Stigma Consciousness: The Psychological Legacy of Social Stereotypes

Elizabeth C. Pinel
University of Texas at Austin

Whereas past researchers have treated targets of stereotypes as though they have uniform reactions to their stereotyped status (e.g., J. Crocker & B. Major, 1989; C. M. Steele & J. Aronson, 1995), it is proposed here that targets differ in the extent to which they expect to be stereotyped by others (i.e., stigma consciousness). Six studies, 5 of which validate the stigma-consciousness questionnaire (SCQ), are presented. The results suggest that the SCQ is a reliable and valid instrument for detecting differences in stigma consciousness. In addition, scores on the SCQ predict perceptions of discrimination and the ability to generate convincing examples of such discrimination. The final study highlights a behavioral consequence of stigma consciousness: the tendency for people high in stigma consciousness to forgo opportunities to invalidate stereotypes about their group. The relation of stigma consciousness to past research on targets of stereotypes is considered as is the issue of how stigma consciousness may encourage continued stereotyping.

Innocent chatter, the currency of ordinary social life, or a compliment ("You don't think like a woman"), the well-intentioned advice of psychologists, the news item, the joke, the cosmetics advertisement—none of these is what it is or what it was. Each reveals itself, depending on the circumstances in which it appears, as a threat, an insult, an affront, as a reminder, however subtle, that I belong to an inferior caste.

—S. L. Bartky, "Toward a Phenomenology of Feminist Consciousness"

And I always feel this with . . . people—that whenever they’re being nice to me, pleasant to me, all the time really, underneath they’re only assessing me as a criminal and nothing else. It’s too late for me to be any different now to what I am, but I still feel this keenly, that that’s their only approach, and they’re quite incapable of accepting me as anything else.

—E. Goffman, Stigma: Notes on the Management of Spoiled Identity

For some targets of stereotypes, prejudice and discrimination always seem to be "out there." It is easy to understand why. Researchers have documented the pervasiveness of stereotypes in our society, both in terms of the number of groups that are stereotyped and the number of people who endorse stereotypes about these groups (cf. Crocker & Major, 1989). From this perspective, it is surprising that targets of stereotypes would ever think that their stereotyped status does not influence how people treat them.

Empirical research corroborates the claim that targets of stereotypes recognize that their group membership plays a role in how people interact with them. For instance, when attractive students received positive feedback, they were more likely to attribute the feedback to their appearance when their evaluator could see them than when their evaluator could not (Major, Carrington, & Carnevale, 1984). Similarly, when participants with cosmetically applied facial scars interacted with a confederate, they later reported that the scar influenced their interaction—even when the scar had surreptitiously been removed prior to the interaction (Kleck & Strenta, 1980)!

Of course, targets of stereotypes do not always interpret their experiences in terms of their group membership. One important determinant of this interpretive tendency seems to be the perceptions of the probability of being stereotyped. In one test of this hypothesis, women learned that they would soon receive evaluations from eight male judges and that either 100%, 75%, 50%, 25%, or 0% of these judges were known to have discriminated against women (Ruggiero & Taylor, 1997, Study 1). These women then received a poor evaluation (i.e., a grade of F on a test of their future prospects). Only when the women were certain that their evaluators were sexist did they attribute their poor performance to discrimination. Other, more naturalistic methods for increasing the perceived probability of being stereotyped seem to have the same effect. For example, women who anticipated being the sole woman in a group expected to be stereotyped more than women who did not expect to occupy such a solo status (Cohen & Swim, 1995).

There may also be stable individual differences in the extent to which targets expect to be stereotyped or discriminated against. For example, targets who remain largely insulated from out-group members would have few occasions on which to reflect on their stereotyped status (e.g., McGuire & McGuire, 1981). Presumably, such targets should perceive less of a probability of being stereotyped than targets who were raised in a community composed primarily of out-group members (see Crosby, 1982; Major, 1994).

Whether the perceived probability of being stereotyped is situ-
Stigma consciousness. Of course, people’s level of stigma consciousness may act as a schema in the more general sense of the term, for, like any schema, it may influence the way in which people process schema-relevant information (for reviews, see Hastie, 1981; Markus & Zajonc, 1985).

Finally, insofar as it can be situationally induced, stigma consciousness resembles the notion of stereotype threat (Steele, 1997; Steele & Aronson, 1995), the feeling that occurs when situations instill in targets of stereotypes the fear of confirming the stereotype about their group. Although a susceptibility to feelings of stereotype threat may certainly covary with stigma consciousness (in fact, see Pinel, Swann, & Rentfrow, 1998), the two constructs differ in at least one important way. Stereotype threat refers to a concern about one’s own behavior (e.g., “Am I going to confirm the stereotype?”); high levels of stigma consciousness reflect an expectation that one will be stereotyped, irrespective of one’s actual behavior.

In sum, despite its resemblance to several constructs in the literature on targets of stereotypes, stigma consciousness appears to be a distinct construct that has potential for shedding light on the perceived and actual experiences of stereotyping among targets of stereotypes. To explore this potential, I developed the stigma-consciousness questionnaire (SCQ). I present the development and initial validation of the SCQ in Study 1. Studies 2, 3, and 4 provide further evidence for the scale’s validity. Specifically, Study 2, conducted on women, provides information about the test–retest reliability of the questionnaire, as well as its discriminant, convergent, and construct Validities. In Studies 3 and 4, I tested the generalizability of the stigma-consciousness construct by validating the questionnaire on gay men and lesbians, men, women, Whites, Blacks, Asians, and Hispanics. In Study 5, I used a known-groups approach to examine further the construct validity of the SCQ. Finally, in Study 6, I illustrate how stigma consciousness has behavioral consequences that could contribute to the persistence of stereotypes.

**Study 1: Development of the SCQ for Women**

**Method**

Participants

Seven hundred fifty-three female introductory psychology students participated in the scale development phase in partial fulfillment of a research requirement. Of the 722 participants who indicated their race, 472 were White, 62 were Black, 83 were Asian, 101 were Hispanic, and 4 were Native American.

Procedure

Participants completed a 16-item version of the SCQ for women. This questionnaire, which was administered during several massive testing sessions, was embedded in a packet containing several unrelated questionnaires—for example, Tafarodi and Swann’s (1995) Self-Liking/Self-Competence Scale.

The 16 items constituting the original SCQ for women spanned two broad content areas: (a) women’s phenomenological experiences when interacting with men (e.g., “I almost never think about the fact that I am female when I interact with men”) and (b) beliefs about how men view women (e.g., “Most men have a problem viewing women as equals”). Respondents indicated the extent to which they agreed with each SCQ for women item on a scale ranging from 0 (strongly disagree) to 6 (strongly agree).
agree), with a midpoint of 3 (neither agree nor disagree). Eight of the 16 items were reverse scored.

Results

Because, as noted above, the items constituting the scale formed two somewhat discernible groups, I began by factor analyzing the 16 SCQ for women items. Specifically, I conducted a principal-axis factor analysis with varimax rotation. Only one factor with an eigenvalue of greater than one (actual eigenvalue = 2.92) emerged, accounting for 83% of the common variance and 23% of the total variance. The factor pattern revealed that all 10 items loaded .32 or higher on the single factor. These items and their factor loadings are presented in Table 1.

Having honed the original questionnaire down to 10 items, I followed two data-analytic strategies. First, I conducted another principal-axis factor analysis, this time on the 10-item scale. Again, one factor emerged, this time accounting for 96.5% of the common variance and 24% of the total variance. The factor pattern revealed that all 10 items loaded .32 or higher on the single factor, with the average loading being .48. I supplemented this factor analysis by examining the internal consistency of the 10-item scale using the technique proposed by Cronbach (1951). The results indicated that no deletion of an item would increase alpha (which was .74).

