

Willing and able: How internal motivation and failure help to overcome prejudice

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Abstract

Internal motivation to behave nonprejudiced reduces automatic and controlled prejudice. The present studies examined the impact of internal motivation to behave nonprejudiced on reactions to one's failure to behave nonprejudiced. In Study 1 higher levels of internal motivation led to more negative self-directed affect when failing to behave nonprejudiced, but not when failing in other domains. In Study 2 higher levels of internal motivation led to less prejudice after failure to behave nonprejudiced, but not in a non-failure condition. These findings suggest that failure to behave nonprejudiced plays a key role for highly internally motivated individuals in learning to regulate prejudice successfully.

Keywords

failure, internal motivation, prejudice, self-regulation

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Tolerant attitudes and behavior towards stigmatized groups, especially racial minorities, have become increasingly valued and important in most societies. Most individuals nowadays are aware of the fact that stereotypes and prejudiced behavior have negative and long-lasting harmful effects on stereotyped groups (e.g., Blascovich, Spencer, Quinn, & Steele, 2001; Hansen & Sassenberg, 2006; for an overview, see Major, Quinton, & McCoy, 2002). As a result, many people adopt the goal to behave in a nonprejudiced way, either because they do not want to infringe established behavioral norms (externally motivated) or because it is personally important to them (internally motivated). In particular, internal motivation contributes to individuals' success in avoiding prejudiced behavior

(e.g., Devine, Plant, Amodio, Hansen-Jones, & Vance, 2002). The self-regulatory mechanisms underlying the positive impact of internal motivation have not been fully understood. Thus, the present work aims to contribute to the understanding of these motivational processes by studying how *failure* to behave in a nonprejudiced manner influences individuals differently depending on their internal motivation to behave as nonprejudiced.

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Failure to behave as nonprejudiced

Negative consequences of social discrimination are not restricted to targets of discrimination but also occur for a substantial number of individuals who show prejudiced behavior. As Monteith (1993) states in her model of the self-regulation of prejudiced responses, the awareness of the discrepancy between nonprejudiced standards and prejudiced responses leads to an increase in negative affect and results in greater effort and success in behaving as nonprejudiced. The model has received ample evidence (for a summary, see Monteith & Mark, 2005; e.g., Monteith, Mark, & Ashburn-Nardo, 2010). To give just two examples: Monteith, Voils, and Ashburn-Nardo (2001) found that confronting individuals with the difficulty of controlling their automatic prejudiced responses on a race Implicit Association Test (IAT, Greenwald, McGhee, & Schwartz, 1998) led to feelings of guilt, if individuals attributed their IAT scores to racial biases. Moreover, Monteith, Ashburn-Nardo, Voils, and Czopp (2002) demonstrated that guilt activates the behavioral inhibition systems and elicits retrospective reflection which in turn leads to the formation of a cue that is later used to inhibit prejudice. In sum, according to Monteith (1993), the awareness of racial biases leads to negative self-directed affect which is a **crucial step in regulating one's own prejudiced responses.**

Intuitively one would ask why people should show prejudiced behavior in the first place if it makes them feel guilty or miserable. The answer is straightforward: Because prejudiced behavior is not always controllable. Knowledge about stereotypes prevailing in society and in people's minds leads to automatic activation of stereotypes in the face of category members and, in turn, is more likely to lead to prejudiced behavior (Devine, 1989). Numerous studies in the past decade have supported the notion that prejudice partly relies on the automatic activation of stereotypes and that individuals show prejudice, notwithstanding their nonprejudiced intention to bypass or ignore it (Bargh, 1999; Greenwald & Banaji, 1995).

The role of motivation

Although stereotypes and prejudice have been shown to rely on automatic processes, individuals can control stereotyping and prejudice at least to some extent (for an overview, see Blair, 2002). The idea that, depending on how motivated individuals are, prejudiced behavior may be circumvented has been proposed by, for example, Fazio (1990), who established the Motivation to Control Prejudiced Reactions scale (MCPR). The higher the individual's MCPR, the less does she/he express controlled as well as automatic race bias (Dunton & Fazio, 1997; Maddux, Barden, Brewer, & Petty, 2005; Olson & Fazio, 2004; Payne, 2005). But when looking at people's motivation to behave as nonprejudiced, it is—as indicated in the introductory paragraph—not only important to ask if they are motivated to behave as nonprejudiced but also what the source of this motivation is. Plant and Devine (1998) have shown that individuals can be motivated for internal (personal) or external (normative) reasons to behave as nonprejudiced. Whereas internal motivation to behave as nonprejudiced stems from internalized, personal nonprejudiced beliefs, external motivation to behave as nonprejudiced reflects the desire to behave as nonprejudiced to avoid negative evaluations by others, which would follow prejudiced behavior. In line with the self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985, 2000), which highlights the importance of the internalization of goals and values for successful self-regulation, the crucial role of internal motivation to behave as nonprejudiced when regulating prejudice has been consistently demonstrated. Specifically, there is evidence (1) that individuals high in internal motivation and low in external motivation to behave as nonprejudiced show lower levels of implicit race bias (Devine et al., 2002); (2) that, on the contrary, low internal motivation to behave as nonprejudiced can lead to attitudinal and behavioral backlash if pressure to respond nonprejudicially was imposed (Gordijn, Hindriks, Koomen, Dijksterhuis, & van Knippenberg, 2004); and (3) that highly internally motivated individuals show more reduction of racial bias as the result of training (Peruche & Plant, 2006).

