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Displaying Hypocrisy through Social Judgments

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Abstract

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In two studies, the authors investigated how people evaluate hypocrites. Study 1 found that a hypocrisy-primed group, compared to a no hypocrisy-primed group, judged a hypocrite leniently, rating the hypocrite lower on prejudice, hypocrisy, and deception. However, when participants in the hypocrisy-primed group were able to establish credentials by signing a petition, they rated the hypocrite more harshly than their counterparts who were not allowed to establish credentials. Study 2 replicated this finding and also demonstrated that participants in the hypocrisy-primed group judged themselves less harshly than a hypocrite, rating themselves lower on prejudice, hypocrisy, and deception.

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Introduction

In classical literature as in political life, a hypocrite is characterized as someone who gives a public statement or shows a commitment to a standard, but then displays behaviors that contradict that statement or standard. In Dickens’ *David Copperfield*, Uriah Heep constantly declaims his humbleness while lusting after another man’s money and daughter. Senator Strom Thurmond, who built his political career upon racial segregationism, was found posthumously to have fathered a daughter with an African-American maid employed by his family.

These hypocrisy examples highlight several key hypocritical elements that researchers have investigated such as inconsistency, an audience, and the intent to deceive. Hypocrites behave inconsistently when they profess one thing and do another (Barden, Rucker & Petty, 2005). Also, they operate within a social context and often require an audience (Statman, 1997; Stone, Aronson, Crain, Winslow & Fried, 1994). Furthermore, hypocrisy typically involves deception and hypocrites frequently display intentions to deceive others (Batson, Thompson, & Chen, 2002). However, people can also be hypocritical in how they judge others such as when strict parents disapprove of other parents’ punitive behaviors or when Reverend Ted Haggard condemns homosexuals, while engaging in homosexual acts himself.

In this research, we examine how people can be hypocritical in their social judgments by condemning others for faults they themselves possess and by utilizing more stringent evaluative standards when judging others than when judging themselves (Crisp & Cowton, 1994; Szabados & Soifer, 2004). We propose that when it is suggested to
participants that they are hypocrites, they will judge fellow hypocrites positively (Valdesolo & DeSteno, 2007). However, we also propose that when participants in a hypocrisy-primed group are able to establish credentials, they will condemn other hypocrites and judge them harshly (Monin & Miller, 2001). Furthermore, we expect participants in the hypocrisy-primed group to judge fellow hypocrites more harshly than themselves (Alicke, Klotz, Breitenbecher, Yurak & Vredenburg, 1995).

*Cognitive Dissonance and Moral Hypocrisy Paradigms*

In order to investigate hypocrisy’s elements and effects on people, psychologists have employed cognitive dissonance and moral hypocrisy paradigms. In the dissonance studies, experimenters induce hypocritical feelings in their participants by instructing them to give speeches promoting certain behaviors/standards, and then making them mindful of past instances when they did not live up to their advocated behaviors/standards (Stone, Aronson et al., 1994). These studies feature two important hypocrisy elements, inconsistency and an audience, and demonstrate that hypocritical participants experience cognitive dissonance and a threatened self-concept when they realize that their past behaviors are inconsistent with their self-standards (Fried & Aronson, 1995; Stone & Cooper, 2001; Thibodeau & Aronson, 1992). Furthermore, results suggest that hypocrites try to alleviate their cognitive dissonance and attempt to repair their threatened self-concepts by changing their behaviors and/or attitudes (Fointiat, 2004).

Researchers who use the moral hypocrisy paradigm induce hypocritical feelings in their participants by having them display behaviors contradictory to their moral
standards. Participants publicly agree to assign two tasks, one long and the other short, to either themselves or another person by a morally fair method (a coin flip). However, they proceed to cheat on the coin flip and assign the short, preferred activity to themselves even when the coin designates that the other person should receive the quick activity (Batson et al., 2002). These studies feature the deception element and suggest situations where people refrain from engaging in hypocrisy. When participants become self-aware due a mirror being present in the lab, they assign the enjoyable task in accordance with the coin flip (Batson, Kobrynowicz, Dinnerstein, Kampf, & Wilson 1997). However, studies using these paradigms have little to say regarding how people can display hypocrisy in their social judgments. The present research examined how people can be hypocritical in how they judge others by condemning others for faults they themselves possess and by utilizing more stringent evaluative standards when judging others than when judging themselves.

The Self and Social Judgment

The self plays a major role in people’s social judgments and is frequently used as a reference point when judging others (Alicke, Dunning & Krueger, 2005; Alicke, 1993; Beauregard & Dunning, 1998; Biernat, Manis, & Kobrynowicz, 1997; Dunning & Hayes, 1996). Furthermore, people often modify their social judgments to maintain positive self-images (Beauregard & Dunning, 1998; Dunning & Cohen, 1992). Participants who scored low on the SAT and experienced a failure on an intellectual task, compared to participants who scored high on the SAT and failed an intellectual task, rated a person with an average SAT score significantly higher on intelligence (Beauregard & Dunning,
1998). By doing so, the low-performing participants were able to claim to be intelligent themselves. These results suggest that hypocritical participants will evaluate fellow hypocrites positively. Indeed, emerging research shows that people who are made to feel like moral hypocrites judge their own immoral acts and the immoral behavior of a hypocritical in-group member leniently.

