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Confronting Prejudice (Literally): Reactions to Confrontations of Racial and Gender Bias

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Participants in two studies reported how they would feel, think, and behave after being confronted about either gender-biased or equivalent racial-biased responses. In Study 2, whether the confrontation was from a target group member (Black or female) or nontarget (White or male) group member was manipulated. Regardless of confronter status, allegations of racial bias elicited more guilt and apologetic-corrective responses and greater concern over having offended the confronter than similar confrontations of gender bias, which elicited more amusement. Target confrontations elicited less guilt but greater discomfort than nontarget confrontations and were associated with feelings of irritation and antagonism among more prejudiced participants. In addition, participants perceived a target's confrontation as more of an overreaction than the same confrontation from a nontarget. The implications of these findings for prejudice-reduction efforts are discussed.

Keywords: *prejudice reduction; confrontation; racism; sexism*

According to the 2000 National Census, the United States is more racially and ethnically diverse than ever before (El Nasser, 2001). As the nation continues to struggle with issues related to stereotyping, prejudice, and discrimination, research on ways to improve intergroup relations becomes increasingly important. Within social psychology, considerable research over the years has examined how people's tendencies for stereotyping and prejudice can be decreased.

Rokeach (1973) suggested that people's belief systems could be altered through self-confrontation. Because White Americans often feel committed to the general tenets of democracy such as egalitarianism, they experience self-dissatisfaction when confronted with aspects of the self that are inconsistent with such ideals (i.e., their prejudicial tendencies). To reduce such self-dissatisfaction, people become motivated to change

their belief systems to be more consistent with their egalitarian self-concepts. More recently, Monteith and colleagues (Monteith, 1993; Monteith, Ashburn-Nardo, Voils, & Czopp, 2002) developed and tested a model concerning how people can learn to self-regulate their behavior and ultimately decrease their likelihood of prejudiced responses. Other researchers have likewise suggested that individuals can learn to overcome their tendencies for biased responding through practice (e.g., Kawakami, Dovidio, Moll, Hermsen, & Russin, 2000), self-reflection (e.g., Fazio & Hilden, 2001), and making their egalitarian goals chronically accessible (e.g., Moskowitz, Gollwitzer, Wasel, & Schaal, 1999).

As these examples suggest, a considerable amount of research has been devoted to understanding the role of intrapersonal processes in decreasing prejudice. However, very little research has examined how other people can be agents of change in prejudice reduction endeavors by confronting people about their prejudiced responses. History suggests that confrontation can indeed be a powerful medium for social change. In the United States, Civil Rights activists of the 1960s employed a variety of confrontational strategies to protest the inequality and hypocrisy of government-sanctioned discrimination. Bus boycotts, sit-ins, protest rallies, and marches were all confrontations against the prevailing prejudice of the time. Ultimately, such con-

frontations were effective in bringing sweeping governmental changes, the abolition of legalized discrimination, and the creation of a social climate with strong norms against overt and hostile expressions of prejudice. However, prejudice certainly was not eradicated; indeed, many theorists suggest that it often resides "underground" and that more subtle manifestations persist (see Gaertner & Dovidio, 1986; McConahay, 1986). The general goal of the present research was to examine people's reactions to being confronted about their prejudiced responses to better understand the role of confrontations in reducing prejudice.

There are a variety of reasons to expect that confrontations may indeed be an effective way of decreasing prejudice. For example, confronting others about their prejudiced responses can be a means of emphasizing norms of nonprejudice and egalitarianism. If, as early prejudice theorists have suggested, White Americans have come to patriotically embrace principles of fairness and egalitarianism (e.g., Myrdal, 1944), such norm saliency should have a powerful influence on people. In fact, several studies have suggested that when norms of egalitarianism are made salient, people become less likely to provide prejudiced responses (Blanchard, Crandall, Brigham, & Vaughn, 1994; Blanchard, Lilly, & Vaughn, 1991; Monteith, Deneen, & Tooman, 1996). Furthermore, confrontations have the potential to raise people's awareness of prejudiced responses that, although personally unacceptable, nonetheless occur due to the often automatic nature of stereotype activation (see Bargh, 1999; Devine & Monteith, 1999). As described earlier, Rokeach's (1973) self-confrontation method and Monteith's (1993) model of self-regulation suggest that awareness of prejudiced responding can create feelings of self-dissatisfaction and serve to reduce the likelihood of similar responses in the future. However, do confrontations from others, which likewise increase awareness of one's prejudiced responding, lead to similar consequences? We propose that people's reactions to confrontation will depend on two important factors: the group targeted by the prejudiced response and whether the person making the confrontation is a member of that target group.

Sexism and Racism: All-Isms Are Not Created Equal

Extant research on stereotyping and prejudice often focuses on either prejudice toward women or Blacks but investigators rarely address sexism and racism simultaneously so that they can be compared and contrasted. One of the goals of this study was to directly compare people's reactions to confrontations involving gender bias and racial bias.

Fiske and Stevens (1993) discuss several differences between the nature of prejudice and stereotypes involving women and Blacks and corresponding norms of acceptability. For example, most gender stereotypes tend to be more prescriptive in nature than most racial stereotypes. That is, people tend to believe that women should conform to common stereotypes about women (e.g., warm, nurturing) to a greater extent than people believe Blacks should behave in correspondingly stereotypic ways (e.g., criminal, lazy). In addition, because of the unique and intimate communal roles between men and women (as spouses, parents, children), gender stereotypes may be more likely to be perceived as true, thus legitimizing sexist attitudes. Furthermore, Glick and Fiske (1996, 2001) have suggested that this combination of gender stereotype prescription and the interdependency of men and women is rooted in a historically paternalistic relationship (where women are praised for conforming to stereotypes) and this may undermine people's perceptions of the seriousness of sexism.