In sum, it has been shown consistently and throughout different social categories that internal motivation to behave as nonprejudiced reduces explicit and implicit forms of prejudice (see also Klonis, Plant, & Devine, 2005; Peruche & Plant, 2006; Plant & Devine, 2001). In other words, internal motivation seems to be very effective (compared to external motivation) when trying to behave as nonprejudiced. Because automatic tendencies fuel potential failure in behaving as nonprejudiced, it seems crucial to include failure and how people deal with it in any model that tries to uncover the mechanisms of regulation of prejudice. Although the model of self-regulation of prejudiced responses (Monteith, 1993) has contributed substantially to the understanding of the self-regulation of prejudice, the distinction between internal and external motivation has so far not been explicitly integrated into the model. As internal motivation is consistently associated with lower levels of prejudice, one might argue that low prejudice resembles high internal motivation. However, correlations between internal motivation and measures of prejudice are inconsistent across studies and at times quite low (e.g., Legault, Green-Demers, Grant, & Chung, 2007; Plant & Devine, 1998). Therefore, the current research tested how failure to behave as nonprejudiced influences affect and behavior in future situations, depending on how much the individual was internally and externally motivated to behave nonprejudiced.

Motivated reactions to failure

Combining insights from the model of self-regulation of prejudiced responses (Monteith, 1993) and self-completion theory (Wicklund & Gollwitzer, 1982), the model of self-regulation of prejudiced responses suggests that failure to behave as nonprejudiced (i.e., showing prejudiced behavior) needs to be distinguished from an inner state resulting from this behavior: the awareness of the discrepancy between one's standards and one's behavior. This subjective experience elicits the self-regulation of prejudiced behavior.

Self-completion theory states that internal rather than external standards lead from the failure to

behave as nonprejudiced to the awareness of a discrepancy. The theory suggests that individuals who experience failure relevant to an identity goal (i.e., an internally motivated standard such as the internal motivation to behave as nonprejudiced) will experience a sense of incompleteness (or in Monteith's terminology: the awareness of a discrepancy). This sense of incompleteness in turn motivates self-symbolizing efforts, meaning that individuals will strive harder on following goal-relevant tasks to compensate for the failure (Brunstein & Gollwitzer, 1996; Brunstein, Schultheiss, & Maier, 1999). If no possibility to increase goal-directed efforts on a further relevant task is given, an individual who failed on an identity-relevant task is caught in the aversive state of incompleteness and will therefore ruminate about the event (Brunstein, 2000; Brunstein & Gollwitzer, 1996). In contrast, for external standards such as the external motivation to behave as nonprejudiced, no such effects are expected or found in the studies testing this theory, because failure does not result in a sense of incompleteness in this case.

Taken together, responses to failure to behave as nonprejudiced will depend on the internal motivation to behave in this way but not on external motivation to behave as nonprejudiced. Therefore, we predict that only after failure (i.e., incidences of prejudice), individuals with higher levels of internal motivation to behave as nonprejudiced (for whom being nonprejudiced is an identity goal) will show more negative self-directed affect (but no increase of negative other-directed affect). This is due to the aversive state they are caught in after failure related to an identity goal, if they have no opportunity to compensate. If another goal-relevant task (i.e., prejudice-related behavior) provides the opportunity for compensation, higher levels of internal motivation will lead to stronger goal-striving after failure to behave as nonprejudiced, but not without failure. In other words, the less prejudiced behavior is expected after failure, the more individuals are internally motivated to behave as nonprejudiced.

In fact, previous research provides some support for these assumptions. Based on the method

developed by Devine and colleagues (Devine, Monteith, Zuwerink & Elliot, 1991), Plant and Devine (1998, Study 6) tested the impact of internal and external motivation on affective responses to *imagined* own prejudiced behavior. This correlational study found that internal motivation to behave as nonprejudiced elicits negative self-directed affect after participants had thought about a situation in which they had shown more prejudice than they thought they should.

A recent study by Amodio and colleagues (Amodio, Devine, & Harmon-Jones, 2008) focuses on the role of neurophysiological measures in the context of motivation to behave as nonprejudiced. They demonstrate that the regulation of racial responses leads to enhanced error-related negativity (ERN) for high internally motivated individuals. ERNs are a component of event-related potentials (ERPs), reflecting neural sensitivity for conflict (e.g., Yeung, Botvinick, & Cohen, 2004). The results indicate that especially high internally motivated individuals are better in regulating conflict between consciously held egalitarian beliefs and automatic race bias. More generally, Amodio et al. (2008) provide evidence of the *automatic* processes enabling the control of prejudice among high internally motivated people.