To ensure that the results of the above analyses would replicate using a new sample, I cross-validated the 10-item SCQ for women by administering it to a new sample of 302 female introductory psychology students. Once again, I submitted participants' responses to a principal-axis factor analysis, and once again, this analysis revealed one factor, accounting for 91% of the common variance and 23% of the total variance. Reliability analyses revealed a Cronbach's alpha of .72, and again, alpha could not be increased by deleting any item.

Table 1
The 10 SCQ for Women Items and Their Factor Loadings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Factor loading</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Stereotypes about women have not affected me personally. (R)</td>
<td>.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I never worry that my behaviors will be viewed as stereotypically female. (R)</td>
<td>.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. When interacting with men, I feel like they interpret all my behaviors in terms of the fact that I am a woman.</td>
<td>.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Most men do not judge women on the basis of their gender. (R)</td>
<td>.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. My being female does not influence how men act with me. (R)</td>
<td>.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. I almost never think about the fact that I am female when I interact with men. (R)</td>
<td>.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. My being female does not influence how people act with me. (R)</td>
<td>.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Most men have a lot more sexist thoughts than they actually express.</td>
<td>.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. I often think that men are unfairly accused of being sexist. (R)</td>
<td>.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Most men have a problem viewing women as equals.</td>
<td>.51</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. SCQ = stigma-consciousness questionnaire; R = reverse scored.

Study 2: Validating the SCQ for Women

Having constructed and cross-validated a single-factor, internally consistent questionnaire, my next goal was to acquire data on the convergent, discriminant, and construct validity of the scale, as well as its test–retest reliability. I reasoned that women high in stigma consciousness should (a) express a concern over how others view them and (b) be attentive to signs of sexism. To examine whether the SCQ for women correlates with measures designed to tap into these two constructs, I administered Fenigstein, Scheier, and Buss's (1975) Self-Consciousness Scale (SCS) and Swim, Aikin, Hall, and Hunter's (1995) Modern Sexism Scale. I predicted that the SCQ for women would correlate positively (but moderately) with the Public Self-Consciousness scale of the SCS and negatively (but moderately) with the Modern Sexism Scale.

As noted earlier, people's levels of stigma consciousness should be fairly distinct from both their self-views and their beliefs pertaining to the groups to which they belong. To provide evidence for this claim, in Study 2, participants completed the SCQ for women along with two versions of the short form of Spence, Helmreich, and Stapp's (1974, 1975) Personal Attributes Questionnaire (PAQ), one designed to measure self-views (PAQ-self) and the other designed to measure perceptions of the typical male and female (PAQ-stereotypes). Participants also completed Spence, Helmreich, and Sawin's (1980) Male–Female Relations Questionnaire (MFRQ); and Spence, Helmreich, and Stapp's (1973) Attitudes Toward Women Questionnaire (AWS). I expected to observe weak (if any) correlations between the SCQ for women and these four measures.

Study 2 was also designed to provide evidence for the SCQ for women's test–retest reliability and construct validity. Approximately a month after participants had completed the above questionnaires, they returned to complete the SCQ for women and measures of perceived discrimination at the group, average, and personal level. Also during this second phase, participants completed a thought-listing task for which they listed all the examples of sexism they could recall.

Because, as I have argued, stigma consciousness reflects enduring individual differences, I expected to observe a strong correlation between scores on the two administrations of the SCQ for women. Furthermore, because women high in stigma consciousness should also be more attentive to sexism and discrimination in society than women low in stigma consciousness, I expected scores on the SCQ for women to correlate positively with each measure of perceived discrimination. Finally, I expected that women high in stigma consciousness, as compared with women low in stigma consciousness, would retrieve more examples of sexism and that these examples would be more concrete.

Method

Participants

The study was conducted in two phases. Eighty-six women received credit in their introductory psychology course for participating in the first phase of the study. Of the participants who indicated their race, 46 were White, 6 were Black, 8 were Asian, 11 were Hispanic, 4 were Native American, and 2 were biracial (one Korean and Black, the other White and
Hispanic. The mean age for this group was 19 (mode = 19). Fifty-seven women participated in the second phase of the study, 44 of whom had completed the first phase.

Overview of Procedure

For both phases of the study, participants arrived in groups ranging in size from 2 to 12. At the start of each phase, the same female experimenter explained that she was developing a questionnaire for use with women and that “part of developing questionnaires involves seeing the kinds of attitudes and personality traits that go hand in hand with the construct that the questionnaire is designed to measure.” Participants then received questionnaire packets and were instructed to work through their packet, answering each question in the order in which it was found.

Procedure for Phase 1

During the first phase of the study, participants completed the SCQ followed by five additional questionnaires. With the exception of the PAQ, whose response scale is described below, each questionnaire required participants to indicate how much they agreed with each item on a scale ranging from 0 = strongly disagree to 6 = strongly agree with a midpoint labeled neither agree nor disagree.

The SCQ for women. The SCQ for women consists of 10 items measuring the extent to which women interpret their experiences in light of their group membership (Cronbach’s alpha = .77).

The Social Interaction subscale of Spence et al.’s (1980) MFRQ. This subscale, consisting of 16 items, requires participants to indicate their level of agreement with items describing “the individual’s tendency to modify his or her behavior in social situations containing implicit sex-role demands” (Spence et al., 1980, p. 88). Sample items are “I’d rather have a man as a boss than a woman” and “I’m more likely to swear or use obscenities when in the company of other women than in mixed company.”

Swim et al.’s (1995) Modern Sexism Scale. Modeled after McConahay’s (1986) Modern Racism Scale, this questionnaire assesses subtle expressions of sexism. Participants indicate the extent to which they agree with items such as “Women often miss out on good jobs due to discrimination” and “It is rare to see women treated in a sexist way on television.”

Fenigstein et al.’s (1975) SCS. The 23-item questionnaire consists of three subscales: a Private Self-Consciousness subscale (e.g., “I’m always trying to figure myself out”); a Public Self-Consciousness subscale (e.g., “I’m concerned about the way I present myself”); and a Social Anxiety subscale (e.g., “I have trouble working when someone is watching me”). The public and private subscales differ with respect to the focus of one’s self-reflection. Whereas those scoring high on the public subscale would be most concerned about themselves in relation to other people, those scoring high on the private subscale generally focus inward on their own personal experience and feelings.

Spence and Helmreich’s (1978) AWS. This scale consists of 15 items describing “the rights, roles, and privileges women ought to have or be permitted” (p. 39). Sample items are “In general, the father should have greater authority than the mother in the bringing up of children” and “A woman should not expect to go to exactly the same places or to have quite the same freedom of action as a man.”

Spence et al.’s (1974, 1975) PAQ-self and PAQ-stereotypes. This measure consists of 16 trait adjectives, 5 of which are regularly associated with women (i.e., the femininity items) and 8 of which are regularly associated with men (i.e., the masculinity items). Participants first indicated the extent to which each trait adjective characterizes female or male students on a 5-point scale ranging from 0 (female student much more) to 4 (male student much more) with a midpoint labeled equal. Participants then indicated the extent to which each trait adjective described them on a 5-point scale ranging from 0 (not at all like me) to 4 (very much like me).

Procedure for Phase 2

The second phase was conducted 1 month to 6 weeks after the first. During this session, participants completed the SCQ, measures of perceived discrimination, and a thought-listing task.

The measures of perceived discrimination required each participant to indicate on a 7-point scale (1 = not at all, 7 = extremely) the extent to which she believed that (a) women as a group are discriminated against, (b) the average woman is discriminated against, and (c) she herself is discriminated against personally as a woman.

For the thought-listing task, the experimenter gave participants a blank sheet of paper and instructed them to write down “as many examples as you can come up with of a time when a man acted sexist toward a woman.” She informed them that these examples could be based on personal experience or on something that they had read in books, observed on television or in the movies, and so forth. Furthermore, she advised participants to provide enough information so that a reader unfamiliar with the example would be able to understand it. Participants wrote for precisely 5 min, after which they were thanked and debriefed.