Thus, social norms may be such that taboos against racially prejudiced behaviors are much stronger than similarly egregious behaviors against women. An interesting study by Cowan and Hodge (1996) looking at reactions to "hate speech" against various target groups supported this possibility. In their study, male participants evaluated racist behavior as more offensive than similarly disparaging sexist or anti-gay behavior. This tendency to perceive racism as more serious and offensive than sexism also was demonstrated by all participants (regardless of gender) in a study by Rodin, Price, Bryson, and Sanchez (1990). This investigation included several domains of prejudiced behavior (racism, sexism, ageism, and homosexism) and found that discriminatory behavior involving the exclusion or derogation of Blacks by Whites was evaluated as more prejudiced than the very same discrimination of women by men.

How do these findings relate to confrontations and people's reactions to being confronted? If people perceive racism to be a more serious issue than sexism, they are likely to be more concerned about being perceived (by themselves and/or others) as racist than sexist. People may react to confrontations of racial bias by feeling guilty, apologizing for one's actions, and trying to distance themselves from being labeled as racist. In contrast, people may feel less guilty and be less concerned about their sexist responses.

Different Confronters, Different Reactions?

We also examined whether group membership of the confronter (i.e., member of the target group or not) affects the way in which a person perceives and subsequently reacts to the confrontation. This is a particularly important issue given the need for more research on prejudice that examines target group members in active roles (Eberhardt & Fiske, 1996; Shelton, 2000) and the

fact that target group members may well want to rely on confrontation as a coping strategy for reducing discrimination. For example, Feagin (1991) found that the most common reaction of Blacks to public experiences of racial discrimination was to offer some sort of public verbal response or reprimand to the person(s) responsible for the discrimination—in essence, a confrontation. In addition, Swim and Hyers (1999) examined female participants' reactions to a male confederate's repeated sexist comments and found that almost half (45%) of the participants provided at least one type of confrontational response.

However, confrontations made by target group members (i.e., Blacks, women) may elicit different reactions than similar confrontations made by nontarget group members. Intuitively, one might think that people would be especially contrite or embarrassed if confronted by a member of the group targeted by their prejudiced response. After all, one's bias is being pointed out by someone personally affected by such a response. However, it is precisely this personal involvement that may influence how a target's confrontation is received. Members of groups targeted by the prejudice will naturally have a vested interest in confronting and attempting to curtail others' prejudiced behavior. Because of this vested interest, people may come to expect targets to be more likely to confront others than nontargets.

Recent research on self-interest and persuasion suggests that such expectancies may have important implications for how perceivers process confrontations. In their extension of previous research on expectancy disconfirmation and persuasion (e.g., Eagly, Wood, & Chaiken, 1978), Petty, Fleming, Priester, and Feinstein (2001) found that when sources acted in support of their group's interest (i.e., their position confirmed group-based expectancies), processing decreased among message recipients. In the context of confrontations, because people may expect target group members to confront others (Swim, Cohen, & Hyers, 1998), their confrontations may not be evaluated as carefully and thus may be less effective. For example, a woman who confronts another person's sexist remarks is acting on behalf of her group's interest (thus confirming expectations); consequently, her confrontation may be summarily dismissed as "crying prejudice."

A recent study by Kaiser and Miller (2001) obtained findings consistent with this possibility. Participants evaluated a Black student who attributed a failing test score to either racial discrimination on the part of the judges or the quality of his own responses. When claiming discrimination, the Black target was perceived as more of a complainer and was evaluated less favorably overall than when he accepted personal responsibility. This was true even when participants were informed that 100% of the test-scorers discriminated against Blacks. Thus, even when the Black target had a legitimate reason to suspect discrimination, he was perceived negatively as a complainer.

Would confrontations by nontarget group members be more effective? Petty et al. (2001) suggest that when individuals take a position that violates group-interest, people are surprised and message processing is increased. For example, because people are surprised when nontargets take pro-target positions (Ratner & Miller, 2001), confrontations from nontargets may attract more attention and be considered more reasonable. Thus, confrontations made by nontarget group members may be more effective in curbing prejudice than similar confrontations from targets.

Overview of Present Research

In Study 1, we manipulated the type of bias people were confronted about to see if people would react differently when confronted about having made gender-biased responses or racially biased responses. In Study 2, we also manipulated the group membership of the confronter to examine people's reactions after having provided either a gender- or a racially biased response and being subsequently confronted by a target group member (a woman or Black person) or a nontarget group member (a man or White person). Because reactions to confrontations can be multifaceted, we examined several different dimensions of reactions, including participants' feelings, the types of thoughts they would have, and what they would actually do in response to the confrontation.

Our methodology involved having participants imagine situations in which they had provided a prejudiced response and were subsequently confronted about it by another person. We recognize that there are some weaknesses associated with such an analogue paradigm (e.g., people may have difficulty placing themselves in the situation); however, there are also several strengths. First, although a majority of people admit that they are often prone to prejudiced responses from time to time (Devine, Monteith, Zuwerink, & Elliot, 1991; Monteith & Voils, 1998), getting participants to spontaneously provide natural and unprovoked prejudiced responses in a controlled laboratory that they can be subsequently confronted about is difficult. Second, using hypothetical scenarios, we are able to standardize the confrontation situations to ensure that all participants consider their reactions in the same contexts. Finally, given the highly sensitive nature of prejudice, the actual responses of some people to being publicly confronted may be quite negative, hostile, or even violent. Because there has been no previous research on how people respond to confron-

tation, we considered the use of imagined situations an appropriate first step.

STUDY 1

We have argued that current social norms suggest that acts of racial bias may be perceived as more unacceptable than similar acts of gender bias. As a result, we expected people to be more concerned (e.g., feel bad, worry about others' perceptions) after being confronted about racial bias than gender bias. In addition, we included a measure of participants' prejudiced attitudes (racism or sexism) to examine different reactions to confrontation as a function of the confronted individual's prejudice level. Previous research has suggested that low-prejudice people react to discovering their biases with feelings of guilt but high-prejudice participants occasionally react with feelings of anger and irritation (Monteith, Devine, & Zuwerink, 1993). Although the confrontations described in the current research involve someone else pointing out one's biases (rather than self-insight), we expected similar differential reactions based on participants' prejudice level (i.e., low-prejudice participants feeling more guilt and high-prejudice participants feeling more angry).