In contrast, the present research focuses on the *conscious* processes involved in the control of prejudice. Moreover, as compared to the work of Amodio, the current studies use a broader time perspective. To the best of our knowledge in the domain of conscious control of prejudice so far, there have been no studies that (1) relate the internal motivation to behave as nonprejudiced to actual (rather than imagined) failure to behave nonprejudiced; (2) compare the effects of failure to behave as nonprejudiced to the effects of failure in other domains; and (3) assess actual nonprejudiced behavior (rather than affect) shown by the internally motivated after failure to behave nonprejudiced.

Overview of the current research

The primary goal of the present research is to investigate how internal motivation to behave as nonprejudiced influences the self-regulation of

prejudiced responses. Although previous research has often shown that internal and external motivation interact in predicting *prejudice-related responses* (e.g., Devine et al., 2002), in the current research we do not predict this interaction. In fact, this prediction is supported by previous research by Peruche and Plant (2006), who found no influence of external motivation to behave as nonprejudiced in response to training meant to reduce racial bias and by studies on self-completion theory (e.g., Brunstein & Gollwitzer, 1996), demonstrating that failure unrelated to an identity goal does not influence subsequent performance. Furthermore, when looking at the existing research on internal and external motivation, it seems that (detrimental) effects of external motivation are most often found in relation to *implicit* measures of prejudice (Amodio et al., 2008; Devine et al., 2002; Hausmann & Ryan, 2004), whereas the relation of *explicit* measures of prejudice and external motivation to behave nonprejudiced is rather weak (Fehr & Sassenberg, 2009; Peruche & Plant, 2006; Plant & Devine, 1998).

We therefore predict that conscious compensatory reactions to failure are influenced by internal and not by external motivation to behave as nonprejudiced. Following failure to behave as nonprejudiced, internal motivation to behave as nonprejudiced elicits more negative self-directed affect and less prejudice, but not in a control condition. No such effect is expected for external motivation to behave as nonprejudiced. In two experiments testing these predictions, internal and external motivation to behave as nonprejudiced were measured at first. Study 1 provides a demonstration of the specificity of confronting participants with failure pertaining to prejudice. To this end, a prejudice failure condition was compared to a no failure condition and, more importantly, to a control failure condition, where participants received negative feedback irrelevant to the goal of behaving as nonprejudiced. Study 1 examined if participants in the prejudice failure condition experience more negative self-directed affect with increasing internal motivation compared to the other two conditions. Moreover, we expected an effect only on negative self-directed affect but not on negative

other-directed affect. In Study 2, we investigated whether higher internally motivated participants after failure to behave as nonprejudiced show subsequently less prejudice.

Study 1

Method

Design and participants An experiment with three conditions (prejudice failure vs. control failure vs. no failure) was conducted. Internal and external motivation to behave as nonprejudiced were measured as continuous independent variables. Participants were 118 students (66 female, 52 male) with a mean age of 23 years (range: 18–31).

Procedure

Upon entering the laboratory, participants were informed that they would participate in several unrelated studies and received the first questionnaire assessing internal and external motivation to behave as nonprejudiced. Other items were added to conceal the purpose of this questionnaire. To separate the assessment of the motivation to behave as nonprejudiced from the manipulation, the second questionnaire requested self-ratings. Items were taken from a self-rating questionnaire by Aron, Aron, Tudor, and Nelson (1991). The items are not likely to elicit either threat or self-affirmation as they assess the self-concept in a broad and descriptive manner. However, due to the high involvement resulting from the reference to the self, this task should distract from the topic of prejudice.

After the participants had completed the second questionnaire, they took part in a categorization task similar to the IAT (see Greenwald et al., 1998) with Arabs and Germans (as the ingroup) being the relevant categories (all participants were of German background). In all three conditions the task consisted of five blocks (three practice blocks and two critical blocks) with 140 trials in total. The practice blocks consisted of 20 trials each and the critical blocks of 40 trials. In the first practice block, participants were asked to

categorize attributes as positive or negative (e.g., happy, love vs. mean, murder) and in the second practice block pictures of faces as either Arabic or German. In the critical blocks, words and faces were paired and participants had to categorize both stimuli simultaneously. In the consistent block German + positive and Arab + negative shared the same key and in the inconsistent block German + negative and Arab + positive. Between the consistent block and the inconsistent block participants worked on the third practice block where the concept discrimination was reversed.

The task differed slightly depending on the experimental condition. Participants in the *prejudice failure condition* had to work through the blocks as described above. Afterwards, participants in this condition received the feedback that they had a more negative attitude towards Arabs than towards Germans to increase the failure experience usually felt in an IAT (Monteith et al., 2001). In both the *control failure condition* and the *no failure condition*, the inconsistent block of the categorization task was replaced by an additional consistent block, because participants were not meant to experience any failure in controlling prejudice. Participants in the *no failure condition* did not receive any feedback. In the *control failure condition*, the categorization task was described as a task measuring cognitive flexibility. All participants in that condition received negative feedback pertaining to their cognitive flexibility. Thus, only participants in the *prejudice failure condition* experienced failure controlling their prejudiced responses during the task.

