Moral Credentialing

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Abstract

According to the moral credentialing theory (Monin & Miller, 2001), when individuals become aware of their own moral good they are more likely to act immorally in future endeavors because they feel as if they earned "moral credits". In the current experiment, we expand upon the moral credentialing phenomenon to better understand factors that cause individuals to feel as if they acquired moral credits. In particular, we investigated the effects of relationship closeness (friend v. acquaintance), volitional choice (choice v. no choice), and valence (positive v. negative) of an experience on moral credentialing. These factors were manipulated through a reflection essay task. Moral credentialing was measured through a tolerance towards prejudice scale that was completed after reading a vignette about a racist police department. Results show that relationship closeness leads to an increased tolerance towards prejudice and induces moral credentialing, implications of which will be discussed further.

Moral Credentialing

Individuals who think of themselves as being egalitarian may actually display prejudice attitudes more often. These people are displaying what is termed moral credentialing, or the trend in which individuals who credit themselves as having strong morals have an increased likelihood of displaying a prejudiced attitude in a later situation (Monin & Miller, 2001).   We set out to further explore the moral credentialing phenomenon suggested by Monin and Miller (2001).   More specifically, we are investigating how personal choice, valence of experience, and friendships can influence moral credentialing.

Prejudice and Discrimination

A cultural minority is described as "a socially defined group whose values and aspirations are not validated by those persons who wield the balance of power in a give society" (Gaines & Reed, 1995). One such cultural minority that exists within the United States is the Black population; a group that has historically experienced much prejudice and discrimination. While significant progress in establishing social equality among all races has been made, the social stereotypes that exist concerning Blacks (e.g., inferior intelligence, poor manners) persist to form our ideas about people around us (Gaines & Reed, 1995). While stereotypes can have a "kernel of truth", and can be useful cognitive structures that allow individuals to process information quickly and efficiently, these stereotypes become problematic when they are used to describe every individual of a group (Baron, Byrne, & Branscombe, 2006; Kunda & Oleson, 1995). Additionally, research demonstrates that everyone is aware of stereotypes that exist for their own group, as well as other groups, and quite often people actually try to suppress their stereotypes in order to be egalitarian (Devine, 1989).

Looking at the desire to be egalitarian and stereotype suppression a little further, research shows that members of the majority group often try to suppress their stereotypes (and stereotypic responses) in order to appear egalitarian and in an attempt to reduce anxiety felt due to social pressures to appear egalitarian and avoid prejudiced behavior (Van Boven, 2000). An example of this was found in Dutton's (1971) classic study of behaviors of hostesses at a classy restaurant. Both Black and White couples dressed the same; however, the males were not up to the dress code. The researchers found that the Black couple was seated significantly more often than the White couple--indicating that the hostess was concerned with seeming prejudiced and overcompensated with her lenience of dress code. Dutton attributed the incongruous treatment to the hostesses' fear of seeming racist (Bradley, King, & Hebl, 2010). Assuming this is true, the hostesses in Dutton's (1971) study were most likely demonstrating pluralistic ignorance which occurs when an individual will maintain a politically correct stance (e.g., allowing in the undressed Black males), in order to conform to the larger social group ideal that people should be egalitarian, but that this behavior does not have to reflect the individuals actual beliefs (e.g., they could still hold stereotypes and prejudices; Van Boven, 2000).

The research presented thus far suggests that individuals will often times try to act in an egalitarian manner. However, there are times when individuals will opt to act in a more prejudiced manner. Research shows that if an individual can find an alternate justification for displaying non-egalitarian (or prejudiced) actions, then individuals are more likely to display the personal prejudices they hold. In a study by Norton, Vandello and Darley (2004), it was found that when making judgments between candidates, individuals will over-emphasize positive qualities of their ingroup (e.g. same race or same gender), but will fail to mention equivalent positive qualities for members of their outgroup. By using this alternative justification,

individuals are inadvertently promoting their personal prejudices at the potential cost of discriminating against the most qualified candidate.

In a related manner, the theory of aversive racism suggests that individuals often will not overtly act on their feelings because discrimination and racism are not considered to be socially acceptable. However, when presented with a situation where other explanations for their actions can be given, individuals will act on their racist feelings (Gaertner & Dovido, 2000a). Aversive racism contends that individuals are not always aware of their internal prejudice, or that they are acting on their internal prejudice, and, in fact, many individuals will act this way even if they believe they are egalitarian (Gaertner & Dovidio, 2000a, 2000b). Thus, the research reviewed suggests that if a person does not have an alternative justification available, they are likely to act in an egalitarian manner and may even engage in pluralistic ignorance. However, if an alternative justification is available, individuals will, whether consciously aware of it or not, use the justification as a means to display more prejudicial attitudes and act in discriminatory manners.

