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Exploring a Model of Modern Prejudice

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Abstract

The present study aimed to explore a proposed model of modern prejudice through the selected variables. Self-compassion, compassion towards others, psychological flexibility, and social dominance orientation were selected as intra-psychological variables (Dimension I) to explore, while ethnic and gender identity were selected as the inter-group relationship variables (Dimension II). 242 participants completed online questionnaires for the above-mentioned variables along with questionnaires measuring racism and sexism. The relationship of these variables with racism and sexism was examined, and multiple regression analyses were conducted. Results showed that Dimension I and Dimension II were significant predictors for both racism and sexism, to varying degrees.

Keywords: prejudice, sexism, racism, compassion, SDO, group identification

Exploring a Model of Modern Prejudice

Prejudice, and its behavioural aspect known as discrimination, exists to varying degrees throughout the world (Discrimination, n.d). Prejudiced behaviour based on gender and ethnicity (sexism and racism) are two forms of discrimination that the current paper will be focusing on, particularly in a Swedish context. While Sweden is arguably a leading advocate for human rights and equality compared to the rest of the world (Okar, 2018), sexism and racism still permeate throughout Swedish society today, even if it manifests in different ways in comparison to other countries (Gender Equality in Sweden, 2020; Bursell, 2014). Women earn 10.7% less than men in Sweden on average, and only 55% of women versus 78% of men are in the labour force (Gender Equality in Sweden, 2020). A recent example of misogyny in Swedish media was when Lena Einhorn, a former virus researcher in Sweden, was mocked for her hair, her curtains and her "hysterical" tone of voice when presenting research reports criticising Sweden's approach to COVID-19 (Gustavsson, 2020).

Sweden's response to the COVID-19 pandemic also highlighted the racist undertones present in Swedish society when former chief epidemiologist Johan Giesecke attributed the high number of COVID-19 deaths in nursing homes for the elderly, to staff with immigrant backgrounds who "may not always be understanding the information" (Gustavsson, 2020, p.1). Moreover, Bursell (2014) found evidence that there was extensive ethnic discrimination against male applicants in the Swedish work force with Arabic and North African names. Another study by Bursell (2012) also found that foreign-named applicants need to send twice as many applications to receive a callback compared to Swedish-named applicants. The ongoing presence of such discrimination makes it evident that there is still a need in Sweden for a better

understanding of systemic prejudice, that could thereby lead to the development of improved preventative measures.

The aim of the present study was to select specific psychological variables and examine if they are related with, and are predictors for prejudice (racism and sexism in particular). These variables that predict racism and sexism could consequently be used to develop a model of modern prejudice in Sweden.

Theoretical Framework and Models

Prejudice

The paradox of persistent inequality amid growing awareness in society and legislation concerning decreasing discrimination (Discrimination Act, 2019) brings up the question of factors underlying modern prejudice in Sweden, especially in the form of both gender based and racial discrimination. In general, theorists argue that there are various factors behind why prejudice exists and why it can be difficult to resolve (Devine et al., 2012; Macrae et al., 1994).

Reynolds and colleagues (2001) theorized that the factors underlying prejudice are based on an individual's interpersonal characteristics (personality psychology) and group memberships (social psychology). Approaching prejudice through personality psychology postulates that prejudice or discrimination is the result of internal attributes held by an individual (Reynolds and colleagues, 2001). Thus, when examined through the lens of personality psychology, targeting prejudice would mean targeting certain personality traits that make individuals more likely to be prejudiced.

When viewed from the perspective of social psychology, however, prejudice is explained through theories such as social identity theory (SIT; Tajfel et al., 1979) and self-categorization theory (SCT; Turner et al., 1987). For example, SIT states that people receive a sense of pride and identity from belonging to certain in-groups (gender, ethnicity, social class, etc.) and such inter-group dynamics can help explain prejudiced behaviour against those in the out-groups.

The human brain simplifies first impressions of strangers by dividing people into social categories based on different traits (hair color, ethnicity, gender, social class, etc.; Macrae & Bodenhausen, 2000). This process also entails creating ideas about people who are a part of these ultimately irrelevant, man-made categorizations, which in turn affects how an individual judges them (Macrae & Bodenhausen, 2000). A variety of contextual factors such as socioeconomic and power inequality can lead to an "us and them" form of thinking, where individuals tend to see their own group in a more positive way (Whitley & Kite, 2016) when in reality this positive perception might be subjective or arbitrary. This difference between "us and them" only grows when the out-group is considered a threat to the in-group (Stephan, 2014).

