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# Representations and Preferences of Responses to Housing and Employment Discrimination

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In two studies, the behavioral preferences of majority (White) and visible minority (non-White) individuals in response to a hypothetical situation of discrimination were examined. In addition, the characteristics and dimensions perceived to relate to these behaviors were also examined. In the first study, 120 primarily White undergraduate students first rated the likelihood of engaging in each of 14 behaviors in response to a situation of discrimination, and then rated each behavior on a number of attributes representing key dimensions of behavior identified in intergroup theories (individual–collective; active–passive; non-normative–normative) and phenomenological studies on the experience of discrimination (e.g. risk). A multimode factor analysis of the behaviors and attributes provided a three-component solution. While the dimensions underlying these components reflected dimensions of behavior identified by intergroup theorists, they were also qualitatively different from them. Further analysis revealed that behaviors associated with higher preference ratings were perceived as more normative, preparatory, and low in cost and risk. The behavioral preferences, and the dimensions underlying these preferences were replicated in a second study, which comprised 70 Black and South Asian participants. The patterns of results were similar for the White and non-White participants, although these two groups did differ in their endorsement and ratings of some of the behaviors.

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MUCH of the research on discrimination has been couched within theories of prejudice that focus on the perpetrators rather than the victims of discrimination. When targets of discrimination have been studied, the typical focus has been on their thoughts and feelings, rather than

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on their behavioral intentions or actions. These latter responses can be conceptualized within theories of intergroup relations where behaviors are represented along broad dimensions (i.e. active–passive, individual–collective, normative–non-normative). One purpose of the two studies presented here was to assess how specific responses to discrimination (e.g. going to the Human Rights Commission) are perceived by both majority and minority group members along such dimensions, as well as others. The second purpose of this research was to assess the behavioral intentions of individuals who are faced with hypothetical situations involving housing or employment discrimination, and to identify the dimensions of behavior that are related to these behavior preferences. The third goal was to see if majority (White) and visible minority[1] respondents differed with regard to their preference ratings for responses to discrimination. Finally, individual and institutional forms of discrimination were contrasted to see if they had a differential impact on behavior preferences.

## Behavioral responses to discrimination

Very little research has addressed the behavioral responses that can be taken by recipients of discrimination. Early psychoanalytic work by Kardiner and Oversey (1951) focused on affective responses such as self-hatred and hostility. Allport (1954) extended this type of analysis by including more active responses to discrimination, such as 'enhanced striving', 'strengthening ingroup ties', and 'fighting back'. Much of the empirical research conducted since Allport's original treatise on prejudice has focused on affective and cognitive responses such as self-esteem and attribution (e.g. Crocker, Voekl, Testa, & Major, 1991; Dion & Earn, 1975; Ruggiero & Taylor, 1995). While this research tradition has tremendous value, we know relatively little about the more active responses that victims of discrimination can take to challenge discrimination and what the more advantaged members of society think these victims should do.

In the context of prejudice, discrimination represents a situation where an individual is unjustly treated on the basis of membership in a socially disadvantaged group. Discrimination, therefore, can be seen as a form of intergroup behavior. Given that theories of intergroup relations such as social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979), relative deprivation theory (e.g. Crosby, 1976), and the five stage model (see Taylor & Moghaddam, 1994) make predictions regarding the potential actions of members of disadvantaged groups, they may be useful for conceptualizing the responses of victims of discrimination. These theories share three important dimensions in their representations of behavior: active versus passive, normative versus non-normative, and individual versus collective. Lalonde and Cameron (1994) examined the potential responses of victims of discrimination to see how they fit within descriptions of behavior provided by intergroup theorists. Results of a multidimensional scaling analysis of behaviors in an interpersonal situation of discrimination (i.e. housing being denied by an individual) were best represented by dimensions described as passive–active, private–public, and preparation–implementation (e.g. consulting friends vs. contacting the media). Behaviors elicited by an intergroup or institutional situation of discrimination (i.e. denial of right to vote based on group membership) were best represented by the active–passive and normative–non-normative dimensions. The individual–collective dimension was not found to empirically represent the behaviors in this study. Blanz, Mummendey, Mielke, and Klink (1998) also found little support for this dimension in their examination of the identity management strategies of East Germans within the context of German reunification.

It seems, therefore, that the dimensions of behavior identified in intergroup theories do not fully capture the essence of behaviors that are available within more interpersonal situations of discrimination, where interactions are between individuals rather than groups. A limitation of past research on behavioral responses to discrimination is that the attributes or dimensionality of the behaviors either are defined a priori (e.g. Wright, Taylor, & Moghaddam,

1990) or post hoc (e.g. Lalonde & Cameron, 1994) by the researchers. Given that much of this research has been couched within theories of intergroup relations, the types of dimensions that are looked for or identified are those that are found within these theories (e.g. individual–collective). It is important to look at other attributes of the responses, as well as the attributes that the respondents (i.e. victims of discrimination) feel are important in their behavior selection.

Research that has addressed the phenomenology of being a victim of racism using more qualitative approaches (e.g. Essed, 1991a; Feagin, 1991; Lykes, 1983) suggests that other important aspects of behavior need to be considered; foremost among these dimensions are the personal costs and risks associated with challenging discrimination. Louis (2001) has recently taken these aspects of behavior into account by integrating social identity theory with an expectancy-value analysis; she argues that decision making in an intergroup context involves an analysis of individual and group level costs and benefits (see also Kelly, 1993; Simon et al., 1998).

Another line of work that has focused on the responses of victims of discrimination outside of a prejudice or intergroup framework is the research addressing responses to sexual harassment. A number of these studies have examined actual responses to sexual harassment (e.g. Bingham & Scherer, 1993; Gruber & Bjorn, 1986; Gruber & Smith, 1995; Yoder & Aniakudo, 1995), rather than responses to situations presented in vignettes (e.g. Jones & Remland, 1992). Two response typologies seem to dominate this literature. Gruber and his colleagues have focused on the *assertiveness* of the response in their studies. Fitzgerald and her colleagues (e.g. Fitzgerald, Swan, & Fischer, 1995) have categorized responses as either internally or externally focused. Internal strategies focus on cognition and emotion (e.g. denial), while external strategies focus on solving the problem (e.g. seeking social support). More recently, Miller and Kaiser (2001) have proposed a theoretical model for coping with stigma that categorizes behavior as voluntary or involuntary and as involving engagement (i.e. fight) or disengagement (i.e. flight).

## The present research

*The first purpose of this research was to identify which dimensions of behavior characterize specific responses that can be taken in situations of discrimination.* Pettigrew (1997) has noted that social psychology as a discipline has done little to develop typologies of situations (there are of course important exceptions; e.g. Forgas, 1979) and this criticism can easily extend to typologies of overt behaviors. In order to address this problem, Study 1 examined a number of behavioral options in response to discrimination in relation to a variety of critical dimensions that may underlie these behaviors. Three of the dimensions of behavior are those identified in different theories of intergroup relations: active–passive (e.g. Dion, 1986), collective–individual (e.g. Hogg & Abrams, 1988), and non-normative–normative (e.g. Wright et al., 1990). The present study will, in part, test the ability of these theoretically derived dimensions to account for the data. Moreover, by examining the relationship between theoretically derived and empirically derived dimensions of behavior, we should be in a better position to develop a process model of responding to discrimination.

