

Self and Other Obedience Estimates: Biases and Moderators

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ABSTRACT. The authors conducted 2 studies regarding behavior perceptions of "self" and "typical other" in hypothetical replications of S. Milgram's (1963) obedience experiment. In Study 1, participants' knowledge about Milgram's actual results was manipulated. Regardless of knowledge, results demonstrated several specific social and perceptual biases (e.g., the *self-other bias*; J. D. Brown, 1986), in addition to several general, fundamental lessons of social psychology (e.g., the perseverance of *lay dispositionism*). Study 2 was designed to explore the possibility that participants' own academic interests and worldview could influence the biases explicated in Study 1. The authors assessed perceptions of both criminal-justice majors and non-criminal-justice majors regarding their perceptions of behaviors of self and typical other. The criminal-justice students' self-other obedience estimates were significantly higher than those of the non-criminal-justice students. Further, the self-other discrepancy for criminal-justice students was significantly smaller than the difference reported by non-criminal-justice majors, suggesting that the criminal-justice students demonstrated the self-other bias significantly less than non-criminal-justice students in this context. The findings indicate that specific social-perceptual biases may have been moderated by career interest and worldview.

Key words: authority, criminal justice, electric shock, Milgram, obedience, self-other bias

IN DESCRIBING his quintessential research on obedience to authority, Milgram wrote that "the social psychology of this century reveals a major lesson: Often, it is not so much the kind of person a man (or woman) is as the kind of situation in which he (or she) finds him (or her) self that determines how he (or she) will act"

(1974, p. 205). Milgram's words arguably present the crux of social psychology, particularly two major points. Specifically, Milgram was speaking to the fact that (a) situational influences on behavior are often much greater than common sense would dictate (as found in the Stanford Prison Study; Haney, Banks, & Zimbardo, 1973) and (b) as social perceivers, individuals tend to discount the impact of situational variables on others' behavior (Ross, Amabile, & Steinmetz, 1977).

In a synthesis of themes in social psychology, Ross and Nisbett (1991) described social perceivers as "lay trait theorists," meaning that people tend to assume that others behave as they do because they possess personality traits that dictate such behavior. For instance, people are more likely to assume that another driver is simply "a jerk" than to attribute the driver's error to situational influences such as driving conditions. Ross and Nisbett argued that such assumptions about personality traits are often incorrect. Further, they posited that such a perceptual pattern is inconsistent with the plethora of research in social psychology demonstrating how powerful situations are in affecting behavior (Haney et al., 1973).

Milgram's (1963) Obedience Paradigm

Perhaps the clearest and best known example of research demonstrating the power of a situation is Milgram's (1963) work on obedience to authority. In this research, naive participants were told that they were to act as "teachers" in an experiment assessing the effects of punishment on learning. Specifically, they were asked to administer electric shocks, increasing in voltage, whenever the "learner" made a mistake in performing a memory task. At one point, the researcher urged participants to keep applying increasingly powerful shocks to the learners, regardless of their protests and cries of pain. Although Milgram (1974) obtained a range of results across several replications, participants were generally much more obedient than expected. For instance, in the electric-shock situation, 65% of participants administered the highest possible level of shocks, even though they knew they were inflicting serious pain on the learner.

Milgram's obedience research speaks to many issues in social psychology and is relevant to the present research in several ways. First, it clearly demonstrated the importance of situational variables in behavior. The primary variables that affected obedience in Milgram's experiments were situational—whether the teachers could hear the learners' cries, for example. Although Milgram (1974) also assessed the role of dispositional variables such as moral development and authoritarianism in obedience, these variables were not strongly related to obedience levels. In Milgram's words, "My over-all reaction was to wonder how few correlates there were of obedience" (1974, p. 205).

Milgram's research also addressed the observers' tendency to discount the power of situational variables. Milgram asked a group of psychiatrists and senior psychology students to act as "judges" by predicting the levels of obedience in his experimental paradigm. All judges estimated that obedience levels would be considerably lower than they actually were. These misjudgments most likely reflected perceivers' tendencies to ignore the importance of the situation and to focus on the role of personality traits (Milgram, 1974).