METHOD

Participants

Participants included 159 (71 men, 84 women, 4 not reported) students from the Introductory Psychology subject pool who completed the study in return for research credit toward a course requirement. Participants were predominantly White (87%), with 13 Black participants and 8 participants indicating they were Hispanic, Asian, or of some other racial background. All Black participants were assigned to the gender-bias condition and condition assignment for all other participants was randomly determined.[1]

Design

A 2 (bias condition: racial or gender) × 2 (participant sex: male or female) × continuous (prejudice) between-participants design was used.

Procedure and Materials

Participants completed a packet of two questionnaires in groups of no more than 15 students. Instructions emphasized the confidential and anonymous nature of responses and participants were encouraged to be open and honest. The order of questionnaires within the packet was counterbalanced across participants. When they had completed the entire packet, partici-

pants placed their questionnaires in a box and were thanked and debriefed.

Interpersonal situations. The instructions for the Interpersonal Situations questionnaire informed participants that this study examined how people react to being confronted about certain responses they have made. Specifically, they were to imagine themselves in three hypothetical scenarios in which they provided a response that could be construed as biased and were subsequently confronted by another person about that biased response. The instructions emphasized that although these situations may not necessarily describe responses that participants would actually have, they were to imagine themselves as if they had truly done exactly what the scenarios described. Furthermore, the instructions encouraged participants to sincerely try to mentally place themselves in each of the situations described and carefully consider how they would respond.

Each of the three scenarios described the participant engaging in a subtle behavior that could be considered a biased response (see appendix). Depending on the experimental condition, participants imagined they had provided either three racially biased responses or three gender-biased responses and were subsequently confronted about those responses by another person. The biased responses were specifically designed to be quite subtle because subtle transgressions are most likely to go unnoticed by people (thus requiring someone else to point them out) and many participants would be unlikely to have committed more overtly prejudiced behaviors. The scenarios were virtually identical between experimental conditions except for the group targeted by the biased response (i.e., Blacks or women).

After reading a given scenario, participants indicated how they would react across three different response domains. First, they completed a 13-item affect scale rating the extent to which each item (e.g., disappointed with myself, annoyed at others, amused) applied to how they would feel in the situation. Each item was rated using a 7-point scale (1 = *does not apply at all*, 7 = *applies very much*). Second, participants were instructed to write down the first two thoughts that would come to mind in this situation. Finally, participants reported how they would behave in the situation by describing what they would actually do in response to the confrontation.

Content analyses were later performed on participants' open-ended written responses to identify various categories of thought and behavioral reactions. The first step in the content analysis was to generate exhaustive lists of all unique thought and behavior reactions. Then, using a "funneling" procedure, similarities between reactions were identified such that specific thoughts and behaviors sharing a more general and common theme were combined to form a new response category. Six

thought categories and six behavior categories emerged. Two coders then evaluated participants' responses and assigned each thought and behavior reaction to a category. Average agreement across all three scenarios was 96.2% for thoughts and 97.8% for behaviors.

Prejudice measures. To measure sexist attitudes, participants in the gender-bias condition completed the Ambivalent Sexism Inventory (ASI) (Glick & Fiske, 1996). Interest in the present study was on the negative attitudes toward women captured by the hostile sexism (HS) subscale (e.g., "When women lose to men in fair competition, they typically complain about being discriminated against"), because we were primarily interested in this more traditional form of prejudice. Participants responded on a 6-point scale (0 = *disagree very much*, 5 = *agree very much*). Responses were reverse-coded when necessary such that greater HS scores correspond with more sexist attitudes. The mean score on the HS subscale (possible range of 0-5) was 2.08 (*SD* = .88, α = .83).

For participants in the racial-bias condition, racially prejudiced attitudes were measured using the Attitudes Toward Blacks Scale (ATB) (Brigham, 1993). The ATB is a 20-item questionnaire commonly used to assess prejudice toward Blacks (e.g., "Black people are demanding too much too fast in their push for equal rights"). Participants responded on a 7-point scale (1 = *disagree very much*, 7 = *agree very much*). Responses were reverse-coded when necessary such that greater ATB scores correspond with more racist attitudes. The mean score on the ATB (possible range of 1-7) was 2.61 (*SD* = .81, α = .83).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Overview of Analyses

A general prejudice index was formed by standardizing participants' racism (ATB) and sexism (HS) scores within their respective distributions. For each dependent measure, hierarchical regression analyses were conducted with participant sex (dummy coded, 1 = female, 0 = male), bias condition (dummy coded, 1 = racial, 0 = gender), and standardized prejudice (treated continuously) entered at the first step; two-way interactions between these variables entered at the second step; and the three-way interaction entered at the third step. There were significant main effects of participant sex across all affect measures (all *p*s < .05). Women reported feeling more Negself and Discomfort than men, but men reported feeling more Irked and Amused than women. Of importance, however, participant gender did not interact with any variables, and it will not be further discussed.[2]

Affective Reactions

Within each scenario, the 13-item affect scale was submitted to a principal components factor analysis with varimax rotation. These analyses consistently yielded four factors and accounted for an average of 70.26% of the total variance. The first factor, Negself, included six items traditionally identified as negative self-directed affect (disappointed with myself, dissatisfied with myself, embarrassed, guilty, self-critical, and shameful) and maintained high internal consistency across all scenarios (αs = .92, .93, and .96 for Scenarios 1, 2, and 3, respectively). A second index, Discomfort, was created using four items representing feelings of general discomfort (fearful, tense, threatened, and uncomfortable) and also demonstrated acceptable reliability (αs = .81, .78, .78). The third factor, Irked, consisted of two items representing agitation toward others (annoyed at others and irritated at others) and were highly correlated across all scenarios (*r*s = .85, .80, .78). The single item, Amused, loaded separately as its own factor and was included as a single item for analyses.