**Hypocrisy and Social Judgments**

Valdesolo and DeSteno (2007) recently demonstrated that hypocritical people rate their own and a fellow in-group member’s moral transgressions significantly higher in fairness than the same moral transgression enacted by an out-group member. However, their experiment only examined how people can act hypocritically by evaluating their immoral transgressions less harshly than the same immoral transgressions enacted by another person. Along with investigating how people behave hypocritically by evaluating themselves more favorably than others, we examined how people can display hypocrisy by condemning others for faults they themselves possess. The current studies gave participants a chance to repair their self-concepts and establish credentials, an opportunity Valdesolo and DeSteno did not provide. Participants in the hypocrisy-primed condition might then exhibit another hypocritical element, condemnation, and judge a fellow hypocrite harshly after being able to repair their self-concepts and establish credentials (Monin & Miller, 2001). Another extension the present research made on Valdesolo and DeSteno’s work was to examine how people’s evaluations of a hypocrite differ when they are experiencing both hypocritical feelings and a threat to their self-concept compared to when they are only experiencing a threatened self-concept.
The current research included a self-threat condition where participants’ self-concepts were threatened, but they were not meant to feel hypocritical. Finally, the current studies employed a no hypocrisy-prime control condition, a comparison group Valdesolo and DeSteno did not utilize.

**The Present Research**

Broadly, the present research examined how hypocrites view fellow hypocrites. Previous cognitive dissonance and moral hypocrisy research does not fully investigate people’s evaluations of hypocrites and only a few recent studies explore how people judge hypocrites (Barden et al., 2005; Valdesolo & DeSteno, 2007). One possible reason for this lack of research is the expectation that people will always judge hypocrites negatively. Acts of hypocrisy routinely involve negative actions and philosophers accuse hypocrites of being interested only in themselves and self-interested rewards (Shklar, 1984; Szabados & Soifer, 2004). Additionally, people dislike hypocrites since they display inconsistent behavior and have the potential to cause group conflict (Tedeschi, Schlenker, & Bonoma, 1971; Ybarra, 2002). However, if people are made to feel like hypocrites themselves, perhaps they will not judge other hypocrites so negatively due to empathetic feelings and self-enhancement concerns. People may rate fellow hypocrites positively since they can take their perspective and feel empathy for them (Vreeke & van der Mark, 2003). Also, they may rate fellow hypocrites leniently since it will make themselves feel better and will reflect positively on their own character (Beauregard & Dunning, 1998). Though, after establishing credentials, hypocritical people may be
quick to forget their transgressions and proceed to condemn fellow hypocrites (Monin & Miller, 2001).

*Overview of the Present Studies*

The two studies described below examined how people can act hypocritically in their social judgments. Both studies primed hypocrisy in participants and suggested to them that they were racial hypocrites by giving them discrepant feedback on two measures of racial attitudes: a low score on an explicit measure and a high score on an implicit measure. Low scores on the racial measures gave participants positive feedback and indicated to them that they displayed egalitarian attitudes, whereas high scores on the racial measures gave participants negative feedback and indicated to them that they exhibited bias and prejudice attitudes. Participants in the no hypocrisy-primed conditions received low scores and positive feedback on both these racial measures. Participants in the self-threat conditions received a high score, negative feedback, on the implicit measure but did not first establish a self-standard with the explicit measure. Roughly half of the participants established credentials via a petition, and then all participants rated four fictitious students, one of which was a hypocrite who scored low on an explicit measure and high on an implicit measure.

Study 1 addressed the condemnation element by having participants in the hypocrisy-primed group judge a fellow hypocrite on various dimensions including hypocrisy, prejudice and deception. Hypocrisy was primed in roughly half of the participants and about half the participants were able to establish credentials by signing a petition. It was expected that participants in the hypocrisy-primed conditions, compared
to participants in the no hypocrisy-primed conditions, would judge the fellow hypocrite more positively, rating the hypocrite lower on deception, prejudice, and hypocrisy (Valdesolo & DeSteno, 2007). However, it was also predicted that participants in the hypocrisy-primed condition who were able to establish credentials, compared to hypocrisy-primed participants who were not allowed to sign the petition, would condemn the fellow hypocrite and judge them harshly (Monin & Miller, 2001). Participants in the no hypocrisy-primed conditions should have rated the hypocrite harshly regardless of whether they were able to establish credentials or not.

Study 2 examined the self-other ratings disparity element and had participants in the hypocrisy-primed condition judge themselves and make self-ratings on the same domains that they judged the fellow hypocrite. This second study also included a condition in which participants experienced self-threat, but were not made to feel hypocritical. It was predicted that participants in the hypocrisy-primed conditions would have higher self-ratings of hypocrisy than participants in the no-hypocrisy-primed and self-threat conditions. Also, it was expected that the participants in the hypocrisy-primed conditions would rate themselves less harshly than the fellow hypocritical student, thereby utilizing more stringent evaluative standards when judging others than when judging themselves. Finally, we again predicted that participants in the hypocrisy-primed condition who were able to establish credentials, compared to hypocrisy-primed participants who were not allowed to sign the petition, would condemn the fellow hypocrite and judge them harshly.
Study 1

The first study explored how participants, especially hypocrisy-primed participants, would rate other hypocrites. Hypocrisy was primed in roughly half of the participants. In the other half, no hypocrisy was primed. Also, about half of the participants were allowed to establish credentials by signing a petition. Finally, participants in each condition were asked to judge four fictitious students on various dimensions. Replicating past work, we expected hypocrisy-primed participants to rate a fellow hypocrite leniently. But, we also expected participants in the hypocrisy-primed condition who were able to establish credentials, compared to their counterparts who were not able to sign the petition, to judge a fellow hypocrite harshly.

Method

Design and Participants

In all, 36 male and 52 female introductory psychology students at a large Midwestern university were recruited in exchange for partial course credit and were randomly assigned to the conditions of a 2 (feedback: hypocrisy-primed vs. no hypocrisy-primed) X 2 (credentials: established vs. not established) between subjects factorial design. Participants were run on separate computers in group laboratory sessions no larger than 5.

Procedure

Upon entering the lab, the experimenter welcomed the participants and told them that to begin the experiment they will answer various demographic questions. After
completing the questions, the experimenter informed the participants about the goal of first part of the experiment: to examine student’s racial feelings.