Following the IAT, all participants completed a questionnaire measuring negative self-directed affect and perceived difficulty of the IAT. Finally, they were thanked, thoroughly debriefed and received €5 as compensation.

Measures

Manipulation checks Perceived difficulty of the IAT was measured on a 7-point scale from 1 (= not at all) to 7 (= very much) with a single item ("The task was difficult"). We decided on this indirect approach rather than a direct measurement of perceived failure to avoid the salience of

failure, which might have been perceived as a self-threat and would have influenced our results.

The *internal and external motivation* to behave as nonprejudiced was assessed by a German translation of the scales introduced by Plant and Devine (1998). All items were rephrased to ask for internal and external motivation to behave as nonprejudiced towards Arabs (e.g., internal motivation: "I attempt to act in nonprejudiced ways towards Arabs because it is personally important to me", $\alpha = .82$; external motivation: "I try to hide any negative thoughts about Arabs in order to avoid negative reactions from others", $\alpha = .81$). The items were rated on a 7-point scale from 1 (= does not apply) to 7 (= does fully apply).

Negative self-directed affect was assessed by a German translation of the items used by Monteith, Devine, and Zuwerink (1993). The scale consisted of six items (uneasy, tense, fearful, threatened, bothered, and embarrassed, $\alpha = .75$). Subjects had to indicate how well each of the six items described their actual feelings on a 7-point scale from 1 (= does not apply) to 7 (= does fully apply).

Negative affect towards others was assessed by a German translation of the items used by Monteith et al. (1993). The scale consisted of three items (angry at others, irritated at others, and disgusted with others, $\alpha = .78$). Subjects had to indicate how well each of the three items described their actual feelings on a 7-point scale from 1 (= does not apply) to 7 (= does fully apply).

Results

Manipulation checks The perceived difficulty of the categorization task differed between conditions, $F(2, 115) = 3.81, p = .025, \eta^2 = .062$. To test whether task difficulty was higher in the prejudice failure condition ($M = 2.10, SD = 1.64$) and the control failure condition ($M = 1.84, SD = 1.91$) than in the no failure condition ($M = 1.12, SD = 1.38$), two orthogonal contrasts (focal contrast: 1 1 -2; residual contrast: -1 1 0) were computed. The focal contrast revealed a significant effect, $F(1,115) = 7.11, p = .009, \eta^2 = .058$. The residual contrast was not significant $F(1,115) < 1$. Hence, both

failure conditions led to a similar experience, which was perceived to be more difficult than the experience in the no failure condition. Before analyzing the IAT data from the prejudice failure condition, erroneous responses (7%) and outliers (3%), that is, response time data that were two standard deviations above the mean response time (>2460 ms) or below 150 ms, were excluded. For participants in the prejudice failure condition, the standard IAT-effect was found to be $t(39) = 6.77, p < .001 (M = 186, SD = 174)$, indicating a more positive attitude towards Germans than towards Arabs.

Negative self-directed affect We predicted that higher internal motivation but not external motivation to behave nonprejudiced would lead to more negative self-directed affect in the prejudice failure condition, but not in the other two conditions. Moreover, we expected an effect for negative self-directed affect but not for negative other-directed affect. To test these hypotheses, regression analyses were computed with failure, internal and external motivation to behave as nonprejudiced and the failure \times internal motivation to behave as nonprejudiced and failure \times external motivation to behave as nonprejudiced interactions as predictors. In addition, the two-way interaction of internal and external motivation to behave as nonprejudiced as well as the three-way interaction of failure \times internal \times external motivation was included. Following Aiken and West (1991), the interaction terms were computed by a multiplication of the z -standardized internal motivation score with two unweighted effect codes of the failure variable (contrast 1: -1 prejudice failure, 0 control failure, and 1 no failure; contrast 2: 0 prejudice failure, -1 control failure, and 1 no failure). Unweighted contrast coding was used so that the betas from the interaction could be interpreted and no ΔR^2 test had to be computed (Aiken & West, 1991).

There were no main effects of external or internal motivation to behave as nonprejudiced ($\beta = .16, p = .126$ and $\beta = .09, p = .339$ respectively)

and failure (contrast 1: $\beta = -.06, p = .579$; contrast 2: $\beta = .13, p = .271$). In line with our expectations, the two-way interactions of failure \times external motivation and internal \times external motivation to behave as nonprejudiced had no impact on participants' negative self-directed affect (contrast 1: $\beta = .12, p = .319$; contrast 2: $\beta = .02, p = .908$ and $\beta = .01, p = .926$, respectively). The three-way interaction of failure \times internal \times external motivation had no impact on participants' negative self-directed affect (contrast 1: $\beta = -.08, p = .489$; contrast 2: $\beta = .16, p = .182$), whereas the failure \times internal motivation to behave as nonprejudiced interaction had (contrast 1: $\beta = -.26, p = .026$; contrast 2: $\beta = .18, p = .127$), R^2 change = .04, $F(1,105) = 5.13, p = .026$. As predicted, simple slope analysis following the procedure suggested by Aiken and West (1991) revealed that internal motivation led to more negative self-directed affect in the prejudice failure condition ($\beta = .40, p = .023$), but no such effect was found in the no failure condition ($\beta = -.01, p = .947$) and the control failure condition ($\beta = -.13, p = .469$, see Figure 1).