Hypothetical Behavior in Social Psychology Experiments

Previous research has been designed to assess perceptions about hypothetical other participants involved in social influence research. For instance, Blass (1996a, 1996b) conducted a series of studies by using a video of the Milgram obedience research to evaluate people's assessments of responsibility of the various characters in this experiment ("teacher," "learner," and "experimenter"). In similar research along these lines, perceivers' intuitive biases, which tended to focus on personal causes of behaviors, were often present in their judgments about others. In one such study, Safer (1980) asked participants to make judgments about participants in a condition of Milgram's (1963) obedience research who could control the level of shock they administered. In this condition, Milgram found that the participants administered relatively low shock levels. However, participants in Safer's study who had recently learned about Milgram's standard obedience condition greatly overestimated the levels of shocks that Milgram's participants actually administered. In their erroneous estimates, Safer's (1980) participants clearly neglected to take the importance of Milgram's situational manipulation into account. In effect, Safer argued, such participants tended to make dispositional attributions, largely missing the highly situationist implications of Milgram's work.

Pietromonaco and Nisbett (1982) studied participants' perceptions of hypothetical others who had the opportunities to help victims in distress. Half of their participants first read a summary of the results of a Darley and Batson (1973) study in which seminary students were given the opportunity to help a victim in an alley. Situational variables, such as the extent to which the participant was in a hurry, greatly influenced whether he or she would help the victim, whereas dispositional variables pertaining to religiosity were uncorrelated with their willingness to help the victim in the alley. Regardless of this knowledge about Darley and Batson's findings, participants in Pietromonaco and Nisbett's research still tended to discount situational influences on the behaviors of the hypothetical people in the vignettes. In both Safer's (1980) and Pietromonaco and Nisbett's studies, the fundamental attribution error (Ross et al., 1977), which is the tendency to discount situational influences on the behavior of others, was not changed, regardless of the researchers' efforts to reduce this perceptual bias.

STUDY 1

This study was designed to determine whether knowledge about (a) social perceptual biases and (b) Milgram's social influence research would affect students' judgments about people's behavior in a hypothetical Milgram obedience study. In addition, this research was developed as a tool for students of social psychology; specifically, it allows for an understanding and discussion of social psychological biases in the context of classic social influence research. Thus, we applied social psychology biases to the behavior of actual participants in classic social psychology research. Three specific perceptual biases were addressed in this research: (a) the fundamental attribution error (Ross et al., 1977), (b) the self-other bias, and (c) social projection. The *self-other bias* (Brown, 1986) is the general tendency for people to rate themselves as better than "typical others." This tendency is very similar to the *false uniqueness effect* (McFarland & Miller, 1990), which is a systematic underestimation of similarities between the self and others. This finding has occurred consistently in diverse areas. For example, people consistently believe that they are happier, more intelligent, and less prejudiced than others (McFarland & Miller, 1990). These findings suggest that false uniqueness occurs when the traits or characteristics are positive, because they are advantageous or socially desirable.

The term *social projection* was first used by Allport (1924) to describe people's tendency to use information about their own attitudes to make judgments about others' beliefs. People are motivated to believe that they have support for their opinions, so they rely on their own self-perceptions to make judgments about others' behavior, which is then reflected in their responses. However, this type of projection occurs regardless of knowledge about the actual degree to which others have certain characteristics (Krueger & Clement, 1994).

To examine how these social psychology biases apply to participants' behavior in classic social influence research, we conducted a classroom demonstration in which students estimated the hypothetical behaviors of self and typical others in a Milgram obedience study. To assess the effects of social-psychological knowledge on these biases, we studied three different samples of students.

Method

We recruited 111 participants (85 women and 17 men; 9 of them did not report their gender) from three different populations: 26 advanced social psychology students from an elite liberal arts college, 35 introductory-level students from a regional state university, and 50 social psychology students from the same regional school. None of the 35 introductory students had been exposed to Milgram's (1963) obedience research before this study. (We excluded from this research introductory students who had already been exposed to Milgram. All other students had been exposed to his research.)

A questionnaire was designed to assess how people would respond in a hypothetical replication of Milgram's research. A brief summary of the experiment was presented to the participants, followed by the actual voltage scale used in the Milgram (1963) study. Students were then asked to estimate how many volts they would administer to the learner, as well as how many volts the typical other student of their same gender would administer. Several demographic variables were assessed, including gender, class, and familiarity with Milgram's research findings.

Procedure

All participants gave informed consent and were asked to fill out the questionnaire during class. The only difference in procedure among the different groups of participants was that students in the social psychology course had viewed Milgram's (1965) obedience video just before receiving the questionnaire.