Moral Credentialing and Prejudice

To expand upon past research involving stereotypes and racism, Monin and Miller (2001) investigated egalitarian goals and prejudiced actions among the majority group. Their research tested participants on their willingness to express unfavorable attitudes on the realms gender stereotypes, minority stereotypes, and political incorrectness, and they consistently found that individuals who became aware of their background of fairly treating a minority group seemed to rest upon their laurels of good moral credentials, and subsequently feel freer to behave in a manner that may be conceived as prejudiced in the future. For example, in their study

participants were asked to select individuals for a hypothetical job situation. When participants were able to select a Black individual for the first job, they were more likely to choose a White individual for jobs thereafter. Thus, this research shows that earning "moral credits" allows individuals to actually, on occasion, act immorally because these individuals feel free from scrutiny due to their past displays of egalitarianism.

Does Valence of an Experience and Volitional Choice Influence Moral Credentialing?

Two possible factors that may influence the extent to which moral credentialing is experienced could be the valence (positivity or negativity) of the experience a person recalls with a minority group member and the amount of volitional choice a person has in recalling experiences with a minority group member. First, in terms of valence, research shows that the types of stereotypes evoked depend on the situational context. To examine this, participants were exposed to Blacks either in positive (e.g., baseball arena) or negative (e.g., poor neighborhood) environments, and participants' implicit and explicit attitudes were measured (Wittenbrink, Mudd, & Park, 2001). The results show that attitudes were more favorable towards Blacks in the positive condition than in the negative condition which serves as evidence that valence of a situation can influence attitudes towards a minority group (Wittenbrink, Mudd, & Park, 2001). Thus, this research suggests that our attitudes can be influenced by the context in which we think about minority group members. Further studies have shown that context in addition to motivation to control prejudice have an effect on displayed prejudice attitudes. It was found that individuals with low levels of motivation to control prejudice show an ingroup bias whereas individuals who had high levels of motivation to control prejudice showed an outgroup bias, or more positive attitudes towards the outgroup (Maddux, Barden, Brewer, & Petty, 2005). Based on these findings, we can predict that thinking about a negative experience with a Black

person may increase negative attitudes towards Blacks. But, in relation to moral credentialing, thinking about a positive experience with a Black person could lead to more favorable attitudes towards that person, but could also lead to an increased sense of moral worthiness and likelihood that the individual will act more prejudiced in a future situation. Thus, the current research sets out to examine how the valence of an experience with a minority person influences moral credentialing.

In addition to the valence of the situation, another factor that seems to play a role in the extent to which moral credentials are used is volitional choice (Bradely, King, and Hebl, 2010). For instance, in one study, participants were either given a choice to write about a positive or negative experience with a minority group member, or they were assigned to write about a specific experience (either positive or negative). The results show that participants that chose to write about a positive experience with a minority group used their moral credentials the most and expressed the most prejudice in a subsequent situation (Bradely, et al., 2010). The researchers argued that choosing to write about a positive experience promoted feelings of self-satisfaction and an increased sense of moral worthiness because they went out of their way to be egalitarian; whereas, those assigned to write about a positive experience did not experience these feelings to the same extent because they could justify why they wrote about a positive experience—they were instructed to do so.   This can be tied into the theory of cognitivie dissonance. According to cognitive dissonance, individuals' self-concepts are threatened when their attitudes and behaviors are inconsistent—especially when there is insufficient justification for the inconsistencies (Festinger & Carlsmith, 1959). Relating this to choice in moral credentialing, individuals who choose the essay they write have insufficient justification for why they chose the task they did; whereas, those who were assigned the type of essay they wrote have sufficient

justification (their behavior is based on what they were told what to do). Cognitive dissonance theory suggests that in order to reduce cognitive dissonance, individuals will change their original attitude, change their future behavior, or modify their exisiting attitudes. Applying this to choice and moral credentialing, we predict that those who had a choice would experience more insufficient justification, and subsquently they should be more likely to need to convince themselves of that their behavior (especially of writing a positive experience with an outgroup member) is due to their own moral good. This heightened sense of moral worthiness should result in aquiring in moral credits and increased prejudice in a subsequent situation. In conclusion, past research shows that both the context or valence of a situation and volitional choice can influence the extent to which stereotyping and prejudice occur. Based on these findings and how they may effect moral credentialing, the current experiment examines the effects of valence and choice on moral credentialing.

