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PART I

CULTURE AND SOCIAL INTERACTION

Whether consciously or not, we rely on culture for our sense of self-identity and in almost everything we do. The articles selected for Part I look at the influence of culture on our society, the groups we belong to, and our individual lives. They also reveal how we construct and change culture. Together, they provide clear examples of the influence of norms, beliefs, subcultures, and some of our primary socializing agents on various aspects of society and on individuals.

Everyone wants to feel they belong and are accepted by other members of society. No one wants to be rejected. In "When Fiends Become Friends: The Need to Belong and Perceptions of Personal and Group Discrimination," Mauricio Carvallo and Brett W. Pelham show that our need to belong impacts our ability to recognize when we are victims of discrimination. While our need to feel socially accepted does not affect our ability to observe general discrimination against a group of which we are a part, being personally discriminated against does harm our sense of belonging. Therefore, we are less likely to notice and report personal discrimination.

Every subculture has its own norms. However, sometimes the perceived norms do not accurately reflect the true behavior of members of the group. In "Differences between Actual and Perceived Student Norms: An Examination of Alcohol Use, Drug Use, and Sexual Behavior" Matthew P. Martens and his co-authors reveal that college students overestimate how much their fellow students drink, use drugs, and engage in sexual activity. Informing students of the real levels of these activities will decrease the likelihood that they will drink, use drugs, or have sex. When such behavior is not seen as the norm, fewer students will engage in it.

In "The Influence of Friendship Groups on Intellectual Self-Confidence and Educational Aspirations in College," Anthony Lising Antonio points out that, if we want to understand the impact of peers on college student development, we need to focus on the influence of the peers with whom college students interact the most (rather than the entire student body). People tend to be most influenced by those they interact with on a regular basis. So, Antonio argues that we should be examining subgroups of college friends, rather than relying on surveys of large populations of college students when we try to understand the impact of college on students' self-concepts and educational success.

Our own identity often comes from our sense of belonging. Subcultures provide a sense of community for their members and shape how members view themselves. While most subculture communities have relied on face-to-face interaction to establish a sense of group identity, the Internet now provides a medium for people who may never meet one another to form and support a sense of subcultural identity. In "Authentic Identities: Straightedge Subcultures, Music, and the Internet," Patrick Williams looks at this phenomenon and the sometimes negative reactions to it in the anti-apathy and anti-drugs straightedge subculture.

As you read the articles in this section, keep in mind the following points:

- Culture is socially constructed and, therefore, varies over time and from society to society.
- Subcultures have generally relied on face-to-face interaction to form communities. However, the Internet offers a new way for subcultures to form and for members to interact with one another.
- We all want to feel as though we are socially accepted. This desire can impact our ability to recognize when we are being discriminated against.
- A society's norms guide behavior in a society.
- Even our moods are guided by the norms for acceptable levels of happiness, unhappiness, optimism, etc.
- Our cultural values and beliefs influence the laws we create.
- What we believe to be true can influence us just as much, or even more, than what is actually occurring.

CHAPTER 1

When Fiends Become Friends

The Need to Belong and Perceptions of Personal and Group Discrimination

Mauricio Carvallo and Brett W. Pelham

Persons who scored above average in the need to belong reported lower levels of personal discrimination but higher levels of group discrimination. The differences were significant, even when controlled for stigma consciousness, gender identify and public collective self-esteem.

An important topic of interest in social psychology is the study of stereotypes, prejudice, and discrimination. Traditionally, research on discrimination attempted to examine how the beliefs and feelings of the members of privileged groups influenced their tendency to discrimination against out-group members (Adorno, Frenkel-Brunswik, Levinson, & Sanford, 1950; Allport, 1954; Dovidio & Gaertner, 1986; Duncan, 1976; Sidanius & Pratto, 1999). More recently, however, social psychologists have become increasingly interested in how the targets of stereotypes, prejudice, and discrimination respond to these negative social experiences. Much of this recent research has focused on (a) how readily the members of stigmatized groups acknowledge that they have been the victims of discrimination (Crosby, 1982; Jost & Branaji, 1994; Major, Quinton, & McCoy, 2002; Stangor, Swim, Van Allen, & Sechrist, 2002; Taylor, Wright, Moghaddam, & Lalonde, 1990) and (b) how the experience of stigma or discrimination influences a person's self-evaluations (Branscombe, Schmitt, & Harvey, 1999; Crocker & Major, 1989; Pelham & Hetts, 1999). In this report, we focus on the first of these two recent questions. Specifically, when and why do stigmatized group members acknowledge their experiences with discrimination, and when and why do they minimize or deny these experiences?

Although research has shown that stigmatized group members frequently experience negative economic and interpersonal outcomes (e.g., Braddock & McPartland, 1987; Crandall, 1995; Crocker & Major, 1989; Dovido & Gaertner, 1986; Sigelman & Welch, 1991), research has also suggested that stigmatized group members may minimize the extent to which they have personally experienced discrimination. Crosby (1982) was one of the first to document this phenomenon. In her study, designed to explore sex discrimination in the work place, Crosby observed that whereas objective indicators of women's experiences suggested that they were victims of discrimination, most women felt extremely positive about their jobs. What puzzled Crosby most was that, when asked to report their personal experiences with discrimination, these women reported experiencing lower levels of discrimination than they reported for women as a group. . . .