We computed 2 (gender) \times 3 (class) \times 2 (target: self vs. other) mixed analyses of variance (ANOVAs) to assess any significant discrepancy between self and other voltage estimates. No significant effects were found among all the participants in the different conditions. However, a significant main effect was obtained for the discrepancy variable, $F(1, 96) = 91.46, p < .01$. Specifically, participants estimated that typical others would administer much more powerful shocks ($M = 210.50, SD = 111.54$) than they would administer themselves ($M = 139.05, SD = 100.21$; see Table 1).¹

We also conducted a correlation analysis to determine the degree of social projection that may be evident in the data. The correlation between self and other estimates was .64, suggesting that students used their own shock scores as a basis for deciding how others would administer shocks in the same situation.

These results demonstrate several important social psychology biases that seem quite resistant to change. For instance, these data speak to the fundamental attribution error (Ross et al., 1977). One of Milgram's main findings was that obedience was a function of primarily situational influences. If participants truly understood this point, then their self and other estimates should not have differed significantly. The current findings are consistent with those of Pietromonaco and Nisbett (1982), who argued that "the fundamental attribution error might be quite resistant to the data and arguments of the social scientist" (p. 4).

Knowledge of the actual results of Milgram's original research was not reflected in the participants' estimates; informed students continued to believe

¹The initial $2 \times 3 \times 2$ ANOVA revealed several interaction effects whereby the size of the self-other discrepancy interacted with both class and gender. However, all these interactions were due to the fact that 2 of the 3 male participants in the "elite liberal arts college" sample reported extreme self (0 volts) and other (450 volts) estimates. When a subsequent $2 \times 2 \times 2$ ANOVA was conducted omitting this sample, no significant interaction effects were obtained.

TABLE 1
Study 1: Means and Standard Deviations of Participants'
Voltage Estimates for Self and Typical Other, by Class and Gender

Class	Voltage estimate				<i>n</i>
	Self		Other		
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	
Social psychology	131.10	84.68	197.00	99.03	50 ^a
Women	129.62	84.47	190.64	97.97	39
Men	137.50	51.45	222.50	93.15	6
General psychology	147.00	114.63	240.43	108.26	35 ^a
Women	150.00	116.43	247.20	112.34	25
Men	153.75	126.71	247.50	96.88	8
Advanced social psychology	143.65	109.67	196.15	133.22	26 ^a
Women	155.00	97.13	171.43	108.33	21
Men	120.00	207.85	420.00	51.96	3
Total	139.05	100.21	210.50	111.54	111

Note. The social psychology and general psychology classes were from the same regional state university. The advanced social psychology class was from an elite liberal arts college.

^aTotal *ns* do not necessarily correspond to *ns* for given genders because not all participants reported their gender.

that most people would be unwilling to fully obey the experimenter's instructions. The fact that these knowledgeable participants' judgments did not reflect an incorporation of the powerful situational determinants appears to indicate that these participants were making the fundamental attribution error.

Although knowledgeable participants' estimates should have reflected Milgram's actual findings, it seems that their self-estimates, as well as the self-estimates of the naive participants, were based on their motivations to see themselves positively (by rating themselves as relatively benevolent). In other words, all participants, regardless of condition, demonstrated the self-other bias (Brown, 1986). Similarly, their responses can be viewed as manifestations of the false uniqueness effect (McFarland & Miller, 1990). Participants may perceive blind obedience as an undesirable trait and, as such, they tend to view themselves as superior by rating typical others as more obedient than themselves, thereby seeing themselves as unique.

In addition, the participants' other estimates may have reflected social projection (Allport, 1924). Specifically, it seems that participants used an anchoring and adjusting heuristic (Tversky & Kahneman, 1974) in which they used self-estimates as a measure by which to judge typical others. Because participants' self-estimates were derived from self-idealization, and thus were quite low, their anchors used to judge typical others were deflated. As such, typical-other estimates were considerably lower than the actual scores obtained by Mil-

gram. This proposed strategy of using self-estimates to judge others was reflected in the strong positive correlation between self and other estimates of the present participants.

The fact that these biases exist regardless of efforts to reduce them raises the question of whether there are certain contextual or dispositional variables that may moderate their presence. Study 2 of the present endeavor was designed to elaborate on the results of Study 1 by exploring whether participants' career orientation and worldview regarding issues such as obedience may moderate the nature of their perceptions regarding self and other levels of obedience in a hypothetical Milgram replication.

