Measuring Dimensions of Perceived Discrimination in Five Stigmatized Groups

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Abstract The purpose of this investigation was to design and validate a multidimensional scale with the potential to measure perceived discrimination in different stigmatized groups. The study was carried out in Spain with a sample of 1,016 participants belonging to five stigmatized groups: Latin American immigrants, Romanian immigrants, people with HIV, gays and lesbians. Confirmatory factor analysis validated the existence of four dimensions in the scale: blatant group discrimination, subtle group discrimination, blatant individual discrimination, and subtle individual discrimination. In accordance with the literature, the scale presents positive relations with the stigma consciousness scale (Pinel in J Pers Soc Psychol 76:114–128, 1999) and negative relations with two measures of psychological well-being, affect balance and self-acceptance. Likewise, the results indicate that the perception of subtle individual discrimination is more negatively associated with participants’ psychological well-being.

Keywords Perceived discrimination · Stigmatized groups · Psychological well-being · PANAS

1 Introduction

The perception of discrimination negatively affects diverse aspects of people’s lives. The meta-analysis of Pascoe and Smart Richman (2009), which describes the results of 134 studies, reveals that perceived discrimination has negative effects on the physical and mental health of people who belong to stigmatized groups. Most of these investigations were carried out in the United States in the sphere of perceived ethnic and racial discrimination, mainly with African Americans (66 %), since the percentages of studies of gender discrimination (14 %) and sexual orientation-based discrimination (6 %) were lower. The article of Pascoe and Smart Richman also reveals a large variety of formats and content in the instruments used to measure perceived discrimination.
Among the most extensively used scales are the perceived racism scale (McNeilly et al. 1996) and the Schedule of Racist Events (Klonoff and Landrine 1999), which were used in 10 and 9 %, respectively, of the studies included in the meta-analysis. The perceived racism scale was initially designed to measure the experience of perception of racism in African Americans. It has various subscales that measure perceived racism in diverse spheres. It also measures the coping strategies and emotions aroused by the perception of racism. Although it was initially created to measure the perception of racism among African Americans, the Schedule of Racist Events has subsequently been adapted to measure discrimination perceived by other ethnical minorities in the United States (Landrine et al. 2006). In the Schedule of Racist Events (SRE), discrimination is conceived as a stressful situation. Each SRE item assesses discrimination in a different setting (e.g. work, streets, health care) and is answered three times, once in relation to the frequency of the discriminatory events in the past year, once for the frequency of the events in one’s entire lifetime, and once concerning the appraisal of the stressfulness of the events. An adapted version of this scale is the most frequently used means to measure discrimination based on sexual orientation.

In the racial or ethnic domain, the different theoretical origin of the measures used and their specific design to measure the discrimination as perceived by a certain group makes it difficult to reach general conclusions and compare the results obtained. Therefore, various authors (Landrine et al. 2006) underline the need for scales of a more general nature whose items can be applied to members of different discriminated groups.

The goal of our investigation is to go one step further and create a scale to measure the discrimination perceived, not only by ethnic groups, but by people belonging to a diverse range of stigmatized groups. Although discrimination or stigmatization can adopt specific forms for each group, we think that they share enough similarities to enable us to create a questionnaire that measures the aspects of discrimination that are common to all of them. This scale should take into account various relevant dimensions. On the one hand, it should differentiate between the perception of group and individual discrimination and, on the other, between the perception of direct or blatant discrimination and that of indirect or subtle discrimination.

1.1 Discrepancy Between Individual and Group Discrimination

Many investigations have shown that, individually, some people report suffering less discrimination than other members of their group (Bourguignon et al. 2006; Crosby 1982; Dumont et al. 2006; Taylor et al. 1994). This discontinuity among the judgments of discrimination towards oneself and the group has been called “personal-group discrimination discrepancy” and it is a very robust effect that has been found in a very large variety of devalued groups. Various types of explanations of this effect have been proposed. The motivational explanations (Dumont et al. 2006) sustain that people tend to deny or minimize personal experiences of discrimination in order to maintain a positive self-image and a personal perception of control over events. Moreover, for Crosby (1984), to minimize or deny the existence of individual discrimination allows the victim to avoid facing the perpetrator of the unfair behavior, who, on the other hand, usually has more power. At the cognitive level, other explanations have been proposed that suggest that the discrepancy between individual-group discrimination proceeds from biases, which may be unconscious, when processing information (for example, greater accessibility of episodes of group discrimination).
The distinction between individual and group discrimination is also relevant for the theory of relative deprivation (Smith and Ortiz 2002), which states that individual and group deprivation have different effects. The feeling of personal discrimination (ego deprivation) affects a person’s well-being whereas the feeling of group discrimination (fraternal deprivation) influences the possible collective actions taken by the group. Recent investigations confirm the existence of “personal-group discrimination discrepancy” in diverse stigmatized groups. Thus, Bourguignon et al. (2006) find that the perception of personal discrimination is higher than that of group discrimination in African immigrants in Belgium and in women. In both cases, personal discrimination is negatively related to self-esteem whereas group discrimination has a positive relation. Molero et al. (2011), in a sample of people with HIV, found that perceived personal discrimination was lower than group discrimination and that both types of discrimination were related to well-being in different ways. Group discrimination was related to well-being through other variables such as group identification, whereas personal discrimination had a direct relation.