The thought-listing data were transcribed onto a computer file, and hard copies were given to four separate judges, three female and one male. So that the judges’ ratings of each participant’s examples would not be influenced by any of the participant’s other examples, these examples were presented in list form and contained no identifying information whatsoever. Furthermore, all four judges were unfamiliar with the research hypotheses.

The judges were instructed to rate the specificity of each item on a 7-point scale (1 = a statement in which the author is making an inference about the sexist nature of the example, 7 = a statement that is highly clear and specific). An example of an item that received a low specificity rating is “At work, men usually use their power to come on to women.” An example of an item that received a high specificity rating is “A best friend of mine got raped.”

The goal was to assess participants’ immediate generation of examples of sexism. I therefore examined the specificity of the first two statements generated by each participant (the number of statements varied widely across participants and ranged from 1 statement, provided by a participant whose data were not analyzed, to 16). I calculated each judge’s mean rating of the first two statements provided by each participant and used an intraclass correlation coefficient (ICC) to assess the interrater reliability of these mean ratings (Shrout & Fleiss, 1979). The coefficient that resulted was satisfactory (ICC = .71). I therefore based my analyses pertaining to the specificity of participants’ examples on the mean of the judges’ ratings for each participant.

Results

Phase 1

The data collected during Phase 1 provide information about the convergent and discriminant validity of the SCQ for women. I predicted moderate correlations between stigma consciousness and both self-consciousness and the identification of subtle expressions of sexism. Specifically, I expected a positive correlation between stigma consciousness and scores on the public subscale of the SCS and a negative correlation between stigma consciousness and scores on the Modern Sexism Scale. In contrast, I predicted weak correlations between stigma consciousness and scores on the (a)

1 In accordance with guidelines presented in the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (4th ed., 1994), I asked participants their preferred way of referring to their race. The terms used here were preferred by the majority of the participants belonging to each race category.
MFRQ, (b) AWS, (c) PAQ-stereotypes, and (d) PAQ-self. To examine these predictions, I calculated correlations between scores on the SCQ for women and scores on each of the other questionnaires administered during Phase 1. As can be seen in Table 2, stigma consciousness correlated positively with the Public Self-Consciousness subscale of the SCS, indicating that women high in stigma consciousness, relative to women low in stigma consciousness, are more likely to worry more about how others view them. Also, stigma consciousness correlated negatively with scores on the Modern Sexism Scale, indicating that women low in stigma consciousness are more likely to believe that sexism is no longer a problem in society than are women high in stigma consciousness. No correlations emerged between stigma consciousness and the AWS, the two PAQ measures, the private subscale of the SCS, or the Social Anxiety subscale of the SCS. However, stigma consciousness did correlate modestly with scores on the MFRQ, suggesting that women high in stigma consciousness are more likely than women low in stigma consciousness to conform to meet implicit sex-role demands.

Phase 2

One of the purposes of Phase 2 was to examine the test–retest reliability of the SCQ for women. I therefore computed the correlation between stigma consciousness as measured during Phase 1 and stigma consciousness as measured during Phase 2 (an average of 5 weeks after Phase 1). The correlation coefficient that emerged, r(42) = .76, p < .001, indicates that levels of stigma consciousness remain relatively stable over a 1-month period.

Stigma consciousness and examples of sexism. Another goal of Phase 2 was to provide evidence of stigma consciousness’s construct validity. If women high in stigma consciousness really are more attuned to stereotyping and discrimination, then scores on the SCQ for women should predict perceptions of discrimination and should be related to the examples of sexism they provide. To examine these issues, I computed the correlation between stigma consciousness, as measured during both Phase 1 and Phase 2, and the measures of group, average, and personal discrimination. The correlation coefficients in Table 3 indicate that women high in stigma consciousness are more likely than women low in stigma consciousness to perceive discrimination at the group, average, and personal level.

I also examined whether participants high in stigma consciousness provide more specific examples of sexism than participants low in stigma consciousness. Specifically, I calculated the correlation between participants’ stigma-consciousness scores and their mean ratings of specificity. As predicted, participants high in stigma consciousness also received the highest ratings of specificity, r(49) = .35, p < .002.2

Did participants high in stigma consciousness provide more examples of sexism than participants low in stigma consciousness? To answer this question, I computed the correlation between stigma consciousness and number of examples recalled. The result of this analysis revealed a nonsignificant relation, r(50) = .11.

Comparing perceptions of discrimination at the group and personal levels. Members of stereotyped groups typically see more discrimination at the group level than at the personal level (for reviews, see Crosby, Cordova, & Jaskar, 1993; Taylor, Wright, & Porter, 1994). Some researchers have suggested that this phenomenon stems from difficulties in ascertaining whether personal encounters with members of the out-group actually involve discrimination (e.g., Taylor et al., 1994). Women high in stigma consciousness should readily detect signs of discrimination; as such, one might expect to observe a smaller gap between their perceptions of group and personal discrimination.

To examine this possibility, I first created an index of discrepancy by subtracting participants’ perceptions of personal discrimination from their perceptions of group discrimination. I then conducted a two-tailed t test on the discrepancy scores of participants scoring in the upper and lower thirds of the frequency distribution for stigma consciousness. As predicted, women low in stigma consciousness perceive more of a discrepancy between group and personal discrimination (M = 1.59, SD = 1.18) than do women high in stigma consciousness (M = 0.83, SD = 0.86), t(33) = 4.75, p < .05.

2 Because the data-analytic strategies I used required that participants provide two examples, I did not analyze the specificity data for the participant who provided just one example of sexism. In addition, the data for 5 participants were not analysed because they provided examples that were exceedingly difficult to decipher. For instance, as examples of sexism, one of these participants wrote “needing a strong voice for a show” and “break-dancing.”
Discussion

The results of Study 2 suggest that the SCQ is a useful instrument for detecting differences in the extent to which women feel as though stereotypes about their group color their daily life. As predicted, women high in stigma consciousness are concerned with how they appear to others (i.e., they score high on the public subscale of the SCS) and are especially likely to acknowledge the continued, though sometimes subtle, presence of sexism in modern society (i.e., they score low on the Modern Sexism Scale). Nonetheless, the moderate correlations between stigma consciousness and both the public subscale of the SCS and the Modern Sexism Scale indicate that they are empirically distinct. In addition, evidence that scores on the SCQ for women predict perceptions of discrimination lends support to the claim that people who differ in levels of stigma consciousness also differ in the extent to which they feel as though they are judged on the basis of a stereotype. However, the stigma-consciousness construct should apply to anyone who expects to be judged on the basis of a stereotype. That participants high in stigma consciousness were more likely to generate specific examples of sexism than those low in stigma consciousness is consistent with this claim.

In spite of this support for the construct validity of the SCQ for women, readers might wonder why participants high in stigma consciousness did not provide significantly more examples of sexism than those low in stigma consciousness. One possibility is that the large time frame provided for the generation of examples allowed for factors other than stigma consciousness (e.g., intelligence, verbal fluency) to determine the sheer number of examples participants could generate. Such factors should exert less of an influence on measures that more uniquely tap into stigma consciousness (i.e., the specificity of the examples). That participants high in stigma consciousness were more likely to generate specific examples of sexism than those low in stigma consciousness is consistent with this claim.

Study 3: Development and Validation of the SCQ for Gay Men and Lesbians

Although the results of Study 2 suggest that the SCQ for women is a valid and reliable measure, it is unclear whether the results would generalize to a different stigmatized group. Theoretically, the stigma-consciousness construct should apply to anyone who expects to be judged on the basis of a stereotype. However, evidence that the experience of stigmatization can be quite different for people with concealable stigmas than it is for people with visible stigmas (e.g., Fraile, Platt, & Hoey, 1998; see also Eberhardt & Fiske, 1994, for a discussion of differences between stigmatized groups) suggests that stigma consciousness might not manifest itself in the same way for all stigmatized groups.