Initial analyses treating scenario as a repeated measure revealed few significant effects and none of theoretical importance; thus, results are presented collapsed across scenarios.[3] The regression analysis predicting Negself revealed a significant main effect for bias condition. As expected, participants indicated they would feel more negative self-directed affect when confronted about a racial bias as opposed to a gender bias, $F(1, 151) = 20.24$, $p < .001$, β = .305 (see Table 1). Similarly, participants expressed stronger feelings of discomfort when confronted about a racial bias than when confronted about a gender bias, $F(1, 151) = 12.45$, $p = .001$, β = .270. Of interest, participants reported feeling more amused when confronted about a gender bias than when confronted about a racial bias, $F(1, 151) = 6.90$, $p < .01$, ∃ = −.201. Thus, as expected, participants who felt bad when confronted about a racially biased response showed less evidence of concern when confronted about a gender-biased response.

The expected effects of prejudice also emerged. Specifically, there was a significant negative relation between participants' prejudiced attitudes and their reported feelings of negative self-directed affect in response to confrontation, $F(1, 151) = 22.04$, $p < .001$, β = −.328, such that low-prejudice participants were more likely than their high-prejudice counterparts to experience feelings of guilt after confrontation. This suggests that confrontation situations may be effective in eliciting feelings of guilt and self-criticism among relatively low-prejudice people, which is an important step in self-regulatory attempts to curb future prejudiced responding (Monteith, 1993).

TABLE 1:   Study 1: Mean Affective Reactions by Bias Condition and Participant Gender

	Negself	Discomfort	Irked	Amused
Gender bias				
Mean	2.34	2.02	2.82	2.54
Men ($n = 38$)	1.85	1.87	3.09	3.00
Women ($n = 41$)	2.78	2.16	2.57	2.12
Racial bias				
Mean	3.23	2.61	2.84	1.90
Men ($n = 33$)	2.66	2.33	3.16	2.61
Women ($n = 43$)	3.68	2.82	2.59	1.59

TABLE 2:   Frequency of Thought and Behavior Categories (With Examples) by Bias Condition

	Gender Bias		Racial Bias	
Reactions	n	%	n	%
Thoughts				
Self-conflict (I shouldn't have done that.)	43	10.6	62	14.5
Self-reflection (Why did I do that? Maybe they're right.)	67	16.5	54	12.6
Other-directed, nonhostile (I'm glad that person said that.)	82	20.2	95	22.2
Bias not perceived (I didn't mean anything by it.)	57	14.1	90	21.1
Bias justified (Most doctors are White.)	70	17.3	68	15.9
Hostility (Who the hell cares, you get my point!)	86	21.2	58	13.6
	405	100	427	100
Behaviors				
Apology and correction (I'd apologize and try not to do that.)	43	19.2	47	19.7
Discussion and compromise (I would talk it over with them.)	32	14.3	33	13.8
Concession (I'd say, "I don't care, but we can do it your way.")	64	28.6	50	20.9
Bias unintentional (I'd say, "Whatever, it was just a joke.")	23	10.3	47	19.7
Bias defended (I would mention that men are better surgeons.)	37	16.5	41	17.2
Hostile behavior (I'd say "Quit making a big deal about it.")	25	11.2	21	8.8
	224	100	239	100

Thought and Behavior Reactions

The main goal in measuring participants' thought and behavioral reactions was to identify specific categories of reactions that could ultimately be transformed into questionnaire items in Study 2. The six response categories, examples of each, and their frequencies by bias condition are displayed in Table 2. Although the nonindependence of reaction categories collapsed across scenarios precludes statistical tests, examining participants' more frequent thought and behavioral responses is quite revealing. Among participants confronted about a gender bias, the most common thought reaction contained a hostile and condescending theme (e.g., "Oh geez, no one can say anything anymore," "Lighten up," and "I should tell this person off"). Twenty-one percent of all thoughts in response to a gender-bias confrontation were of a hostile nature, compared to 13.6% of reactions after a racial-bias confrontation. For both bias conditions, the most common behavioral response to being confronted was to make a concession (i.e., change in behavior) without recognizing or admitting any wrongdoing (e.g., "I'd say 'Fine, do it your way, I don't really care,' " and "I'd correct myself and explain that I wasn't being biased"). Thus, as expected, participants expressed a variety of thought and behavioral reactions to confrontation ranging from more self-focused and conciliatory reactions (e.g., Self-Conflict) to more other-directed and antagonistic reactions (e.g., Hostility).

STUDY 2

We sought to replicate the finding that people are more concerned when confronted about a racial bias than a gender bias in Study 2, and we extended our investigation to address the potential moderating role of race or gender of the person confronting participants. As discussed earlier, such features of the confronter may have important implications for how people interpret and subsequently react to confrontations. We hypothesized

that the vested interest of target group members would work to discount their confrontations, whereas reactions to nontarget group members' confrontations would be enhanced. Specifically, participants were expected to be more concerned after being confronted by a White person or a man than after the same confrontation from a Black person or a woman. As in Study 1, we also expected that people's personal prejudice-related standards would influence their reactions such that low-prejudice people would be more concerned than high-prejudice people.

In addition to the above theoretically driven modifications, Study 2 included some methodological improvements. First, to decrease possible social desirability motives and demand characteristics, participants were told that this study assessed people's reactions to general confrontation situations rather than only situations involving prejudiced responses. Consistent with this cover story, we included one critical scenario involving a prejudice-related confrontation and two filler scenarios that involved prejudice-unrelated confrontations. Second, rather than recording participants' thought

and behavioral reactions via open-ended questions, we made use of the taxonomy of reactions formed in Study 1 to create questionnaire items that corresponded to each response category.

METHOD

Participants

Three hundred thirty-one (71 men, 259 women, 1 not reported) Introductory Psychology students participated in return for research credit. As in Study 1, participants were mostly White (88%), with 21 Black students and 19 students of Hispanic, Asian, or another racial background. Again, all Black participants were intentionally assigned to the gender-bias condition, and condition assignment was randomly determined for all other participants.

Design

A 2 (bias condition: racial or gender) × 2 (confronter status: target or nontarget group member) × 2 (participant sex: male or female) × continuous (prejudice) between-subjects design was used.

Procedure and Materials

Although some of the materials presented to participants were changed, the experimental procedure was identical to that of Study 1.