Why Does It Matter?

Why should it matter whether the members of stigmatized groups frequently fail to realize the disadvantages they face? Pragmatically, if people are oblivious to the

fact that they have often encountered discrimination, they may indirectly communicate to others that discrimination is not an important social problem (e.g., see Taylor, Wright, & Porter, 1994). Moreover, if stigmatized group members fail to realize that discrimination affects them personally, they may not be very motivated to take collective action toward social change (Crosby et al., 1989; Jost, 1995; Major, 1994). That is, if people frequently fail to realize that they have been the victims of discrimination, this increases the likelihood that the status quo will forever remain the status quo. . . .

Why Does It Occur?

Assuming that people do often fail to appreciate the degree to which they are the victims of discrimination, why might this be the case? Research focusing on the personal-group discrimination discrepancy has offered several answers. For example, Crosby (1982) argued that people are motivated to avoid pinpointing the particular villains who might have discriminated against them. Others have argued that admitting that one has been the victim of discrimination would require people to admit that they do not have control over their lives (Ruggiero & Taylor, 1995; but cf. Sechrist, Swim, & Stangor, 2004).People might also be motivated to ignore signs that they have been maltreated because of a need to justify their own inaction in the face of such maltreatment (Taylor & Dube, 1986). Finally, people may wish to distance themselves from the negative attributes stereotypically ascribed to their fellow in-group members (Hodson & Esses, 2002).

. . . [R]esearch has also suggested that stigmatized group members are particularly likely to minimize public reports of personal discrimination in the presence of nonstigmatized group members (Stangor et al., 2002), either out of fear of retaliation (Swim & Hyers, 1999) or to avoid the social cost of appearing to be a complainer (Kaiser & Miller, 2001). Although this research has not assessed people's reports of group discrimination, it suggests the possibility that different social pressures operate at the level of the individual and at the level of the group. At the same time, one of the assumptions underlying much of this research on the social costs of reporting discrimination is that there is often a big difference between what people publicly report and what people personally believe. How can one explain the fact that many people honestly seem to believe that they themselves are rarely the victims of discrimination?

The Need to Belong and Perceptions of Discrimination

In addition to the reasons listed above, we believe that there is another important reason why people might fail to appreciate the degree to which they have been the victims of discrimination. This reason is that acknowledging discrimination represents a threat to people's need to belong. For decades, social and personality psychologists have argued that people have an intrinsic motivation to affiliate and bond with each other (Bowlby, 1969, 1973; Epstein, 1991; Freud, 1915/1963; Maslow, 1968; McClelland, 1951; Murray, 1938). More recently, Baumeister and Leary (1995) have argued that the need to belong lies at the heart of many important social phenomena, ranging from both infant and adult attachment to adult emotional experience and physical well-being (see also Brewer, 2004; Fiske, 2003; Stevens & Fiske, 1995). The need to belong is defined as the desire for frequent, positive, and stable interactions with others (Williams & Sommer, 1997) and is fulfilled primarily through affiliation with and acceptance from others (Gardner, Pickett, & Brewer, 2000). As a result, people show a strong need for social acceptance and an even stronger aversion to social rejection (Leary, 2001). According to this perspective, the need to belong increases following rejection and decreases following social inclusion or acceptance (Leary, Tambor, Terdal, & Downs, 1995; see also Baldwin & Sinclair, 1996). More important, Baumeister and Leary have argued that people strive to fulfill this basic need not only by attempting to maximize their actual acceptance from others but also by structuring their beliefs about the self and others in ways that allow them to feel that most people like and accept them (see also Brewer & Pickett, 1999; Williams & Sommer, 1997).

Consistent with Baumeister and Leary (1995), we use the phrase "need to belong" in this research to refer to a basic human motivation to be accepted or feel accepted by others. However, we realize that there are many ways to conceptualize the basic need for connectedness or acceptance (e.g., Bowlby, 1973; Deci & Ryan, 1985, 2000; Rogers, 1959). Furthermore, we realize that human beings base much of their behavior on specific interpersonal goals rather than general motives (e.g., sexual needs, the desire for power). Nonetheless, our position is that a host of closely related motives that we refer to as "the need to belong" or "the need for acceptance" dominates much of the human interpersonal landscape. Moreover, we agree with Baumeister and Leary that at least some highly specific interpersonal

goals (e.g., the desire for fame) may ultimately be rooted in a desire for connectedness or social acceptance. . . .

The need to belong might influence not only how people assess their own personal experiences with discrimination but also how people assess and evaluate the experiences of their fellow in-group members. However, it seems unlikely that the need to belong would motivate people to overlook instances of discrimination directed at the group. On the contrary, the need to belong should probably increase the likelihood that people acknowledge instances of group discrimination. . . . Because of our interest in how the need to belong relates to perceptions of group as well as personal discrimination, and because of the tradition of comparing these two distinct judgments (e.g., Crosby, 1982; Crosby et al., 1989; Taylor et al., 1994), we typically assessed people's beliefs about both personal and group discrimination in this research.