Apart from the social and personality psychology approach, another explanation regarding why prejudice can occur, unknowingly or otherwise, are cognitive processes, an example of which is assimilated stereotyping. According to Macrae, Milne & Bodenhausen (1994) assimilated stereotyping can help an individual reduce the burden of understanding a complex social environment. Another intra-psychological factor that is a contributor toward discrimination is the existence of implicit biases (Devine et al., 2012). These biases are often unintentional and are automatically activated (Devine et al., 2012), which makes them difficult to

address. People can be unaware that they have these biases, as they can exist even in the presence of conscious non-prejudiced attitudes (Devine et al., 2012).

Hayes and colleagues (2002) presented another explanation for prejudice and argued that it has a cognitive basis and is caused when individuals apply certain attributes and categories to other individuals through the use of language and ignore the complex history and context behind why and how they came to assign these labels. For example, words such as “brown”, “Jewish”, “lesbian”, “addict”, etc., are all verbal categories (Masuda, Hill, Morgan, & Cohen, 2012). These arbitrary categories are acquired during childhood (Berens & Hayes, 2007) and continue throughout life (Hayes et al., 2002; Kohlenberg, Hayes & Hayes, 1991) in order to reduce the cognitive burden of understanding a complex social environment. Hayes et al. (2002) speculated that prejudice and discrimination persist in virtually every sociocultural context since the verbal processes are automatic, constant and without conscious awareness (Hayes et al., 2002). This approach to prejudice could explain why individuals have implicit biases despite denying having any prejudiced attitudes (Greenwald et al., 2009). These implicit biases are crucial to address because they can subtly influence discriminatory behaviour under the appearance of equality (Dasgupta, 2004).

The present study will be examining specific variables that fall under the previously mentioned schools of thought regarding prejudice such as personality, social, cognitive psychology, and more. For the sake of simplicity while incorporating a variety of variables from these different schools of thought, the current paper will divide said variables into two broad dimensions. The first dimension will be intra-psychological variables (which are the processes

that occur within an individual's mind). The second dimension will be inter-group variables (that relate to between group dynamics and in-group identification).

Dimension I, titled, Intra-Psychological Processes, will consist of the following: *self-compassion, compassion to others, psychological flexibility, psychological inflexibility,* and *social dominance orientation (SDO)*. Dimension II, titled Inter-Group Relations, will consist of in-group identification (*ethnic identification* and *gender identification*). By examining these variables and their relationship with prejudice (*racism* and *sexism* in particular), the present study will achieve a deeper understanding of the face of modern prejudice in Sweden, and thereby be able to develop a model of modern prejudice in further research.

Dimension I: Intra-Psychological Variables

Psychological Flexibility and Psychological Inflexibility

Psychological flexibility is the ability to be consciously in the present moment and to be able shift and adjust behaviour in accordance with one's values, while psychological inflexibility is the inability to do so (Bond et al., 2006). While psychological flexibility and inflexibility have previously been treated as opposite ends of the same construct, recent evidence suggests that they are separate dimensions and should be treated as distinct constructs that may be linked (Rogge et al., 2019; Peltz, Daks & Rogge, 2020; Peltz et al., 2020). Consistent with these findings, the present study examined psychological flexibility and psychological inflexibility as two distinct variables.

The psychological flexibility theory the present paper will be focusing on was derived from relational frame theory (Barnes-Holmes & Roche, 2001), and it aims to understand behaviours of interest (such as discrimination or prejudice) and work toward a specific goal (such as decreasing discrimination) through the use of an intervention strategy called acceptance and commitment therapy (ACT; Hayes et al., 2012). Hayes and colleagues (2012) hypothesize that prejudice arises from "inappropriately" applied verbal and language processes, in other words, the arbitrary social categorizations that individuals assign to others. An individual high in psychological flexibility would hypothetically be able to shift away from these arbitrary social categorizations and discriminatory behaviour when faced with the reality of their prejudices because they would be able to adjust and assimilate to this new information and frame of mind, especially when given the tools to change their biased verbal categories. Individuals high on psychological inflexibility would not be able to do so. Studies have shown this is indeed the case; that increasing psychological flexibility reduces discrimination (McFarland, 2010; Levin et al., 2016). Hence, it would be beneficial to examine the relationship of these two variables with prejudice and determine if they are a good fit for a model of prejudice in Sweden.