Interpersonal situations. Participants were told that the purpose of the study was to examine people's reactions to being confronted by others and were instructed to consider how they would respond in three different scenarios. Each scenario described the participant engaging in transgressions of varying degrees of magnitude and subsequently being confronted about such behaviors by another person. The first two situations were filler scenarios and described transgressions that could be considered rather mild (i.e., being called a terrible friend after forgetting to invite your roommate out to a movie) or more severe (i.e., getting caught stealing your neighbor's mail). The third and critical scenario was the first scenario from Study 1, which involved choosing someone to play the part of a doctor in a school play (see appendix). Bias condition was manipulated as in Study 1 and we further manipulated whether the confrontation was made by either a target group member (specifically, either a Black person or a woman) or a nontarget member (i.e., a White person or a man). The group membership information was provided parenthetically within the scenario. For example, a scenario in which the participant was confronted by a Black person about a racial bias included the sentence, "Your partner for the project (who is Black) says, 'I think that's racially biased, maybe we should have a Black surgeon.' How do you react?" For

consistency, there were also similar parenthetical identifying descriptions in the two filler scenarios.

Reactions. Affective responses were assessed using a 14-item affect questionnaire. Thought and behavioral reactions were assessed using items created from the taxonomies developed in Study 1. Specifically, each of the six classifications of thoughts and behaviors was converted to a corresponding questionnaire item (see Table 3). Participants rated the extent to which each affect, thought, and behavior item would represent their reaction to the confrontation using a 7-point scale (1 = *does not apply at all*, 7 = *applies very much*).

After recording their affective, cognitive, and behavioral reactions to the confrontation, participants responded to four additional items that assessed interpretations of the confrontation. Two items concerned perceived severity of the biased response ("To what extent would you be concerned that you had offended the other person?" and "How much do you think your behavior upset the other person?"). The other two items measured perceived legitimacy of the subsequent confrontation against them ("How reasonable do you think the other person is being in this situation?" and "To what extent do you think the person is overreacting in this situation?"). Participants responded to these items using similar 7-point scales.

Prejudice measures. As in Study 1, the hostile sexism (HS) subscale of the ASI (Glick & Fiske, 1996) was used to assess sexist attitudes in the gender-bias condition and the ATB (Brigham, 1993) measured racial attitudes in the racial-bias condition. Participants completed the measure of prejudice after completing the Interpersonal Situations questionnaire.

Manipulation check. A final question on the last page of the questionnaire asked participants to indicate, without looking back, the gender (male or female) or race (White or Black) of the person who confronted them in the critical scenario (depending on bias condition) and the degree of certainty in their response (along a 7-point scale).[4]

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Overview of Analyses

As in Study 1, an overall prejudice index was formed by standardizing participants' ATB and HS scores within their respective distributions. Hierarchical regression analyses were conducted predicting each dependent measure with bias condition (dummy coded), confronter status (dummy coded), and prejudice (continuous) entered at the first step; two-way interactions between these variables entered at the second step; and the three-way interaction entered at the third step. The

TABLE 3:   Thought and Behavior Categories and Corresponding Questionnaire Items

Thought	Item
Self-conflict	I would think I was wrong; I shouldn't have done that.
Self-reflection	I would think about what I had done and why.
Other-directed	I would think about the other person's reaction without getting upset.
Bias not perceived	I would think I really didn't mean anything by what I did.
Bias justified	I would think there's nothing wring with what I did.
Hostility	I would think this person is being a jerk.

Behavior	Item
Correction	I would apologize and try to avoid such behavior in the future.
Discussion	I would talk it over with the person and work it out.
Concession	I would tell the person they're right and drop the subject.
Bias unintentional	I would tell the person, "Whatever, sometimes things like this just happen."
Bias defended	I would tell the other person that my position is right.
Hostile behavior	I would tell the person to lighten up, they're being stupid.

disparity in numbers of male and female participants did not allow for interaction analyses involving gender. The main effect of gender was examined and revealed just one significant effect: As in Study 1, men were more amused after being confronted than were women. Analyses for the critical scenario are presented first, followed by analyses for the two filler scenarios.

Affective Reactions

The affect measure was reduced to three factors comprised of the same items as in Study 1: Negself ($\alpha = .95$), Discomfort ($\alpha = .80$), and Irked ($r = .84$). An additional factor, Amused, included the items amused and entertained ($r = .88$).

Negself. Consistent with Study 1, there was a main effect of bias condition for how much Negself participants experienced, $F(1, 325) = 84.64$, $p < .001$, $\beta = -.438$. As seen in Table 4, regardless of target status, participants confronted about a racial bias felt significantly more negative self-directed affect ($M = 3.78$) than those confronted about a gender bias ($M = 2.18$). Also consistent with Study 1, there was a main effect of prejudice level such that across all confrontations, Negself increased as prejudice decreased, $F(1, 325) = 25.39$, $p < .001$, $\beta = -.241$. Finally, there was a significant main effect of confronter status, such that confrontations made by target group members (i.e., Blacks and women) elicited less guilt and self-criticism ($M = 2.76$) than the same confrontations by nontarget group members (i.e., Whites and men) ($M = 3.25$), $F(1, 325) = 7.26$, $p < .01$, $\beta = -.129$. Thus, not only did participants experience more guilt in response to confrontations about racial bias than gender bias, as hypothesized, they also felt more guilty when confronted by a nontarget than a target group member.

Discomfort. Consistent with Study 1, participants indicated they would feel much more uncomfortable if confronted about a racial bias ($M = 3.59$) than a gender bias ($M = 2.04$), $F(1, 325) = 128.35$, $p < .001$, $\beta = -.528$. However, unlike the above Negself findings, participants reported feeling significantly more Discomfort when confronted by a target group member ($M = 2.96$) than a nontarget ($M = 2.65$), $F(1, 325) = 4.67$, $p < .05$, $\beta = .101$. Thus, it appears that people feel guilty after being confronted by nontargets but experience a more general sense of uneasiness when confronted by a target.