Two of the dimensions, private–public and preparatory–final, were those empirically derived in the Lalonde and Cameron (1994) study, although the private–public distinction also has been identified as an important dimension in responding to sexism (Swim & Hyers, 1999), as well as in the area of conflict resolution (Goldstein, 1999). Four other dimensions of behavior were examined in this study: formality, effectiveness, cost, and risk. The issue of formality is central in Tyler and Blader's (2000) conceptualization of procedural justice in the area of groups; they believe that the formality of a procedure plays an important role in determining how people respond to injustice. Formality, or more precisely informality, also has been used by Kelly and Breinlinger (1996) to describe one category of actions taken by women in a gendered context. Kelly (1993) also

sees effectiveness as central in a model of participation in collective action; she predicts that a person's behavioral intention will be predicted in part by their belief 'that collective action will be *effective* in bringing about social change' (p. 71). The importance of the perceived effectiveness of a behavior in the area of collective action has also been highlighted in Klandermans' (1989) work on social movement participation.

Cost and risk have been discussed in studies addressing the experience of racial discrimination (Essed, 1991a; Feagin, 1991; Lykes, 1983) and sexual harassment (Fitzgerald & Shullman, 1993; Fitzgerald et al., 1995; Gutek & Koss, 1993). In terms of direct empirical evidence, Swim and Hyers (1999) predicted that the most frequently selected responses to a sexist response would be those that are the least costly (defined as more polite and less risky); they found that the most frequent behaviors were in fact those that were perceived as more polite, but ratings of risk were unrelated to the response. Kaiser and Miller (2001) have demonstrated in a series of experimental studies using vignettes that there are social costs associated with making attributions of discrimination—the individual who makes attributions of discrimination is seen as a complainer. Appraisals of cost and risk, therefore, appear to be central in a number of different approaches to the study of discrimination.

*The second goal of this research was to assess which behaviors are preferred in situations of discrimination, and to see which dimensions of behavior are associated with these behavior preferences.* When different response preferences to discrimination are contrasted with each other in terms of the individual–collective and normative–non-normative dimensions, clear preferences for certain types of behavior can be seen across a number of studies.[2] For instance, a close examination of results from experimental studies, where participants either experience or read about situations of injustice, reveals a consistent preference for individual rather than collective responses to these situations (Kawakami & Dion, 1993; Lalonde & Silverman, 1994; Wright et al., 1990). Similarly, in Lalonde and Cameron (1994, Study 1) participants reported far more individual than collective responses. A preference for normative responses, compared to non-normative responses, can be found in experimental studies (Wright et al., 1990) and situations of interpersonal discrimination (Lalonde & Cameron, 1994). Louis and Taylor (1999), however, found that this preference for individual and normative responses may diminish in situations involving high levels of discrimination when the degree of effort required to engage in the behavior is experimentally controlled.

Research addressing responses to sexual harassment has also found preferences for different types of behavior. While early studies conducted in the 1970s and early 1980s indicated that less assertive responses such as avoidance were the most common (see review by Gruber, 1989), more recent studies indicate that the modal responses are now more direct (often involving a confrontation with the harasser), but formal complaints are still rare (Gruber & Smith, 1995; Yoder & Aniakudo, 1995). A few studies have looked at preferred responses to discrimination in interviews with African Americans in the USA. Feagin (1991), for example, found with a middle class sample that the most typical responses to discrimination experienced in public places were a verbal response or resigned acceptance.

One study that is pertinent to the present research was conducted by Lalonde, Majumder and Parris (1995). They compared the preferences for a number of different responses to situations of discrimination in two studies. Their first study examined preferred responses of Black Canadians to housing discrimination. The clearly preferred behaviors were 'informing others' about the discrimination and 'seeking advice from social agencies', which Lalonde et al. characterized as preparatory, less active, and less public in comparison to a number of the other behaviors. Their second study focused on preferences for responses to employment discrimination with a Bengali Canadian sample. The clearly preferred responses were characterized as self-directed responses (e.g. keep working hard and try again next time). While

some of the behaviors examined in each study were unique to each, there was a striking consistency between preferences for similar behaviors in both situations. One of these was the lack of support for the collective strategy (i.e. organizing others to protest). A limitation of the Lalonde et al. (1995) study, however, was that the researchers inferred the possible reasons why certain behaviors were preferred (e.g. because they are individual rather than collective) without actually assessing their respondents' perceptions of these behaviors on relevant dimensions. In both studies presented here, therefore, behavior preferences will be examined with reference to behavioral dimensions that are evaluated by the participants.

*The third purpose of this study was to determine if the social status of the perceiver (i.e. majority vs. minority) has an impact on the perception and preferences of responses to discrimination.* Individuals from certain social groups, such as members of visible minorities, are more likely to be victims of discrimination (Dion & Kawakami, 1996) and may differentially endorse potential responses to discrimination in comparison to more socially advantaged group members. Lalonde et al. (1995), for example, found that Bengali Canadians who reported past experiences of discrimination showed greater preference for resigned acceptance in a hypothetical situation of discrimination compared to those who reported no such experiences. Past experiences of racism and discrimination, therefore, are likely to shape the representations that victims of discrimination are likely to have. Moreover, the response preferences of majority group members (e.g. Whites) are of considerable interest, because they often dictate the implicit norms and expectations within their society. In the current research, Study 1 consisted primarily of a majority (White) sample, while Study 2 partially replicated the procedure of Study 1 with a visible minority (Black and South Asian) sample.

*The final purpose of this research was to determine if response preferences would differ as a function of individual or institutional discrimination.* Lykes (1983) analysed interviews of women who were active in improving the lives of African Americans in the 1940s and 1950s, and found that their responses were more direct (aimed at the source of the problem and therefore confrontational) when discrimination was of a more personal nature than when discrimination was institutional. The current studies examined a more subversive form of institutional discrimination (i.e. unofficial policies) compared to institutional forms of discrimination that were publicly sanctioned in the 1940s and 1950s. Given this difference in the form of institutional discrimination, it was not clear whether there would be an interaction between preferred responses and level of discrimination (individual or institutional) as was found by Lykes (1983), although the perception may be that it is easier to challenge an individual than an organization.

It can be seen from the four goals of this article that the current research is largely descriptive and not hypothesis driven (see Rozin, 2001). Developing a clearer picture of lay representations of responses to discrimination will allow a more informed look at the theoretical positions and limitations of theories of intergroup relations.