Self-Compassion and Compassion to Others

Neff (2003) defines self-compassion as being nurturing towards oneself, even in times of failure or in situations that threaten one's sense of adequacy. As previously discussed, prejudice can rise from feeling socially threatened by out-group members (Tajfel et al., 1979). Hence, hypothetically, individuals with higher levels of self-compassion would not feel their sense of adequacy threatened by out-groups. There are very few studies exploring the connection between self-compassion and out-group attitudes. One such study found that self-compassion influences

empathy and improved attitudes to outgroups (Fuochi et al., 2018). A direct link should be further investigated.

Goetz and colleagues (2010) defined compassion towards others as the feeling of wanting to help after witnessing the suffering of others. Compassion toward others is also crucial to investigate as it has been linked with viewing out-groups as less of a threat (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2017), and it increases one's ability to feel connected with humanity as a whole (Gilbert, 2014). Hunsinger and colleagues (2014) found that individuals that engaged in compassion-based meditation were less prejudiced towards outgroups when compared with participants who did not practice it. Compassion was chosen as a variable for the present study due to its subtle contribution to prejudiced mindsets, both in the form of self-compassion and compassion towards others.

Social Dominance Orientation

Defined by Pratto and colleagues (1994), SDO is the desire and tendency to maintain an unequal power balance among social groups in the form of dominant/subordinate social hierarchies. SDO stemmed from social dominance theory (Sidanius & Pratto, 1993) and has shown to be negatively correlated with tolerance (Pratto et al., 1994). An individual with high levels of SDO promotes group inequality by conducting, promoting and supporting discriminatory acts that produce better outcomes for dominant groups in society. Social dominance theory highlights that higher levels of SDO in a country are associated with the greater social inequality and the maintenance of this inequality. This highlights that it is

important to examine if SDO is a variable behind prejudice in Sweden today and is linked to the current social inequalities in the country.

Research has shown that these theories are robust and that SDO and discrimination are related, and that it is a good predictor of prejudice. Studies have repeatedly shown that people who scored higher on SDO were less likely to support immigrant and female empowerment, had higher levels of prejudice towards homosexuals and African Americans, and supported the maintenance of social inequality (Jackson & Esses, 2000; Heaven et al., 2006; Duriez & Van Hiel, 2002; Bates & Heaven, 2001; Whitley Jr, 1999; Sidanius, Sinclair & Pratto, 2006b). Hence, it is important to explore if SDO is an underlying variable present in society today in order to examine if it plays a role in prejudice and discrimination in Sweden.

Dimension II: Intergroup Relational Factors

In-group Identification

In-group identification is a crucial construct that helps in the understanding of intra and intergroup dynamics (Leach et al., 2008). Research has shown that merely being assigned to a certain group is enough to create an "us vs. them" mentality, also known as intergroup discrimination. (Diehl, 1990; Tajfel, 1981). However, it is important to note that while merely being part of a group can give rise to in-group biases (Diehl, 1990; Tajfel, 1981), the degree to which an individual identifies with said group is also important (Leach et al., 2008). SIT states that this degree of in-group identification is what predicts discriminatory behaviour, and studies have found significant relationships between the extent of in-group identification, and in-group

bias (Perreault & Bourhis, 1999; Sidanius et al., 1994) and discriminatory behaviour (Gagnon & Bourhis, 1996; Perreault & Bourhis, 1999)

Leach and colleagues (2008) also identified that individuals with distinct in-group identities wish to maintain their distinctiveness from out-group members and attempts to decrease this distinction would be met with opposition. For example, the integration of ethnic minorities/immigrants in a country, or gender minorities in a workplace, might be met with resistance since their integration would decrease the homogeneity of a country or ingroup at a workplace (Leach et al., 2008).

This makes in-group identification perhaps the most crucial aspect to study in social psychology when trying to examine variables that contribute to prejudice in society. The present study will be examining in-group identification in two forms: ethnic in-group identification and gender in-group identification.

Study Aims

Specific variables linked with prejudice have been chosen for this research paper in order to put forward a model of modern prejudice. It is proposed that the modern model of prejudice consists of two dimensions: Dimension I consists of *intra-psychological variables* that are *psychological flexibility, psychological inflexibility, self-compassion, compassion to others* and *social dominance orientation (SDO)*. Dimension II of this model consists of *inter-group relationship variables* that are in-group identification (*ethnic identification* and *gender identification*). In the present study, the robustness of this proposed model will be tested by

examining the relationship each dimension has with prejudice (racism and sexism in particular), along with the individual variables in each.