Overview of the Present Research

 . . . [W]hereas some researchers have mentioned interpersonal motivations in passing (e.g., Major, Quinton, & McCoy, 2002; Tyler & Lind, 1992), we know of no systematic research that has focused on the hypothesis that the need to belong plays an important role in people's judgments of personal and/or group discrimination (but see Kobrynowicz & Branscombe, 1997). Study 1 was designed as an initial test of this idea. If the need to belong causes people to minimize perceptions of personal discrimination, then people who are higher than average in the need to belong might be particularly likely to report that they typically experience less discrimination than their fellow group members. Furthermore, if the need to belong causes people to acknowledge or accentuate perceptions of group discrimination, then people high in the need to belong might be especially likely to report that the members of their group frequently experience discrimination. Of course, the converse of these two predictions is that people who do not have a very strong need to belong might report (a) relatively high levels of personal discrimination and (b) relatively low levels of group discrimination. Study 2 sought to test these same hypotheses by manipulating rather than measuring the need to belong. Finally, in Study 3, we broadened the scope of this research by (a) using a different approach to activate the need to belong and (b) assessing people's attributions about discrimination rather than perceived levels of discrimination. Specifically, Study 3 tested the idea that participants' desire to be accepted by an attractive interaction partner would

influence their judgments of why the partner had evaluated their work negatively.

Study 1

The first study tested our hypotheses by assessing the need to belong before asking male and female participants to report their judgments regarding personal and group discrimination on the basis of their gender. Although most research on how people assess discrimination aimed at themselves and their social groups has focused on stigmatized social groups, recent research has shown that the members of nonstigmatized groups often report judgments of personal and group discrimination that resemble those of stigmatized persons. For example, men often report that they have personally experienced less gender discrimination than has the average man (Moghaddam, Stolkin, & Hutcheson, 1997; Operario & Fiske, 2001; Postmes, Branscombe, Spears, & Young, 1999). Although there is some disagreement about how to interpret this finding, the possibility that men strive to minimize their perceptions of personal gender discrimination is consistent with our motivational framework. After all, the need to belong should apply to all people, not just stigmatized group members.

In addition to assessing the need to belong, Study 1 also examined three other individual difference factors likely to be related to perceptions of perceived discrimination: stigma consciousness, group identification, and the perception that people in general view one's group favorably. Research has shown that stigma consciousness is positively correlated with perceived personal discrimination across a variety of stigmatized groups (e.g., African Americans, Latinos, women; Pinel, 1999). Similarly, studies also show that group identification is positively correlated with perceptions of personal and/or group discrimination among stigmatized group members, including women (Crosby et al., 1989; Operario & Fiske, 2001). Finally, people's judgments of how other people evaluate their gender group (public collective self-esteem) might be expected to predict perceptions of both personal and group discrimination. Specifically, people should perceive less discrimination directed at them or their groups to the extent that they believe that others generally view their groups positively (Luhtanen & Crocker, 1992). In short, we included these three variables in our analyses to control for any potential overlap between the need to belong and stigma consciousness, group identification, or public collective self-esteem.

METHOD

Participants

Participants were 219 undergraduates (74 men and 145 women) from the State University of New York at Buffalo, who ranged from 18 to 43 years old ($M = 21.12$). The ethnic composition of our sample was 77% Caucasian, 9% Asian or Asian American, 4% African American, 5% Latino, and 5% other ethnicities. Participants received credit toward a course requirement.

Measures

Need to belong. Participants' need to belong was assessed using the Need to Belong Scale (Leary, Kelly, Cottrell, & Schreindorfer, 2001). This scale includes 10 items such as "If other people don't seem to accept me, I don't let it bother me," and "My feelings are easily hurt when I feel that others do not accept me." Items were measured on a 9-point scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 9 (*strongly agree*). Items expressing a low need to belong were reverse scored so that higher scores reflected a greater need to belong ($\alpha + .84$).

Stigma consciousness. Stigma consciousness was assessed using Pinel's (1999) Stigma Consciousness Scale. This scale consists of 10 items that were modified to focus on gender (e.g., "I never worry that my behavior will be viewed as stereotypically male (female)" and "Most men (women) do not judge women (men) on the basis of their gender."). Items were measured on a 9-point scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 9 (*strongly agree*) ($\alpha = .76$).

Gender identification. Gender identification was assessed with the four-item Importance to Identity subscale of the Collective Self-Esteem Scale (Luhtanen & Crocker, 1992), rephrased to be gender specific (e.g., "Overall, being a woman (man) has very little to do with how I feel about myself? (reverse coded) and "Being a woman (man) is an important reflection of who I am"). Participants responded to each item on a scale from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 9 (*strongly agree*). Reliability was acceptable ($\alpha = .70$).

Public (gender) collective self-esteem. Participants' views of how their gender group is seen by others were assessed with the Public subscale of Luhtanen and Crocker's (1992) Collective Self-Esteem Scale. This subscale consists of four items that were slightly modified to focus on gender (e.g., "Overall, women (men) are considered good by others," "In general, others respect women (men)," and "In general, others think that being a woman (man) is unworthy" (reverse coded)). Reliability was acceptable ($\alpha = .72$).