Irked. There was a main effect of prejudice level qualified by a Prejudice × Confronter interaction further qualified by a three-way interaction of Prejudice × Bias Condition × Confronter, $F(1, 321) = 6.35$, $p < .05$. Simple slope analyses (Aiken & West, 1991) revealed the pattern of predicted values shown in Figure 1. There were no differences between low- and high-prejudice participants in how annoyed they felt in response to confrontations from a man, woman, or White person (average $\hat{Y} = 2.53$). However, when participants were confronted about a racial bias by a Black person, high-prejudice participants reported feeling much more annoyed and irritated ($\hat{Y} = 3.49$) than low-prejudice participants ($\hat{Y} = 2.74$), $F(1, 158) = 20.59$, $p < .001$, $\beta = .413$. Furthermore, as shown in Figure 1, this effect is not being driven by a decrease in low-prejudice participants' irritation, ($F < 1$) but rather an increase in high-prejudice participants' irritation, $F(1, 158) = 4.98$, $p < .05$, $\beta = .244$.

Amused. As in Study 1, participants reported feeling more amused in response to confrontation about a gender bias ($M = 2.04$) than a racial bias ($M = 1.37$), $F(1, 325) = 20.72$, $p < .001$, $\beta = .244$.
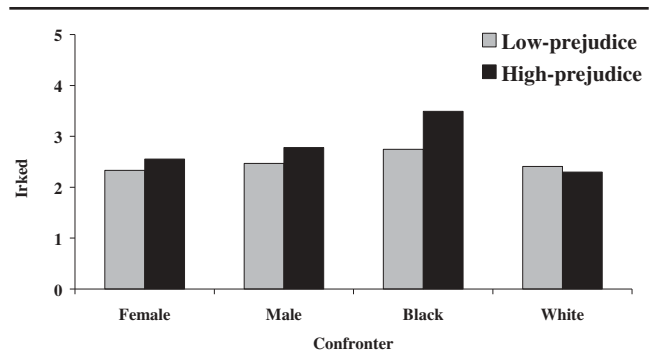
TABLE 4:   Study 2: Mean Affective Reactions by Confronter and Participant Gender

	Negself	*Discomfort*	*Irked*	*Amused*
Female confronter				
Mean	2.01	2.08	2.33	1.93
Men ($n = 19$)	2.01	2.09	2.37	2.42
Women ($n = 65$)	2.01	2.08	2.32	1.79
Male confronter				
Mean	2.35	1.97	2.46	2.10
Men ($n = 21$)	2.27	2.05	3.02	1.97
Women ($n = 60$)	2.38	1.94	2.27	2.14
Black confronter				
Mean	3.45	3.77	2.84	1.34
Men ($n = 16$)	2.67	3.50	3.13	1.90
Women ($n = 75$)	3.62	3.82	2.77	1.21
White confronter				
Mean	4.15	3.35	2.41	1.37
Men ($n = 17$)	4.31	3.01	2.18	1.82
Women ($n = 64$)	4.12	3.44	2.48	1.26

Figure 1   Study 2: Reported irked as a function of confronter status.

Thought and Behavior Reactions

The 12 thought and behavior items based on the taxonomies revealed in Study 1 were submitted to a principal components factor analysis with varimax rotation and were reduced to three factors. The first factor, designated Compunction, described reactions that were self-focused and involved apologizing and changing the biased behavior. It included five items: Self-Conflict, Self-Reflection, Bias Justified (reversed), Concession, and Apology and Correction. Responses to these items were averaged ($\alpha = .78$). The second factor, Antagonism, captured reactions that were more other-directed and antagonistic to the idea that the participant had done anything wrong. It included items from five categories: Other-Directed Thoughts, Hostile Thoughts, Bias Unintentional, Bias Defended, and Hostile Behavior. Responses to these items also were averaged ($\alpha = .72$). A third factor included the remaining two items and, although correlated ($r = .259$, $p < .001$), the index was not associated with any significant effects. Therefore, it will not be discussed further.

Compunction. This index yielded results similar to participants' reports of Negself. Participants indicated they would react with more compunction when confronted about a racial bias ($M = 4.15$) than a gender bias ($M = 3.20$), $F(1, 325) = 36.47$, $p < .001$, $\beta = -.306$. In addition, low-prejudice participants were more likely to react with compunction than high-prejudice participants, $F(1, 325) = 24.25$, $p < .001$, $\beta = -.250$. Finally, there was a marginally significant effect of confronter, such that nontargets elicited more Compunction than targets, $F(1, 325) = 3.52$, $p = .062$, $\beta = -.095$.

Antagonism. Participants' likelihood of providing more antagonistic reactions was similar to their reports of how irked they would feel after being confronted. Although the three-way interaction only approached significance, $F(1, 321) = 2.66$, $p = .10$, the pattern of means was nearly identical to those portrayed in Figure 1. Participants provided similar reactions when confronted about a gender bias regardless of confronter ($ps > .10$). In addition, just as with the Irked factor, when confronted about a racial bias by a Black person, high-prejudice participants reacted with much more antagonism than low-prejudice participants, $F(1, 325) = 39.16$, $p < .001$, $\beta = .537$.

Perceptions of Response Severity and Confrontation Legitimacy

The two items measuring perceived severity of the biased response correlated highly ($r = .58$, $p < .001$) and were averaged. Analysis of this measure revealed a substantial main effect of bias condition, $F(1, 326) = 76.86$, $p < .001$, $\beta = -.427$. Consistent with our predictions, participants expressed greater concern over upsetting and offending someone with a racially biased response ($M = 5.07$) than a gender-biased response ($M = 3.71$). In addition, there were two interactions, neither of which qualified this main effect of bias condition. First, there was a significant Prejudice × Bias Condition interaction, $F(1, 323) = 7.52$, $p < .01$ which resulted because the effect of prejudice was only significant in the racial-bias condition. That is, low-prejudice participants perceived their biased response as more serious than high-prejudice participants when it was a racial bias, $F(1, 335) = 7.93$, $p = .005$, $\beta = -.187$, but there was no effect of prejudice in the gender-bias condition, $F < 1$. There was also a significant Bias Condition × Confronter interaction such that participants perceived a biased response directed toward a target person as more offensive than one directed toward a nontarget, but only in the racial

condition, $F(1, 323) = 5.30$, $p < .05$. This is particularly interesting in light of the previously reported Negself and Compunction findings. Although participants reported that a biased response is more likely to be offensive to a Black person than a White person, when confronted by a Black person after making such a response, participants reported they would feel less guilty than if confronted by a White person.