Does Closeness with a Minority Group Member Influence Moral Credentialing?

Another factor that influences views towards minority group members, is an individual's contact with minority group members—known as the Contact Theory (Allport, 1954). According to the contact theory, increased contact with a member of a minority group should help change stereotypes as the individual will be presented with information that their stereotypes may not be entirely true, and the minority group member serves as a liason into the minority group as a whole and the positive and stereotype-inconsistent attributes will consequently be generalized to the entire minority group. However, research on the contact theory shows that in order for such a contact to be successful it needs to be personal, cooperative, be between individuals of equal social status, and the social norms of the contact need to highlight cooperativeness and equality. Research on the contact theory shows that it can

effectively reduce prejudice, even when the contact occurs with an acquaintance, coworker, friend, or family member. (Allport, 1954, pp. 261-282)   In line with the contact theory, Winslow (2004) observes that when a majority member is accused of being racist, a common defense is to show close ties with a minority group member, for example "I'm not racist because my best friend is black" (Winslow, 2004).

Given that increased contact with minority group members can influence attitudes towards that group, it seems likely that contact may too play a role in moral credentialing. More specifically, individuals who have friends (or think about their friends) of a minority group should be more likely to experience moral credentialing than those who do not have minority group friends because they should become more aware of their own moral good for having friends that are not part of the majority group.   Thus, the current study sets out to examine whether closeness felt towards a minority group member influences moral credentialing.

Present Research

In conclusion, while Monin and Miller (2001) demonstrated that moral credentialing influenced the expression of prejudice, factors that could enhance or limit the moral credentialing effect were not examined. Therefore, the current experiment expands upon past knowledge of moral credentialing by examining how valence of an experience, volitional choice in recalling experiences, and closeness with a minority group member influence moral credentialing.

More specifically, past research demonstrates that the valence of the situation or context (positive or negative) influences the types of attitudes held (e.g., seeing a Black man by a church elicited less prejudiced attitudes than seeing a Black man in a poor neighborhood; Wittenbrink, et al. 2001; Maddux et al. 2005).   While thinking of a positive experience with a Black person lessens stereotyping and prejudice with that immediate target, the moral credentialing literature

suggests that the individual who thinks of a positive experience should become more aware of their own moral good, and subsequently be more prejudiced in a future situation. And, research has examined the valence of the situation in relation to volitional choice and has found that it influences moral credentialing (Bradley, et al., 2010). More specifically, this research showed that those who chose to write about a positive experience with a minority group member expressed more prejudice than those who were forced to write about a positive experience (Bradley, et al., 2010). Thus, we predict to replicate these findings.

While the past research has looked at valence and choice, it has not examined whether one's perceived level of closeness with a minority group member influences moral credentialing. Contact theory suggests that increased contact should lead to decreased prejudice (Allport, 1954), and should thus be applicable to moral credentialing. Thinking about a close friend from a minority group may heighten one's sense of moral good, and may, inadvertently, increase the likelihood of acting prejudiced in a future situation. Thus, the current experiment will examine how valence, choice, and closeness influence moral credentialing.

<div align="center">Method</div>

Participants

One-hundred and twenty three participants (66 males, 57 females) from a small private Northeastern institution completed this study. Each participant signed an informed consent form, and those enrolled in a social science course earned course credit. There were no monetary incentives. Of the 123 participants, 12 participants were removed from the data analysis. Eight participants were removed because they were Black and the manipulation was designed to examine majority group members' attitudes towards Blacks. Additionally, two participants were removed for having responses on the dependent measures that were more than two standard

deviations beyond the mean responses, and two participants were removed for indicating that they had ignored the instructions when writing their essays. Thus, the data are based on 111 participants (61 males; 50 females).

Design

This experiment features a 2 (Choice: Choice vs. No Choice) x 2 (Valence: Positive vs. Negative) x 2 (Closeness: Close Friend vs. Acquaintance) between-participants design. More specifically, the study investigated if choice, valence, and closeness influenced the extent to which moral credentialing occurred. The dependent variable is the degree of moral credentialing and this is measured by how suitable participants deem a Black police officer to be for a position, and how positively participants evaluate a racist police department.   To see if choice influences the likelihood of moral credentialing, participants either were given a choice in the type of essay they wrote (a positive or negative valanced essay) about an experience with Black person or they were instructed to write a particular type of essay (either positive or negative). To see if valence of an essay mattered, participants were either instructed to write a positive or negative experience they had with a Black person. To investigate the effects of closeness on moral credentialing, participants were instructed to write about a close friend or an acquaintance.