Participants will be completing self-report measures for the following: psychological flexibility, psychological inflexibility, self-compassion, compassion to others, social dominance orientation (SDO), and in-group identification (ethnic and gender separately), and measures for sexism and racism.

By developing this model of modern prejudice and testing it, a better understanding of prejudice in Sweden will be achieved. This model could thereby in the future help develop interventions that target variables, and therefore decrease prejudice and discrimination.

Hypotheses

1. Dimension I (psychological flexibility, psychological inflexibility, self-compassion, compassion to others and SDO) will be correlated with racism and sexism.

2. Dimension I (psychological flexibility, psychological inflexibility, self-compassion, compassion to others and SDO) will predict racism and sexism.

3. Dimension II (ethnic identification and gender identification) will be correlated with racism and sexism.

4. Dimension II (ethnic identification and gender identification) will predict racism and sexism.

Method

Participants

There were 260 completed responses, out of which 242 responses were selected for further data analyses. 189 participants chose to take the survey in Swedish and identified their countries of origin as the following from the range of options provided; Sweden (176), Europe (7), West Asia (3) and South/Central America (3). 53 participants opted to take the survey in English and identified their countries of origin as the following; Sweden (8), Europe (22), North America (10), South Asia (6), Central America (1), Other (2).

The age range of the participants ranged from 18 to 75 years of age (M_{age} = 30.42, *SD* = 11.21). Participants reported having a diverse range of occupations; students, full time employees, part-time employees, freelancers, etc. The sample consisted of 156 women (65%), 80 men (33%), and six participants who chose the option to not specify their gender (2%).

Materials and Procedures

An online survey was created using Qualitrics (https://www.qualtrics.com). The survey was available in English and Swedish, and participants chose what they preferred. All participants gave explicit consent to taking part in the experiment with the understanding that their data would be analysed and presented in a master's thesis. They were informed that they could withdraw from the study or discontinue at any point and were assured of the confidentiality and anonymity of the data collected. Questionnaire order was randomized to account for order effects.

The survey was emailed to approximately 5,000 email addresses that were provided as part of the Lund University database. Moreover, the survey link was also posted on Facebook (in Facebook groups and as people's statuses).

Questionnaires that were originally in English were translated to Swedish by the project members of the present study using back-translation.

Self-Compassion Scale, SCS-SF

The Self Compassion Scale used in the present study is the short form of the Self Compassion Scale. The 12-item Self-Compassion Scale–Short Form (SCS–SF) is in Dutch and English and was created by Raes and colleagues (2011). It has a scale from 1 *'Never'* to 5 *'Always'*. It demonstrated high internal consistency (α = .86).

Compassion Scale, CS

Pommier, Neff, & Tóth-Király (2020) developed and validated the Compassion Scale (CS) which measures compassion towards others. It consists of 16 items and has a scale from 1 '*Almost Never*' to 5 '*Almost Always'*. Internal consistency was found to be high (α = .86).

Psychological Flexibility Scale, PFQ-F

This questionnaire examines the degree of psychological flexibility on a scale of 1 '*Do not agree at all*' to 6 '*Fully agree*'. The scale is currently being validated and developed by Wolgast, Wolgast & Hoff (2020) and was found to have an internal consistency of α = .84 in the current study.

Psychological Inflexibility Scale, PFQ-I

This questionnaire examines the degree of psychological inflexibility on a scale of 1 '*Do not agree at all*' to 6 '*Fully agree*'. The scale is currently being validated and developed by Wolgast, Wolgast & Hoff (2020) and was found to have an internal consistency of α = .87 in the current study.

Social Dominance Orientation Short Scale, SDO-SC

The SDO Short Scale consisting of 8 items was created by Ho and colleagues (2015). It has 8 items and a scale from 1 *'Completely disagree'* to 7 *'Completely agree'*. The validity of the scale was tested and reported a Cronbach's alpha of α = .87.

In-Group Identification Scale, Ethnic Identification

Leach and colleagues (2008) developed an in-group identification scale that can be adjusted according to the in-group aspect being measured. In the present study, ethnic identification was measured. It is a self-assessment measure with a scale ranging from 1 '*Completely disagree*' to 4 '*Completely agree*'. It has high internal consistency (α = .86 to .91).

In-Group Identification Scale, Gender Identification

Leach and colleagues (2008) developed an in-group identification scale that can be adjusted according to the in-group aspect being measured. In the present study, gender identification was measured. It is a self-assessment measure with a scale ranging from 1 '*Completely disagree*' to 4 '*Completely agree*'. It has high internal consistency (α = .86 to .91).