In Study 3, therefore, I examined the construct and discriminant validity of a stigma-consciousness questionnaire designed for use with gay men and lesbians (the SCQ for gay men and lesbians). Specifically, a sample of gay men and lesbians completed a version of the SCQ for women that was modified for use with gay men and lesbians. As in Study 2, the participants also completed Fenigstein et al.’s (1975) SCS and three measures of perceived discrimination. I expected to observe a positive correlation between stigma consciousness and (a) the public subscale of the self-consciousness scale and (b) the three measures of perceived discrimination.

One might argue that what appears to reflect stigma consciousness in actuality reflects a general distrust in people. To examine this possibility, I also administered, in Study 3, a measure of “trust in people.” I expected stigma consciousness to correlate negatively, but moderately, with scores on this measure.

Method

Participants

Sixty-six participants (mean age = 34, SD = 9.07) were recruited at the 1997 Gay Pride Festival held in San Diego, California. A sign invited participants to participate in a study on their experiences as “a gay man or lesbian.”

Three participants neglected to complete any measures other than the SCQ for gay men and lesbians, and so their data were not analyzed. Of the remaining participants who indicated their group membership, 23 were gay men and 27 were lesbians.

Procedure

The experimenter provided participants with a packet of questionnaires containing a consent form, the SCQ for gay men and lesbians, and three additional questionnaires. For most of the questionnaires, participants indicated their level of agreement to each item on a 7-point scale ranging from 0 = strongly disagree to 6 = strongly agree with a midpoint labeled neither agree nor disagree. The response scale for the measures of perceived discrimination differed from this 7-point scale and is described below. Also, one of the questionnaires—Fenigstein et al.’s (1975) SCS—was identical to that used in Study 1 and therefore is not described here.

The SCQ for gay men and lesbians. The SCQ for gay men and lesbians consists of 10 items measuring the extent to which gay men and lesbians interpret their experiences in light of their group membership. As with the SCQ for women, this scale was internally consistent (Cronbach’s alpha = .81) and constituted one single factor, which accounted for 74% of the common variance. The 10 items and their factor loadings are presented in Table 4.

Trust in people. I created a measure of trust in people by combining Scheussler’s (1982) Doubt About the Trustworthiness of People Scale with a modified version of Rosenberg’s (1957) Faith in People Scale. This 13-item measure proved to be internally consistent (Cronbach’s alpha = .89).

Measures of perceived discrimination. Each participant indicated on 7-point scales ranging from 1 = not at all to 7 = extremely, the extent to which he or she believed that (a) gay men as a group are discriminated against, (b) lesbians as a group are discriminated against, (c) gay men and lesbians as a group are discriminated against, and (d) he or she is discriminated against personally as a gay man or lesbian.

After completing their questionnaire packets, participants received a written debriefing form and were thanked for their participation.

Results

I expected stigma consciousness among gay men and lesbians to correlate positively with self-consciousness and perceptions of discrimination. Furthermore, I predicted that stigma consciousness, although perhaps correlated with trust in people, would be empirically distinct from this construct.

To examine these predictions, I calculated correlations between scores on the SCQ and scores on (a) all three subscales of the SCS and (b) scores on the measure of trust in people. Furthermore, I examined the correlation between scores on the SCQ and each of the four measures of perceived discrimination. As can be seen in
Table 4
*The 10 SCQ for Gay Men and Lesbians Items*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Factor Loading</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Stereotypes about homosexuals have not affected me personally. (R)</td>
<td>.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I never worry that my behaviors will be viewed as stereotypical of homosexuals. (R)</td>
<td>.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. When interacting with heterosexuals who know of my sexual preference, I feel like they interpret all my behaviors in terms of the fact that I am a homosexual. (R)</td>
<td>.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Most heterosexuals do not judge homosexuals on the basis of their sexual preference. (R)</td>
<td>.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. My being homosexual does not influence how homosexuals act with me. (R)</td>
<td>.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. I almost never think about the fact that I am homosexual when I interact with heterosexuals. (R)</td>
<td>.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. My being homosexual does not influence how people act with me. (R)</td>
<td>.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Most heterosexuals have a lot more homophobic thoughts than they actually express.</td>
<td>.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. I often think that heterosexuals are unfairly accused of being homophobic. (R)</td>
<td>.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Most heterosexuals have a problem viewing homosexuals as equals.</td>
<td>.25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* SCQ = stigma-consciousness questionnaire; R = reverse scored.

Table 5, stigma consciousness correlated positively with the private and public subscales of the SCS, indicating that gay men and lesbians high in stigma consciousness, relative to those low in stigma consciousness, are more likely to focus on themselves and worry about how others view them. Stigma consciousness did not correlate significantly with either trust in people or the Social Anxiety subscale of the SCS. 3

As with the female sample in Study 1, I examined whether stigma consciousness moderates the tendency for people to perceive more discrimination at the group level than at the personal level. Specifically, I conducted a two-tailed *t* test on the discrepancy scores of participants scoring in the upper and lower thirds of the frequency distribution for stigma consciousness. The results of this analysis approached significance, indicating that participants low in stigma consciousness were more likely to perceive a discrepancy between discrimination directed toward them at the group and personal levels (*M* = 1.77, *SD* = 1.30) than were participants high in stigma consciousness (*M* = 0.86, *SD* = 1.10), *F*(1, 25) = 3.89, *p* < .06.

Study 4: Stigma Consciousness’s Domain Specificity and Discriminant Validity

Many people belong to several stereotyped groups, and their stigma-consciousness level with respect to one of those groups could influence their stigma-consciousness level with respect to the other groups to which they belong. One of the purposes of Study 4 was to examine whether stigma consciousness is a specific construct that can vary across people’s multiple group memberships or if it is a more global construct that applies to all of a person’s group memberships equally.

To examine this issue, men and women of five different races completed two stigma-consciousness questionnaires: one pertaining to their sex and one pertaining to their race. All participants also completed the SCS, the trust in people measure used in Study 2, and measures of perceived discrimination.

One additional goal of Study 4 was to discriminate the SCQ from conceptually related measures. In particular, I wondered to what extent the SCQ for women was simply a measure of group consciousness (see Gurin, 1985; Gurin et al., 1980; Gurin & Townsend, 1986; Henderson-King & Stewart, 1994, 1997) or sensitivity to sexism (see Bartky, 1975; Henderson-King & Stewart, 1997). I therefore administered to women in Study 4 the Sensitivity to Sexism Scale (recently developed by Henderson-King & Stewart, 1997) and Rickard’s (1987; as presented in Henderson-King & Stewart, 1997) Feminist Identity Scale. Although the title of Rickard’s scale suggests that it is a measure of feminist identity, it is more appropriately regarded as a measure of feminist consciousness (e.g., Henderson-King & Stewart, 1994, 1997). For example, two of its subscales—Revelation and Embeddedness/Emanation—correspond to the components of group consciousness termed appraisal of legitimacy and belief in collective action (see Gurin 1985; Gurin et al., 1980; Gurin & Townsend, 1986).

**Method**

**Participants**

Three hundred seventy-two introductory psychology students participated in the study in partial fulfillment of a course requirement. The data for 26 participants were not analyzed, however, because these participants had completed their packets incorrectly. In addition, 6 participants were the only Native American students in the study and 3 participants were the only biracial students in the study. Because of the small sample of Native American and biracial students, the data for the 9 participants belonging to these groups were not analyzed. Of the 337 participants whose data were analyzed, 136 were male and 201 were female. One hundred ninety-eight of these participants were White, 63 were Asian, 53 were Hispanic, and 21 were Black.

3 The results did not differ substantially across the two groups (i.e., lesbians and gay men). The results broken down by group are available on request.
Procedure

As in Study 2, participants arrived in groups ranging in size from 2 to 12 people. At the start of the study, the experimenter explained that he or she was developing a questionnaire designed "to study what it's like to be a member of a stereotyped group." Participants then received the questionnaire packet that corresponded to their sex and were instructed to work through their packet, answering each question in the order in which it was presented and answering only those questions that pertained to them and their group membership.