## Study 1

In order to achieve the goals of the present research, preferred responses to discrimination in housing and employment were examined in this study. These situations represent important areas of an individual's life, and discrimination in these areas has been documented in the city where the current study was conducted (e.g. Henry, 1989; Henry & Ginzberg, 1985). They also were examined because a range of responses to these situations has been identified (Lalonde & Cameron, 1994), as well as differential preferences for these behaviors (Lalonde et al., 1995). In addition, it is possible to select identical behaviors that are applicable to both situations. It should be stated that no interaction between behavior preference and situation of discrimination (housing and employment) was expected, given that Lalonde et al. (1995) observed a fairly consistent pattern of response preferences in these two situations. By using two

situations, however, the generalizability of the findings is increased.

## *Method*

**Respondents** A total of 120 undergraduates from York University in Toronto were paid CND$5.00 for their participation in the study. There were 92 women and 28 men with a mean age of 21.4 years. Twenty of the participants (17%) could be categorized as members of a visible minority group (e.g. Asian, Black, South Asian) and all 20 considered themselves members of a minority group.

**Procedure** Respondents were tested individually. After giving their informed consent, they read a scenario (one single-spaced page) in which they adopted the role of an individual experiencing a series of events. Two variables were manipulated in the scenarios. A *situation of discrimination* manipulation involved either an interview for a job for which they have the necessary qualifications (*employment*) or a visit to a desirable apartment for which they have the financial means (*housing*). In both situations they are given a call two days later and informed that the job/apartment was offered to someone else. The second manipulation was the *level of discrimination—individual* or *institutional*. After receiving their call, they were informed by a friend working in the company (living in the building), that the job (apartment) was not filled (rented). They also learned that they were discriminated against because of their group membership—the friend overheard a conversation where the level of discrimination is revealed. This discrimination stemmed either from a prejudiced individual (e.g. a property manager stating 'I don't want any damn #?*!!# living in the same building as me') or from an unofficial company policy, a form of institutional discrimination (e.g. a company executive stating to another 'It will be a while before we have any #?*!!# working here, the company has had an unofficial policy of not hiring any #?*!!#'). In all conditions, it was indicated that none of the references in their application were contacted and that when they called to talk about the decision, the interviewer stated that the final decision was made regarding their application (by upper management in the institutional conditions), and that there was an important call on another line. Respondents read that '#?*!!#' referred to a group to which they belonged. Immediately after reading their story, participants were asked to indicate the group they thought of themselves belonging to and whether this group membership was actual or imagined.

After reading the scenario, respondents were asked to read through a list of different things they may do in their situation, and then to rate the likelihood of engaging in the different actions using a scale ranging from 'definitely no' (1) to 'definitely yes' (9). The 14 behaviors were taken from lists of responses identified in a study conducted by Lalonde and Cameron (1994). While the behaviors were equally applicable to situations of employment and housing discrimination, the wording changed somewhat between the individual (see Table 1) and institutional conditions. Each of the 14 behaviors then was rated on nine 7-point semantic differential scales: Active–Passive; Collective–Individual; Non-normative–Normative; Private–Public; Low cost–High cost; Preparatory–Final; Formal–Informal; Effective–Ineffective; and Safe–Risky. Behaviors and semantic differential scales were randomized prior to being presented in the same order to all participants.

At the end of the questionnaire, participants were asked for background information such as age, gender, and ethnic/racial group membership. They also were asked if they had been discriminated against by an individual or a company in the scenario they had read, in order to check on the level of discrimination manipulation.

## *Results*

**Preliminary analyses** The manipulation check indicated that the vast majority of respondents who were in the individual discrimination condition indicated that they had been discriminated against by an individual (88%). In the systemic discrimination condition, however,

*Table 1.* Preference ratings for White and visible minority participants in Studies 1 and 2

| | Study 1 | | Study 2 |
|---|---|---|---|
| | White ($n$ = 100) | Visible ($n$ = 20) | South Asian & Black ($n$ = 70) |
| Ask friends and family for ideas about possible actions. | $8.01_{a}$ | $7.61_{a}$ | $7.04_{a}$** |
| File complaint with Human Rights Commission. | $7.42_{ab}$ | $7.35_{ab}$ | $6.30_{ab}$*** |
| Consult social agencies for advice about what can be done. | $7.47_{ab}$ | $6.50_{abc}$* | $6.11_{abc}$*** |
| Collect evidence proving I was a victim of discrimination. | $7.31_{ab}$ | $6.95_{ab}$ | $6.03_{abc}$*** |
| Consult lawyer (or legal aid) for advice. | $7.16_{ab}$ | $5.55_{abcd}$** | $5.66_{bcd}$*** |
| Inform other potential victims (members of same social category) about the discrimination. | $6.78_{bc}$ | $7.25_{ab}$ | $6.99_{a}$ |
| Meet with discriminator (company) to discuss the decision. | $6.51_{bcd}$ | $4.95_{bcd}$* | $5.54_{bcd}$* |
| Take legal action against discriminator (company) by laying charges of discrimination. | $5.89_{cde}$ | $5.40_{abc}$ | $4.49_{de}$*** |
| Get a lawyer to write letter to discriminator (company) asking about the decision. | $5.98_{cde}$ | $4.25_{cd}$** | $5.23_{bcd}$* |
| Try to contact others similarly discriminated against and work together to fight discriminator (company). | $5.53_{def}$ | $6.00_{abc}$ | $4.73_{de}$* |
| Become active in groups that fight systemic discrimination. | $5.48_{def}$ | $6.00_{abcd}$ | $4.74_{de}$* |
| Threaten discriminator (company) with legal action unless the decision is reversed. | $5.32_{ef}$ | $3.60_{d}$** | $4.56_{de}$ |
| Inform the media (television, newspaper) about my situation. | $4.64_{fg}$ | $5.10_{abcd}$ | $4.89_{cde}$ |
| Do nothing about the situation. | $3.62_{g}$ | $4.20_{cd}$ | $3.93_{e}$ |

*Note*: * $p < .05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < .001$ are associated with two-tailed comparisons between White and visible groups in Study 1 and between White & South Asian/Black groups in Study 2. Means within a column that do not share a common subscript are significantly different from each other ($p < .01$).

only 67 percent of the participants indicated that they had been discriminated against by the company. Although it was stated that it was a company policy and that the decision was made by upper management, 33 percent of the respondents may still see the discrimination as stemming from an individual because of the interpersonal nature of their interactions (i.e. interview and subsequent telephone conversation with only one person).

With regard to manipulation effects, behavior preferences were analyzed in a Situation (apartment vs. employment) × Type of Discrimination (individual vs. institutional) × Behavior multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA), with repeated measures on the latter factor.