Participants then completed various explicit measures of racial attitudes. These measures consisted of a set of self-report questions and various items from the Modern Racism Scale, MRS (McConahay, Hardee, & Batts, 1981). The MRS items asked participants to respond to statements like “Blacks are getting too demanding in their push for equal rights” by answering on a 7-point scale where 1 indicated a strong disagreement and 7 indicated a strong agreement. Participants were told that their scores fell on a 50-point scale, with higher numbers indicating higher levels of prejudice. Participants received genuine feedback on these explicit measures, where high numbers indicated a prejudice toward African Americans and low numbers indicated no prejudice toward African Americans. We noted participants who exhibited prejudice attitudes on these explicit measures and did not include them in the data analysis since they may have not experienced any hypocritical feelings when they were later informed by an implicit measure that they exhibited a preference for White faces. The experimenter then told the participants that they will be completing a more accurate implicit measure of racial attitudes.

Next, participants completed an implicit measure of racial attitudes similar to the bonafide-pipeline task (Fazio & Hilden, 2001). This measure consisted of four stages. Participants first completed a practice stage where they indicated if words that flashed up on the computer screen had a good or bad meaning. In order to signify that the word had good meaning, they pressed the “Z” key. In order to signify that the word had a bad
meaning, they pressed the “/” key. This information was available to them through two sticky notes on the keyboard. Also, to help warn participants that a new word was coming up, a row of asterisks was presented in the center of the screen.

After the practice session, participants completed the second stage, where they again identified good and bad words. In the third stage, participants viewed 24 male facial profiles of Black and White people. These faces were presented for a brief period of time in the center of the screen. The fourth phase of the experiment combined phases two and three. Participants saw the facial profiles flash on the screen for one second and then had to identify whether the following word was positive or negative by pressing the appropriate keys.

Participants were randomly assigned to one of two possible feedback conditions on the implicit measure: a high score of 45, and a low score of 26. A high score of 45 signaled to participants that they exhibited high levels of prejudice and demonstrated a preference for White faces. A low score of 26 indicated to participants that they did not display any prejudice and demonstrated an equal preference for White and Black faces.

The hypocrisy priming manipulation was achieved by creating a discrepancy between participants’ scores on the explicit and implicit measures. Due to actual beliefs, social desirability and self-presentational concerns, participants should have scored low on the explicit measure, indicating that they did not exhibit high levels of prejudice. Thus, in order to create the perception of racial hypocrisy, participants in the hypocrisy-prime conditions received a manipulated, very high score of 45 on the implicit measure of racial attitudes. By receiving this high score of 45, hypocritical feelings should have
resulted. Participants in the hypocrisy-prime conditions should have realized that they professed an egalitarian attitude and scored low on the explicit measure, but then displayed a contradictory, bias attitude and scored high on the more accurate implicit measure. The manipulated high scores were qualified by having the computer inform participants ‘You obtained this score because your response times for the bad words were faster when a Black face flashed up on the screen. Also, your response times for the good words were slightly slower when a Black face flashed up on the screen.’

Participants in the no hypocrisy-prime conditions received positive feedback on the implicit measure. The computer informed them that they received a low score of 26, and thus had an equal preference for White and Black faces. Therefore, no feelings of hypocrisy should have arisen in these participants since they scored low on both the explicit and implicit racial measures. The low scores were qualified by having the computer inform the participants ‘You obtained this score because your response times for the good and bad words were equal when a Black and White face flashed up on the screen.’

Next, the experimenter introduced the petition to the participants, if the condition called for it. Therefore, some participants had the opportunity to sign a petition to volunteer their time to LINKS, an actual minority campus organization. Information regarding this organization was located on the top portion of the petition. By volunteering and signing the petition, participants in the hypocrisy-prime condition were able to establish credentials and repair their self-concepts.
After participants signed the petition, the experiment continued. If participants were in the conditions in which there was no petition, the petition was skipped and the experimenter proceeded directly to the second part of the experiment, the evaluation of the fictitious students. Participants were informed that the students completed the same racial measures in another study and were falsely told that recent research has demonstrated that the implicit racial attitudes measure enhances one’s ability to engage in person perception and make trait judgments. However, before the participants evaluated the fictitious students, they were asked again to report their scores on the explicit and implicit measures.

Finally, participants randomly viewed four fabricated student scores and judged the students on various dimensions and attributes. The participants evaluated four students in total to reduce suspicion as to the purpose of the experiment. The experiment was really only interested in how participants evaluated the hypocritical student who scored low on the explicit measure, demonstrating egalitarian values, but then exhibit prejudice attitudes by scoring high on the implicit measure. All of the fictitious students’ information was randomly presented to participants and they were informed that these students were four fellow college students enrolled at satellite campuses. The students’ scores on the implicit measure were presented in the same format as the participants’ and were displayed as follows:

Date: 9-22-07
Campus: xxx
Study: Personal Responsibilities
Explicit Score: xxx
Implicit Score: xxx
*These scores are based on a 50-point system. Higher numbers indicate that an individual has a preference for White faces and signifies high levels of prejudice. However, low numbers indicate an equal preference toward Black and White faces and signify low levels of prejudice. *

Dependent Measures

Participants judged the fictitious students on prejudice, deception, and hypocrisy. The dependent measures scales were presented after each fictitious student’s scores. Also, the fabricated students’ scores on the explicit and implicit measures were always visible at the top of the computer screen so participants did not have to memorize them.

The participants used 10-point scales ranging from 1, indicating very low levels of the dependent variable, to, 5 indicating average levels of the dependent variable, to 10, indicating very high levels of the dependent variable to evaluate the fictitious students. For instance, in measuring a fictitious student on prejudice, participants would select 1 to signify the student displayed very low levels prejudice, 5 to convey that the student exhibited average levels of prejudice, and 10 to indicate that the student displayed very high levels of prejudice.