All packets contained either an SCQ for women or an SCQ for men and five additional SCQs pertaining to each of five different races (i.e., Black, White, Asian, Hispanic, and Native American). The race-based SCQs were presented in five different orders, with participants being assigned randomly to each order. All of the SCQs consisted of 10 items whose phrasing differed only with respect to the stereotyped group and associated outgroup to which the questionnaire pertained. Each SCQ proved to be internally consistent, with alphas ranging from .64 to .84 and with an average alpha of .77.

Each SCQ was followed by essentially the same three measures of perceived discrimination described in Study 1; the only difference was that the wording was changed to reflect the group to which these items pertained. For example, the wording for the group measure of discrimination for the Asian sample was "To what extent do you believe that Asians as a group are discriminated against?"

After completing the version of the SCQ corresponding to their sex and race, and the measures of perceived discrimination following each SCQ, participants completed Fenigstein et al.'s (1975) SCS (described in Study 1) and the measure of trust in people used in Study 3. Female participants went on to complete a measure of their sensitivity to sexism and a measure of their feminist consciousness. For both of these questionnaires, participants indicated their level of agreement with each statement on a 7-point scale ranging from 0 = strongly disagree to 6 = strongly agree.

Henderson-King and Stewart's (1997) Sensitivity to Sexism Scale. This 10-item scale measures the extent to which women perceive sexism in their environment and feel as though they should take a stand against it.

Sample items are "Sometimes I feel bad when I don't confront someone or their environment and feel as though they should take a stand against it."

Each item was phrased so that it reflected the stereotyped group to which the questionnaire pertained. Each SCQ proved to be internally consistent, with alphas ranging from .64 to .84 and with an average alpha of .77.

Results

Stigma Consciousness and Domain Specificity

One of the main goals of Study 4 was to determine whether stigma consciousness is a general attribute or whether it is domain-specific. I began by asking first whether scores on the gender-based stigma consciousness measures correlated with scores on the race-based measures. These correlations were all positive and ranged from .27 to .53, with an average correlation of .41.

Given the moderate relation between race-based and gender-based stigma consciousness, I pursued the question of domain specificity further. I first calculated the zero-order correlations between stigma consciousness (gender-based and race-based) and scores on the SCS, the measure of trust in people, and the measures of perceived discrimination. I then examined whether controlling for participants' gender-based stigma consciousness would change the nature of the correlations between race-based stigma consciousness and these other measures and whether controlling for participants' race-based stigma consciousness would change the nature of the correlations between gender-based stigma consciousness and these other measures.

The zero-order and partial correlations are presented in Tables 6 and 7, respectively. Looking at the zero-order correlations, one finds that stigma consciousness correlated negatively with trust in people and that this relation was statistically significant for all groups except the Hispanic group. The results also indicate a tendency for stigma consciousness to correlate positively with both Private and Public Self-Consciousness, although the size and statistical significance of these relations did vary across groups.

Although the above results suggest that some of the correlates of stigma consciousness vary from group to group, for those mea-

Table 6
Correlations of the Gender- and Race-Based SCQs With Trust in People, Self-Consciousness, and Perceived Discrimination

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SCQ</th>
<th>Men (n = 136)</th>
<th>Women (n = 198)</th>
<th>Whites (n = 197)</th>
<th>Blacks (n = 21)</th>
<th>Asians (n = 63)</th>
<th>Hispanics (n = 53)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Trust in people</td>
<td>-.23**</td>
<td>-.17*</td>
<td>-.29**</td>
<td>-.44*</td>
<td>-.28*</td>
<td>-.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private Self-Consciousness</td>
<td>.23**</td>
<td>.31**</td>
<td>.24**</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>.28*</td>
<td>.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Self-Consciousness</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td>.30**</td>
<td>.16*</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>.23*</td>
<td>.25†</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Anxiety</td>
<td>.18*</td>
<td>.15*</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>-.20</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td>.27†</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discrimination</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group</td>
<td>.19*</td>
<td>.28**</td>
<td>.31**</td>
<td>.54*</td>
<td>.35**</td>
<td>.51**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>.22*</td>
<td>.29**</td>
<td>.32**</td>
<td>.49*</td>
<td>.26*</td>
<td>.63**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal</td>
<td>.29**</td>
<td>.36**</td>
<td>.42**</td>
<td>.77**</td>
<td>.40**</td>
<td>.64**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. SCQ = stigma-consciousness questionnaire.  
† p < .05 (marginally significant). *p < .05. **p < .01.
for the most part, modest, I wanted to rule out the possibility that feminist consciousness and Sensitivity to Sexism measures were, strongly were measuring largely overlapping constructs. To this end, I first submitted responses to all of the items on the SCQ for women, Sensitivity to Sexism Scale, and Revelation and Embeddedness subscales to a principal-axis factor analysis with promax rotation. This analysis yielded four factors with eigenvalues of greater than 2. Consistent with the claim that stigma consciousness represents a unique factor, items 1 through 7 of the SCQ for women loaded .3 or higher on one single factor (eigenvalue = 2.36) and only one of these seven items loaded on any of the other factors. Two of the remaining items loaded on the factor associated with items from the Revelation subscale (the loadings were .4 and .31), and one of the remaining items loaded on the factor associated with items from the Sensitivity to Sexism Scale (the loading was .2).

I sought additional evidence that the stigma-consciousness construct is indeed distinct from Sensitivity to Sexism, Revelation, and Embeddedness, by examining whether scores on these three measures show the same pattern of correlations with the Study 4 measures as does stigma consciousness (this is the heterotrait-monomethod discussed by Campbell & Fiske, 1959). Looking at Table 9, one sees that stigma consciousness and Revelation can be distinguished from one another on the basis of their correlations with Passive Acceptance. Specifically, whereas stigma consciousness scores correlate negatively with Passive Acceptance scores, Revelation scores do not. Similarly, stigma consciousness and Embeddedness can be distinguished from one another on the basis of their correlations with trust in people, Public Self-

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>Men (n = 136)</th>
<th>Women (n = 198)</th>
<th>Whites (n = 197)</th>
<th>Blacks (n = 21)</th>
<th>Asians (n = 63)</th>
<th>Hispanics (n = 53)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Trust in people</td>
<td>-0.11</td>
<td>-0.10</td>
<td>-0.21**</td>
<td>-0.25</td>
<td>-0.25**</td>
<td>-0.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private Self-Consciousness</td>
<td>0.22**</td>
<td>0.22**</td>
<td>0.14*</td>
<td>-0.11</td>
<td>0.25†</td>
<td>0.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Self-Consciousness</td>
<td>-0.01</td>
<td>0.24**</td>
<td>0.18*</td>
<td>-0.04</td>
<td>0.18</td>
<td>0.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Anxiety</td>
<td>0.17†</td>
<td>0.11</td>
<td>0.07</td>
<td>-0.15</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>0.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group</td>
<td>0.22**</td>
<td>0.26**</td>
<td>0.30**</td>
<td>0.45*</td>
<td>0.25†</td>
<td>0.35*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>0.18*</td>
<td>0.24**</td>
<td>0.30**</td>
<td>0.43†</td>
<td>0.19</td>
<td>0.51**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal</td>
<td>0.23**</td>
<td>0.32**</td>
<td>0.39**</td>
<td>0.70**</td>
<td>0.28†</td>
<td>0.59**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. SCQ = stigma-consciousness questionnaire.
† p < .07 (marginally significant). * p < .05. ** p < .01.

sures that are most relevant to the stigma consciousness construct, consistent patterns emerged. For each and every group tested, stigma consciousness correlated positively with perceptions of discrimination at the group, average, and personal levels. Furthermore, these correlations remained even when controlling for participants’ stigma-consciousness levels pertaining to one group membership (e.g., gender) while examining the correlation between perceptions of discrimination and their stigma-consciousness levels pertaining to another group membership (e.g., race). As indicated in Table 7, although partialing in this way altered the pattern of correlations between stigma consciousness and trust in people, Private Self-Consciousness, Public Self-Consciousness, and Social Anxiety, scores on all versions of the SCQ continued to predict, positively and significantly, participants’ perceptions of discrimination. These results suggest that stigma consciousness is a domain-specific construct; knowing people’s stigma-consciousness levels with respect to one of their group memberships does not necessarily inform us about their stigma-consciousness levels with respect to their other group memberships.