Perceptions of personal discrimination. Our first dependent measure was a four-item measure of participants' perceptions that they had personally experienced gender discrimination This measure was adapted loosely from past research by Sechrist, Swim, and Mark (2003). The items were as follows: "Prejudice against my gender group has affected me personally," "I have personally experienced gender discrimination," "I have often been treated unfairly because of my gender," and "Because of gender discrimination, I have been deprived of opportunities that are available to women (men)." Items were measured on a 9-point scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 9 (*strongly agree*). Reliability was high ($\alpha = .90$).

Perceptions of group discrimination. To assess group discrimination, we asked participants to respond to four items that closely paralleled the items used in the personal discrimination measure (these items were presented after the personal discrimination measure, preceded by two filler questions about gender discrimination in general). The items were "Prejudice against my gender group has affected the average female (male) college student," "The average female (male) college student has experienced gender discrimination," "The average female (male) college student has often been treated unfairly because of her gender," and "Because of gender discrimination, the average female college student has been deprived of opportunities that are available to men (women)." Participants responded to each item on a 9-point scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 9 (*strongly agree*). Reliability was high ($\alpha = .92$).

RESULTS

Perceptions of Personal Discrimination

We tested the hypotheses that people high on the need to belong would report relatively low levels of personal discrimination by using a simultaneous multiple regression analysis that included five predictors: (a) need to belong, (b) stigma consciousness, (c) gender identity, (d) public collective self-esteem, and (e) perceptions of group discrimination. We controlled for perceptions of group discrimination because we wanted to assess the unique relation between each of our predictors and perceptions of personal versus group discrimination. The analysis showed that the combined effect of the

five predictors was significant ($R^2 = .45, p < .001$). Not surprisingly, perceptions of group discrimination were the strongest predictor of perceptions of personal discrimination ($\beta = .51, p < .001, \eta = .45$). Stigma consciousness ($\beta = .18, p < .01, \eta = .16$) and public collective self-esteem ($\beta = -.12, p < .05, \eta = .11$) were also associated with perceptions of personal discrimination (in the expected direction). More important, and consistent with our hypothesis, there was also a significant association for need to belong ($\beta = -.11, p < .05, \eta = .11$). Participants high in the need to belong reported experiencing less personal discrimination than did participants low in the need to belong. Group identity was not significantly associated with personal discrimination ratings ($\beta = .07, ns$).

Perceptions of Group Discrimination

Our analyses for perceptions of group discrimination included exactly the same predictors as our analysis for perceptions of personal discrimination. The only difference was that in this analysis we controlled for perceptions of personal discrimination (so as to look at the unique associations with perceived group discrimination). Together, the five predictors were significant ($R^2 = .43, p < .001$). As expected, perceptions of personal discrimination were the strongest predictor of perceptions of group discrimination ($\beta = .52, p < .001, \eta = .45$). Public collective self-esteem ($\beta = -13, p < .05, \eta = .12$) and gender identity ($\beta = .10, p = .056, \eta = .10$) were also significant or nearly significant predictors. Stigma consciousness was not ($\beta = .09$), though the trend was in the expected direction. Once again, the analysis showed that the need to belong was a significant predictor ($\beta = .12, p < .05, \eta = .11$). In the case of perceptions of group discrimination, however, participants high in the need to belong perceived more group discrimination than did participants low in the need to belong. . . .

Discussion

As we expected, the need to belong was significantly associated with perceptions of both personal and group discrimination. Specifically, even after we controlled for several established predictors of personal and group discrimination (e.g., stigma consciousness and two gender-relevant aspects of collective self-esteem), participants who were high in the need to belong reported lower levels of personal discrimination but higher levels of group discrimination. Although these initial results are supportive of our hypothesis, these findings are correlational.

Thus, the direction of causation is not clear. For example, people may report low levels of the need to belong because they perceive themselves as having been victims of discrimination, rather than vice versa. That is, the belief that one has often been rejected by others could lead a person to decide that connectedness with others is not that important (cf. Gardner et al., 2000). Similarly, past research has shown that perceived discrimination against one's group sometimes leads to increased identification with the group (e.g., Dion & Earn, 1975; Gurin & Townsend, 1986; Tajfel & Turner, 1986).

Although it would still be interesting if perceptions of personal versus group discrimination have opposite effects on the general need to belong, this does not negate this methodological limitation. Accordingly, we conducted a second study in which we manipulated the need to belong. After doing so, we asked participants to report their judgments of personal and group discrimination on the basis of their gender.

Study 2

According to Baumeister and Leary (1995), one criteria for inclusion of the need to belong as a fundamental human motivation is that it should display satiation patterns. That is, the motive should increase when levels of belongingness fall below threshold and should decrease when levels of belongingness are satiated (see also Gardner et al., 2000). In Study 2 we incorporated a manipulation intended to satiate participants' need to belong. We predicted that participants who have been made to feel accepted would report higher than average levels of personal discrimination and lower than average levels of group discrimination.