Results and Discussion

Six participants were excluded from the analyses since they failed debriefing by expressing suspicion when questioned about the implicit racial measure feedback. A 2 (no hypocrisy-prime feedback vs. hypocrisy-prime feedback) X 2 (established credentials vs. no established credentials) ANOVA was used to analyze the data. Descriptive statistics for all the dependent variables are presented in Table 1.
Hypocrisy Judgments

A 2 (hypocrisy-primed vs. no hypocrisy-primed) X 2 (credentials established vs. credentials not established) ANOVA was conducted on the participants’ hypocrisy ratings of the hypocritical student. The ANOVA revealed a significant main effect of hypocrisy, $F(1, 87) = 12.75$, $p < .05$, $\eta^2 = .132$. Participants evaluated the hypocritical student more favorably, indicating they thought the student exhibited low levels of hypocrisy, when they were made aware of their own hypocrisy (5.47) than when they were not made aware of their own hypocrisy (7.11). This main effect was qualified by a significant Hypocrisy X Credentials interaction, $F(1, 87) = 5.16$, $p < .05$, $\eta^2 = .058$. To explore the nature of this interaction, we conducted planned comparisons. For the hypocritical participants, establishing credentials had a significant impact, such that they evaluated the hypocritical student more harshly, judging them significantly higher on hypocrisy, when they were able to sign the petition (6.26) than when they were not able to sign the petition (4.68), $t(84) = -2.46$, $p < .05$. Conversely, establishing credentials did not have a significant impact on the evaluations made by non-hypocritical participants. Non-hypocritical participants rated the hypocritical student similarly on hypocrisy regardless of whether they signed the petition (6.86) or not (7.36), $p = .443$.

Prejudice Judgments

A 2 (Hypocrisy-primed vs. No Hypocrisy-primed) X 2 (Credentials Established vs. Credentials Not Established) ANOVA was conducted on the participants’ prejudice ratings of the hypocritical student. The ANOVA revealed a significant main effect of hypocrisy, $F(1, 87) = 12.86$, $p < .05$, $\eta^2 = .133$. Participants evaluated the hypocritical
student more favorably, indicating they thought the student exhibited low levels of prejudice, when they were made aware of their own hypocrisy (5.54) than when they were not made aware of their own hypocrisy (7.27). This main effect was qualified by a marginally significant Hypocrisy X Credentials interaction, $F(1, 87) = 3.59, p < .10, \eta^2 = .041$. To explore the nature of this interaction, we conducted planned comparisons. For the hypocritical participants, establishing credentials did not have a significant impact, $p = .142$. Additionally, for the non-hypocritical participants, establishing credentials did not have a significant impact, $p = .234$.

**Deception Judgments**

A 2 (Hypocrisy vs. No Hypocrisy) X 2 (Credentials Established vs. Credentials Not Established) ANOVA was conducted on the participants’ deception ratings of the hypocritical student. The ANOVA revealed a significant main effect of hypocrisy, $F(1, 87) = 5.03, p < .05, \eta^2 = .057$. Participants evaluated the hypocritical student more favorably, indicating they thought the student exhibited low levels of deception, when they were made aware of their own hypocrisy (4.72) than when they were not made aware of their own hypocrisy (5.79). This main effect was qualified by a marginally significant Hypocrisy X Credentials interaction, $F(1, 87) = 3.17, p < .10, \eta^2 = .036$. To explore the nature of this interaction, we conducted planned comparisons. For the hypocrisy-primed participants, establishing credentials had a significant impact, such that they evaluated the hypocritical student more harshly, judging them significantly higher on deception, when they were able to sign the petition (5.30) than when they were not able to sign the petition (4.14), $t(84) = -1.76, p < .10$. Conversely, establishing
credentials did not have a significant impact on the evaluations made by no hypocrisy-primed participants. They rated the hypocritical student similarly regardless of whether they were able to sign the petition (5.52) or not (6.05), p=.444.

Study 1 investigated whether participants would display hypocrisy by condemning others for faults they themselves possess, an important component. Participants in the hypocrisy-primed group exhibited this element, but only after they established credentials by signing a petition. After signing a petition, they rated a fellow hypocrite significantly higher on hypocrisy and deception in comparison to their counterparts who did not sign the petition. However, Study 1 did not investigate how people can act hypocritical in how they judge themselves and others. Hypocrites often utilize more stringent evaluative standards when judging others than when judging themselves (Szabados & Soifer, 2004). In order to examine this element, participants should have made self-ratings on the same dimensions that they judged the fellow hypocrite. Study 2 had participants make these self-ratings. Also, Study 2 included a self-threat group in the experimental design. By including this new self-threat condition, Study 2 was able to test whether inconsistent and hypocritical feelings are critical or just a threat to one’s self-concept is sufficient to produce the results from Study 1.

Study 2

The purposes of Study 2 were to replicate the hypocrisy-priming and credential findings from Study 1, to explore a new self-threat condition, and to examine whether participants in the hypocrisy-prime conditions would exhibit an additional element of hypocrisy by utilizing more stringent evaluative standards when judging others than
when judging themselves. Study 2 attempted to make the participants in the self-threat condition experience a threat to self by giving them negative feedback, a high score, on the implicit racial attitudes measure. However, participants in this condition should not have felt hypocritical since they did not first establish an egalitarian standard with the explicit measures.

In addition, participants were asked to make self-ratings on hypocrisy, prejudice, and deception, the same dimensions on which they judged the other students. By having participants make these self-ratings, Study 2 was able to investigate whether participants in the hypocrisy-prime conditions would act even more hypocritically by utilizing more stringent evaluative standards when judging others than when judging themselves (Szabados & Soifer, 2006). Furthermore, these self-ratings served as a hypocrisy manipulation check. Participants in the hypocrisy-primed conditions should have felt more hypocritical and therefore should have rated themselves as more hypocritical than participants in the no hypocrisy-prime and self-threat conditions.