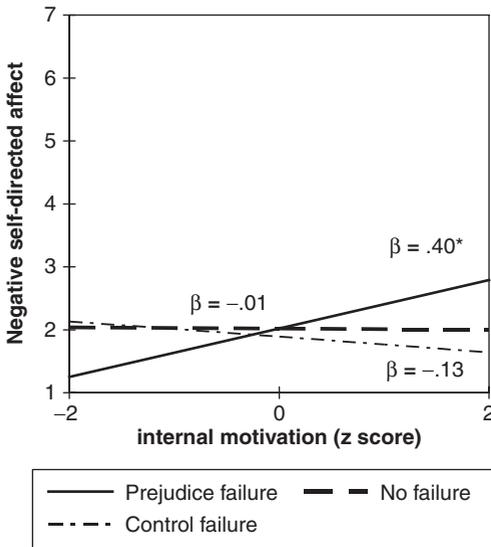


Figure 1. Negative self-directed affect as a function of internal motivation and failure condition (Study 1, $N = 118$).
 Note: * $p < .05$.

Negative other-directed affect A multiple regression with negative other-directed affect as criterion variable and the same set of predictors as above neither led to a failure \times internal motivation interaction (contrast 1: $\beta = -.03, p = .836$; contrast 2: $\beta = -.14, p = .255$), nor to an interaction of failure \times external motivation or internal \times external motivation to behave as nonprejudiced (contrast 1: $\beta < .01, p = .989$; contrast 2: $\beta = -.15, p = .256$ and $\beta = -.02, p = .879$, respectively). Moreover, the three-way interaction of failure \times internal \times external motivation had no impact on participants' negative other-directed affect (contrast 1: $\beta = .13, p = .274$; contrast 2: $\beta = -.05, p = .704$). No main effects were found (all $|\beta s| < .12$; all $p s > .25$).

Discussion

The results support the hypothesis that the higher the internal motivation to behave as nonprejudiced, the stronger is the participants' feeling of negative self-directed affect after prejudice failure compared to situations without failure or failure irrelevant to the goal of behaving as nonprejudiced. This effect was restricted to the internal motivation to behave as nonprejudiced and did not generalize to the external motivation to behave as nonprejudiced. Thus, the current findings are congruent with earlier findings, showing that failure to behave as nonprejudiced leads to negative self-directed affect for low but not for high prejudiced individuals (e.g., Monteith et al., 1993). Moreover, they extend the previous research in two ways. First, by specifying the source of motivation underlying the low level of prejudice (i.e., internal rather than external motivation), and, second, by comparing the prejudice failure condition not only to a no failure condition, but also to a control failure condition. As expected, higher internal motivation only led to stronger feelings of negative self-directed affect in the prejudice failure condition. It thereby supports the notion that the results are not due to general negative feedback, but that the increase in negative self-directed affect resulting from higher internal motivation is an effect of prejudice-related

failure most likely pertaining to the awareness of discrepancies. Moreover, a multiple regression with negative affect towards others as the criterion did not reveal any effects, thereby indicating that participants attribute the discrepancy internally.

Following self-completion theory (Wicklund & Gollwitzer, 1982), failure on high internally motivated goals will elicit rumination and negative self-directed affect if no option to behaviorally compensate the failure is given. If individuals get the possibility to behaviorally compensate for their failure, it should lead to a stronger striving to achieve that goal in future tasks. As Study 1 only tested for the elicitation of negative self-directed affect if no possibility for compensation was given, we conducted a second study to test whether internal motivation actually prompts the regulation of prejudice following failure. To this end, in Study 2, participants received a second goal-relevant task, which gave them the potential to compensate for their failure by regulating prejudice.

Study 2

Study 2 sought to provide evidence for the prediction that with higher levels of internal motivation to behave as nonprejudiced, individuals will strive harder to compensate for failure in behaving as nonprejudiced, if they are provided with an opportunity to do so. More precisely, Study 2 aimed to show that failure to behave as nonprejudiced will elicit more compensatory behavior on subsequent goal-relevant tasks with higher levels of internal motivation. Therefore, the affect measure was replaced by a prejudice measure. Moreover, due to the lack of difference between the no failure condition and the control failure condition in Study 1, Study 2 did not include a control failure condition. We predicted that higher levels of internal motivation to behave as nonprejudiced (but not external motivation) would lead to less prejudice in a subsequent situation after failure to behave as nonprejudiced. This effect was not expected without experiencing failure.

Method

Design and participants An experiment with two conditions (prejudice failure vs. no failure) was conducted. Internal and external motivation to behave as nonprejudiced were measured as continuous independent variables. Participants were 93 undergraduate students (68 female, 25 male) with a mean age of 21 years (range: 18–27). All participants were German.