Materials

Choice Manipulation. One third of the participants were given a choice to write about either a positive or negative experience that they had had with a Black person. They were asked to circle their choice above the lines designated for the essay. Of the remaining participants, half were instructed to write about a positive experience while the other half were instructed to write about a negative experience. See Appendix A for all materials.

Valence Manipulation. The type of experience recalled (positive or negative) was also manipulated. One third of the participants were instructed to write about a positive experience that they had with a Black person, and one third were instructed to write about a negative experience. The remaining one third of the participants were given a choice to write about either a positive or negative experience that they had had with a Black person. See Appendix A for all materials.

Friendship Manipulation. Friendship was manipulated in that half of participants were instructed to write about a close friend or someone they knew well while the other half of participants were instructed to write about an acquaintance or someone they did not know well. See Appendix A for all materials.

Moral Credentialing Measure. Moral credentialing was measured in several ways. First, participants all read a vignette about a police department that was having problems with racial prejudice. Participants' attitudes were then measured. Participants indicated how suitable a Black police officer was for a job position on a 7-point Likert-Type Scale (1 = Much Better for Black Person; 7 = Much Better for a White Person). In addition, a composite was created from 10 questions that assessed participants' attitudes towards the racist police department (1 = Strongly Disagree; 7 = Strongly Agree), for example, "The police officers who openly express negative attitudes about Black people should be reprimanded". A Principle Components factor analysis confirmed that the 10 questions created one composite (Eigenvalue = 3.82), and a reliability analysis confirmed that this factor was reliable (α = .80). See Appendix B for the questionnaire.

Demographic Information. Gender, age and race were asked in order to determine if any relationships between the demographic information and moral credentialing existed. Further, there was a manipulation check for the friendship question. Participants were instructed to indicate the closeness on a 7-point Likert-Type scale of their relationship to the Black person in their essay (1 = not at all close, 7 = very close; see Appendix C).

Procedure

Participants came into the lab and read and signed an informed consent form. After signing the consent form, participants were led to believe that the study investigated their evaluations of themselves and others. All participants wrote a short essay about an experience they have had with a Black individual. The type of essay participants wrote about varied, and participants were randomly assigned to the different conditions. First, whether participants had a choice in the type of essay they wrote varied (Choice Independent Variable). In the choice condition, participants were asked to choose to write about either a positive or negative experience they have had with a Black person. In the no choice condition, participants were assigned to write about either a positive or negative experience they have had with a Black person. Second, the type of experience participants wrote about was varied (Valence Independent Variable). In the positive condition, participants wrote about a positive experience they have had with a Black person. In the negative condition, participants wrote about a negative experience they have had with a Black person. And, last, who the participants wrote about was manipulated (Friendship Independent Variable). Half the participants were instructed to write about a close friend or someone they knew well; whereas, the remaining half of the participants wrote about an acquaintance or someone they did not know very well. Thus, there were six conditions total: choice of essay about a close friend, choice of essay about an acquaintance,

positive experience with a friend, positive experience with an acquaintance, negative experience with a friend, and negative experience with an acquaintance.

After writing the essay, all participants received vignette about the Police force in an unnamed town. In the vignette, participants learned that the town was having problems with racial prejudice. Participants were asked to evaluate the appropriateness of hiring a Black officer to work in the described. They are also surveyed about their attitudes towards the prejudiced community, and completed demographic information (e.g., gender, ethnicity). Finally, all participants were debriefed.

Results

It was predicted that choosing to write about a positive experience about a close friend should heighten one's own moral worthiness and should result in the most moral credentialing. When looking at the data, there were only 9 people who chose to write about a negative experience with a Black person. Given the low cell size in this condition, we excluded this condition from the analyses and instead ran two different two-way ANOVAS--one for the Choice/No Choice X Friend/Acquaintance effect and one investigating the Friend/Acquaintance X Positive/Negative effect which can be found in figures 1 and 2 respectively. Overall, it was found that while valence and friendship did have a significant effect on prejudice attitudes; however, choice did not.