STUDY 2

This study was designed to elaborate on the primary finding from Study 1, which suggests that people consistently used the self–other bias when judging their own and others' hypothetical behavior in a Milgram obedience study replication. Of particular interest was whether the Study 2 participants' general opinions about obedience would moderate the effects found in Study 1. To address this point, we needed participants from a special population in which blind obedience is viewed positively (e.g., the military). A sample from such a population would allow for an assessment of whether the self–other effects documented in Study 1 are contingent on participants' generalized perceptions regarding obedient behavior.

To address this line of reasoning, we selected a sample of criminal-justice majors from a regional university in the Pacific Northwest. All participants in this sample were students majoring in policing or corrections. The primary goal of this academic program is to "prepare students for successful service in the criminal justice system at local, state, and federal levels" (Southern Oregon University, 2000). Data from this sample should allow for an examination of the social psychology of people in the field of policing.

Researchers examining perceptions of police and correctional officers have uncovered several phenomena. Researchers have focused on areas such as self-perceptions (Munn & Renner, 1978), the relationship between officer job satisfaction and altruism (Khouri & Khouri, 1981), officers' perceptions of public opinion (Tuohy & Wrennall, 1995), attitudes of new officers compared with veteran officers toward the role of police officers (Ellis, 1991), and public opinion regarding police officers (Linguanti & McIntyre, 1992).

In researching the attitudes of new police recruits, Ellis (1991) found that new recruits, more so than veteran officers, tended to have a "serve-and-protect" orientation regarding their roles. Ellis's findings suggest that people starting careers in policing had more idealistic perceptions of police officers' roles. Further, part of this idealized perception suggests that obedience in the form of public service is of paramount importance to new officers.

Tuohy and Wrennall (1995) also conducted research on officers' perceptions

regarding their roles. In that study, data were obtained from officers and from the public, allowing researchers to concurrently assess actual public opinions of police as well as police officers' perceptions of public opinion. The accuracy of these views was evaluated by comparing public perceptions to officers' own meta-perceptions regarding public perception. The discrepancies between actual public perceptions and officers' metaperceptions were small, indicating relative accuracy. However, officers tended to be overly optimistic about police stereotypes in several domains. For instance, officers underestimated the degree to which the public believed that the police rely on physical force. The officers' misperception may have predisposed them to perceive obedience (in a Milgram-like study) differently than others would perceive it. Further, this misperception may affect both self and other ratings regarding obedient behavior.

On the basis of the findings that new members of the police community (a) believed their roles incorporate a large obedience component (Ellis, 1991) and (b) underestimated the degree to which the public attributes police obedience to the officers' dispositional qualities (Tuohy & Wrennall, 1995), we made several predictions in the hypothetical Milgram replication. First, we predicted that estimates of obedience from criminal-justice majors would be higher than those from non-criminal-justice majors. Next, because criminal-justice majors' obedience estimates of others may largely be based on their own self-estimates, we predicted their estimates of others would be higher (more obedient) than the estimates of non-criminal-justice majors. Further, because obedience may be more positively viewed by criminal-justice as opposed to non-criminal-justice majors, the self-other discrepancy for criminal-justice majors was predicted to be smaller than the discrepancy for non-criminal-justice majors. Fifty-one criminal-justice students (29 men and 22 women) and 62 non-criminal-justice students (18 men and 43 women)² participated in Study 2. All students were enrolled either in introductory law enforcement or introductory psychology courses. Of the 51 criminal-justice majors, 19 were familiar with Milgram's obedience research; 29 were not (3 respondents gave no indication). Of the 62 non-criminal-justice majors, 20 students were familiar with Milgram's obedience research; 38 were not (4 gave no indication).

We used the same self-report questionnaire as in Study 1 to assess how participants believed they would respond in a hypothetical replication of Milgram's (1963) research. Participants were given a summary of Milgram's research and the actual voltage scale that he used. Participants were asked to estimate the shock-voltage level they believed they would administer if they were the teachers in Milgram's experiment, as well as the shock-voltage level they believe a typical other student would administer.

