low prejudiced groups. Nine percent of the high prejudiced subjects reported negative standards, and none of the low or moderately prejudiced subjects did. Fourteen percent of subjects' explanations were coded as other.

**GENERAL DISCUSSION**

The pattern of results across the three studies suggests that high and low prejudiced subjects' personal standards for how they should respond to members of various stereotyped groups differ in important ways. First, higher levels of prejudice are permitted by high prejudiced subjects' personal standards as compared with low prejudiced subjects' personal standards. Second, discrepancies from their personal standards lead to different affective consequences for high and low prejudiced subjects. The present studies indicated that only low prejudiced subjects with large should-would discrepancies experienced compunction (i.e., guilt and self-criticism); high prejudiced subjects with large discrepancies experienced global discomfort but not compunction. Thus, Campbell (1961) was incorrect in assuming that guilt necessarily follows from discrepancies. The data from Studies 1 and 2 demonstrate that measures of both prejudice and affect are necessary for understanding the consequences of discrepancies for our subjects.

The measures taken in Study 3 provide additional insight concerning why low but not high prejudiced subjects experienced prejudice with compunction. Low prejudiced subjects' personal standards were highly internalized (i.e., important and self-defining), and they felt obligated to respond consistently with them. Transgressions of such internalized standards presumably threaten low prejudiced subjects' nonprejudiced self-concepts, creating feelings of compunction. Because high prejudiced subjects' personal standards were less well internalized and thus less self-relevant, their self-concepts presumably were not threatened by transgressions of their standards. Instead, because high prejudiced people appear to derive their personal standards from society's standards, discrepancies led to discomfort feelings.

The present research provides a starting point for addressing processes involved in prejudice reduction. First, our findings suggest that low prejudiced subjects are more committed to
resolving the discrepancy between their actual responses and their should standards than are high prejudiced subjects. Second, Steele (1988; Steele & Liu, 1983) suggested that when people engage in dissonant actions that involve behaving in self-concept-discrepant ways, they will attempt to reaffirm their self-concepts by engaging in attitude-bolstering behaviors (see also Dutton, 1976; Dutton & Lake, 1973; Sherman & Gorkin, 1980). Such behaviors may help to establish a pattern of non-prejudiced responding. In addition, many researchers have found that self-focused attention motivates individuals to engage in discrepancy-reducing behaviors (Carver & Scheier, 1981; Duval & Wicklund, 1972; Scheier & Carver, 1988). It may be that the self-directed negative affect observed in our low prejudiced subjects is just one manifestation of a more general proclivity to become self-focused after transgressing personally important standards. Thus, self-directed negative affect may facilitate the initiation of discrepancy-reducing responses by serving as a punishment cue (cf. Gray, 1981, 1982) or that on future occasions may help the individual become more effective at inhibiting discrepant responses.

Another possibility we are currently exploring is that low prejudiced subjects' affect and their motivation to continue discrepancy-reduction efforts are influenced by their perceived progress toward achieving their goal of being nonprejudiced. Carver and Scheier (1990), for example, have argued that affect is determined not simply by the presence or absence of discrepancies, but also by the perceived rate of discrepancy reduction over time. If perceived rate of progress is adequate, people will experience positive affect, which may create favorable expectancies about discrepancy reduction and encourage continued discrepancy-reduction attempts. If perceived progress is inadequate, people will experience negative affect, which may create unfavorable expectancies about discrepancy reduction. If expectancies are sufficiently unfavorable, people may disengage from active pursuit of the goal (Carver, Blaney, & Scheier, 1979). Although the likelihood of abandoning effort at discrepancy reduction is likely to depend on the importance of the goal (Scheier & Carver, 1988), this analysis suggests that it would be productive to help people identify, develop, and practice discrepancy-reduction strategies.

An issue not addressed in the present research but that will be important to explore in future work is why some people, but not others, have developed nonprejudiced personal standards. Although many may be committed to egalitarian values, not all may have made the connection that commitment to these values has implications for their reactions to members of stereotyped groups. Rokeach's (1973) work on the self-confrontation technique suggests that only when prejudice is recognized as contradicting fundamental egalitarian values is the stage set for the initiation of prejudice-reduction efforts.

Further research will have to identify the conditions necessary for discrepancy activation. Our research focused on the intentional consideration of the match between actual responses and personal should standards in the prejudice domain. Whereas this direct approach revealed that a majority of our subjects reported discrepancies, the accessibility of these available discrepancies remains an empirical question (Higgins & King, 1981). Obviously, for discrepancies and their concomitant affect to play a role in prejudice-reduction processes, discrepancies would have to be activated by means less explicit than those used in our studies.

AMBIVALENCE AND OTHER CONTEMPORARY MODELS

In this section we compare and contrast our work with other contemporary models of prejudice that are concerned with understanding conflicting reactions people have to members of stereotyped groups (Gaertner & Dovidio, 1986; Katz, 1981; Katz, Wackenhut, & Hass, 1986; McConahay, 1986). Each of the models assumes that, in one form or another, most White Americans are ambivalent in their reactions to Black people. Consistent with Myrdal's (1944) writings on the “American Dilemma,” the models posit that ambivalence derives from the conflict between people's commitment to the values of equality and justice as prescribed by the American Creed and their prejudiced tendencies.