From the data collected, the participants' responses were sorted into three measures: hiring, prejudice, and affect. All of the responses of the 1-7 Likert-Type scale were coded such that 1 is the least prejudice while 7 is the most prejudiced. All data were assessed for statistical

significance at α = .05 using a univariate analysis of variance with independent variables of either choice and closeness or valence and closeness.

Hiring Measure. The first measure was the answer to the question "Do you feel that this specific job position is better suited for any one ethnicity?" which was termed "hiring measure". Looking at choice and closeness on moral credentialing, the analyses showed no significant main effects for choice ($p = 0.75$) or closeness ($p = 0.69$). Levels of prejudice were nearly even for the closeness manipulation between the acquaintance ($M = 4.30$, $SD = 0.71$) and friend conditions ($M = 4.35$, $SD = 0.83$). Prejudice levels were also similar between the choice ($M = 4.36$, $SD = 0.72$) and no choice conditions ($M = 4.31$, $SD = 0.79$). There was a significant interaction found between closeness and choice, $F(1, 107) = 4.52$, $p = 0.04$, as seen in Figure 1. To explore this analysis further, a simple effects analysis was conducted. Looking at those who wrote about an acquaintance, those who had a choice ($M = 4.56$, $SD = 0.78$) tended to show more prejudice by believing a white applicant was more suitable for the job than those who did not have a choice ($M = 4.18$, $SD = 0.62$), $F(1,107) = 2.91$, $p = 0.09$. However, for those who wrote about a close friend, there was no significant difference between those who had a choice and those who did not ($p > 0.2$). Of those who had a choice, closeness did not influence prejudice ($p > .2$). Nor did closeness influence prejudice of those who did not have a choice ($p > 0.1$)

Looking at the effects of closeness and valence, the analyses showed no main effect for closeness ($p = 0.41$). However, there was a significant main effect for valence, $F(1, 107) = 4.49$, $p = 0.04$, such that those who wrote about a negative experience ($M = 4.5$, $SD = 0.80$) found a white person to be more suitable for the job than those who wrote positive essays ($M = 4.20$, $SD = 7.17$). There was a significant interaction between closeness and valence, $F(1, 107) = 3.99$, $p = .05$, as seen in Figure 2. To explore this interaction further, a simple effects analysis was

conducted. Looking at those who wrote about a close friend, those who wrote about a negative experience ($M = 4.73$, $SD = 0.77$) showed more prejudice by believing a white applicant was better suited for the job than those who wrote about a positive experience ($M = 4.12$, $SD = 0.78$), $F(1,107) = 8.69$, $p = 0.00$. However, for those who wrote about an acquaintance, the valence of the essay did not influence attitudes towards who was better suited for the job, $F(1,107) = 0.02$, $p = 0.88$. Of those who wrote about a negative experience, those who wrote about a close friend ($M = 4.73$, $SD = 0.77$) marginally showed more prejudiced by believing a white candidate was better suited for the job than those who wrote about an acquaintance ($M = 4.32$, $SD = 0.89$), $F(1,107) = 1.94$, $p = 0.06$. Contrary to our predictions, for those who wrote about a positive experience, closeness did not influence attitudes towards who was better suited for the job, $F(1,107) = 0.46$, $p = 0.82$.

Prejudice Measure. The second category was the combined answers to all of the prejudice attitudes questions, and higher numbers indicate more of a tolerance towards prejudice. For the analysis of choice and closeness, there no significant main effect for choice ($p = .28$). However, there was, as predicted, a significant main effect for closeness, $F(1,107) = 7.37$, $p = 0.01$, such that those who wrote about a friend tolerated more prejudice ($M = 3.03$, $SD = .99$) than those who wrote about an acquaintance ($M = 2.52$, $SD = .73$). There was no interaction between choice and closeness ($p = .63$).

For the analysis of closeness and valence, there was a significant main effect for closeness, $F (1, 107) = 12.50$, $p = 0.00$, such that those who wrote about a friend were more tolerant of prejudice ($M = 3.03$, $SD = .99$) than those who wrote about an acquaintance ($M = 2.52$, $SD = .73$). There was a marginally significant main effect for valence, $F (1, 107) = 3.60$, $p = 0.06$, such that those who wrote about a positive experience ($M = 2.66$, $SD = .79$) tended to be