Method

Participants

Participants were 127 undergraduates (71 men, 56 women) from the State University of New York at Buffalo, who ranged from 18 to 51 years old ($M = 20.28$). The ethnic composition was 56% Caucasian, 18% Asian or Asian American, 15% African American, 9% Latino, and 2% other ethnicities. For their participation, all participants received credit in a psychology course.

Procedure and Measures

Participants completed the same measures of personal and group discrimination as in Study 1. However,

the need to belong was manipulated with a priming task intended to create feelings of acceptance. Participants were randomly assigned to an acceptance priming condition or a neutral pleasant word condition. In the acceptance priming condition, participants were asked to complete a word-search task that contained words related to acceptance (e.g., *accepted, included, welcomed, adored, supported, wanted*). In the neutral pleasant-word condition, participants were asked to complete the same word-search task by finding pleasant words that were unrelated to acceptance (e.g., *chuckle, smile, peace, amuse*; Baccus & Baldwin, 2001).

When participants arrived at the study, they were told that the research involved assessing their attitudes and perceptions about gender. Before starting the study, they were asked whether they would be willing to participate in a pilot test that was, ostensibly, unrelated to the present study. All participants agreed to participate. The alleged pilot test consisted of a word-search puzzle. Participants were given 5 min. to complete the word-search puzzles containing either words related to acceptance or words that were neutral. After completing the word-search task, participants were thanked for assisting with the pilot study and then asked to report their judgments regarding personal and group discrimination on the basis of their gender. No participant reported any suspicion that the two tasks were related.

RESULTS

Perceptions of Personal Discrimination

We predicted that people whose need to belong was reduced (because of recent satiation) would report higher than average levels of personal discrimination. We tested this hypothesis by using a one-way analysis of covariance that is conceptually identical to the multiple regression analysis conducted in Study 1. To separate the unique contributions to participants' perceptions of personal discrimination above and beyond any associations for perceptions of group discrimination, we included ratings of group discrimination in the analysis as a covariate. The independent variable was the priming ("accepted") manipulation. The dependent variable was perceptions of personal discrimination. As predicted, the analysis revealed a significant main effect of condition. Participants in the accepted condition (covariate-adjusted $M = 4.26, SE = 0.20$) reported higher levels of personal discrimination than did participants in the control condition (covariate-adjusted $M = 3.69, SE = 0.20$), $F(1, 124) = 3.97$,

$p < .05, \eta = .14$. The covariate was also significant, $F(1, 124) = 75.62, p < .001$.

Perceptions of Group Discrimination

Our analysis of perceptions of group discrimination was patterned directly after our analysis of personal discrimination, the only difference being the obvious change in the covariate. Thus the dependent variable was perceptions of group discrimination, and the covariate was perceptions of personal discrimination. As predicted, the analysis revealed a significant main effect of condition. Participants in the accepted condition (covariate-adjusted $M = 3.94, SE = 1.80$) reported lower levels of group discrimination than did participants in the control condition (covariate-adjusted $M = 4.69, SE = 1.87$), $F(1, 124) = 9.07, p < .01, \eta = .21$. The covariate was also significant, $F(1, 124) = 75.62, p < .001. . . .$

DISCUSSION

Studies 1 and 2 strongly suggest that the need to belong influences the degree to which people perceive that they or their groups are victims of discrimination. Studies 1 and 2 thus identify the need to belong as an important reason why people sometimes fail to appreciate the degree to which they have experienced discrimination. Notice, however, that the need to belong does not simply blind people to all possible instances of discrimination. When it comes to people's judgments that their fellow in-group members have experienced discrimination, the need to belong seems to motivate people to acknowledge instances of discrimination. . . .

If the assumption is made that perceptions of personal and group discrimination are best conceptualized separately, then we believe that our findings regarding personal discrimination may be more important than our findings regarding group discrimination because they suggest a reason why people might fail to appreciate instances of discrimination of the most obvious and self-relevant sort—discrimination aimed at the self. Thus, in Study 3, we decided to focus exclusively on self-relevant rather than group-relevant judgments. In Study 3, we also wanted to broaden the scope of our investigation by assessing attributions about potentially discriminatory behavior rather than judgments of the perceived level of discrimination. As Major, Quinton, and McCoy (2002) noted, the attributions that people make for obviously negative outcomes are at least as important as people's

judgments of the nature or level of these outcomes. Finally, self-affirmation theorists might argue that our manipulation of acceptance in Study 2 was actually a subtle self-affirmation manipulation (e.g., see Sherman & Cohen, 2002; Steele & Liu, 1983). In Study 3, we manipulated people's desire for connectedness in a way that was orthogonal to self-affirmation. . . .

People should be most likely to recognize instances of discrimination—and to make self-protective attributions to discrimination—when they are not highly motivated to develop or protect a relationship with a potential perpetrator. On the other hand, in situations in which people are highly motivated to be accepted by potential perpetrators (e.g., when one's romantic partner rather than a stranger is the source of a sexist remark), we believe that they will steer away from making attributions to discrimination. Thus, Study 3 was designed to assess whether the need to belong influences the attributions that people make for the potentially discriminatory evaluations of another person.