Stigma Consciousness, Sensitivity to Sexism, and Group Consciousness

A second goal of Study 4 was to examine whether the stigma-consciousness construct is distinct from group identity and group consciousness. I used a variety of strategies to accomplish this goal. First, I computed the correlations between stigma consciousness in women and (a) the four subscales of the Feminist Identity Scale and (b) the Sensitivity to Sexism Scale. The correlation coefficients presented in Table 8 indicate that stigma consciousness correlates positively with Revelation, Embeddedness/Emanation, and Sensitivity to Sexism, and that partialing out the effects of race-based stigma consciousness did not change the nature of these relations.

Although the correlations between stigma consciousness and the feminist consciousness and Sensitivity to Sexism measures were, for the most part, modest, I wanted to rule out the possibility that the scales with which stigma consciousness correlated most strongly were measuring largely overlapping constructs. To this end, I first submitted responses to all of the items on the SCQ for women, Sensitivity to Sexism Scale, and Revelation and Embeddedness subscales to a principal-axis factor analysis with promax rotation. This analysis yielded four factors with eigenvalues of greater than 2. Consistent with the claim that stigma consciousness represents a unique factor, items 1 through 7 of the SCQ for women loaded .3 or higher on one single factor (eigenvalue = 2.36) and only one of these seven items loaded on any of the other factors. Two of the remaining items loaded on the factor associated with items from the Revelation subscale (the loadings were .4 and .31), and one of the remaining items loaded on the factor associated with items from the Sensitivity to Sexism Scale (the loading was .2).

I sought additional evidence that the stigma-consciousness construct is indeed distinct from Sensitivity to Sexism, Revelation, and Embeddedness, by examining whether scores on these three measures show the same pattern of correlations with the Study 4 measures as does stigma consciousness (this is the heterotrait-monomethod discussed by Campbell & Fiske, 1959). Looking at Table 9, one sees that stigma consciousness and Revelation can be distinguished from one another on the basis of their correlations with Passive Acceptance. Specifically, whereas stigma consciousness scores correlate negatively with Passive Acceptance scores, Revelation scores do not. Similarly, stigma consciousness and Embeddedness can be distinguished from one another on the basis of their correlations with trust in people, Public Self-

Table 8
Correlations and Partial Correlations of the SCQ for Women With Measures of Feminist Consciousness

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>r</th>
<th>pr</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Passive Acceptance</td>
<td>-0.14†</td>
<td>-0.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Synthesis</td>
<td>0.20**</td>
<td>0.20**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revelation</td>
<td>0.35**</td>
<td>0.28**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Embeddedness/Emanation</td>
<td>0.30**</td>
<td>0.24**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sensitivity to Sexism</td>
<td>0.41**</td>
<td>0.35**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. SCQ = stigma-consciousness questionnaire. n = 201.
† p < .07 (marginally significant). **p < .01.
Consciousness, and Passive Acceptance. Stigma-consciousness scores correlate with each of these scales; Embeddedness scores do not.

Unlike Revelation and Embeddedness, Sensitivity to Sexism showed much the same pattern of correlations with the Study 4 measures as did stigma consciousness. Recall, however, that only one of the SCQ for women items loaded on the same factor as the sensitivity to sexism items in the factor analysis reported above. Although the results of this factor analysis were encouraging, I wondered whether stigma consciousness does indeed make predictions that are distinct from those made by Sensitivity to Sexism. I began by examining the correlations between scores on the SCQ for women and the remaining Study 4 measures, partialing out the effects of scores on the Sensitivity to Sexism Scale. I next examined the correlations between scores on the Sensitivity to Sexism Scale, controlling for the effects of scores on the SCQ for women. I reasoned that the patterns that emerged in these two sets of partial analyses would clarify the distinction between Sensitivity to Sexism and stigma consciousness. Controlling for scores on Sensitivity to Sexism substantially weakened the correlations between the SCQ for women and (a) trust in people, \( r(198) = -.10, p = .16 \), and (b) Synthesis, \( r(198) = .08, p = .24 \). In contrast, controlling for scores on the SCQ for women substantially weakened the correlation between Sensitivity to Sexism and Public Self-Consciousness, \( r(198) = .11, p = .14 \), and between Sensitivity to Sexism and Social Anxiety, \( r(198) = .12, p = .09 \).

### Study 5: A Known-Groups Validation Study

I have argued that stigma consciousness reflects the extent to which targets of stereotypes expect to be judged on the basis of their group membership. Where do these expectations come from? It is quite possible that a number of factors conspire to make some targets of stereotypes higher in stigma consciousness than others. For example, parenting or teaching strategies that emphasize targets' stereotyped status may contribute to high levels of stigma consciousness (e.g., Bem, 1981; Bigler, Jones, & Lobliner, 1997), as might the degree of contact targets have with out-group members (e.g., Crosby, 1982; Major, 1994). Irrespective of the particular antecedent, however, heightened levels of stigma consciousness would not persist for long if people could not amass evidence for their belief that out-group members judge them stereotypically. In short, one's past experiences with stereotyping and discrimination should be a strong predictor of the extent to which one expects similar experiences in the future (i.e., of one's stigma-consciousness level).

If the above analysis is correct, then targets who have traditionally borne the brunt of stereotyping and discrimination should, as a group, be higher in stigma consciousness than those who have not. I tested this hypothesis in Study 5. First, I compared the stigma-consciousness levels of gay men to those of lesbians. Both media reports of "gay-bashing" and empirical evidence (e.g., Herek, 1988; Kite, 1984, 1994) suggest that the bulk of anti-gay attitudes has been directed toward gay men. I therefore expected gay men to have higher levels of stigma consciousness than lesbians. I also compared the stigma-consciousness levels of women to those of men and the stigma-consciousness levels of Blacks to those of Whites. Again, because females and Blacks appear to be discriminated against more than males and Whites (see Crocker & Major, 1989), I expected to observe higher stigma-consciousness scores in women versus men and in Blacks versus Whites.

### Method

#### Participants

The 23 gay men and 27 lesbians who participated in Study 3 also participated in Study 5. Likewise, 142 men, 201 women, 200 Whites, and 21 Blacks from Study 4 also participated in Study 5.

#### Procedure

The gay men and lesbians were provided with a packet of questionnaires, the first of which was the SCQ for gay men and lesbians. The remaining participants were recruited in groups ranging in size from 2 to 12. As described in Study 4, the experimenter explained that she was developing a questionnaire "to study what it's like to be a member of a stereotyped group." She then provided each participant with a packet of questionnaires.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>SCQ</th>
<th>Revelation</th>
<th>Embeddedness</th>
<th>Sensitivity to Sexism</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Trust in people</td>
<td>-.17*</td>
<td>-.33**</td>
<td>-.09</td>
<td>-.20**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private Self-Consciousness</td>
<td>.31**</td>
<td>.21**</td>
<td>.28**</td>
<td>.31**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Self-Consciousness</td>
<td>.29**</td>
<td>.24**</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>.23**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Anxiety</td>
<td>.16*</td>
<td>.20**</td>
<td>.16*</td>
<td>.16*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Passive Acceptance</td>
<td>-.14†</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>-.04</td>
<td>-.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Synthesis</td>
<td>.21**</td>
<td>.43**</td>
<td>.44**</td>
<td>.32**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revelation</td>
<td>.35**</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Embeddedness/Emanation</td>
<td>.31**</td>
<td>.56**</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sensitivity to Sexism</td>
<td>.42**</td>
<td>.50**</td>
<td>.39**</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discrimination Group</td>
<td>.28**</td>
<td>.36**</td>
<td>.25**</td>
<td>.36**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>.29*</td>
<td>.38**</td>
<td>.27**</td>
<td>.36**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal</td>
<td>.35**</td>
<td>.43**</td>
<td>.25**</td>
<td>.37**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. SCQ = stigma-consciousness questionnaire.
† \( p < .07 \). * \( p < .05 \). ** \( p < .01 \).
the first of which was the appropriate gender-based SCQ. The next five questionnaires consisted of the race-based SCQs, and these were presented in five different orders, with participants being assigned randomly to one of these orders. Participants completed the race-based SCQ that pertained to their race.