The two items measuring perceived legitimacy of the confrontation also were correlated, $r = -.55$, $p < .001$. Analysis of the average of these items indicated that high-prejudice participants were more likely than low-prejudice participants to perceive confronters as overreacting and being unreasonable, $F(1, 323) = 14.15$, $p < .001$, $\beta = .203$. In addition, all participants perceived target group members as overreacting more ($M = 4.22$) than nontargets ($M = 3.82$), $F(1, 323) = 4.53$, $p < .05$, $\beta = .120$. Thus, Blacks and women who confronted others were perceived as overreacting to a greater extent than Whites and men even though both the initial biased response and the subsequent confrontation were exactly the same.

Filler Scenarios

As expected, participants felt more Negself and Discomfort in Scenario 2 (which involved a more serious offense than Scenario 1) but were more Amused and Irked in Scenario 1 (all $ps \leq .001$). In addition, participants were more concerned about having upset or offended the confronter in Scenario 2 and perceived the confronter as overreacting more in Scenario 1 ($ps < .001$). Most important, participants' prejudiced attitudes were largely unrelated to their reactions to the filler confrontations. There were small correlations between prejudice and perceived severity ($r = -.14$, $p = .01$) and confrontation legitimacy ($r = -.13$, $p = .02$) in Scenario 1 and how Irked participants felt in Scenario 2 ($r = .11$, $p = .045$). However, prejudice was not related to participants' reported Negself or any remaining reaction measures (average $|r| = .05$).

GENERAL DISCUSSION

Across two studies, we examined how people respond to being confronted about their prejudiced responses in an attempt to assess the potential effectiveness of confrontation as an instrument of prejudice reduction. Consistent with past research on self-discovered biases (e.g., Devine et al., 1991), low-prejudice participants were more concerned than high-prejudice participants after being confronted about such transgressions. Although this suggests some similarity in reactions to self- and other-initiated confrontations, the interpersonal nature of confrontation situations introduces other factors that may create additional (and perhaps different) reactions.

Specifically, we examined the influence of two other factors: the type of bias involved in the confrontation and group membership of the person making the confrontation. Both variables have important implications for how confrontations may or may not be helpful for curbing prejudice.

Sexism and Racism: A Schism of -Isms

Following Fiske's and Stevens's (1993) theoretical analysis, we argued and found empirical evidence consistent with the idea that current social norms regarding prejudice suggest that sexism is perceived as less severe and more tolerable than racism. Low- and high-prejudice participants in both studies reported that they felt more guilty and more uncomfortable when confronted about a biased response against Blacks than when confronted about the same biased response targeting women. In contrast, the predominant evaluative sentiment resulting from confrontations about gender-biased behavior was amusement. In the context of the confrontation situations, such amusement arguably is more indicative of a patronizing sense of condescension than of genuine merriment.

Further support for the discrepancy in tolerance toward sexist and racist acts was found in participants' evaluations of response severity. Participants were significantly more concerned about upsetting and offending others about a racially biased response than a gender-biased response. Moreover, although prejudiced attitudes were (negatively) related to concern about a racial bias, there was no effect of prejudice in the gender-bias condition. This suggests that people with less prejudiced attitudes whose personal standards normally disavow such responding were uncharacteristically similar to their high-prejudice counterparts in their reactions to a confrontation of gender bias. These findings are consistent with the notion that there are differential norms regarding the severity of sexism versus racism.

Unfortunately, this may create a self-defeating pattern for attempts to curb sexist remarks via confrontation. If confrontations against sexism are perceived as likely to yield aversive and unsuccessful results, a potential confronter may refrain from challenging future sexist acts, unintentionally conveying passive acceptance of such behavior. How, then, can confrontation possibly be a tool for prejudice reduction in the realm of sexism? Perhaps one answer lies in our nation's history. Although early attempts of the Civil Rights movement may have been perceived as unsuccessful, confrontations were ultimately successful in changing social norms regarding tolerance of racial prejudice in America through a sustained, strategic, and collective effort. Perhaps a similar development awaits society's acceptability of sexism. As Fiske and Stevens (1993) remarked, "gender stereotyp-

ing has the potential for another major historical shift. Such a shift has already occurred in the literature on racism, along with changing historical norms" (p. 191).

Although patience and perseverance may be required to combat sexism, confrontations against racial biases may enjoy more immediate success. Both low- and high-prejudice participants reported they would experience stronger feelings of guilt and self-criticism in response to a confrontation about a racially biased response. Such negative self-directed affect has favorable implications for prejudice reduction. Baumeister, Stillwell, and Heatherton (1995) have found that feelings of guilt are associated with apologizing, learning a lesson, and subsequently changing one's behavior. Furthermore, among low-prejudice people, feelings of guilt that are experienced after a prejudiced response are part of an association-building self-regulatory process that decreases future prejudiced responses (Monteith, 1993).

Target Group Status: A Vested (Dis)interest

Everyone has the ability to stand up and confront others' prejudiced responding but not everyone will elicit the same reactions in their confrontations, and some may be more successful in their attempts than others. We hypothesized that because target group members' confrontations confirm group-based expectancies, they are likely to be taken less seriously and discounted as a typical and trivial cry of prejudice. Supporting this, our participants indicated that they would feel less guilty in response to a target's confrontation than a nontarget's similar confrontation and they perceived targets as more unreasonable and overreacting more than nontargets. These findings are consistent with Kaiser and Miller's (2001) results demonstrating that Black targets who make attributions of prejudice are perceived as complainers and they raise questions about the role of confrontation among target group members. To borrow Eberhardt and Fiske's (1996) words, "What is a target to do?" Although confrontations may provoke some undesirable initial reactions, they may nonetheless be an effective tactic for targets under certain circumstances. For example, despite negative immediate interpersonal reactions (especially among more prejudiced people), confrontation may ultimately curb future prejudiced responses. In addition, whereas low-prejudice people are often motivated to reduce their biased responses by feelings of guilt, high-prejudice people may be more influenced by confrontations that emphasize universal norms of fairness and egalitarianism (Blanchard et al., 1994) or promote a shared superordinate group (Gaertner et al., 1999).