Modern Racial Prejudice Scale

This scale measures explicit attitudes of modern racism. It is a self-assessment scale that has been constructed and tested previously in Sweden in Swedish and English (Akrami,

Ekehammar & Araya, 2000) and consists of nine questions with a Likert scale from 1 '*Completely disagree'* to 5 '*Completely agree'*. It was found to have high internal consistency (α = .80) when it was validated.

Modern Sexism Scale

The Swedish Modern Sexism scale was constructed in Swedish and English for measuring attitudes toward women in a Scandinavian context by Ekehammar and colleagues (2000). This scale consists of eight items with a Likert scale from 1 '*Completely disagree'* to 5 '*Completely agree'*. and was found to have high internal consistency (α = .80).

COVID-19 Questions

A check for the current state of the participants' well-being was assessed using six items. Three items asked the participants to rate their response on a Likert scale ranging from 1 '*Much worse*' to 5 '*Much better*'. Examples of questions asked are '*How is your health right now compared to how it normally is?'* and '*How is your psychological well-being right now compared to how it normally is?'*. The remaining three items were open ended questions with text boxes provided that the participants could record their responses in. An example is *'What is influencing your psychological well-being right now?'*.

Control Questions

Two control questions were added to the survey to ensure that participants were actively participating and not randomly selecting responses. The first question was '*Select the slightly agree answer option to this question*' and the second question was '*Select the completely agree answer option to this question'*.

Statistical Analysis

Statistical analysis was performed using Microsoft Excel (2020), SPSS 26.0 statistical software (IBM Corp., 2019) and Jamovi (The Jamovi Project, 2020)

The dataset was first cleaned in Microsoft Excel. Incomplete questionnaires and responses that failed the control questions were discarded. Descriptive statistics were analysed to check if basic assumptions were met in order to conduct further statistical analysis. Normality was checked and Mahalanobis distance was calculated in order to detect multivariate outliers and those detected were removed. Linearity as assessed by partial regression plots and a plot of residuals against the predicted values. There was independence of residuals, as assessed by a Durbin-Watson statistic of 1.900. There was no evidence of multicollinearity, as assessed by tolerance values greater than 0.1. There were no leverage values greater than 0.2, and values for Cook's distance above 1. The assumption of normality was met, as assessed by a Q-Q Plots

Results

To determine internal consistency of the questionnaires, Cronbach’s alpha was calculated for each of the questionnaires (Table 1 below).

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics of Questionnaires

Questionnaire	*Mean**	*SD**	α
Self-Compassion Scale	22.933	4.385	.846
Compassion Scale	67.256	6.177	.762
Psychological Flexibility	65.95	9.832	.841
Psychological Inflexibility	47.677	12.008	.865
Social Dominance Orientation	14.863	6.395	.735
Ethnic Identity	34.607	8.803	.907
Gender Identity	38.611	7.942	.870
Racism Scale	16.285	5.085	.845
Sexism Scale	16.09	4.627	.758

*Note: *of the scores of each scale*, α = *Cronbach's alpha*

Next, a correlation matrix was created in order to examine the relationship of the two dimensions with racism and sexism. Lastly, a multiple linear regression was conducted for each of the dimensions with racism and sexism each.

Dimension I Analysis

Correlation

A Pearson's correlation was run to assess the relationship of Dimension I variables with racism and sexism. There was a statistically significant, negative correlation between

compassion towards others and the following; racism, $r(240) = -.407$, $p < .001$ and sexism, $r(240) = -.326$, $p < .001$. This means that the more compassion towards others found, the lower the racist and sexist prejudice scores the individuals showed.

Results of the Pearson correlation further indicated that there was a significant, strong positive association between social dominance orientation with racism, $r(240) = .644$, $p < .001$ and sexism, $r(240) = .587$, $p < .001$. This indicates that the higher the SDO scores found, the higher the racist and sexist prejudice scores the individuals showed.

Furthermore, there was a statistically significant, positive correlation between self-compassion and sexism, $r(240) = .165$, $p < .001$. This implies that the higher the self-compassion scores found, the higher the sexist prejudice scores the individuals showed. Table 2 outlines the correlation results.