Procedure

Apart from the dependent measure, the procedure and materials in Study 2 were the same as in Study 1. As in Study 1, participants worked on a categorization task similar to the IAT with the relevant categories Arab and German. After the categorization task, all participants went on to complete a questionnaire which measured prejudice toward Arabs, the dependent variable. They read six different stories about a person with either a German or an Arabic name and were asked to judge the person's behavior on different adjectives. Finally, they were thanked, thoroughly debriefed, and received €5 as compensation.

Measures

The *internal and external motivation* to behave as nonprejudiced was assessed as in Study 1. Internal consistency for both subscales was good (internal and external motivation $\alpha = .77$ and $\alpha = .81$, respectively).

Prejudice towards Arabs was assessed through a personal judgment task adapted from the Donald paradigm (Higgins, Rholes, & Jones, 1977; Kawakami, Spears, & Dovidio, 2002). We decided to measure prejudice this way because the judgment of ingroup (in this case "Germans") and outgroup (in this case "Arabs") members in the Donald paradigm represents not an implicit but a rather subtle and covered measure of prejudice. Specifically, each participant read six ambiguous descriptions of six different men, with a number of activities. Participants were asked to form a separate impression of each man while reading

the paragraph and to subsequently rate the extent to which 10 adjectives (aggressive, amiable, clever, stupid, unpleasant, pleasant, friendly, unfriendly, likeable, dislikeable) applied to the person, using a 9-point scale from 1 (= does not apply) to 9 (= applies very much). In three of the six stories the person described had a typical German name and in three stories the person had a typical Arabic name, resulting in two subscales *Prejudice towards Arabs* ($\alpha = .91$) and *Negative attitude towards Germans* ($\alpha = .85$). Through pilot testing two parallel sets were constructed that did not differ in perceived valence. The order of the target paragraphs, whether participants received the description of a German or an Arabic target person first, was counterbalanced across participants. For data analysis, all positive adjectives were recoded and a mean score was computed, so that higher values would indicate a more negative description of the person.

Results

The IAT data were treated as in Study 1. There was an IAT effect in the prejudice failure condition, $t(47) = 8.22, p < .001$ ($M = 129, SD = 109$).

It was hypothesized that higher internal motivation (but not external motivation) to behave as nonprejudiced results in less prejudice towards Arabs after prejudice failure (but not in the control condition). To test this prediction, a regression analysis was conducted with prejudice towards Arabs on failure, internal and external motivation to behave as nonprejudiced, and the failure \times internal motivation to behave as nonprejudiced and failure \times external motivation to behave as nonprejudiced interactions as predictors. In addition, the two-way interaction of internal and external motivation to behave as nonprejudiced as well as the three-way interaction of failure \times internal \times external motivation was included. The negative attitude towards Germans was included as a covariate in order to control for the interindividual differences in scale usage ($\beta = .40, p < .001$). The regression revealed no main effects of internal motivation to behave as nonprejudiced ($\beta = -.17, p = .084$), external motivation

to behave as nonprejudiced ($\beta = .15, p = .133$) or failure ($\beta < .01, p = .972$) on prejudice towards Arabs. In line with our expectations, the two-way interactions of failure \times external motivation and internal \times external motivation to behave as nonprejudiced had no impact on participants' prejudice towards Arabs ($\beta = .14, p = .170$ and $\beta = -.11, p = .269$, respectively). Most importantly the three-way interaction of failure \times internal \times external motivation had no impact on participants' prejudice towards Arabs ($\beta = -.13, p = .184$), whereas the failure \times internal motivation to behave as nonprejudiced interaction had ($\beta = -.22, p = .026$), R^2 change = .05, $F(1,84) = 5.17, p = .026$. Simple slope analysis following the procedure suggested by Aiken and West (1991) revealed that internal motivation led to less negative evaluations of Arabs in the prejudice failure condition ($\beta = -.40, p = .001$), but no such effect was found in the no failure condition ($\beta = .05, p = .727$, see Figure 2). The results support the hypothesis that the higher the internal motivation to behave as nonprejudiced, the less prejudice individuals will show after prejudice failure compared to situations without failure.

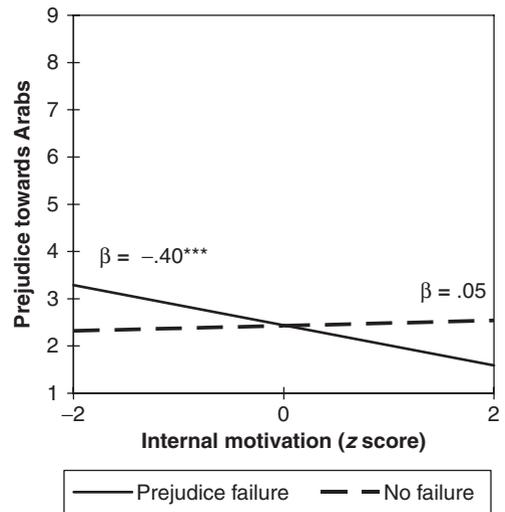


Figure 2. Prejudice towards Arabs as a function of internal motivation and failure condition (Study 2, $N = 93$).