Method

Participants and Design

In all, 49 male and 65 female introductory psychology students at Ohio University were recruited in exchange for partial course credit and were randomly assigned to the conditions of a 3 between (feedback: hypocrisy-primed, self-threat, no hypocrisy-primed) X 2 between (credentials: established vs. not established) X 2 within (ratings: self-ratings and other-ratings) mixed factorial design. Participants were run on separate computers in group laboratory sessions no larger than 5.
Procedure

The procedures of Study 2 were identical to that of Study 1, except for the additions of the self-threat condition and participants making self-ratings. Participants in the new self-threat condition did not complete the explicit racial attitudes measures, instead only taking the implicit racial attitudes measure. They received negative feedback on this measure, a high score of 45 indicating that they exhibited prejudice, which should have threatened their self-concepts. However, participants should not have felt hypocritical since they did not first establish an egalitarian self-standard by completing the explicit measures. They were given the same information as the participants in the hypocrisy-primed and no hypocrisy-primed conditions and were told that the implicit measure was more accurate at measuring racial attitudes than traditional self-report measures and were informed that scores on both the explicit and implicit measures fell on 50-point scales, with higher scores indicating higher levels of prejudice. Furthermore, similar to participants in the hypocrisy-primed and no hypocrisy-primed conditions, half of the participants in the new self-threat condition were given a chance to establish credentials by signing a petition and volunteer their time at a minority organization on campus.

Study 2 also instructed participants to make self-ratings on the same dimensions they judged the other students. They were asked to indicate, based on their own scores, how deceptive, hypocritical, and prejudice they thought they themselves were. These self-ratings always came after the students made their judgments of the fictitious students. The dependent variables of interest in Study 2 were participants’ self-ratings of
hypocrisy, prejudice, and deception as well as their ratings of hypocrisy, prejudice, and deception with regards to the fictitious hypocritical student. The dependent variables were measured in the same way as in Study 1.

Results and Discussion

8 participants were excluded from the analyses since they failed debriefing by expressing suspicion when questioned about the implicit racial measure feedback. A 3 (no hypocrisy-primed feedback, hypocrisy-primed feedback, and self-threat feedback) X 2 (established credentials and no established credentials) X 2 (self-judgment and other judgment) repeated measures ANOVA was used to analyze the data. Descriptive statistics are provided in Table 2.

Manipulation Check

In order to examine whether our hypocrisy manipulation was successful, we conducted a one-way ANOVA on the participants’ self-judgments of hypocrisy. A main effect of feedback was obtained $F(2,114) = 5.80, p < .05, \eta^2 = .097$. Participants in the hypocrisy-primed conditions rated themselves to be significantly more hypocritical (3.97), compared to participants in the no hypocrisy-prime conditions (2.54). Thus, our manipulation worked fairly well, participants in the hypocrisy-prime conditions felt significantly more hypocritical than participants in the no hypocrisy-prime conditions $t(111) = 2.98, p < .05$. However, contrary to our hypotheses, participants in the self-threat conditions also rated themselves to be significantly more hypocritical (3.97), compared to participants in the no hypocrisy-prime conditions (2.54). Thus, participants in the self-threat conditions also felt significantly more hypocritical than participants in
the no-hypocrisy conditions \( t(111) = 2.91, p < .05 \). Also unexpectedly, participants in the hypocrisy-primed conditions did not rate themselves to be significantly more hypocritical (3.97), compared to participants in the self-threat conditions (3.97), \( p = .955 \).

**Hypocrisy Judgments**

We submitted the data to a 3 x 2 x 2 repeated measures ANOVA with feedback and credentials as the independent variables and self and other ratings of hypocrisy as the dependent variables. A main effect of self-other ratings was obtained \( F(1, 108) = 88.32, p < .001, \eta^2 = .450 \). Participants rated the hypocritical student significantly higher on hypocrisy (5.85) than themselves (3.50). There was no interaction between self-other ratings and credentials \( F(1, 108) = .508, \text{MSE} = 1.81, p = .478 \). Though, the main effect of self-other ratings was qualified by a significant self-other ratings by feedback interaction \( F(2, 108) = 12.29, p < .001, \eta^2 = .185 \). In order to explore the nature of this interaction, we conducted planned comparisons and examined the differences between participants’ self-ratings and other-ratings by creating a different score variable. To compute this variable we subtracted participants’ self-ratings from their ratings of the hypocritical student. Thus, positive numbers on this difference score would indicate that hypocrisy-primed participants judged themselves to be less hypocritical than the hypocritical student. Indeed, the difference score of hypocrisy was significantly different from zero for participants in the hypocrisy-primed condition, \( t(37) = 3.05, p < .005 \).

We also conducted simple effects tests, after collapsing across credentials; to examine whether the difference scores of hypocrisy differed by feedback conditions. Participants in the hypocrisy-primed condition had a significantly smaller difference
between their self-ratings and other-ratings (1.26) than participants in the no hypocrisy-primed condition (4.08), $t(75) = -4.59, p < .001$. Also, participants in the self-threat condition had a significantly smaller difference between their self-ratings and other-ratings (1.73) than participants in the no hypocrisy-primed condition (4.08), $t(74) = -3.72, p < .001$. Participants in the hypocrisy-primed (1.26) and self-threat (1.73) conditions did not significantly differ on their difference scores, $t(73) = -0.771, p = .443$. Thus, participants in the no hypocrisy-primed condition had a significantly greater difference score between their self-ratings and other-ratings than participants in the hypocrisy-primed and self-threat conditions, rating the hypocritical student as much more hypocritical than themselves.

We did not obtain a significant three-way interaction between self-other ratings, petition, and feedback $F(2, 108) = 2.07, MSE = 7.37, p = .131$. However, due to the results of Study 1, we anticipated certain credential effects on other ratings. So, we conducted a series of planned comparisons investigating the petition’s effect between groups on self-other ratings. Study 1 found that hypocrisy-primed participants, after signing a petition, rated the hypocritical student more harshly than hypocrisy-primed participants who were not given the opportunity to sign the petition.