Table 2
Pearson Correlation for Dimension I

Variable	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.
1. Self-Compassion	-	.081	.532*	-.509*	.015	.066	.165*
2. Compassion to Others	.081	-	.121	-.099	-.312*	-.407*	-.326*
3. Psychological Flexibility	.532*	.121	-	-.659*	.071	.091	.126
4. Psychological Inflexibility	-.509*	-.099	-.659*	-	-.019	.023	-.086
5. Social Dominance Orientation	.015	-.312*	.071	.019	-	.644*	.587*
6. Racism	.066	-.407*	.091	.023	.644*	-	.662*
7. Sexism	.165*	-.326*	.126	-.086	.587*	.662*	-

Note. *p<0.001

Regression with Racism

The multiple regression model statistically significantly predicted racism, $F(5,236) = 43.4$, $p < .001$, *adj.* $R^2 = .468$. This indicates that 46.8% of the variation in racism scores was predicted by the variables in this dimension. The individual predictors were examined further and indicated that compassion towards others, $t(241) = -4.81$, $p < .001$, SDO, $t(241) = 11.26$, $p < .001$), psychological flexibility, $t(241) = 1.91$, $p < .05$, and psychological inflexibility, $t(241) =$

2.03, $p < .04$, were significant predictors in the model. Regression coefficients and standard errors can be found in Table 3 (below).

Table 3

Multiple Regression Results for Racism with Dimension I

Racism Variable	*B*	95% CI for *B*		*SE B*	*β*	R^2	ΔR^2
		LL	*UL*				
Model							
Constant	13.99***	5.46	22.54	4.33		.479	.468
Self-Compassion	.88	-.043	.219	.066	.076		
Compassion to Others	-.198***	-.279	-.117	.041	-.241***		
Psych Flexibility	.065*	-.002	.133	.034	.126*		
Psych Inflexibility	.056*	.002	.109	.027	.131*		
SDO	.446***	.368	.524	.040	.561***		

Note. Model = "Enter" method in SPSS Statistics; *B* = unstandardized regression coefficient; CI = confidence interval; *LL* = lower limit; *UL* = upper limit; *SE B* = standard error of coefficient; *β* = standardized coefficient; R^2 = coefficient of determination; ΔR^2 = adjusted R^2. *p<0.05. **p<0.01. ***p<0.001

Regression with Sexism

Assumptions for regression were fulfilled. The multiple regression model statistically significantly predicted sexism, $F(5,236) = 31.00$, $p < .001$, *adj.* $R^2 = .384$. This indicates that 38.4% of the variation in sexism scores was predicted by the variables in this dimension. The

individual predictors were examined further and indicated that compassion towards others, $t(241) = -3.289$, $p < .001$, SDO, $t(241) = 9.831$, $p < .001$ and self-compassion, $t(241) = 2.586$, $p < .01$ were significant predictors in the model. Regression coefficients and standard errors can be found in Table 4 (below).

Table 4

Multiple Regression Results for Sexism with Dimension I

Sexism	*B*	95% CI for *B*		*SE B*	*β*	R^2	ΔR^2
		LL	*UL*				
Model							
Constant	14.46***	6.10	22.82	4.24		.396	.384
Self-Compassion	.168**	.040	.297	.065	.160**		
Compassion to Others	-.133***	-.212	-.053	.040	-.177***		
Psych Flexibility	.014	-.052	.080	.033	.029		
Psych Inflexibility	.003	-.050	.055	.027	.007		
SDO	.381***	.305	.458	.039	.527***		

Note. Model = "Enter" method in SPSS Statistics; *B* = unstandardized regression coefficient; CI = confidence interval; *LL* = lower limit; *UL* = upper limit; *SE B* = standard error of coefficient; *β* = standardized coefficient; R^2 = coefficient of determination; ΔR^2 = adjusted R^2. *p<0.05. **p<0.01. ***p<0.001

Dimension II Analysis

Correlation

A Pearson's correlation was run to assess the relationship of the Dimension II variables with racism and sexism. There was a statistically significant, positive correlation between ethnic identity and racism, $r(240) = -.149$, $p < .02$. This indicates that the higher the ethnic identity scores found, the higher the racism scores individuals showed. Table 5 outlines the other correlation results.

Table 5
Pearson Correlation for Dimension II

	Ethnic ID	Gender ID	Racism	Sexism
Ethnic Identification	-	.552***	.149*	.082
Gender Identification	.552***	-	.005	-.120
Racism	.149*	.005	-	.662***
Sexism	.082	-.120	.662***	-

Note. *p<0.05. **p<0.01. ***p<0.001

Regression with Racism

Results of the multiple linear regression indicated that there was a collective significant effect between ethnic identity, gender identity and racism, $F(2, 239) = 3.809$, $p < .001$, *adj.* $R^2 = .023$. This indicates that approximately 2.3% of the variation in racism scores could be predicted by

the variables in this dimension. The individual predictors were examined further and indicated that ethnic identity $t(241) = 2.76$, $p < .006$ was a significant predictor in the model. Regression coefficients and standard errors can be found in Table 6 (below).