Note: *** $p = .001$.

An analogous multiple regression with negative attitude towards Germans as the criterion variable, using prejudice towards Arabs respectively as a covariate ($\beta = .41, p < .001$), did not lead to main effects of internal or external motivation or failure, all β s $< |.16|$, all p s $> .12$. Neither the two-way interactions of failure \times external motivation ($\beta = -.01, p = .922$), failure \times internal motivation ($\beta = .19, p = .065$) and internal \times external motivation ($\beta = -.12, p = .237$), nor the three-way interaction of failure \times internal \times external motivation ($\beta = -.04, p = .714$) were significant. Simple slope analysis revealed that internal motivation led to more negative evaluations of Germans in the prejudice failure condition ($\beta = .28, p = .035$), but no effect was found in the no failure condition ($\beta = -.09, p = .551$).

Additionally, we computed an ingroup-bias score (i.e., the difference score of prejudice towards Arabs and negative attitude towards Germans), where higher values indicate a more negative attitude towards Arabs as compared to Germans. When conducting the same regression analysis as before with the ingroup-bias score instead of analyzing the scores separately, the results remained basically the same. As before, the regression revealed no main effects: all β s $< |.19|$, all p s $> .07$. Again neither the two-way interactions of failure \times external motivation ($\beta = .10, p = .359$), and internal \times external motivation ($\beta < .01, p = .994$), nor the three-way interaction of failure \times internal \times external motivation ($\beta = -.08, p = .534$) were significant, while the failure \times internal motivation ($\beta = -.26, p = .013$) interaction remained significant.

Discussion

Study 2 supports the prediction that failure to behave as nonprejudiced actually leads to less prejudice in a subsequent task, the higher internally motivated individuals are. For participants in the no failure condition, internal motivation did not influence their prejudice.

Study 2 extends the results found in Study 1 by showing that prejudice-related failure causes, apart from affective reactions (if no option for

compensatory behavior is given), less prejudice, the higher the internal motivation (if an option for compensatory behavior is given). The results indicate that after failure high internally motivated individuals exert greater self-control (i.e., assert more intentional effort). Hence, especially the controlled components of nonprejudiced behavior help the internally motivated to overcome prejudice.

Given the nature of our dependent measure, we had the possibility to control for the evaluation of the ingroup (Germans) while measuring the evaluation of the outgroup, in this case, prejudice towards Arabs. The higher the internal motivation, the more failure led to less negative attitudes towards Arabs, but not towards Germans, indicating that the effect is not due to a general carefulness in evaluating others, but is a specific compensatory behavior after failure concerning the goal to behave as nonprejudiced. This finding is in line with the self-completion theory's assumption that the compensation for failure on identity-related standards is restricted to tasks in the domain (Brunstein & Gollwitzer, 1996). However, for the negative attitude towards Germans, there was a trend towards the failure \times internal motivation interaction. After failure, higher internal motivation resulted in less positive attitudes towards Germans. If anything, this trend can be interpreted as complementary to the more positive evaluation of Arabs after failure with increasing internal motivation. Given that the feedback used Germans as a reference group, a bidirectional adjustment seems to be a functional compensation for the failure experience.

General discussion

The goal of the present research was to examine the role of internal motivation to behave as nonprejudiced in the self-regulation of prejudiced responses. The present work specifically aimed at contributing to the process underlying the positive effect of failure among individuals high in internal motivation to behave as nonprejudiced. It was hypothesized that responses to failure in behaving as nonprejudiced would differ depending

on internal motivation to behave as nonprejudiced. More specifically, it was expected that after prejudice-related failure (but not after failure unrelated to prejudice or situations without failure), higher levels of internal motivation to behave as nonprejudiced would lead to more negative self-directed affect and less prejudiced behavior. Study 1 showed that after failure to behave as nonprejudiced, higher internally motivated individuals felt more negative self-directed affect compared to individuals who did not fail in behaving as nonprejudiced. Most interestingly, this pattern was only found in response to failure to behave as nonprejudiced and not in response to prejudice-unrelated failure. Study 2—which provided the opportunity to compensate for failure—demonstrated that after failure to behave as nonprejudiced, higher levels of internal motivation to behave as nonprejudiced lead to less prejudice. It showed that internal motivation after failure to behave as nonprejudiced reduced actual prejudice. The same was not true for individuals who did not experience failure before. In sum, both studies consistently provided support for the contribution of internal motivation to behave as nonprejudiced to the self-regulation of prejudiced responses. Although previous research has obtained similar conclusions, the present studies extend previous research as they provide a more thorough testing of the assumption. Extending Monteith's work (Monteith, 1993), the current study assessed the internal motivation to behave as nonprejudiced rather than levels of prejudice as a moderator of the impact of failure. Furthermore, the current studies extended the work by Plant and Devine (1998) by showing that actual rather than imagined failure to behave as nonprejudiced leads to self-directed negative affect among the internally motivated. Finally, none of the earlier work tested the specificity of prejudice-related failure compared to failure in other domains.