less tolerant of prejudice than those who wrote about a negative experience ($M = 2.91$, $SD = 1.01$). There was also a significant interaction between valance and closeness ($F(1, 107) = 4.01$, $p = 0.05$). To explore this interaction further, a simple effects analysis was conducted. Looking at those who wrote about a close friend, those who wrote about a negative experience ($M = 3.32$, $SD = 0.19$) were more tolerant towards prejudice than those who wrote about a positive experience ($M = 2.78$, $SD = 0.15$), $F(1,107) = 5.16$, $p = 0.03$. However, for those who wrote about a acquaintance, the valance of the essay did not influence tolerance towards prejudice, $F(1,107) = 0.00$, $p = 0.96$. Of those who wrote about a negative experience there was a significant difference between the friend and acquaintance conditions, $F(1, 107) = 8.17$, $p = 0.01$, such that those who wrote about a negative experience with a friend showed more prejudice ($M = 3.32$, $SD = 1.03$) than those who wrote about a negative experience with an acquaintance ($M = 2.57$, $SD = 0.73$) Of those who wrote about a positive experience there wasn't a significant difference between the friend and acquaintance conditions ($p > 0.5$).

Affect Measure. The final measure was the combined answers to all of the questions in the department section what were related to emotions towards the racist police department (questions 4,7,10, and 11) which was termed "affect measure". For the analysis of choice and closeness there no significant main effect for choice ($p = .80$) but there was a significant main effect for closeness ($F(1,107) = 7.9.83$, $p = 0.00$) such that those who wrote about a friend were expressed more prejudiced feelings ($M = 3.03$, $SD = 1.34$) than those who wrote about an acquaintance ($M = 2.23$, $SD = .99$). There was not a significant main interaction found for closeness and choice ($p = .51$).

Analysis of closeness and valence showed a significant main effect for closeness, $F(1, 107) = 17.49$, $p = 0.00$, such that those who wrote about a friend ($M = 3.04$, $SD = 1.34$)

expressed more prejudiced feelings than those who wrote about an acquaintance ($M = 2.23$, $SD =$ .99). Valance was found to be marginally significant, $F(1, 107) = 3.60$, $p = 0.06$, such that those who wrote about a positive experience ($M = 2.48$, $SD = 1.07$) tended to express *less* prejudiced feelings than those who wrote about a negative experience ($M = 2.82$, $SD = 1.43$). There was also a significant interaction between valance and closeness ($F(1, 107) = 5.87$, $p = 0.02$). To explore this interaction further, a simple effects analysis was conducted. Looking at those who wrote about a close friend, those who wrote about a negative experience ($M = 3.50$, $SD = 1.53$) expressed more prejudiced feelings than those who wrote about a positive experience ($M = 2.67$, $SD = 1.13$), $F(1,107) = 6.73$, $p = 0.01$. For acquaintances, the simple effect analysis showed that there wasn't a significant difference between negative and positive conditions, ($p > 0.7$). Of those who wrote about a negative experience there was a significant difference between the friend and acquaintance conditions, $F(1, 107) = 11.37$, $p = 0.00$, such that those who wrote about a negative experience with a friend showed more prejudice ($M = 3.50$, $SD = 1.53$) than those who wrote about a negative experience with an acquaintance ($M = 2.28$, $SD = 1.17$) Of those who wrote about a positive experience there wasn't a significant difference between the friend and acquaintance conditions ($p > 0.4$).

Discussion

It was hypothesized that valence, choice, and closeness of experience would influence moral credentialing in that choice, positive valence, and closeness would result in the highest levels of prejudice. It was found that valence and closeness significantly affected prejudice but not choice. From the data we can conclude that individuals who are close with a minority group member show more prejudice than those without a close experience. Further, valence and

closeness interact to significantly increase prejudice indicating that both of these factors induce moral credentialing.

While the contact hypothesis predicts that contact with a minority group decreases prejudice attitudes (Allport, 1954), the results from our study suggest that increased contact may lead to increased moral credentialing and increased prejudice towards others in future situations. Another possible phenomenon that could be responsible for the increased prejudice with closeness is subtyping. In subtyping an individual encounters a group member that is inconsistent with the stereotypes for that group and brands the "abnormal" group member as an exception that is not an accurate representation of the group as a whole (Baron, Byrne, & Branscombe, 2006). Thus, in this experiment, individuals who write about a positive experience with a Black person could consider their friend to be non-representative of the Black population as a whole and could still think negatively of Blacks.