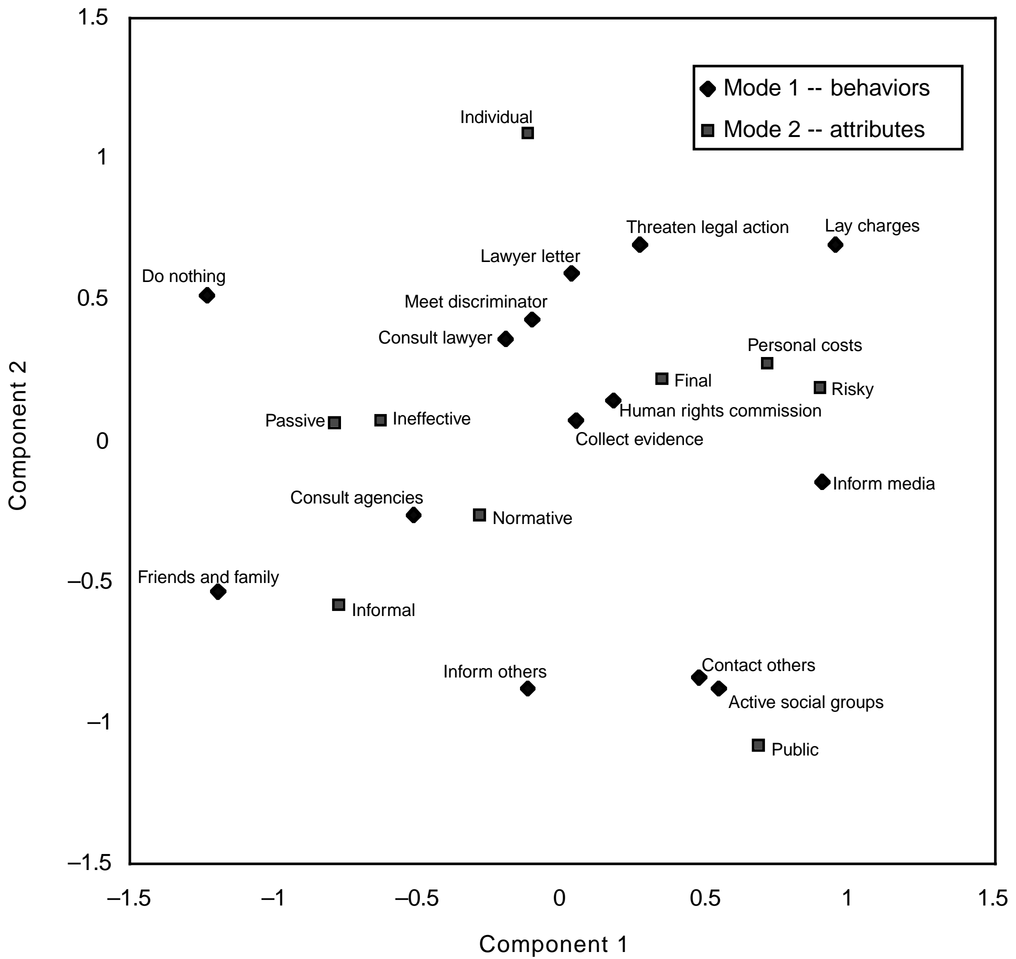


*Figure 1.* Joint plot of behaviors and attributes: Components 1 and 2.

There were no significant multivariate effects involving Situation or Type of Discrimination. The same analysis was repeated only for respondents who recognized the individual versus institutional manipulation; the manipulation was still not effective in bringing about significant Type of Discrimination effects. The significant effect for Behavior will be presented when examining behavior preferences.

Finally, it is important to report the breakdown of actual vs imagined group membership of the participants in the scenarios. As expected, a large proportion of the visible minority respondents (80%) indicated an actual group membership when they imagined themselves in the scenario. Among the White respondents, 55 percent still reported an actual group membership—the majority of these respondents indicated that they thought of their gender group (i.e. women, 21/55), their Jewish identification (13/55), or their non-visible ethnicity (e.g. Italian, 8/55). Of the White respondents who referred to an imagined group membership, the most frequent categories were being Black (15/45), a visible minority member (10/45), or being homosexual (6/45). The behavior preferences of White

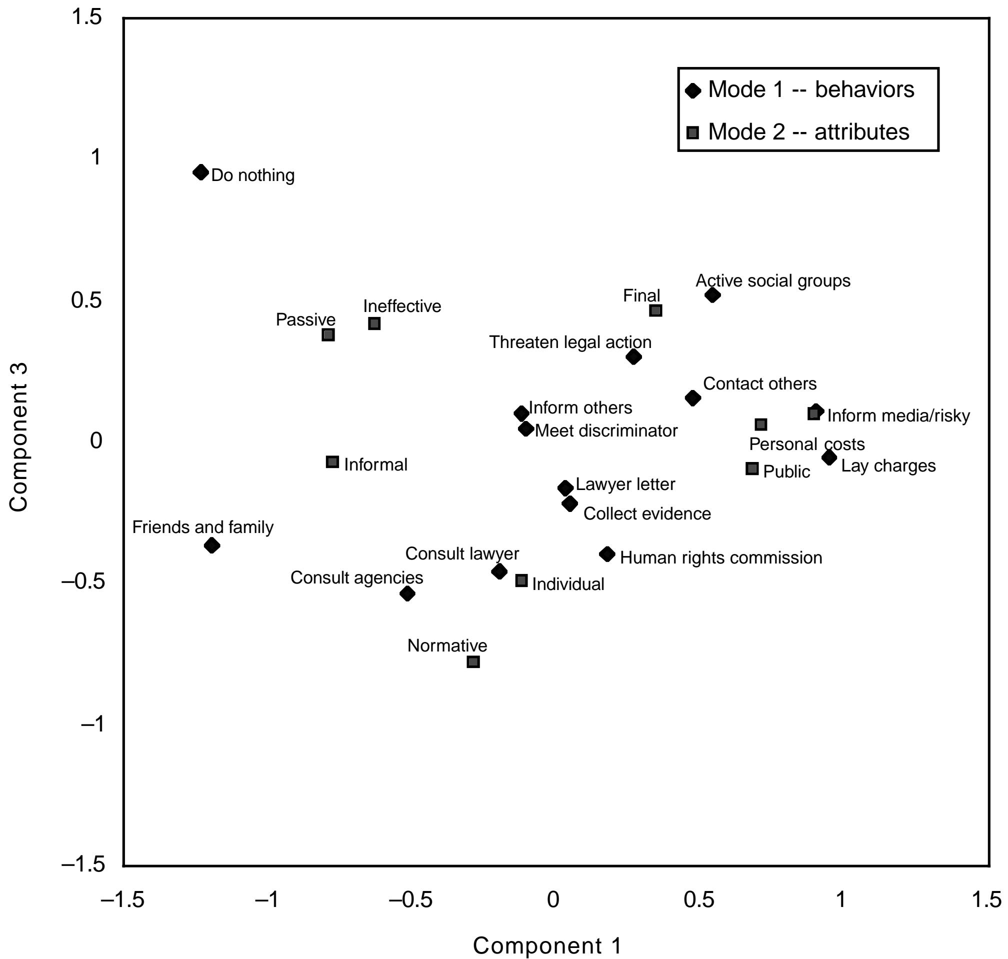


*Figure 2.* Joint plot of behaviors and attributes: Components 1 and 3.

respondents who indicated that their group membership was 'actual' ($N = 55$) was compared to those for whom it was 'imagined' ($N = 55$) and no significant differences were found.