Table 6

Multiple Regression Results for Racism with Dimension II

Racism	*B*	95% CI for *B*		*SE B*	*β*	R^2	ΔR^2
		LL	*UL*				
Model							
Constant	14.83***	11.52	18.14	1.68		.031	.023
Ethnic Identification	.122**	.035	.209	.044	.211**		
Gender Identification	-.071	-.168	.025	.049	-.112		

Note. Model = "Enter" method in SPSS Statistics; *B* = unstandardized regression coefficient; CI = confidence interval; *LL* = lower limit; *UL* = upper limit; *SE B* = standard error of coefficient; *β* = standardized coefficient; R^2 = coefficient of determination; ΔR^2 = adjusted R^2. *p<0.05. **p<0.01. ***p<0.001

Regression with Sexism

Results of the multiple linear regression indicated that there was a collective significant effect between ethnic identity, gender identity and sexism, $F(2, 239) = 5.783$, $p < .001$, *adj.* $R^2 = .038$. This indicates that approximately 3.8% of the variation in sexism scores could be predicted by the variables in this dimension. The individual predictors were examined further and indicated that gender identity, $t(241) = -3.14$, $p < .002$ and ethnic identity, $t(241) = 2.82$, $p < .005$ were

both significant predictors in the model. Regression coefficients and standard errors can be found in Table 7 (below).

Table 7
Multiple Regression Results for Sexism with Dimension II

Sexism	*B*	95% CI for *B*		*SE B*	*β*	R^2	ΔR^2
		LL	*UL*				
Model							
Constant	17.57***	14.58	20.55	1.51		.046	.038
Ethnic Identification	.112**	.034	.191	.040	.214**		
Gender Identification	-.139**	-.226	-.052	.044	-.238**		

Note. Model = "Enter" method in SPSS Statistics; *B* = unstandardized regression coefficient; CI = confidence interval; *LL* = lower limit; *UL* = upper limit; *SE B* = standard error of coefficient; *β* = standardized coefficient; R^2 = coefficient of determination; ΔR^2 = adjusted R^2. *p<0.05. **p<0.01. ***p<0.001

Discussion

Reducing prejudice in Sweden is an on-going goal in the country, and that is reflected in the Discrimination Act (Discrimination Act, 2019) established in 2009. However, in order to understand why it is still prevalent in society, a deeper understanding of the variables associated with it is needed. While the variables associated with prejudice and discrimination have a wealth of theories and research, the present study was the first to examine the relationship between

specific intra-psychological and inter-group variables and prejudice (racism and sexism in particular).

The *first hypothesis* postulated that each of the variables in Dimension I would be linked with racism and sexism. However, the results indicated that while some of the variables were linked with racism and sexism, others were not. Compassion towards others was found to be negatively associated with racism and sexism. These results are in line with past literature that has examined how compassion towards others is linked with viewing out-groups as less of a threat (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2017) and promotes feelings of connectedness (Gilbert, 2014), hence potentially leading to less prejudice.

SDO was found to be positively related to racism and sexism, which reflects previous research examining the link between those variables (Bates & Heaven, 2001; Duriez & Van Hiel, 2002; Pratto, Sidanius & Levin, 2006). Furthermore, an unexpected association was found between self-compassion and sexism. It was a small, positive association implying that higher self compassion is linked with higher sexism. The author of the current paper was unable to find any previous studies that found such an association. While there is research showing the relationship of self-compassion with other traits that are definitively linked with decreased prejudice (Fuochi, Veneziani & Voci, 2018; Neff, 2009), there is little literature examining the direct role of self-compassion with prejudice (particularly sexism). However, considering the small nature of this association and the lack of previous literature to support this link, these results should be interpreted with caution. There is a need for more research examining the direct

relationship between self-compassion and prejudice, while exploring the future implications of that relationship.

Lastly, psychological flexibility and psychological flexibility were not found to be related with sexism and racism. These results do not reflect previous research that has established a link between these two variables and prejudice (Levin et al., 2016). A possible reason behind this could be the questionnaire that was used to measure psychological flexibility and inflexibility. The questionnaires used in the present study (PFQ-F and PFQ-I) measure generalized psychological flexibility and flexibility, which includes a very wide range of human abilities or lack of abilities in the case of inflexibility (Luoma, et al., 2011; Kashdan & Rottenberg, 2010). Research has found that measures of psychological flexibility and inflexibility that are more domain and content specific are more sensitive and applicable when focusing on a particular problem (such as prejudice or addiction, for example; Luoma et al., 2011; Levin et al., 2014). Hence, the present study could have benefited from using a domain specific measure that examines psychological flexibility and inflexibility with prejudiced thoughts.