We computed 2 (gender) \times 2 (major) \times 2 (knowledge) \times 2 (target: self vs. other) mixed ANOVAs to assess whether participants showed a notable discrepancy

²Some participants did not complete this item; thus, the total numbers may not add up correctly for this variable.

between their own and others' voltage estimates. As in Study 1, a significant main effect was observed in the self-other discrepancy; participants assigned high shock estimates to typical others than to themselves, $F(1, 108) = 29.32, p < .001$. Also as in Study 1, knowledge of Milgram's obedience research appeared to have no effect on the self-other discrepancy and did not interact with either of the other between-subjects variables. Unlike in Study 1, however, we found some significant between-subjects effects. As predicted, we found a significant effect for college major, $F(1, 108) = 5.16, p < .05$. The discrepancy between self and other estimates of shock-voltage levels was significantly smaller for criminal-justice students ($M = 38.80, SD = 128.40$) than for non-criminal-justice students ($M = 84.10, SD = 114.50$). Also, unlike in Study 1, a significant main effect was found for gender, $F(1, 108) = 27.20, p < .01$. The women demonstrated larger self-other discrepancies ($M = 79.62, SD = 118.58$) than did the men on average ($M = 42.98, SD = 127.01$). The Major \times Gender interaction was not significant.

We computed ANOVAs to determine whether self and other estimates were differentially related to major and gender. Self-estimates were significantly different between criminal-justice ($M = 192.10, SD = 170.60$) and non-criminal-justice majors ($M = 79.40, SD = 114.70$), $F(1, 111) = 17.45, p < .05$. Self-estimates also differed by gender, with the men ($M = 233.83, SD = 168.59$) giving higher self-estimates than the women ($M = 64.62, SD = 96.52$), $F(1, 110) = 39.95, p < .01$. Criminal-justice students' estimates of others ($M = 230.90, SD = 149.90$) were also significantly higher than those of non-criminal-justice students ($M = 163.50, SD = 154.00$), $F(1, 111) = 5.48, p < .05$. Finally, men had significantly higher other estimates ($M = 266.81, SD = 143.09$) than women ($M = 144.23, SD = 142.91$), $F(1, 110) = 20.05, p < .01$. No Gender \times Major interaction appeared when we used either self or other as the dependent variable (see Table 2 for a summary of the patterns of means).

As in Study 1, a correlation analysis was conducted to determine the degree of social projection. The correlation between self and other estimates was positive and significant, $r(113) = .68, p < .05$, indicating a tendency for participants' estimates of others to relate largely to their self-estimates.

The primary hypotheses for Study 2 were largely supported by the data. Specifically, criminal-justice students' self and other ratings were significantly higher than the ratings of non-criminal-justice students. We propose that these findings result from the differential value attributed to obedience between criminal-justice and non-criminal-justice majors. Because obedience is generally considered an important characteristic for people interested in police careers (Ellis, 1991), the criminal-justice majors may have been more motivated than the non-criminal-justice majors to perceive themselves as obeying authority in a context such as the Milgram experiment. Further, their self-estimates may have formed a basis for their other estimates, which thereby were higher than the other estimates of the non-criminal-justice majors. Also as predicted, the self-other discrepancy was significantly smaller for criminal-justice majors than for non-criminal-justice

TABLE 2
Study 2: Means and Standard Deviations of Participants'
Voltage Estimates for Self and Typical Other, by Major and Gender

Class	Voltage estimate				<i>n</i>
	Self		Other		
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	
Criminal justice	192.06	170.55	230.88	149.88	51
Women	97.50	126.58	170.45	149.61	22
Men	263.79	166.04	276.72	135.21	29
Non-criminal justice	79.44	114.73	163.55	153.00	62 ^a
Women	47.79	72.99	130.81	139.23	43
Men	159.44	156.17	250.83	157.64	18
Total	130.27	156.72	193.94	155.17	113

^aTotal *ns* do not necessarily correspond to *ns* for given genders because not all participants reported their gender.

majors. This finding too may have derived from the groups' differing opinions of obedience. Differentially rating obedience in self and others may not have served the same self-enhancement function for the criminal-justice majors as for the non-criminal-justice majors. Thus, the non-criminal-justice majors could be more motivated to provide estimates of self and others that were discernibly different.

Discussion

The present studies were designed as a metasocial-psychological endeavor. This work explored social-perceptual biases as they pertained to participants' estimates of behavior of self and other in Milgram's classic obedience research. The results from Study 1 demonstrate several social psychology biases in the context of classic social influence research. Regardless of their knowledge of Milgram's findings, the participants consistently said that they would stop administering shocks in an obedience study much earlier than a typical other person would. The existence of the self-other bias (Brown, 1986) in this context speaks strongly to the perseverance of social psychology biases. Students who were quite familiar with Milgram's work gave self and other shock estimates that were largely incongruous with Milgram's findings. Similarly, the students who had successfully completed examinations on material such as self-enhancement biases were just as prone to such biases as first-semester students with no background in social psychology. It seems that educating people about the existence and prevalence of cognitive biases does not necessarily eliminate this type of thinking.