**Dimensionality of behaviors** The first purpose of this study was to identify the emergent dimensions that participants perceived to characterize the 14 behaviors under study. The dimensionality of the different behaviors was examined using TUCKALS2 (Kroonenberg & Brouwer, 1985), which is a program that conducts a form of multimode principal components analysis. Because each of the 14 behaviors was rated on the same nine semantic differential scales, it is possible to examine the pattern of ratings in relation to the behaviors. In essence, this procedure permits the simultaneous examination of two levels, or modes, of analysis. The procedure treated behaviors as the first mode and attributes (i.e. semantic differential ratings) as the second mode. The program is designed to reduce the data to a limited number of dimensions for each mode and to examine the joint relationships between modes. The 14 (behavior) by 9 (attribute) matrix was examined in a series of

analyses. Although no formal procedures exist for finding the best solution, two criteria that have been used in past research, fit and interpretability, were employed (e.g. Pittam, Gallois, Iwawaki, & Kroonenberg, 1995). The 3 × 3 solution was judged to provide the best solution in comparison to solutions involving two, four, and five components for each mode. The fit criterion involves a least squares method, thus providing sums of squares that are divided into fitted and residual components. The solution presented here has an $R^2$ of .42 (compared to an $R^2$ of .34 for the 2 × 2 solution and an $R^2$ of .51 for the 4 × 4 solution). In terms of interpretability, the 3 × 3 solution was clearly the most parsimonious.

In order to facilitate the presentation of the results, the separate solutions for the first mode (behaviors) and the second mode (attributes) will not be presented; only the results involving the interaction between the two modes will be reported. The joint plots of the two modes are presented in Figures 1 and 2. Figure 1 represents the pattern of loadings of behaviors and attributes on the 1st and 2nd components, while Figure 2 represents the pattern of loadings on the 1st and 3rd components. Components in multimode factor analysis are analogous to dimensions in multidimensional scaling. In addition to a visual inspection of Figures 1 and 2, the inner products provided by the TUCKALS2 program were used to identify which behaviors were most clearly aligned with certain attributes.[3]

The first component of the 3 × 3 solution may best be characterized as representing an *assertiveness dimension* (horizontal axis in Figures 1 and 2). The negative pole of the first component (low assertiveness) is represented by the behaviors of 'doing nothing' and 'asking friends and family for ideas' and by 'passive', 'ineffective', and 'informal' attributes. The positive pole (high assertiveness) is characterized by the behaviors 'laying charges of discrimination' and 'informing the media' and by the 'risky', 'high in personal cost', and 'public' attributes. The behaviors identified by the first dimension all had strong inner products relating them to specific attributes. 'Doing nothing' was associated with the 'passive', 'ineffective', 'private', and 'safe' attributes, whereas 'asking friends and family for ideas' was associated with the 'passive', 'low personal cost', 'informal', and 'safe' attributes. The inner products further indicated that 'laying charges' was associated with the 'formal', 'active', 'high personal cost', and 'risky' attributes, while 'informing the media' was associated with the 'public' and 'risky' attributes.

The second component can be interpreted as an *Individual Litigiousness versus Collective/ Public dimension*. The negative pole of this component (vertical axis of Figure 1) is characterized by the 'public' attribute along with the behaviors 'contacting others and working together to fight discrimination', 'informing others', and 'becoming active in groups to fight discrimination'. These three behaviors always had strong inner products indicating a relationship with the 'public' and 'collective' attributes. The positive pole is primarily defined by the attribute 'individual,' and to a lesser extent by a number of litigious behaviors, the most polarized being 'laying charges of discrimination' and 'threatening legal action'.

The third component (vertical axis of Figure 2) has the 'normative' attribute at the negative pole, and 'doing nothing' at the positive pole, and may be best characterized as a *normative versus non-normative dimension*. The behaviors, other than 'doing nothing', were not strongly polarized on this dimension, but it can be seen that the negative (normative) pole was most strongly associated with 'consulting social agencies', whereas the positive pole was associated with 'becoming active in groups' and 'threatening legal action' behavior (after 'doing nothing'). Threatening legal action and consulting with social agencies both had relatively high inner products (−.65 and +.65) on the non-normative–normative scale, thus providing further evidence for identifying normativeness as underlying this dimension.

**Majority–minority differences in preferred behaviors and dimensional correlates of preferences** The second purpose of this study was to assess participants' behavioral preferences, and to determine which attributes were associated with these preferences. The third goal of this

study was to determine if the social status of the perceiver (i.e. majority vs. minority) has an impact on the perception and preferences of responses to discrimination. Tests were conducted to compare behavior preferences of majority (White) respondents compared to visible minority respondents. A Group × Behavior analysis of variance (ANOVA) for behavior preference ratings revealed a marginal effect for Group ($F(1, 118) = 2.76$, $p = .099$), and a significant effect for Behavior ($F(13, 1534) = 22.63$, $p = .000$); these effects were qualified by their significant interaction ($F(13, 1534) = 3.39$, $p = .001$).

The behaviors in Table 1 are listed in terms of the overall means for all respondents from most to least preferred behaviors. The means associated with the Group × Behavior interaction are presented in the first two columns of Table 1. White respondents had higher mean preference ratings than visible minority respondents for the following behaviors: 'consulting social agencies' ($t(118) = 2.16$, $p = .033$), 'meeting with the discriminator' ($t(118) = 2.41$, $p = .017$), 'getting a lawyer to write a letter' ($t(118) = 2.94$, $p = .004$), 'threatening legal action' ($t(118) = 2.67$, $p = .008$), and 'consulting with a lawyer' ($t(118) = 3.08$, $p = .003$). The patterns of mean differences within groups were generally similar to each other, except for the litigious behaviors noted above, which were among the least preferred behaviors for the visible sample and which were equally preferred to 'doing nothing'.

In order to identify which dimensional attributes were related to behavior preferences, the mean behavior preference ratings from the first two columns from Table 1 were correlated with their overall mean attribute ratings (i.e. thus 1 mean preference rating and 9 mean attribute ratings for each behavior). The unit of analysis, therefore, is behavior ($N = 14$). These correlations were calculated separately for the White and visible minority respondents and are presented in the first two columns of Table 2.

The pattern of correlations between behavior preferences and behavior ratings on dimensions were very similar for the White and visible minority respondents. Mean preference ratings were higher for both White and visible minority participants when they were rated as more normative (respective $r$s = .59, $p = .027$ and .74, $p = .002$), and less costly (respective $r$s = −.62, $p = .017$ and −.73, $p = .003$). It should be noted that the mean ratings of the normative and costly attributes correlated significantly with each other for the White ($r = -.74$, $p = .002$) and visible minority respondents ($r = -.69$, $p = .006$). In addition, White respondents tended to prefer behaviors which they perceived as more preparatory ($r = -.75$, $p = .002$), while visible minority respondents preferred behaviors which they perceived as being safer ($r = -.60$, $p = .022$).