For participants in the no hypocrisy-primed group, establishing credentials did not have a significant impact, $t(108) = .415, p = .679$. They rated the hypocritical student similarly on hypocrisy when they signed the petition (6.47) and when they did not sign the petition (6.75). For participants in the self-threat group, establishing credentials did not have a significant impact, $t(108) = -.557, p = .578$. They rated the hypocritical
student similarly on hypocrisy when they signed the petition (5.88) and when they did not sign the petition (5.50). However, for participants in the hypocrisy-primed group, establishing credentials did have a significant impact, $t(108) = -2.11, p = .05$. They evaluated the hypocritical student more harshly, rating them significantly higher on hypocrisy, when they were able to sign the petition (5.95) than when they were not able to sign the petition (4.53). Thus, the hypocrisy/credentials interaction from Study 1 was replicated in Study 2. After they were able to establish credentials, the hypocrisy-primed participants judged the fellow hypocritical student more harshly and higher on hypocrisy compared to their counterparts who were not allowed to establish credentials.

Establishing credentials did not have any impact on how the participants rated themselves with regards to hypocrisy. For participants in the no hypocrisy-primed group, establishing credentials did not have a significant impact, $t(108) = -.266, p = .790$. They rated themselves similarly on hypocrisy when they signed the petition (2.63) and when they did not sign the petition (2.45). For participants in the self-threat group, establishing credentials did not have a significant impact, $t(108) = -.917, p = .361$. They rated themselves similarly on hypocrisy when they signed the petition (4.29) and when they did not sign the petition (3.65). For participants in the hypocrisy-primed group, establishing credentials did not have a significant impact, $t(108) = .534, p = .595$. They evaluated themselves similarly when they were able to sign the petition (3.79) than when they were not able to sign the petition (4.16).

Establishing credentials and signing the petition influenced how the participants’ rated the hypocritical student with regards to hypocrisy, but only when it was suggested
to participants that they themselves were hypocrites. After establishing credentials by signing the petition, the participants felt at liberty to condemn another for a fault they themselves possess, a key element of hypocrisy. However, the petition did not have any impact on the participants’ self-judgments of hypocrisy.

**Prejudice Judgments**

We submitted the data to a 3 x 2 x 2 repeated measures ANOVA with feedback and credentials as the independent variables and self and other ratings of prejudice as the dependent variables. A main effect of self-other ratings was obtained \( F(1, 108) = 74.08, p < .001, \eta^2 = .407 \). Participants rated the hypocritical student significantly higher on prejudice (6.27) than themselves (4.01). There was no interaction between self-other ratings and credentials \( F(1, 108) = 1.23, MSE = 4.82, p = .271 \). Though, the main effect of self-other ratings was qualified by a significant self-other ratings by feedback interaction \( F(2, 108) = 15.21, p < .001, \eta^2 = .220 \). In order to explore the nature of this interaction, we conducted a series planned comparisons and examined participants’ difference scores on self-judgments and other-judgments of prejudice. Again, positive numbers on this difference score would indicate that hypocrisy-primed participants judged themselves to be less prejudicial than the hypocritical student. Indeed, the difference score of prejudice was significantly different from zero for participants in the hypocrisy-primed condition, \( t(37) = 2.20, p < .05 \).

We also conducted simple effects tests; to examine whether the difference scores of prejudice differed by feedback conditions. Participants in the hypocrisy-primed conditions had a significantly smaller difference score between their self and other ratings
(.921) than participants in the no hypocrisy-primed conditions (4.26), $t(75) = -4.59, p < .001$. Also, participants in the self-threat conditions had a significantly smaller difference score between their self and other ratings (1.59) than participants in the no hypocrisy-primed conditions (4.26), $t(74) = -4.02, p < .001$. Participants in the hypocrisy-primed (1.26) and self-threat (1.73) conditions did not significantly differ on their difference scores, $t(73) = -1.07, p = .290$. Thus, participants in no hypocrisy-primed conditions had a significantly greater difference score between their self and other ratings than participants in the hypocrisy-primed and self-threat conditions, rating the hypocritical student much more harshly, and higher on prejudice than themselves.

We did not obtain a significant three-way interaction between self-other ratings, petition, and feedback $F(2, 108) = .262, MSE = 1.03, p = .770$. However, we conducted a series of planned comparisons investigating the petition’s effect between groups on other-ratings. We conducted these planned comparisons since Study 1 showed that participants in the hypocrisy-primed condition who were allowed to establish credentials, in comparison to participants in the hypocrisy-primed condition who were not given an opportunity to establish credentials, rated a fellow hypocrite higher on prejudice.

For participants in the no hypocrisy-primed group, establishing credentials did not have a significant impact, $t(108) = -.06, p = .952$. They rated the hypocritical student similarly on prejudice when they signed the petition (6.89) and when they did not sign the petition (6.85). For participants in the self-threat group, establishing credentials did not have a significant impact, $t(108) = -.944, p = .347$. They rated the hypocritical student similarly on prejudice when they signed the petition (6.82) and when they did not sign the
petition (6.10). For participants in the hypocrisy-primed group, establishing credentials did have a significant impact, $t(108) = -1.95, p < .01$. They evaluated the hypocritical student more harshly when they were able to sign the petition (6.21) than when they were not able to sign the petition (4.74). Thus, after they were able to establish credentials, the hypocrisy-primed participants judged the fellow hypocritical student harshly and higher on prejudice.