The fact that knowledge of social psychology phenomena did not relate to the present participants' judgments supports many documented findings in social

psychology. For instance, several researchers have found evidence that the fundamental attribution error is deeply entrenched. In one study, Pietromonaco and Nisbett (1982) had students read about a study (Darley & Batson, 1973) showing how important situational variables are in determining participants' behavior. After reading about this study, Pietromonaco and Nisbett's participants made judgments about hypothetical participants in a very similar study. Regardless of their knowledge of Darley and Batson's (1973) results, participants clearly tended to attribute the behaviors of these hypothetical participants to personality traits rather than situational characteristics. Pietromonaco and Nisbett's results mirror those of the present work: The intractability of social-perceptual biases was unaffected by relevant knowledge.

These findings shed light on the relationship between knowledge of psychological effects and people's ability to use such knowledge when making decisions. Future researchers could assess whether people are aware that their judgments are inconsistent with their knowledge. Several social psychology studies have shown that people are often less aware of the causes of their judgments than they think they are (Nisbett & Wilson, 1977). The current work may serve to elaborate on this area of social psychology.

Study 2 provided evidence that the biases observed in Study 1 may have been moderated by participants' particular worldviews. The findings in Study 2 suggested that criminal-justice students might demonstrate the self-other bias (Brown, 1986) significantly less in obedience and aggression outcomes than non-criminal-justice students. The criminal-justice students showed a smaller discrepancy between their personal voltage estimates and a typical other's level of obedience compared with non-criminal-justice students. Further, the criminal-justice students' estimates of self and other were considerably higher than the estimates of non-criminal-justice students. These data supported the fact that social-perceptual biases may be moderated by people's generalized perceptions of the objects of judgment; in other words, participants' general notions of obedience may well have had important perceptual implications. In the present research, it seems that criminal-justice and non-criminal-justice students' general orientations toward obedience altered the nature of their judgments of self and others. The self-other discrepancy was also affected, in that this discrepancy was smaller for criminal-justice majors than for others. Perhaps the criminal-justice students recognized that when they enter law enforcement, they may be required to use physical force in order to gain lawful compliance. The non-criminal-justice students may not have thought that they would ever need to use physical force against others and thus were less able to conceive of situations in which they would cause physical pain or damage. Members of this group also may not have valued obedience to an authority figure to the same extent that the criminal-justice students did. These differences suggested that career interests and worldview might moderate estimates of self and other obedience.

For the most part, the findings from Study 1 were replicated in Study 2.

Specifically, we found in both studies that (a) the self–other discrepancy emerged, (b) there was evidence for social projection regarding estimates of self and other, and (c) knowledge of Milgram's research had no impact on judgments. However, gender effects that were not present in Study 1 were found in Study 2. Specifically, the women in Study 2 reported lower self and other estimates than the men. Interestingly, the women in Study 2 reported a significantly higher self–other discrepancy than the men. Because women tend to be less physically aggressive than men (Brehm, Kassin, & Fein, 1999), reports of lesser obedience in this context make some sense. However, the women's larger self–other discrepancy is a bit more complex. Perhaps women's self-estimates in this study were so low that they needed to adjust their other estimates by making them even higher for the purpose of self-enhancement. Further research is needed to explore this issue.

The present research explicates several social–perceptual biases pertaining to self and other judgments of obedience in Milgram's research paradigm. The self–other discrepancy, perhaps motivated by the need to self-enhance, was manifested by participants' tendency to assign higher obedience estimates to others than to themselves. Although this tendency was moderated in Study 2 by participants' worldviews, the self–other discrepancy was still evident across the various groups. Furthermore, lay dispositionism was manifested in the data by the presence of the self–other discrepancy; differentially rating the self and others in this context demonstrates the tendency to discount the important situational variables that affected the Milgram obedience paradigm. The fact that these effects were not related to social psychology knowledge underscores the perseverance of such biases. Future researchers may focus on the specific processes underlying such bias entrenchment in addition to other variables that may moderate these effects.

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