Because the behavior of 'doing nothing' was somewhat of an outlier in the Behavior Preferences (Table 1) and the Multimode analyses, the earlier correlational analyses were repeated dropping this behavior ($N = 13$ behaviors as the units of analysis). Only the significant correlations are reported in parentheses in Table 2, where it can be seen that low cost, low risk, and high normativeness are consistently and more strongly related to behavior preferences for both samples.

**Gender differences** Gender differences were only examined within the White majority sample because of the small number of visible minority men ($N = 6$). A Gender × Behavior ANOVA revealed significant main effects for Gender ($F(1, 98) = 13.91$, $p = .000$), and Behavior ($F(13, 1274) = 25.43$, $p = .000$), but the interaction effect was not significant. Tests of mean differences (correcting for heterogeneity of variance in one case) indicated that women ($N = 78$) preferred the following behaviors more than men ($N = 22$): 'consulting social agencies' ($M = 7.72$ vs. $M = 6.59$; $t(98) = 2.12$, $p = .044$), 'contacting others' ($M = 5.92$ vs. $M = 4.14$; $t(98) = 3.48$, $p = .001$), 'becoming active in groups' ($M = 5.92$ vs. $M = 3.91$; $t(98) = 3.91$, $p = .000$), and 'laying charges of discrimination' ($M = 6.14$ vs. $M = 5.00$; $t(98) = 2.11$, $p = .037$).

## Study 2

Given the small minority sample in Study 1, a second study was conducted with Blacks and

*Table 2.* Correlations between mean behavior preference ratings and mean attribute ratings for behaviors

| | Study 1 | | Study 2 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Dimension | White | Visible | South Asian & Black |
| Passive–Active | −.41 | −.50 | −.35 |
| Individual–Collective | −.15 | −.51 | −.19 |
| Non-normative–Normative | .59* (.84**) | .74** (.83***) | .68** (.75**) |
| Private–Public | −.22 | .32 | −.05 |
| Low cost–High cost | −.62* (−.82***) | −.73** (−.73**) | −.67** (−.80***) |
| Preparatory action–Final action | −.75** (−.67*) | −.47 | −.78*** (−.75**) |
| Formal–Informal | .14 | .37 | .30 (.57*) |
| Ineffective–Effective | −.33 | −.43 | −.30 |
| Safe–Risky | −.46 (−.81***) | −.60* (−.73**) | −.56* (−.74**) |

*$p < .05$; **$p < .01$; *** $p < .001$.
*Note*: Correlations in parentheses are the values of significant correlations when the 'do nothing' behavior is dropped from the analysis.

South Asians, as members of these two groups are likely to perceive discrimination on the basis of their visibility (e.g. Taylor, Wright, Moghaddam, & Lalonde, 1990). One purpose of Study 2 was to determine if the same pattern of majority versus visible minority differences in behavior preferences would be replicated when comparing the Whites from Study 1 with this second larger sample of Black and South Asian respondents. The other was to replicate the pattern of correlations between behavioral preferences and attribute ratings.

## Method

**Respondents** A total of 70 individuals was recruited through contacts in the Black and South Asian communities; a few were undergraduate students who received course credit for their participation. There were 35 men and 34 women (one did not indicate gender), with a mean age of 24. There were 35 South Asian and 35 Black participants; 32 respondents were born outside of Canada, and 60 respondents were Canadian citizens.

**Procedure** The same procedure that was used in Study 1 was followed, with a few exceptions. Because the situations of employment and housing discrimination were not associated with any differences in Study 1, only the situation of employment discrimination was examined. Moreover, at the end of the scenario, respondents had to indicate which of their group memberships was being referred to; there was no option to check 'imagined groups' as in Study 1. Finally, although measures of social identity were included in this study, they did not add significantly to the results.

## Results

**Preliminary analyses** As in Study 1, the manipulation check indicated that many participants incorrectly perceived the source of discrimination. In the individual discrimination condition, 69 percent indicated that discrimination came from an individual, while in the institutional discrimination condition, 74 percent correctly indicated that they had been discriminated against by the company.

**Behavior preferences** Behavior preferences were analyzed in a Level of Discrimination (Individual vs. Institutional) × Group (Black vs. South Asian) × Behavior MANOVA, with

repeated measures on behavior. There were no significant multivariate effects for Group, Level of Discrimination, or their interaction. The same analysis was repeated only for respondents who successfully recognized the individual versus institutional manipulation and the manipulation was still not effective in bringing about any significant Type of Discrimination effects.

There was a significant main effect for Behavior ($F$ (13, 897) = 16.32, $p$ = .000). The mean preferences for each behavior are presented in the last column of Table 2. Comparison of means using a Tukey procedure ($p$ < .01) indicated that the five most preferred behaviors, ranging from: 'ask friends and family for ideas' ($M$ = 7.04) to 'collect evidence proving I was a victim of discrimination' ($M$ = 6.03) all differed significantly from the five least preferred behaviors, which ranged from: 'become active in social groups that fight discrimination' ($M$ = 4.74) to 'do nothing about the situation' ($M$ = 3.93). The least preferred behavior was 'do nothing about the situation', which differed significantly from 8 of the other 13 behaviors.

**Comparisons with Whites from Study 1** A series of $t$ tests was conducted to compare the behavior preferences of this visible sample with those of the White sample from Study 1. Almost all of the observed differences between the White and visible minority respondents from Study 1 were replicated; White respondents had higher mean preference ratings than visible respondents for the following behaviors: 'consulting social agencies' ($t$ (168) = 4.07, $p$ = .000), 'meeting with the discriminator' ($t$ (168) = 2.36, $p$ = .02), 'getting a lawyer to write a letter' ($t$ (168) = 1.94, $p$ = .05), and 'consulting with a lawyer' ($t$ (168) = 4.08, $p$ = .000). In addition, the White participants had higher mean preference ratings than the visible minority participants for the following behaviors: 'asking friends and family for ideas' ($t$ (168) = 3.08, $p$ = .002), 'filing a complaint with the Human Rights Commission' ($t$ (168) = 3.44, $p$ = .001), 'collecting evidence of discrimination' ($t$ (168) = 3.65, $p$ = .000), 'taking legal action' ($t$ (168) = 3.79, $p$ = .000), 'contacting others' ($t$ (168) = 2.30, $p$ = .023), and 'becoming active in groups' ($t$ (168) = 2.08, $p$ = .039). The same differences also were found when only the White respondents from the Employment condition ($N$ = 52) were used in the analyses.