**Results and Discussion**

Were gay men higher in stigma consciousness than lesbians? To answer this question, I conducted a two-tailed t test on the stigma-consciousness scores of participants in these two groups. The results of this analysis approached significance, suggesting that gay men as a group tend to have somewhat higher levels of stigma consciousness ($M = 36.87, SD = 11.06$) than lesbians as a group ($M = 31.37, SD = 11.24$), $t(1, 48) = 3.02, p < .09$.

Were Blacks higher in stigma consciousness than Whites? I examined this question by conducting a two-group analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) on race-based stigma-consciousness scores, using gender-based stigma consciousness as a covariate. The analysis revealed a significant effect of gender-based stigma consciousness, $F(1, 218) = 48.27, p < .01$, and a significant effect of race, $F(1, 218) = 11.08, p < .01$. As predicted, Blacks emerged as significantly more stigma conscious ($M = 36.36, SD = 7.59$) than Whites ($M = 30.56, SD = 7.59$).

Were female participants higher in stigma consciousness than male participants? To answer this question, I conducted a two-group ANCOVA on gender-based stigma-consciousness scores, using race-based stigma-consciousness as the covariate. This analysis revealed a significant effect of race-based stigma consciousness, $F(1, 340) = 65.47, p < .01$, and a significant effect of sex, $F(1, 340) = 173.30, p < .01$. Surprisingly, men were higher in stigma consciousness ($M = 33.50, SD = 6.83$) than women ($M = 23.55, SD = 6.83$). Moreover, this difference emerged across each of the four racial groups, indicating a very reliable tendency for men to be higher in stigma consciousness than women.

Overall, the results of Study 5 support the hypothesis that groups that regularly confront discrimination should have higher levels of stigma consciousness than groups that do not. As predicted, gay men and Blacks had higher stigma-consciousness scores, as a group, compared with lesbians and Whites, respectively (although the former difference only approached significance). These findings thus point to one possible determinant of people’s stigma-consciousness levels: experience. Presumably, gay men and Blacks have personally experienced stereotyping and discrimination more frequently than lesbians and Whites.

Why weren’t women higher in stigma consciousness than men? One possibility is that, just as women are lower in group consciousness than other disadvantaged groups (Gurin et al., 1980), so too are they lower in stigma consciousness. Another possibility is that men, as a group, have been feeling attacked of late. For example, people are beginning to write books (e.g., Kimbrell’s [1995] *The Masculine Mystique: Politics of Masculinity*) centering on the issues of men’s rights. Furthermore, several organizations now exist that have the explicit goal of defending men against male stereotypes (e.g., Dads Against Discrimination, Men’s Rights Agency, National Brotherhood of Fathers). In short, that the female participants in my sample did not emerge as more stigma conscious than the male participants may reflect a general trend in the United States of men becoming stigma conscious.

Study 6: Stigma-Consciousness and Behavior

Earlier, I proposed that people’s stigma-consciousness levels could have profound implications for their experience of stereotyping and discrimination. Having established, in Studies 1 through 5, that the SCQ is a valid and reliable instrument for detecting differences in stigma consciousness, I turned to this issue in Study 6. In particular, I examined whether people high in stigma consciousness avoid situations in which they suspect that they will be stereotyped.

Why would stigma consciousness influence behavior in this way? Research and theorizing on self-verification theory (Swann, 1983, 1990, 1996) suggests one possible answer to this question. In several studies, Swann and his colleagues have observed that people desire interaction partners who see them as they see themselves (see Swann, 1996, for a review). To the extent that targets of stereotypes do not have self-views that map nicely onto the stereotypes about the group to which they belong, being stereotyped by others will constitute a form of self-discrepant feedback, something which people resist. Furthermore, self-discrepant feedback that comes in the form of stereotypes should be especially unwelcome, because self-discrepant evaluations for which there is high consensus are more likely to be taken seriously and are harder to dismiss (see Pinel & Swann, 1998).

The above analysis suggests that people high in stigma consciousness may avoid situations in which there is a possibility that they will be stereotyped. To examine this hypothesis, I invited women high and low in stigma consciousness to participate in a study on the effects of personal choice on performance. Before ostensibly competing against either a male or a female player in a game of “jeopardy,” participants reviewed a list of potential topic areas and indicated the topic areas on which they would prefer to be quizzed. Some of the topic areas covered material that is stereotypically associated with males (e.g., automobile names); others covered material that is stereotype irrelevant (e.g., the human body). I expected that the sex of their competitor would moderate the responses of participants high in stigma consciousness but not those of participants low in stigma consciousness. Specifically, I expected participants high in stigma consciousness to rate the stereotypically male topic areas lower when their competitor was male than when their competitor was female.

**Method**

**Participants**

Eighty-one female college students participated in the experiment. Approximately 50% of the participants completed the experiment in partial fulfillment of a requirement for their introductory psychology course. The remaining participants received $5 for their participation.

All participants had scored in the upper or lower 30% of the frequency distribution for the SCQ for women, which was administered during a massive testing session held earlier in the semester. The data for 2 participants were not analyzed. One of these participants expressed suspicion during the postexperimental interview and the other participant’s response on the main dependent variable was more than 2.25 standard deviations below the mean for the group to which she had been assigned. This left 33 participants low in stigma consciousness ($M = 23.88$) and 46 participants high in stigma consciousness ($M = 43.61$) in the 2 (stigma consciousness: low, high) × 2 (sex of competitor: male, female) design. Participants were
Responses pertaining to these topic areas were therefore not analyzed.

high or higher on the "male" factor as they did on the "neutral" factor.

aged to form three separate composite scores (alphas were .73, .86, and .97, performance, and verification concerns for these three topics were aver-

these five topics were therefore averaged to form three separate composite scores (alphas were .61, .80, and .96, respectively). Three of the stereotype-

concerns—if one were to perform poorly in the particular topic area in question (e.g., "I feel as though, if I perform poorly in this topic area, my competitor will get the wrong impression of me"). For each of these items, participants indicated their level of agreement on a 7-point scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. After completing these items, participants estimated how well they would perform in the topic area in question if they were quizzed on it. Specifically, they estimated how many questions out of 10 they would answer correctly, and they indicated how much they would like to be quizzed on the topic area in question on a 7-point scale ranging from not at all to very well. Because participants made these estimations of performance on two different scales, responses to the performance measures were stan-

To test this hypothesis, I conducted two planned compar-

consciousness but not those of participants low in stigma con-

consciousness. To test this hypothesis, I conducted two planned com-

consciousness varied with the sex of their competitor. For these reasons, I tested my main predictions through use of planned contrasts described above on participants' mean verification concerns and mean performance expectancies. For the measure of

Although the conventional strategy for testing this prediction and ones like it is to conduct an omnibus analysis of variance (ANOVA) and then conduct contrasts if the interaction term is significant, Rosnow and Rosenthal (1995) maintained that this strategy is unnecessary in instances in which researchers have clear predictions. This is particularly true when researchers are not predicting crossover interactions, as is the case here. For these reasons, I tested my main predictions through use of planned contrasts. For all of the planned contrasts reported here, I used the error term from a 2 (stigma consciousness: low, high) × 2 (sex of competitor: male, female) × 2 (topic area: stereotype-irrelevant, stereotypically male) ANOVA with repeated measures on the third factor.
verification concerns, neither one of these comparisons even approached statistical significance ($F_s < 1$). In contrast, the pattern of findings for the performance expectancies measure followed the same exact pattern as participants’ topic preferences. Specifically, participants high in stigma consciousness were more likely to say that they would perform better on the stereotype-irrelevant than stereotype-relevant topics when they were competing against a man than when they were competing against a woman, $F(1, 75) = 6.88, p < .02$ ($Ms = 0.36$ and $-0.18$, respectively).