While results of positive conditions followed our hypothesis, the negative conditions do not fit the theory of moral credentialing. It was consistently found that those who wrote about a negative experience with a friend expressed the most prejudice. Qualitative analysis of these essays shows that many of these stories were about an individual who is a former friend of the participant, and the two are no longer friends. It seems that their negative experiences reinforced negative stereotypes and thus led to increased prejudice. While this does not go along with Monin and Miller's (2001) theory of moral credentialing it does fit into other past research; most notably, these results follow the research conducted by Wittenbrink, et al., (2001) and Maddux, et al., (2005) that situational context (either negative or positive) increases stereotyping and prejudice. Further research could explore the interaction between the phenomena of moral credentialing and situational context.

Another potential area of future research would be to further explore the choice component of moral credentialing. A limitation of this study is that there were not enough people in the negative choice condition, and thus analysis by three-way ANOVA could not be performed. Future research should aim to have a larger effect size in order to explore the effect of choice in moral credentialing to see if it increases tolerance towards prejudice as we would expect. Additionally, future research could explore the applicability of moral credentialing to areas outside of racism. An example could be political stances such as advocates for sustainability feeling privileged to act waste occasionally.

Overall, the current research explores one novel extension of moral credentialing that could potentially be expanded to other fields of social psychology. We now know that moral credentials can be established through reflecting on a past experience. We also know that the valance of this experience plays a significant role on the development of moral credentials as well as the combination of valance and closeness. The phenomenon of moral credentialing could be applicable in everyday out group interactions and thus should be explored more fully in the future.

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Appendix A:

Reflective Essay Task

SECTION ONE

Directions: Please spend about five minutes writing about either a positive or a negative experience that you have had with a Black person. (The choice is completely yours.) This person should be an (**acquaintance**, or someone you do not know very well.) Use the space below to write your response.

anything in parenthesis is variable depending on the condition and will either be deleted in the case of no choice condition, acquaintance/friend condition will vary, and so will the valance condition. In the case of the valance variation, participants were prompted to write about a positive or negative experience

(Please circle positive if you decide to write about a positive experience or circle negative if you decide to write about a negative experience.

     Positive   *Negative*

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

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_____

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Appendix B:

Police Vignette and Prejudice Measures

SECTION TWO

Directions: Please read the scenario on the following page. After reading, please answer the

questions using the number on the scale that best matches your response. Please answer as

honestly as you can. **Remember, there are no right or wrong answers.**

Imagine that you are the police chief of a small town in a rural area of the U.S. Historically, the population of the town has been exclusively White, and attitudes towards other ethnicities tend to be unfavorable. As much as you regret it, you know this is especially the case within your unit. You couldn't help but overhearing racist jokes coming from people you otherwise consider excellent officers. In fact a couple of years ago a Black patrolman joined your unit, and within a year he quit, complaining of hostile working conditions. You are doing what you can to change attitudes, but your main objective is that the police force should do its job, and so far it has been rather effective so you do not want to provoke any major unrest within its ranks. The time has come to recruit a new officer. As a general rule, officers need to be responsible and trustworthy, show quick intelligence enabling them to make split-second decisions in crisis situations. Recent scandals have also highlighted the need for a high level of integrity, resistance to corruption, mild manners and a calm temper. You have just received applications from the new graduates of the local Police Academy. You wonder whether ethnicity should be a factor in your choice.

Do you feel that this specific job position (described above) is better suited for any one ethnicity? (please circle one number on the scale below)

```
        1--------------2--------------3--------------4--------------5--------------6--------------7
```

Yes, much	No, equally	Yes, much
better for a	suited for either	better for a
Black person	ethnicity	White Person

Directions: Using the following scale please indicate your level of agreement with each of the

following statements. **Remember, there are no right or wrong answers.**


```
1--------------2--------------3--------------4--------------5--------------6--------------7
```

Strongly   Neither Agree   Strongly

Disagree   Nor Disagree   Agree

1)_____The police officers who openly express negative attitudes about Black people should be

   reprimanded.

2)_____This police unit would be a hostile working environment for Black people.

3)_____A Black officer would not get along well with other officers in this unit.

4)_____I feel sorry for Black people in this police force.

5)_____A Black officer would not be respected by the members of this town.

6)_____Policies to protect Black people should be initiated in this application process.

7)_____I feel bad about how Black people are treated in this town.

8)_____Diversity programs should be instituted in this department.

9)_____It is appropriate for the officers to tell jokes about Black people.

10)____I am saddened by the attitudes toward Black people in this town.

11)____I am upset that police officers are telling jokes about Black people.