In Study 3, we also expanded our approach by manipulating people's desire to be accepted by a particular person (an attractive, opposite-sex stranger), rather than manipulating people's general need to be liked or accepted. At a conceptual level, we think the need to belong (i.e., the need for acceptance or connectedness) may be most likely to manifest itself in the context of established personal relationships. Nonetheless, we believe that the need to belong also influences people's desire to form new relationships or to care about specific short-term interactions, especially when these interactions (a) have the potential to foster long-term relationships or (b) have direct implications for one's general ability to connect to others (see Baumeister & Leary, 1995). Thus, in Study 3 we manipulated the need to belong by manipulating people's desire to be accepted by an attractive stranger. Finally, in contrast to Study 2, in which we experimentally decreased the need to belong for some participants (relative to a control condition), Study 3 experimentally increased the need to belong for some participants.

Study 3

To test the hypothesis that the need to belong influences judgments of the causes of personal discrimination in attributionally ambiguous situations, we conducted a conceptual replication of a study by Crocker et al. (1991, Experiment 1). Crocker et al. showed that women were more likely to attribute negative feedback to discrimination if the feedback came from a seemingly prejudiced as opposed to nonprejudiced (male) evaluator. In the present study, female participants received a negative evaluation of their performance on a creativity task. The evaluator was always a physically attractive man with traditional gender attitudes, and all participants expected to have a meaningful interaction with this man later in the study. We manipulated the need to belong by describing the male evaluator as being either single or married. Past research has shown that the prospect of forming a relationship with a recently met person appears to be sufficient to alter the way in which people process the interaction (Baumeister & Leary, 1995; Clark, 1984). Thus, women should feel more of a desire to be connected to an attractive interaction partner if they believe that he is single than if they believe that he is married.

Method

Participants

A total of 41 female students from the State University of New York at Buffalo, who ranged from 18 to 43 years old ($M = 19.97$), participated for course credit. The ethnic composition was 79% Caucasian, 10% African American, 8% Asian or Asian American, and 3% Latino. Two participants were excluded from the analyses because they reported that they did not believe the bogus participant was real.

Laboratory Procedure

Background materials and cover story. When participants arrived at the laboratory they were escorted to a room by the male experimenter and asked to wait for another participant who presumably had not yet arrived. After a few minutes, participants learned that the other participant had arrived and was getting ready for the experiment in a different room. The experimenter then explained that participants were taking part in a study of attitudes, peer evaluation, and problem solving. Participants learned that during the first part of the study they and their partner would each work in separate rooms and would only exchange background information. During the second part of the study, they would presumably meet and work together on a 25-min problem-solving activity. Presumably, this approach would allow us to study how people work individually as well as how people work together in groups.

Next, the experimenter took participants' photos with a digital camera and asked them to write a brief self-descriptive essay and complete an attitude survey. Participants were led to believe that they would exchange this self-descriptive material with the other participant as an initial way for them to get to know each other. After taking the getting-acquainted photo, the experimenter left the room, ostensibly to give the same instructions to the other participant. The self-descriptive essay asked participants to describe who they were and what they were like in 100 words or less (without providing any personally identifying information). The attitude survey consisted of 15 questions, 5 of which assessed participants' attitudes regarding women's role in society. These 5 questions were the same ones used by Crocker et al. (1991, Experiment 1). The other 10 questions assessed attitudes toward affirmative action and social services. The 5-point scale for these 15 attitude items ranged from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*).

Creativity task and partner evaluation. After participants completed the essay and attitude survey, the experimenter returned to collect their materials and explain the individual performance task. Participants completed a creativity task in which they were given 5 min to list all possible uses for a brick. It is important to note that before listing their responses, all participants were asked to report their gender and age. In addition, participants were told that the other participant had been assigned a different individual task (a problem-solving task). Further, participants learned that they would evaluate the other participant's problem-solving task while he evaluated their creativity task. The experimenter left the room and returned 5 min later to collect the creativity task and to deliver the problem-solving task that ostensibly had been completed by the other participant. From the response sheet provided to them, participants learned that the other participant was a man and 21 years of age. Participants evaluated the problem-solving task on dimensions such as quality and logicality and then provided a summary evaluation. The fact that participants and their bogus partners had completed different tasks made it impossible for participants to compare the quality of their work with that of their partner.

Exchange of background information (need to belong manipulation). After collecting their evaluation of their partner's work, the experimenter gave the self-descriptive essay, attitude survey, and photo of their partner. Participants were left alone to review these materials for 10 min (while their partner presumably did the same).

Participants in all conditions viewed the same photo of an attractive undergraduate man whose essay described him as a friendly, easygoing person who liked to listen to music, play the guitar, read, and spend time outdoors. Participants in the high connectedness condition read that the other participant was new at the university and was looking forward to meeting new people and making friends. Participants in the low connectedness condition read that the other participant was married, that his wife was expecting a baby girl, and that he was very excited about becoming a father. Responses on the bogus partner participant's attitude survey were identical in all conditions. The bogus participant's responses revealed that he had liberal views regarding affirmative action and social services. However, exactly like the bogus male participant in Crocker et al.'s (1991) study, the bogus participant reported highly traditional attitudes when it came to women's role in society. For example, he reported strongly agreeing that "women, who are less serious about their jobs, take jobs away from men with families to support," and he disagreed that "women and men should receive equal pay for work that is similar." Needless to say, there was not a single participant in the study whose own attitudes about gender roles were as traditional as those of the bogus male partner.