Having established that stigma consciousness and sex of competitor had the same effect on the performance measure as on the measure of topic preference, I followed Baron and Kenny’s (1986) remaining guidelines for conducting mediational analyses. I first examined whether participants’ performance expectancies predicted their topic preferences, which they did, $F(1, 74) = 43.36, p < .001$. Next, I examined whether controlling for participants’ performance expectancies while examining their topic preferences weakened the effect of sex of competitor on participants high in stigma consciousness. I conducted the same two planned comparisons on participants’ performance expectancies described above, using participants’ performance expectancies as a covariate. With participants’ performance expectancies controlled in this way, the moderating effect of sex of competitor on the preferences of participants high in stigma consciousness virtually disappeared, $F(1, 74) < 1$, suggesting that these participants’ performance expectancies did indeed mediate the link between the sex of their competitor and their topic preferences.

Discussion

The results of Study 6 suggest that people high in stigma consciousness may forgo opportunities to invalidate stereotypes about their groups. As predicted, when women high in stigma consciousness believed they would compete against a man as compared with a woman, they were more apt to avoid stereotypically male topics. In contrast, the sex of their presumed competitor had no effect on the topic preferences of women low in stigma consciousness. Moreover, these effects appear to have been mediated by performance expectancies: Whereas the performance expectancies of participants low in stigma consciousness did not vary by condition, participants high in stigma consciousness were more likely to avoid stereotype-relevant topics when they were competing against a man compared with when they were competing against a woman.

Why didn’t participants’ verification concerns mediate their topic preferences? Note that, in order for participants’ verification concerns to predict their topic preferences, participants would have had to care more about being misjudged by a male competitor than about being misjudged by a female competitor. This was simply not the case, perhaps because wherever the possibility of being misjudged exists, so too do verification concerns. Note that this analysis does not rule out the possibility that verification concerns play a role in mediating the link between stigma consciousness and behavioral outcomes. Attempts to uncover this role should, however, be sensitive to the ubiquity of verification concerns.

General Discussion

The results of the six studies presented here suggest that stigma consciousness represents an important way in which targets of stereotypes may differ from one another. Whether the group under study consists of females, males, gay men, lesbians, Blacks, Whites, Asians, or Hispanics, the individuals composing those groups do not all approach their stereotyped status with the same mind-sets. Furthermore, these people’s mind-sets have important cognitive and behavioral consequences. People high in stigma consciousness were more likely to perceive discrimination directed toward their group and toward them personally and were more likely to provide sound evidence for these perceptions. Moreover, people high in stigma consciousness avoided stereotype-relevant situations and thereby forwent the opportunity to prove the stereotype wrong.

The research and theorizing presented here could help integrate a growing body of work suggesting that excessive attention to people’s stigmatized status can have deleterious consequences for stigmatized individuals (e.g., Bigler, Jones, & Loblinier, 1997; Major et al., 1984; Ruggiero & Taylor, 1997). For example, Bigler et al. observed that whether or not children acquire stereotypes about visibly different others depends on whether educators make those differences salient. These researchers divided children into a blue group and yellow group by making the children wear T-shirts whose color corresponded to that of their group. Although this color distinction was maintained throughout the 4-week period, children only categorized one another as “blues” and “yellows” when the camp instructor called these differences to their attention.

Research on the attributions that targets of stereotypes make for their experiences also suggests that it might not always be advisable to call attention to one’s stereotyped status (see Major & Crocker, 1993, for a review). In one study, attractive people attributed positive interpersonal feedback to their appearance, thereby undermining the significance of the feedback (Major et al., 1984). In another study, Black students who received positive feedback experienced a drop in self-esteem when they believed their evaluator could see them but not when they believed their evaluator could not see them, presumably because they attributed the feedback to the evaluator’s desire to appear nonracist (Crocker, Voelkl, Testa, & Major, 1992, Study 2).

To be sure, sometimes the attributional ambiguity that goes along with being a target of stereotypes can serve a self-protective function (cf. Crocker & Major, 1989). Consider research indicating that, in contrast to the self-esteem of Black participants who believed their evaluators had seen them, the self-esteem of Black participants who believed their evaluators had not seen them dropped significantly in response to a negative evaluation. Presumably, when their evaluator could see them, the participants could easily attribute their feedback to their race and thus minimize the self-implications of the negative feedback (Crocker et al., 1992).

Crocker et al.’s (1992) findings suggest that some positive effects can be associated with high levels of stigma consciousness. Moreover, these effects might not manifest themselves just on the intrapersonal level; high levels of stigma consciousness might also be associated with positive outcomes on the societal level. That is, because high levels of stigma consciousness often coincide with high levels of group consciousness (Study 4), people high in
stigma consciousness might be more apt to fight against discrimination than people low in stigma consciousness.

The positive correlates of stigma consciousness should be interpreted with a certain amount of caution, however. Some research suggests, for example, that although attributing negative experiences to discrimination can protect performance-related self-esteem, it can also rob people of self-perceptions that are quite psychologically important. Specifically, Ruggiero and Taylor (1997) examined the correlations between attributing negative feedback to discrimination and (a) the performance component of state self-esteem, (b) the social component of state self-esteem, and (c) perceptions of control. Their results indicate that people who attribute their negative performance to discrimination also tend to experience drops in social self-esteem and lowered perceptions of control over both their performance in subsequent tasks and over their social interactions (Ruggiero & Taylor, 1997).

Taken together, the research documenting the negative consequences associated with high levels of stigma consciousness suggests that parents and educators might want to rethink the soundness of the current prescription for protecting people’s self-views from stereotypes. This approach recommends arming people with the knowledge that they will be stereotyped and discriminated against (Bem, 1981; Crocker & Major, 1989; Hilton & Darley, 1985; Miller, Rothblum, Felicio, & Brand, 1995). Consider Bem’s suggestion that parents help their children develop sexism schemas—predispositions for quickly detecting sexism—to protect their children from gender stereotypes. Research revealing that high levels of stigma consciousness contribute to cognitions that increase one’s experience of being stereotyped suggests that the attempt to reduce a target’s experience of sexism by means of sexism schemas could actually backfire.

Evidence of the behavioral consequences of stigma consciousness suggests that increasing children’s stigma consciousness levels might also make them more likely to confirm stereotypes about their group. Recall that, in Study 6, women high in stigma consciousness avoided stereotypically male topics when they believed they were about to compete in a jeopardy game against a man. Similarly, when provisional college students completed a verbal portion of a Standardized Achievement Test, those who were high in stigma consciousness with respect to their provisional status and indicated their provisional status before taking the test experienced drops in self-perceived verbal ability and performed comparatively poorly on the test (Pinel et al., 1998).

Evidence that high levels of stigma consciousness sometimes make targets of stereotypes more likely to confirm stereotypes about their group, combined with evidence suggesting that people high in stigma consciousness are more likely than people low in stigma consciousness to perceive and experience stereotyping, does not mean that high levels of stigma consciousness are unjustified. To the contrary, evidence that women high in stigma consciousness retrieve concrete examples of sexism, combined with evidence that groups that have a history of being stereotyped and discriminated against are higher in stigma consciousness than groups without such a history, suggests that people’s levels of stigma consciousness may represent faithful reflections of their experiences. Whether or not a high level of stigma consciousness is justified, it may have cognitive and behavioral consequences that shape targets’ future experiences. Paradoxically, people’s excessive concern about their stereotyped status can actually have the unintended effect of spoiling their opportunities to move beyond it.

References


Revision received May 27, 1998

Accepted June 19, 1998