The *second hypothesis* stated that Dimension I would be a significant predictor for both racism and sexism. Results of the regression indicated that Dimension I was indeed significant at predicting racism and sexism. Upon examining the individual variables in Dimension I, self-compassion was not found to be a significant contributor, while SDO, compassion towards others, psychological flexibility and psychological inflexibility were found to be significant contributors to the regression model. Dimension I accounted for almost half (46.8%) of the variation in racism scores. Furthermore, Dimension I was found to be a significant predictor and accounted for 38.4% of the sexism scores, and upon further examination, SDO, compassion to

others and self-compassion were found to be significant contributors to the regression model, while psychological flexibility and inflexibility were not. These findings lend weight to the usefulness of Dimension I of the proposed model of modern prejudice, for both racism and sexism.

The *third hypothesis* postulated that Dimension II (ethnic identity and gender identity) would be linked with racism and sexism. Ethnic identity was in fact found to have a small positive relationship with racism. These results are in line with previous literature that has found that in-group identification leads to higher levels of prejudice against perceived out-groups (Sidanius, Pratto, & Mitchell, 1994; Perreault & Bourhis 1999; Leach, 2008). Gender identity, however, was not found to be associated with sexism or racism.

The *fourth hypothesis* stated the Dimension II would be a significant predictor for both racism and sexism. The results found that Dimension II was a significant predictor of racism, and that within the dimension, ethnic identity contributed significantly to the regression model, while gender identity did not. Dimension II was also found to be a significant predictor for sexism, and both gender identity and gender identity contributed significantly to the regression model. While these results are in line with previous studies examining in-group identification and prejudice, it is important to note that while Dimension I was significant, it only contributed to 2.3% and 3.8% of racism and sexism scores respectively.

Overall, while both dimensions were found to be significant at predicting prejudice, they did so at different levels. The intra-psychological variables of Dimension I were far more relevant in predicting prejudice in Sweden compared to the inter-group variables of Dimension

II. This could be because Sweden is a highly individualistic country (Schimmack et al., 2005), and people in such a society tend to be self-contained, autonomous and self-directed (Realo et al., 2002).

For future research, it could be beneficial to approach prejudice in Sweden through targeting intra-psychological variables in particular. Interventions that focus on shifting intra-psychological variables (for example, increasing compassion towards others) might be more beneficial at decreasing prejudice rather than more traditional interventions that focus on inter-group contact. Furthermore, there is a need to investigate more variables, especially intra-psychological ones, that are present in Swedish society that could contribute to prejudice in order to strengthen the model of modern prejudice in Sweden.

While every proposed variable in both the dimensions did not contribute to each form of discrimination, the present paper is a first step in developing a model of modern prejudice in Sweden. It is proposed that all the variables select in the present study are retained in the model of modern prejudice in Sweden, until further studies can be conducted to determine if any should be removed.

The study benefited from good internal validity as the measures for the dependent variables (sexism and racism) were established, robust measures with high validity. While the sample was a convenience sample, the large sample size ensured that there was sufficient external validity and also generalizability since the participants came from a wide range of career fields (students, full time employed, consultants, etc.) and their age ranged from 18 to 75 years of age. Due to the randomization of questions and the control questions in place to ensure the

participants were paying attention, there is sufficient internal validity. However, it is worth noting that since this survey was conducted during the height of COVD-19, the validity of the results might have been impacted by extraordinary extraneous variables of the global pandemic that was taking place.

In conclusion, the present study provides a foundation to build upon whilst trying to better understand prejudice in Sweden. It does so by proposing and testing a model of modern prejudice. Identifying and understanding variables linked with prejudice is an essential step towards dismantling the linguistic, systemic and deep-rooted prejudice that exists and thereby achieving long lasting, sustainable equality and inclusivity in Sweden. Furthermore, by understanding the variables linked with prejudice, there is room for a shift in how prejudice and discrimination are approached in Sweden. Current approaches showcase that there is a need for change, with ongoing discrimination and the prevalence of inequality. A new model of variables related to prejudice can pave the way towards effective interventions to reduce prejudice and discrimination.

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