According to aversive racism (Dovidio & Gaertner, in press; Gaertner & Dovidio, 1986), ambivalence arises because people sincerely embrace egalitarian values but also possess negative feelings and beliefs about Black people. To cope with this ambivalence, the negative reactions are excluded from conscious awareness. Consequently, aversive racists are not consciously aware of their conflicted reactions and express their prejudices only in subtle or covert ways.

McConahay (1986), in his theory of modern racism, also contends that people are unaware of their prejudices. Although modern racists reject traditionally racist beliefs (e.g., Black people are generally not as smart as White people), they are considered ambivalent because they have not eliminated their negative feelings toward Black people. Instead, modern racists rationalize their negative feelings in terms of more abstract and political issues (e.g., Black people have gotten more economically than they deserve). This strategy allows modern racists to develop nonracial rationalizations or justifications for their negative feelings.

In contrast to the aversive and modern racism perspectives, in Katz's (1981; Katz, Glass, & Cohen, 1973; Katz, Wackenhut, & Glass, 1986; Katz, Wackenhut, & Hass, 1986) model of ambivalence, people do acknowledge their negative feelings toward Black people. However, commitment to values of equality has led many people to also develop positive feelings toward Black people (e.g., sympathy). Ambivalence, then, is caused by the simultaneous endorsement of positive and negative feelings toward the target group. This ambivalence, according to Katz, creates a tendency toward behavioral instability, in which a positive or negative response toward the object of ambivalence may occur, depending on the features of the specific situation.

Although we believe that the aversive and modern racism frameworks may describe some White Americans, we are reluctant to characterize most White Americans as aversive or modern racists. According to the aversive racism and modern racism frameworks, most people would not report should—would discrepancies (as they would not be aware of them); however, the vast majority of our subjects appear to be aware of and willing to acknowledge their discrepancies. Thus, at minimum,
our subjects do not appear to be ambivalent in the sense that modern or aversive racists are said to be ambivalent.

We would also like to suggest that although I. Katz's use of the term ambivalence may apply to the experiences of our high prejudiced subjects with discrepancies, it is less applicable to the experiences of our low prejudiced subjects with discrepancies. That is, our high prejudiced subjects' personal standards were mixed (i.e., containing both egalitarian and discriminatory tendencies). Depending on which standard is situationally salient, high prejudiced subjects with discrepancies, like I. Katz's ambivalent subjects, may engage in positive or negative responses to gay people. Indeed, many of our high prejudiced subjects indicated that their responses toward gay people depended on situational factors. In contrast, our low prejudiced subjects did not possess mixed standards for how they should respond to gay people. Their standards are clear, well-defined, and nonprejudiced (i.e., egalitarian). Thus, low prejudiced people do not appear to be ambivalent concerning what they regard as acceptable responses.

From our perspective, then, the presence of conflicting reactions is not a sufficient criterion for ambivalence—the presence of conflicting reactions does not necessarily imply that both reactions are deemed acceptable. It may be more productive to define ambivalence in terms of whether personal standards permit or reject prejudiced responses. With this criterion in mind, although both our high and low prejudiced subjects experienced conflicting reactions, only the high prejudiced subjects would be characterized as ambivalent. We believe that to characterize all people with conflicting reactions as ambivalent glosses over important differences between high and low prejudiced subjects.

In summary, we believe that the present framework complements and extends the ambivalence models. Although we argue for a narrower definition of ambivalence, we believe that the present framework actually has broader applicability. That is, this perspective encourages us to examine people at all prejudice levels who either do or do not have should–would discrepancies. Moreover, this perspective, with its emphasis on the personal standards that people use in evaluating their actual responses, encourages integration of work on prejudice with theories that explore the relation between personal standards and affect and theories that explore self-regulatory mechanisms that may be useful in understanding prejudice reduction processes.

CONCLUSIONS

The present results suggest that many individuals have sincerely rejected a prejudiced ideology and have embraced non-prejudiced, egalitarian beliefs and standards. Although they continue to experience prejudice-like reactions (Devine, 1989), we argue that this does not invalidate their self-reported non-prejudiced beliefs and standards. Our results indicate that violation of such self-reported nonprejudiced standards leads to feelings of compunction. We believe that it would be inappropriate to characterize these individuals as prejudiced or even as ambivalent. From our perspective, the prevailing position that little progress is being made toward the alleviation of prejudice (Crosby et al., 1980; Dovidio & Gaertner, in press; Gaertner & Dovidio, 1986) seems overly pessimistic. Many people appear to be in the process of prejudice reduction. A necessary first step is the adoption of nonprejudiced standards. Fully overcoming the "prejudice habit" (Devine, 1989) presents a more formidable task and is likely to entail a great deal of internal conflict over a protracted period of time. Many of the subjects in the present research, like the Southerners in Pettigrew's (1987) quote cited at the beginning of this article, appear to be embroiled in the arduous task of breaking the prejudice habit.

References