**Correlations between preference and attribute ratings** In order to examine the pattern of relationships between the behavior preferences and the attribute ratings for this sample, the mean behavior preference ratings from the third column from Table 1 were correlated with their overall mean attribute ratings (i.e. 1 mean preference rating and 9 mean attribute ratings for each behavior). Four of the nine correlations were significant, and these were very similar to those found in Study 1. On average, behaviors were more likely to be preferred when they were rated as more preparatory (or less final: $r$ = −.78, $p$ = .001), as more normative ($r$ = .68, $p$ = .008), less costly ($r$ = −.67, $p$ = .008), and less risky ($r$ = −.56, $p$ = .037). It should be noted that the mean ratings of these four attributes correlated significantly with each other: final with normative ($r$ = −.61, $p$ = .021), final with costly ($r$ = .78, $p$ = .001), final with risky ($r$ = .69, $p$ = .006), costly with normative ($r$ = −.68, $p$ = .008), costly with risky ($r$ = .89, $p$ = .000), risky with normative ($r$ = −.81, $p$ = .000). This pattern of correlations did not differ between Black and South Asian respondents. When the correlational analyses were repeated dropping the 'do nothing' behavior ($N$ = 13), it can be seen in Table 2 (correlations reported in parentheses) that low cost, low risk, and high normativeness are consistently and more strongly related to behavior preferences for the Black and South Asian respondents.

**Gender differences** Gender differences were examined in a Gender × Group (Black, South Asian) × Behavior ANOVA. In addition to the main effect for Behavior reported earlier, the only other significant effect was the Gender × Behavior interaction ($F$ (13, 845) = 1.91, $p$ = .026). Tests of mean differences indicated that women ($N$ = 34, $M$ = 5.53) preferred 'becoming active in groups' in comparison to men ($N$ = 35, $M$ = 4.00) ($t$ (67) = 2.96, $p$ = .004.

## General discussion

**Underlying dimensions of behaviors** The first purpose of the present research was to identify the dimensionality underlying responses that can be taken in situations of housing and employment discrimination. The multimode factor analysis conducted in Study 1 revealed three components. The first component was seen as representing an 'assertiveness' dimension. While this dimension is akin to the passive–active dimension identified in intergroup theories, it is more fully defined within this study. The assertive (or active) pole of this dimension is clearly associated with personal cost and risk, attributes that have only recently been addressed by intergroup (Kelly, 1993; Louis, 2001; Simon et al., 1998) and prejudice theorists (Major, Quinton, McCoy, & Schmader, 2000), but that have been recognized by more qualitative researchers for some time (Essed, 1991a; Feagin, 1991). This dimension also mirrors Gruber's (e.g. Gruber & Smith, 1995) method of classifying responses to sexual harassment, if one equates 'doing nothing' in response to discrimination with 'ignoring' harassment and 'laying charges of discrimination' with 'reporting a harasser'. It is apparent that intergroup theories can be well informed by the considerable literature on sexism and sexual harassment.

The second component was interpreted as an Individual Litigiousness versus Collective/Public dimension. This dimension may reflect, on the surface, the individual–collective dimension identified in intergroup theories, but in fact it is qualitatively different. For example, when social identity theorists refer to individual strategies for dealing with social disadvantage they speak of 'individual mobility' which 'may improve one's personal position but it leaves the group's position unchanged' (Hogg & Abrams, 1988, p. 56). While such individual strategies can exist when responding to housing and employment discrimination (e.g. looking for employment in a different company), the individual strategies identified in this study were quite litigious in nature (e.g. laying charges of discrimination) and they could have important consequences for the collective.

The third component of the solution was seen as representing a normative–non-normative dimension, again reflecting an important dimension of behavior identified by intergroup theorists. This dimension was not as clearly defined as the other two dimensions, because it did not polarize behaviors and attributes to the same extent. Nonetheless, this dimension highlights some important findings. First, consultative behaviors are seen as normative. Given the ambiguous nature of many instances of discrimination, there may be no clear norms about what one is to do; seeking information through consultation can therefore be seen as a fallback normative response and the first step in a process, particularly with a student sample. Another interesting aspect of this component was that 'doing nothing' was in direct opposition to the normative attribute, thus suggesting that it is not perceived to be a normative response. There are probably fairly strong demand characteristics in an analogue study for respondents to see 'doing nothing' as a non-normative and undesirable response, thus accounting for its low ratings. We will return to the issue of inaction shortly.

In summary, although the three key dimensions identified by intergroup theorists (passive–active; individual–collective; non-normative–normative) were represented in the components identified in the multimode factor analysis, it is clear that behaviors are multiply determined. Moreover, it is not these theoretical dimensions that are the most likely to be considered by victims in the process of responding to discrimination.

### *Preferred responses*

The second goal of this research was to identify the preferred behaviors in situations of discrimination, and to see which attributes were correlated with these preferences. The pattern of response preferences was similar across the two studies. For example, the most preferred response for all groups of respondents involved seeking information from friends and family. Other more preparatory or consultative behaviors were also among the most preferred (consulting social agencies and collecting evidence).

The more collective behaviors of 'contacting others and working together' and 'becoming active in groups' were among the least preferred behaviors for the White, as well as Black and South Asian (Study 2) respondents. But it is not the collectivistic nature of behaviors that was related to behavior preferences. It was the perceived cost, risk, and normativeness of behaviors that seemed to be important; these three related attributes consistently correlated with behavior preferences across the two studies for both White and non-White samples. Respondents clearly preferred behaviors that they rated as low in cost, low in risk, and high in normativeness. Of the three dimensions identified in the intergroup relations literature, therefore, only the normative dimension consistently related to behavior preferences. While the notion of personal cost and risk has been raised as an important factor in deciding how to respond to discrimination (e.g. Feagin, 1991) and sexual harassment (e.g. Gutek & Koss, 1993), it is only recently that researchers have incorporated this dimension into social identity frameworks predicting collective behavior (Kelly, 1993; Louis, 2001; Simon et al., 1998). There are of course other related dimensions of behavior such as effort (Louis & Taylor, 1999), that should be considered in the prediction of behaviors taken in response to discrimination.

### *Majority–minority differences*

Although the same defining attributes were related to behavior preferences in both studies, there were important differences between the White and visible minority respondents in their preferences. The most consistent and striking finding is that White (majority) respondents gave higher ratings to almost all of the behaviors that were provided particularly in comparison to the South Asian and Black respondents from Study 2. The visible minority respondents in both studies were particularly less likely to endorse behaviors of a litigious nature. It appears that the perceived appropriateness of a response to discrimination will differ with the social standing of the perceiver, at least from a majority/minority perspective as defined by color.

The stronger endorsement of behaviors by White respondents may reflect their somewhat naive belief that action is a normative response in a situation of injustice. This belief may stem from a cognitive representation of discrimination that is not informed by personal or group experience. A potential implication of this result is that majority respondents are more likely to believe that victims of discrimination will take action when discrimination takes place. Such a biased representation of the responses to discrimination can serve to reinforce the myth that discrimination is relatively uncommon and that when it occurs it can be successfully challenged. Inman and Baron (1996) have found that there are prototypical expectancies on perceptions of prejudice that involve a typical type of perpetrator (e.g. a White) and a typical type of victim (e.g. a Black). It is quite likely that there are also prototypical expectations regarding responses to discrimination. If future research finds that members of socially advantaged groups are more likely to believe that members of socially disadvantaged groups will take action in response to discrimination, they may also harbor the mistaken belief that taking action is relatively easy. Moreover, advantaged group members may persist in their beliefs that discrimination is not a problem if they believe that action is typically taken and that solutions are reached on the basis of such actions; such beliefs would bolster the 'blaming the victim' phenomenon. Given the potential implication of majority representations about responses to discrimination and the differences that were found in this study, it is clear that more research is required with majority group members as well as with a greater variety of disadvantaged groups. The current study relied mostly on the responses of South Asians and Blacks living in Toronto and experiences of discrimination may change by location and by group (e.g. Essed, 1991b).