Negative evaluation from partner. After participants digested the material regarding their bogus partner, the experimenter returned with their partner's evaluation of their work on the creativity task. The bogus participant was not very impressed. For example, in response to the question, "How would you evaluate the creativity of the responses given?" on a 9-point scale ranging from 1 (*not at all creative*) to 9 (*very creative*), he offered a 2. He also gave ratings of 3 on similar scales for both quality and novelty. Finally, in response to an open-ended question about overall creativity, he indicated "In general, the responses given were not very imaginative."

Dependent Measures and Assessment of Stigma Consciousness

Immediately after reading their evaluations, participants were asked to complete a series of questionnaires that included their impressions of the other participant, their attributions for his evaluation of their work on the creativity task, and their memory for his responses on the attitude survey. Next, participants were asked to complete a measure of state self-esteem, a mood measure, the stigma consciousness measure, and some demographic questions. Participants were reminded that all their responses to these

questionnaires would remain completely anonymous and that the other participant would not read them. They were also reminded that after completing the questionnaires, they would meet the other participant and begin the final part of the study. After completing these questionnaires, participants were carefully debriefed and completed a final anonymous questionnaire assessing suspicion.

Attributions. Two items assessed the extent to which participants believed that the evaluations they received were due to gender discrimination: "To what extent do you think that the evaluation you received was due to potential gender biases on the part of the evaluator?" and "To what extent do you think that the evaluation you received was due to the evaluator's attitudes toward women?" Items were answered on 9-point scales ranging from 1 (*not at all*) to 9 (*very much*). This measure was highly reliable ($\alpha = .88$). In addition, two items assessed the extent to which participants believed that the evaluations they received were due to the "creativity level of their answers" and to the "strengths and weaknesses of their work" ($\alpha = .47$). Because these two items behaved the same way, we combined them despite their low reliability.

Mood and state self-esteem. Following Crocker et al. (1991), we also assessed mood and state self-esteem. We assessed mood using four items from each of the three subscales of the Multiple Affect Adjective Check List (Zuckerman & Lubin, 1965). We assessed state self-esteem using a modified ("right now") version of Rosenberg's (1965) Self-Esteem Scale.

Impressions of the partner's similarity to self. Using 9-point scales, participants reported their views of their partner on a number of valenced dimensions (e.g., intelligence, sincerity, pleasantness). Embedded among these questions was a single item that assessed how similar participants felt their attitudes were to those of their partner.

Stigma consciousness. As in Study 1, we assessed stigma consciousness using the Stigma Consciousness Scale, modified to be relevant to gender ($\alpha = .73$). We assessed stigma consciousness near the end of the study to avoid sensitizing participants to our interest in stigma prior to the delivery of our experimental manipulation.

RESULTS

Attributions to Discrimination

A one-way analysis of covariance was conducted to test the hypothesis that experimentally created differences in the need to belong would influence participants' attributions regarding negative feedback from their interaction partner. Thus, the dependent variable was attributions to discrimination for the negative feedback received. The independent variable was the relationship status of the bogus interaction partner (single or married). Stigma consciousness served as a covariate. . . . [T]he analysis revealed a significant main effect of experimental condition. Relative to those who believed that their interaction partner was married, those who believed he was single (i.e., those whose need to belong was strongly activated) were less likely to attribute the same negative evaluation to discrimination. Respective covariate-adjusted means in the married and single conditions were 6.28 ($SE = 0.42$) and 5.08 ($SE = .041$), $F(1, 36) = 4.19$, $p < .05$, $\eta = .29$. The covariate was also significant, $F(1, 36) = 10.86$, $p < .01$. Independent of the experimental manipulation, participants high in stigma consciousness were more likely to attribute their negative evaluation to discrimination. Neither the experimental manipulation, $F(1, 36) = 1.65$, $p > .21$, nor stigma consciousness, $F(1, 36) = 0.03$, $p > .87$, was related to participants' tendency to attribute the feedback to the quality of their work. . . .

General Discussion

The research reported here supports the hypothesis that the need to belong plays an important role in people's judgments of personal and group discrimination. In Study 1, [participants who were high in the need to belong] scored lower levels of personal discrimination but higher levels of group discrimination. Indeed, the need to belong proved to be a significant predictor of personal and group discrimination even when we controlled for participants' stigma consciousness, gender identity, and public collective self-esteem. The results of Study 2 showed a similar pattern. This time, however, the need to belong was manipulated by use of a priming task intended to create feelings of acceptance. As predicted, participants who had been made to feel accepted reported relatively higher levels of personal discrimination and lower levels of group discrimination than participants in a control condition. We find it interesting to note that participants in the accepted condition reported nearly identical levels of personal and group discrimination. Thus, our manipulation eliminated an otherwise robust phenomenon: the tendency to perceive more discrimination aimed at one's group rather than at oneself. In Study 3, we tested the hypothesis that targets of prejudice may be motivated to avoid blaming their negative

outcomes on discrimination when doing so would threaten their need for connectedness. Accordingly, we manipulated the desire for connectedness among female participants who believed they would engage in a significant interaction with a sexist but otherwise charming male participant. Consistent with predictions, participants in the high connectedness condition were relatively less likely to attribute a negative evaluation from the male partner to discrimination. Taken together, the results of these studies support the hypothesis that the need to belong influences not only how likely stigmatized group members are to acknowledge or minimize their experiences with discrimination but also how willing they are to attribute negative evaluations to discrimination.