Appendix C:

Demographic Information

SECTION THREE

Gender (please circle):   Female   Male

Age: _____

Race (please circle):

White   Hispanic   Asian   Black   Native-American   Other: _____

Student: Are you currently a student?

        Yes   No

    If Yes, what year in school are you?

       1st   2nd   3rd   4th-5th   Graduate Student

Relationships:

Please recall the person you wrote about at the beginning of the survey.

Please rate how close you are to that person by circling a number on the scale below.

  1--------------2--------------3--------------4--------------5--------------6--------------7

  Not At   Moderately   Very Close

All Close   Close

Did anything in today's session strike you as odd or unusual?

Sometimes in studies in social psychology, participants believe there is more going on than meets the eye. It would be helpful to know if you felt that way about this particular session. What hypothesis did you think we were testing? Did thinking this influence your responses in any way?

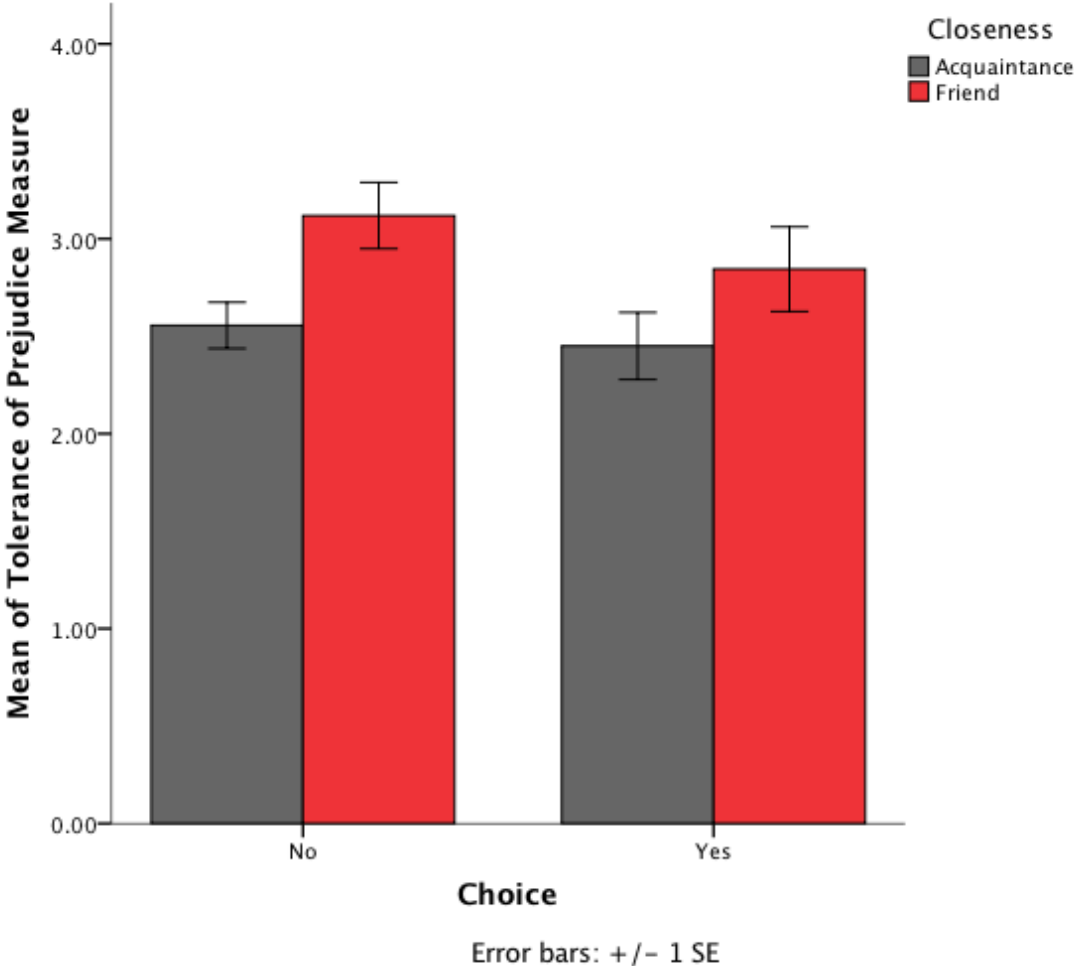*Figure 1.* Effect of closeness and choice on tolerance of prejudice.

Error bars: +/− 1 SE

Figure 2. Effect of closeness and valence on tolerance of prejudice.