### *Responding to individual and systemic discrimination*

In both of the current studies, no effects were found for the level of discrimination manipulation (individual versus institutional) on the

preferred responses to discrimination. The pattern of results reported by Lykes (1983) could not be replicated with the current paradigm. The manipulation checks in both studies indicated that many participants incorrectly identified the source of the discrimination they experienced. The greatest number of errors was in Study 1 where one third of the participants in the institutional discrimination condition perceived the discrimination as coming from an individual. This finding does not necessarily mean that they did not detect the institutional manipulation (i.e. an unofficial company policy); it may simply reflect a tendency to interpret dyadic interactions at an individual level (i.e. the company policy was enforced by the interviewer). The overall pattern of errors, however, probably reflects in part the attributional ambiguity involved in identifying a source of discrimination. While Crocker and Major (1989) have highlighted the attributional ambiguity of labelling the source of a negative experience as more internal (characteristics of the self) or external (membership in a group), an ambiguity still remains even when a negative experience has been attributed to group membership. What is apparent from the current results is that it is difficult to disentangle individual from institutional discrimination. While the distinction is important in conceptualizing prejudice, it may be impractical to force the distinction into a research paradigm, because institutional discrimination will typically be played out by individuals.

### *Using analogue methods to study discrimination and the problem of inaction*

The correlations indicating that preferred responses tend to be perceived as more preparatory, indicates one of the limitations of this study and others that employ analogue situations (i.e. vignettes). The dynamic nature of responding to discrimination cannot be fully captured in the context of static vignettes because they fail to capture the sequential contingencies of a chain of behaviors. Studies that have examined the phenomenology of being a victim of racism indicate that an assessment of the situation is a major and critical step that usually precedes many actions (Essed, 1991a; Feagin, 1991). In the current studies, the majority of the preferred behaviors (asking friends and family for ideas; consulting social agencies; collecting evidence) clearly represent part of an assessment strategy that can lead to further action or inaction. It is very difficult for vignettes to capture the dynamic nature of the discrimination experience (see Weiss & Lalonde, 2001).

The analogue method entails another important limitation. The respondents only indicated their behavioral preferences without actually having to take action in a real and stressful situation. The gap between stated preferences and actual responses to discrimination is highlighted in two recent studies. Swim and Hyers (1999) examined the responses of women faced with a man making several sexist remarks during a group discussion. In a first study they examined the responses of women who actually experienced the situation and in a second study they examined the response preferences of women who were asked to imagine themselves in the same situation. When they imagined themselves in the situation, 81 percent of their respondents indicated they would give at least one confrontational response, but when they actually experienced the situation only 45 percent of the women engaged in some form of confrontation. A similar set of studies was conducted by Woodzicka and LaFrance (2001) who examined women in a sexually harassing job interview. Their first study examined the responses of women who actually experienced the interview and their second study examined the responses of women imagining themselves in the same situation. Once again, the level of active responding was much higher in the imagined situation than in the actual situation. In both the Swim and Hyers (1999) and Woodzicka and LaFrance (2001) studies, the majority of their victims of sexism chose to do nothing. Such results certainly question the predictive validity of analogue studies particularly with regard to passive behavior and some researchers have argued that experimental analogue studies of discrimination are uninformative (e.g. Fitzgerald et al., 1995). Woodzicka and LaFrance (2001) have noted, however, the importance of understanding the

anticipated responses of victims of discrimination. Data from analogue studies indicate the expectations that individuals have about how they would and *should* respond, namely, the representations of discrimination responses that were discussed earlier.

Nonetheless, because the analogue methodology offers control of the manipulated and measured variables, it did allow for a number of interesting comparisons. First, and as expected, no differences in behavior preferences were found between the employment and housing situations, suggesting a generalizable pattern of response preferences. It was also found in Study 1 that White women had higher preference ratings than men for four of the behaviors. Among these behaviors were the collective/public strategies (contacting others/working together and becoming active in groups); this finding may reflect in part the notion that some women are more communal than men (e.g. Moskowitz, Suh & Desaulniers, 1994). It is premature, however, to suggest that women are more likely to show stronger preferences for taking action than men given that they are more likely to be targets of discrimination. Because visible minority respondents gave significantly lower preference ratings than Whites for most of the behaviors, gender must be looked at in relation to groups status. In fact, there was only one gender difference that was found in the South Asian and Black sample (i.e. becoming active in groups to fight discrimination). Clearly more research is needed in order to look at the interaction between race and gender in the perceived appropriateness of different responses to discrimination, and an analogue methodology facilitates the test of such group and interaction effects.

### *Conclusion*

While discrimination represents a form of intergroup behavior, it appears that intergroup theories are not sufficiently articulated to address behavioral responses in situations of interpersonal discrimination. The current studies suggest that such responses should be conceptualized in terms of a process model. Part of this process should involve an appraisal of the responses that are available to a target of discrimination and an assessment of the costs and risks associated with taking different types of actions. By focusing on an applied problem such as coping with discrimination, intergroup theories will need to more clearly articulate how socially disadvantaged group members (i.e. potential victims of discrimination) attempt to respond to their status, and to move beyond broad dimensions of behavior (i.e. individual–collective). Furthermore, it is important to assess what advantaged group members perceive as appropriate responses to discrimination in order to gain insight into how they will respond to the actions taken by victims of discrimination.

## Notes

1. The term visible minority will be used throughout the paper. It is the official term used in Canada for purposes of Employment Equity and related policies. We recognize that individuals from groups such as Blacks dislike the term (Boatswain & Lalonde, 2000) and that this label does not recognize the unique experiences and histories of different groups. The term does recognize, however, a common reality for individuals from non-White groups (Blacks, South Asians) in North America. They are more likely than individuals from White ethnic groups (Italians, Jews, Portuguese) to perceive group based discrimination (Dion & Kawakami, 1996).
2. In these studies, the categorization of responses into discrete categories was done either a priori or a posteriori by the researchers. It is important to note that the participants in these studies may not have been thinking of the same dimensions of behavior as the researchers when evaluating the behaviors.
3. An inner product represents the cosine of the angle between two vectors and thus their closeness. A high positive inner product indicates that the concepts (behaviors and attributes) are closely related, whereas a high negative inner product indicates that they are inversely related (in the case of semantic differential scales, this would mean that a behavior is related to the attribute on the negative pole of the scale). With the present data only inner products having an absolute value greater than .75 were considered (with two exceptions in the interpretation of the 3rd component—see text).

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