The social psychological literature is replete with references to the ways in which perceivers' motives and goals influence judgments and social perceptions (Fiske & Taylor, 1991; Hilton & Darley, 1991; Kruglanski, 1996; Kunda & Sinclair, 1999; Stevens & Fiske, 1995). Judgments of prejudice and discrimination are no different. In our view, perceptions of potential prejudice and discrimination threaten people's pervasive need to form and maintain relationships with others. Because the need to belong is fulfilled through affiliation with and acceptance from others, the drive to seek social acceptance must be accompanied by mechanisms for enhancing the subjective likelihood that one will, in fact, be accepted rather than rejected by other people (Leary, 2001). Thus, the drive for social acceptance colors people's judgments of others in ways consistent with the belief that one will not be subject to interpersonal rejection. . . .

LIKELY ROLE OF THE NEED TO BELONG IN PAST RESEARCH

Our findings are consistent with past research suggesting that people may be motivated to avoid reporting instances of personal discrimination to others. Thus, past research has shown that blaming negative outcomes on personal discrimination is typically viewed negatively by others, even when it is obvious that discrimination is the cause of these events (Kaiser & Miller, 2001). People who complain about discrimination in public can be seen as impolite, as violators of potent social norms that discourage voicing negative views of others. Thus, even complainers who have much to complain about risk being labeled as hypersensitive, unpleasant people (Crosby, 1984; Kaiser & Miller, 2001; Stangor et al., 2002). From our perspective, the normative influence processes that discourage people from complaining

about maltreatment are likely to be grounded in the basic desire all people have to be part of a group in which social friction is kept to a minimum (Breckler & Greenwald, 1986). In other words, research on how people respond to those they perceive as complainers and how people seek to avoid being perceived as complainers has been highly consistent with our guiding assumption about the need to belong. . . .

The current research has important implications for theories of stigma. Some theorists argue that in most interactions with nonstigmatized individuals, the stigmatized person is likely to expect to experience some degree of prejudice and discrimination (Feldman Barrett & Swim, 1998; Swim, Cohen, & Hyers, 1998). Even if a social interaction with a nonstigmatized person is free of prejudice, the stigmatized person will still be uncertain whether he or she has been treated in a prejudicial manner on the basis of his or her stigma (Crocker & Major, 1989; Crocker et al., 1991). On the basis of this perspective, most research on stigma has focused primarily on the strategies that stigmatized people use to cope with the prejudice and discrimination they inevitably expect to encounter. Although we do not deny that vigilance is an important part of many routine social interactions between stigmatized and nonstigmatized group members, our research suggests that when people are motivated to protect meaningful relationships with their interaction partners, such people will sometimes be motivated to overlook instances of discrimination. Of course, just as extreme vigilance can be maladaptive in situations in which majority group members harbor only good will (Ayduk, Downey, & Kim, 2001; Mendoza-Denton et al., 2002), turning a blind eye to discrimination can be maladaptive when those one wishes to please are likely to act on deep-seated prejudices.

THE NEED TO BELONG AND FUTURE RESEARCH

Whether stigmatized members readily acknowledge that they are victims of discrimination or whether they minimize or downplay such discrimination has recently become the subject of considerable research. The evidence so far supports two seemingly opposing theoretical views. On the one hand, vigilance perspectives suggest that stigmatized group members are highly sensitive to signs of prejudice in their environments and are eager to blame negative outcomes on discrimination. On the other hand, minimization perspectives support the view that stigmatized members fail to perceive that they personally are targets of discrimination or fail to attribute negative outcomes

to prejudice even when it is plausible to do so. We agree with Major, Quinton, and McCoy (2002) that there is no use in establishing whether one perspective supersedes the other. The evidence shows that both vigilance and minimization exist. We further agree that future research should focus on finding moderators that explain when and why stigmatized members are more likely to recognize or minimize acts of prejudice and discrimination. Several studies have examined different moderators of perceptions and attributions to discrimination such as group identification and endorsement of status-legitimizing ideologies (Major, Gramzow, et al., 2002; Major et al., 2003; Operario & Fiske, 2001). Our studies extend this research by proposing a basic motivational factor that explains why stigmatized group members might fail to see that they have been the victims of discrimination. By manipulating this motive (e.g., by manipulating people's allegiances to different groups), future research could shed further light on the power of interpersonal motives to shape people's perceptions of discrimination. If the world were full of nothing but distant fiends or devoted friends, there might be a single answer to the question of whether people emphasize or de-emphasize their own personal experiences of discrimination. But in the real world, there are many shades of gray between fiend and friend.

Discussion Questions

1. Why do people tend to recognize group discrimination but minimize personal discrimination?

2. After reading this article, could you see yourself minimizing personal discrimination in certain situations? Why or why not?