Establishing credentials did not have any impact on how the participants rated themselves with regards to prejudice. For participants in the no hypocrisy-primed group, establishing credentials did not have a significant impact, $t(108) = .240, p = .811$. They rated themselves similarly on prejudice when they signed the petition (2.53) and when they did not sign the petition (2.70). For participants in the self-threat group, establishing credentials did not have a significant impact, $t(108) = -.403, p = .688$. They rated themselves similarly on prejudice when they signed the petition (5.00) and when they did not sign the petition (4.70). For participants in the hypocrisy-primed group, establishing credentials did not have a significant impact, $t(108) = -.503, p = .616$. They evaluated themselves similarly on prejudice when they were able to sign the petition (4.74) than when they were not able to sign the petition (4.37).

Establishing credentials by signing the petition influenced how the participants’ rated the hypocritical student with regards to prejudice, but only when it was suggested to participants that they themselves were hypocrites. After signing the petition, the hypocrisy-primed participants were willing to negatively evaluate another for faults they
themselves possess. However, establishing credentials did not have any impact on the participants’ self-judgments of prejudice.

Deception Judgments

We submitted the data to a 3 x 2 x 2 repeated measures ANOVA with feedback and credentials as the independent variables and self and other ratings of deception as the dependent variables. A main effect of self-other ratings was obtained $F(1, 108) = 23.90$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .181$. Participants rated the hypocritical student significantly higher on deception (4.80) than themselves (3.42). There was no interaction between self-other ratings and credentials $F(1, 108) = .458$ $MSE = 2.08$, $p = .500$. Though, the main effect of self-other ratings was qualified by a significant self-other ratings by feedback interaction $F(2, 108) = 3.18$, $p < .05$, $\eta^2 = .056$. In order to explore the nature of this interaction, we conducted a series planned comparisons on participants’ different scores on judgments of deception. Again, positive numbers on this difference score would indicate that the hypocrisy-primed participants judged themselves to be less deceptive than the hypocritical student. Indeed, the difference score of deception was significantly different from zero for participants in the hypocrisy-primed condition, $t(37) = 2.50$, $p < .05$.

We also conducted simple effects tests to examine whether the difference scores of deception differed by feedback conditions. Participants in the hypocrisy-primed condition had a significantly smaller difference score between their self and other judgments (.895) than participants in the no hypocrisy-primed condition (2.41), $t(75) = -2.06$, $p < .05$. Also, participants in the self-threat conditions had a marginally significant
smaller difference score between their self and other judgments (.865) than participants in the no hypocrisy-primed condition (2.41), $t(74) = -1.96, p < .01$. Participants in the hypocrisy-primed (.895) and self-threat (.865) conditions did not significantly differ on their difference scores, $t(73) = .052, p = .958$. Thus, participants in no hypocrisy-primed conditions had significantly greater difference scores than participants in the hypocrisy-primed and self-threat conditions, rating the hypocritical student much more harshly and higher on deception than themselves.

We obtained a significant three-way interaction between self-other ratings, petition, and feedback $F(2, 108) = 3.79, p < .05$ with regards to deception. Thus, we conducted a series of planned comparisons investigating the petition’s effect between groups on self-other ratings. Establishing credentials and signing the petition did not have any impact on how participants rated the hypocritical student. For participants in the no hypocrisy-primed group, establishing credentials did not have a significant impact, $t(108) = 1.40, p = .165$. They rated the hypocritical student similarly on deception when they signed the petition (5.00) and when they did not sign the petition (5.95). For participants in the self-threat group, establishing credentials did not have a significant impact, $t(108) = -.652, p = .516$. They rated the hypocritical student similarly on deception when they signed the petition (4.71) and when they did not sign the petition (4.25). For participants in the hypocrisy-primed group, establishing credentials did not have a significant impact, $t(108) = -.230, p = .819$. They evaluated the hypocritical student similarly on deception when they were able to sign the petition (4.53) than and when they were not able to sign the petition (4.37).
The petition did have some impact on how the participants rated themselves with regards to deception. For participants in the no hypocrisy-primed group, establishing credentials did have a significant impact, $t(108) = -2.27$, $p < .05$. They rated themselves more harshly on deception when they signed the petition (3.84) and when they did not sign the petition (2.35). For participants in the self-threat group, establishing credentials did not have a significant impact, $t(108) = -.566$, $p = .575$. They rated themselves similarly on deception when they signed the petition (3.82) and when they did not sign the petition (3.40). For participants in the hypocrisy-primed group, establishing credentials did not have a significant impact, $t(108) = 1.93$, $p = .100$. They evaluated themselves similarly when they were able to sign the petition (3.00) than when they were not able to sign the petition (3.40).

Establishing and signing the petition did not influence how the participants’ rated the hypocritical student with regards to deception. They rated the hypocrite similarly regardless of whether they had an opportunity to sign the petition or not. The petition did have any impact on the participants’ self-judgments of deception, but only for those participants in the no hypocrisy-primed condition.

Study 2 expanded on Study 1 in two ways. First, Study 2 included a new self-threat condition, which theoretically should have helped our understanding of whether hypocritical and inconsistent thoughts are crucial, or just a threat to one’s self-concept is enough to produce the results found in Study 1. However, it is difficult to make any conclusions since participants in the self-threat condition did not rate themselves as less
hypocritical than participants in the hypocrisy-primed condition, even though they did not establish any self-standards by completing the explicit measures.

Second, Study 2 instructed participants to make self-ratings on the same dimensions that they judged the fictitious students. By including self-ratings in the design, we were able to conclude whether our hypocrisy manipulation was successful. Indeed, participants in the hypocrisy-primed condition judged themselves to be significantly more hypocritical than participants in the no hypocrisy-primed condition. These self-ratings also allowed us to examine if participants would exhibit an additional hypocrisy element by using more stringent evaluative standards when judging others than when judging themselves. Indeed, participants in the hypocrisy-primed conditions acted even more hypocritically by judging themselves to be much less hypocritical, prejudice, deceptive than the fellow hypocritical student.