Of interest, our findings suggest that nontarget group members may have unique opportunities for prejudice reduction via confrontation. Our results indicate that a nontarget's challenge elicited more guilt from participants yet simultaneously made them feel less tense and uneasy than a target's confrontation. Although (and perhaps because) they are surprising, nontarget confrontations may provide a nonthreatening atmosphere for recipients to appreciate the confrontation message. Thus, although White people and men—without a clear vested interest—may think they should "mind their own business," they may have a unique advantage to help curb prejudice through confrontation.

Future Directions

Recent work suggests that people's self-reports of hypothetical reactions are accurate when compared to their actual reactions (Robinson & Clore, 2001). Nonetheless, given the potentially affect-laden nature of confrontations and their interpersonal nature, future research will need to go beyond the analogue methodology used herein and examine reactions to actual confrontations. For example, although the wording of confrontations was the same across bias type and confronter status, participants may have imagined these confrontations (e.g., a more impassioned confrontation from a target group member).

Although our findings in the gender-bias condition (i.e., both male and female participants were similarly more influenced by a male confronter than a female confronter) provide support for our vested interest argument, future research should more closely examine the underlying cognitive processes (e.g., message elaboration) driving reactions to target and nontarget confrontations. In addition, future investigations should examine how confrontations from target group members who merely witness the biased action differ from group members who are personally targeted by the prejudiced response (e.g., the actual actor denied the role of a surgeon in our scenarios). Similarly, future research should examine the possible influence of perceived vested interest in confrontations from other minority groups (e.g., Asians confronting a White person about an anti-Black racial bias).

Finally, a few words on the practical applications of this research on attempts to curb prejudice are necessary. We have endeavored in this research to examine people's reactions to confrontation to determine how confrontations can effectively be used as an everyday prejudice reduction tool. However, confrontation is certainly not the only tool available for people who want to decrease the prejudice they face, and in certain situations it may even be the wrong tool. There are likely to be important situational idiosyncrasies that need to be considered before people confront others. Such factors may lead people to carefully tailor their confrontations to accommodate such situational influences or may cause

people to not confront at all. For example, confrontations against those who hold power over us and control important outcomes may yield very undesirable reactions. As Swim and Hyers (1999; see also Kowalski, 1996) suggest, people may need to engage in a careful costs-benefits analysis to determine if confrontation is indeed an appropriate course of action.

APPENDIX

Scenario 1

Imagine that you are completing a class assignment with a partner in a theater class. You and your partner for the project are in the process of casting roles for people who will play different characters in a drama the class is writing. You now need to decide who should play the role of a surgeon who will be in the drama. One of the remaining characters is White (male) and the other is Black (female). You automatically assume that the White (male) actor should play the role. Your partner for the project says, "I think that's racially (gender) biased, maybe we could have a Black (female) surgeon." How do you react?

Scenario 2

Imagine that you are talking about two classes that you have this semester with someone who has the same classes. The professor in one of the classes is Black (female) and the professor in the other class is White (male). During the course of your conversation, you refer to the Black (female) professor as "Mr. (Mrs.) Osgood" and to the White (male) professor as "Dr. Johnson." The classmate with whom you are talking says, "Do you know that you just called Dr. Osgood 'Mr. (Mrs.)' but you called Dr. Johnson 'Dr.' . . . which shows some racial (gender) bias." How do you react?

Scenario 3

Imagine that you are hanging out with a small group of people and one of them tells the following joke: "What do you call a Black with an IQ of 15? Gifted. (What do a woman and a beer bottle have in common? They're both empty from the neck up.)" You laugh at the joke, and then one of the people in the group says, "I really don't think people should tell or laugh at jokes that play on stereotypes." How do you react?

NOTES

1. Our decision to assign all Blacks to the gender-bias condition but to assign approximately 1/2 of the women to the gender-bias condition was related to numbers of available participants. Whereas approximately half of the participants we were able to recruit were women, few Blacks were available in our subject pool. Thus, although we were able to analyze by gender to see if being a member of the target group affects reactions to confrontations, we would have been unable to do so in the case of Blacks. We are not suggesting, however, that Blacks need not or should not be confronted about bias in relation to members of their own group.

2. There were some unexpected effects of questionnaire order on participants' reactions. Specifically, analyses collapsed across all three scenarios revealed that participants who completed the Interpersonal Situations questionnaire after completing the measure of prejudiced attitudes provided reactions lower in Discomfort ($p = .022$) and Irked ($p = .048$) than when the order was reversed. We can only speculate that completing the prejudice measure first may have aroused some social desirability concerns and tempered any reactions participants perceived as inappropriate. Of importance, participants' prejudice scores did not differ as a function of questionnaire order ($F < 1$).

3. Specifically, there were significant Scenario × Bias Condition interactions for participants' reported Negself, $F(2, 146) = 8.05$, $p = .005$, and Discomfort, $F(2, 146) = 14.85$, $p < .001$. The nature of these interactions was such that participants experienced significantly more Negself and Discomfort in response to a confrontation of racial bias than gender bias in Scenarios 1 and 3 (all $ps < .001$) but the difference between bias conditions was not significant in Scenario 2, although the means were in the hypothesized directions for both affect measures. Additional analyses indicate that the main effect of bias condition on Negself was considerably stronger in Scenario 3 than in Scenario 1.

4. Thirteen participants (in addition to the reported N) were excluded because they incorrectly identified the group membership of the confronter and 9 participants were excluded for providing ratings below the midpoint of how certain they were about the confronter's group membership.

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