The current findings stress that failure, even though it always constitutes a source of threat to a positive self-image, does not in each case lead to increased levels of prejudice. Thus, they contradict the work by Fein and Spencer (1997; Spencer, Fein, Wolfe, Fong, & Dunn, 1998) suggesting that

the failure-induced self-image threat elicits prejudice as one possible strategy to restore a threatened self-image by devaluing others and thereby affirming the self. This inconsistency can be resolved by taking into account that the self cannot be affirmed after failure in behaving as nonprejudiced by repeating this failure.

Although the pattern of results supports the hypothesis that the positive impact of internal motivation to behave as nonprejudiced can be explained by individual reactions to failure in behaving as nonprejudiced, some potential limitations are worth considering.

First, affective and behavioral reactions were not assessed in a single but rather in consecutive studies. But giving participants the possibility to express their negative affective state after failure can already be considered as a form of compensation that will reduce the need for a "goal-related coping" (Kidd, 1976). Previous research on the self-completion theory therefore only found evidence for negative affect and compensatory actions in separate conditions (Brunstein & Gollwitzer, 1996). For this reason, affective and behavioral reactions were measured separately. In other words, because both the expression of negative affect and the behavioral reaction can serve as a compensatory reaction, a mediation of the failure–compensatory–behavior–relationship by affect is not expected.

A second potential limitation is the specific assessment of prejudice in Study 2. Although this is not a measure of attitude, it does not assess prejudiced *behavior* in a narrower sense. We nevertheless decided on this measure of prejudice as it represents an explicit but rather subtle measure of prejudice. Additionally, we found similar evidence measuring effort to behave as nonprejudiced with a different paradigm (Fehr, 2008) providing additional evidence for the validity of the current findings. However, in future studies it would be desirable to measure prejudiced behavior more directly.

Although previous research (e.g., Devine et al., 2002) has often shown that internal and external motivations interact in predicting prejudice-related responses, in the current research we did

not predict this interaction. This pattern of results is in line with earlier research if one takes into account the respective measure of prejudice as moderating factor. It seems that (detrimental) effects of external motivation are most often found in relation to *implicit* measures of prejudice (Amodio et al., 2008; Devine et al., 2002; Hausmann & Ryan, 2004), whereas the relation of *explicit* measures of prejudice and external motivation to behave as nonprejudiced was rather weak, in earlier research as in the current studies (Fehr & Sassenberg, in press; Peruche & Plant, 2006; Plant & Devine, 1998). Future research should address more directly the differential impact of internal and external motivation on implicit and explicit measures of prejudice.

Whereas previous research has already shown that conscious processes can eliminate behavioral bias (Dasgupta & Rivera, 2006), the present study elaborates on the conscious control processes. Our findings suggest that conscious control processes are activated precisely when individuals, who are highly internally motivated to behave as nonprejudiced, realize that they have failed in behaving as nonprejudiced (for similar results concerning low prejudiced individuals, see Monteith et al., 2002). It thus seems that high internally motivated individuals are not per se better at behaving as nonprejudiced, but that they have the ability to take advantage of the negative event of failure in the long run. Referring once more to the model of self-regulation of prejudiced responses (Monteith, 1993), the present research identifies who becomes aware of prejudice-related discrepancies in case of prejudiced behavior. The internal motivation to behave as nonprejudiced instigates individuals' awareness of discrepancies and thereby promotes subsequent compensatory actions, aimed at reducing the aversive state by reaching the identity-relevant goal. Whereas our research showed that individuals react differently to failure depending on their internal motivation to behave as nonprejudiced, we did not investigate whether the actual awareness for the objective event of failure differed depending on the internal motivation. Further research should test more directly whether the

coherence of objective failure and the subjective awareness of discrepancies changes depending on individuals' motivation.

One can wonder whether a potential drawback of the proposed mechanism is that as the study is self-completed, it might have the paradoxical effect of decreasing *conscious* control and opening again the door to automatic prejudice (cf. Monin & Miller, 2001). However, previous work by Amodio et al. (2008) suggests that success in prejudice will not lead to increased prejudice. He demonstrated that high internally motivated individuals are also more successful in the *automatic* control of prejudice. In sum, whereas previous work has shown more successful automatic control of prejudice among high internally motivated individuals, the current work has shown that they are also more successful in the conscious control of prejudice, providing a full picture of the possible control mechanisms that help internally motivated individuals to overcome prejudice.

Conclusion

Individuals who try to behave as nonprejudiced will at times be confronted with the fact that they failed in behaving as nonprejudiced, due to the impact of automatic processes. The present studies show that with higher levels of internal motivation, the inherently negative experience of failure helps to overcome prejudice. That is, the more internally motivated individuals are, the more they show negative self-directed affect and the less prejudice they show if they fail in behaving as nonprejudiced before. Taken together, the results suggest that failure might play a key role for high internally motivated individuals in the successful regulation of prejudice.

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