General Discussion

Our investigation into hypocrisy began with a general research question. We were interested in examining how hypocrites judge fellow hypocrites and Study 1 was designed to answer this query. When it was suggested to participants that they themselves were hypocrites, they judged a fellow hypocrite more leniently and rated the hypocrite lower on hypocrisy, prejudice, and deception than did participants who were non-hypocrites. This result reflects past research findings with regards to how hypocrites judge fellow hypocrites (Valdesolo & DeSteno, 2007). As an extension of previous research, Study 1 provided interesting evidence that hypocrisy-primed participants, after establishing credentials by signing a petition, judge fellow hypocrites as negatively as
non-hypocrites. By judging the fellow hypocrite this way, they displayed an important hypocrisy element, condemning others for faults they themselves possess.

Study 2 replicated the majority of the findings of Study 1 and examined hypocrisy more closely by including a self-threat condition and by having the participants make self-ratings on the same dimensions that they judged the fictitious students. Again, hypocrisy-primed participants who were able to establish credentials judged the fellow hypocritical student more harshly than their counterparts who were not able to sign the petition, rating the hypocrite higher on hypocrisy and prejudice.

The self-ratings demonstrated that our hypocrisy manipulation was successful. Participants in the hypocrisy-primed condition rated themselves as being more hypocritical than participants in the no-hypocrisy-primed condition. However, unexpectedly, the participants in the self-threat condition also judged themselves to be more hypocritical than the participants in the no-hypocrisy condition. Furthermore, these self-ratings also allowed us to investigate a hypocrisy element not addressed by previous cognitive dissonance and moral hypocrisy paradigms. By including these self-ratings, Study 2 was able to investigate whether the hypocrisy-primed participants would utilize more stringent evaluative standards when judging others than when judging themselves. Indeed, they displayed this additional element and rated themselves more positively and judged themselves much more leniently on the same dimensions they judged the hypocritical student.

Psychological research demonstrates that feelings of hypocrisy influence people’s behaviors/attitudes and that people frequently go against their self-standards (Stone,
Aronson, et al., 1994; Batson, Thompson, & Chen, 2002). Recent hypocrisy research has started to examine how people view hypocrites and has begun to investigate how hypocrisy can influence people’s social judgments. This research shows that people negatively evaluate hypocrites but that hypocrites sometimes judge fellow hypocrites leniently (Barden et al., 2005; Valdesolo & DeSteno, 2007). The present studies followed this new hypocrisy research line, showing that hypocrisy-primed participants judge fellow hypocrites more leniently than did a no hypocrisy-primed group. However, when hypocrisy-primed participants were able to establish credentials by signing a petition, they judged a fellow hypocrite as harshly as a no hypocrisy-primed control group.

Questions for Future Research

There are several directions that future research could explore. First, participants in the self-threat conditions felt as hypocritical as the participants in the hypocrisy-primed conditions, even though they did not first establish an egalitarian self-standard. Thus, we cannot say for certain whether our results are being driven by hypocritical feelings, a threat to one’s self concept, or a combination of the two. Future research should utilize a condition in which participants’ sense of self is threatened, but they do not feel hypocritical.

Second, future studies could have participants judge how similar they think they are to the hypocrites they are rating. Ratings of similarity could potentially mediate the participants’ judgments of hypocrites in that the more similar the participants see themselves to the hypocrites, the more lenient they rate them. This would fall in line with
recent research demonstrating that people are more prone to forgive others when they can see themselves as capable of committing similar offenses (Exline, Baumeister, Zell, Kraft & Witvliet, 2008).

Finally, future research could explore mitigating factors that lead to lenient judgments. Hypocrisy-primed participants judged the fellow hypocritical student harshly when they were able to establish credentials and the no hypocrisy-primed control group consistently judged the hypocritical student harshly regardless of whether they signed the petition. Perhaps though, if the participants judged a hypocrite who expressed remorse and volunteered a large amount of hours to a minority organization, they would not judge the hypocrite so negatively and harshly.

Conclusion

The main purpose of the present studies was to examine how hypocrites judge fellow hypocrites. This question is important since hypocrites are so visible in our society, from New York Governors to local preachers. Most people consider hypocrites liars and cheats, but if they are made aware of their own hypocrisy and similar failings in their pasts, maybe they would not be so quick to judge hypocrites so negatively. Though, once they are able to repair their self-concepts and establish credentials, people are quick to forget their transgressions and proceed to condemn the fellow hypocrites
References


Table 1

*Means and Standard Deviations for Hypocrisy, Prejudice, and Deception Judgments, Study 1.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>Hypocrites</th>
<th>Non-Hypocrites</th>
<th>Hypocrites</th>
<th>Non-Hypocrites</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hypocrisy</td>
<td>6.26 (1.69)</td>
<td>6.86 (2.18)</td>
<td>4.68 (2.08)</td>
<td>7.36 (2.59)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prejudice</td>
<td>6.04 (2.31)</td>
<td>6.86 (2.22)</td>
<td>5.05 (2.06)</td>
<td>7.68 (2.42)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deception</td>
<td>5.30 (2.12)</td>
<td>5.52 (2.36)</td>
<td>4.14 (1.55)</td>
<td>6.05 (2.72)</td>
</tr>
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</table>

*Note:* Ratings on these dependent measures were made on 10-point scales ranging from 1 to 10.

*Note:* Standard deviations appear in parentheses.
**Means and Standard Deviations for Hypocrisy, Prejudice and Deception Judgments, Study 2**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feedback</th>
<th>Petition</th>
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<td>Self</td>
<td>Other</td>
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<td>Hypocrisy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hypocrisy</td>
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<td>5.95</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>(1.90)</td>
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<td>(1.84)</td>
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<td>4.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(1.76)</td>
<td>(1.78)</td>
</tr>
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<td>Threat</td>
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<td>(2.77)</td>
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*Note:* Standard deviations appear in parentheses.