Whatever the explanation of the effect of “personal-group discrimination discrepancy,” its existence, as well as the different effects it has on the perception of the diverse types of discrimination seems clear. Therefore, a scale that proposes to measure perceived discrimination should take into account both individual and group discrimination.

1.2 The New Expressions of Prejudice

In contemporary society, practically nobody justifies ethnic or sexual discrimination (among other reasons, because in many countries, it is illegal). Nonetheless, the traditionally devalued groups continue to be at a disadvantage compared to the majority. Presently, discrimination is not justified in terms of a supposed ethnic inferiority, but on the assumption that minorities “do not want to accept the traditional values of the majority” or “do not want to integrate,” which also leads to blaming them to some extent for their situation. Ever since the 1980s, diverse authors have been interested in these new forms of prejudice, which have received various names, such as “modern racism” (McConahay 1986), “aversive racism” (Gaertner and Dovidio 1986), “subtle” prejudice (Meertens and Pettigrew 1992), or “benign” bigotry (Anderson 2010). These new forms of prejudice or racism are still very harmful for the minorities, as noted by Gaertner and Dovidio (2000, p. 4), “like a virus that has mutated, racism may have evolved into different forms that are more difficult not only to recognize but also to combat.”

The above-mentioned types of contemporary prejudice have been studied through surveys in the majority population. It is assumed that the members of the devalued groups are also aware of the new forms of prejudice and it is very likely that these new forms of discrimination exert an effect somewhat differently to direct rejection. However, there are very few investigations that compare the effects of subtle and blatant prejudice in discriminated groups. In the sphere of racial or ethnic prejudice, Dovidio et al. (2001) indicate that the subtlety and ambivalence of aversive racism may contribute to explaining the mistrust of African Americans towards White people. People with aversive prejudice sometimes discriminate but at other times, they do not, depending on the strength of the predominant norms in a certain situation. Therefore, from the perspective of the African Americans, an aversive racist’s behavior is inconsistent and false. Perhaps, as a consequence of this, African Americans respond to the feedback that they receive from a White person to a lesser extent, whether it being positive or negative. We think that this reflection can apply not only to ethnic groups but also to other discriminated collectives, such as people with HIV or gays and lesbians.
Therefore, it becomes important for a scale which aims to measure perceived discrimination to take into account the distinction between the manifestations of direct and subtle rejection.

2 The Present Investigation

The main goal of this investigation is to design a scale to measure discrimination perceived by a diverse range of stigmatized collectives. From the review of the literature, such a scale should differentiate between: (1) the perception of group and individual discrimination and (2) the perception of direct discrimination and subtly expressed discrimination. We expect to obtain evidence of construct validity and of the relation of the test with other related constructs.

To achieve the proposed goal, we designed a 20-item scale that explored the above-mentioned aspects. This scale was applied to members of various discriminated collectives, such as immigrants (Latin American and Romanian), people with HIV, gays and lesbians. In order to obtain evidence of construct validity, we shall test, by means of confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), a theoretical structure of the four proposed dimensions: blatant group discrimination (BDG), subtle group discrimination (SGD), blatant individual discrimination (BID), and subtle individual discrimination (SID).

With regard to the diverse dimensions, we expect (Hypothesis 1) that perceived group discrimination, both subtle and blatant, will be higher than perceived individual discrimination.

In addition, in accordance with the theories of the new forms of prejudice, we expect (Hypothesis 2) that perceived blatant discrimination, both group and individual, will be lower than perceived subtle discrimination.

In order to check the convergent validity of the scale we will also examine the association between the different dimensions of perceived discrimination and other psychosocial variables that the literature has found to be associated with discrimination, such as stigma consciousness and subjective and psychological well-being.

Pinel (1999) defined stigma consciousness as the extent to which the members of stigmatized groups expected to be stereotyped and found high correlations between perceived discrimination (measured by a single item) and stigma consciousness for different stigmatized groups. We therefore expect that perceived discrimination will be positively associated with stigma consciousness.

With regard to the relations between the perception of discrimination and psychological well-being, numerous studies systematically show inverse relations between these constructs for diverse stigmatized collectives (Berger et al. 2001; Bunn et al. 2007; Logie and Gadalla 2009; Mak et al. 2007). We therefore expect that perceived discrimination will be negatively associated with the psychological well-being of stigmatized individuals.

3 Method

3.1 Participants

The sample was made up of 1016 participants, 54.1 % were men and 46.4 % were women. Their age ranged between 16 and 66 years ($M = 34.97$, $SD = 10.06$). The participants were members of five stigmatized collectives: Latin American immigrants ($N = 199$, 20 %), Romanian immigrants ($N = 202$, 20 %), people with HIV ($N = 134$, 13 %), gays ($N = 237$, 24 %) and lesbians ($N = 232$, 23 %).
3.2 Procedure

The investigation was carried out in Spain during the year 2010. In order to access the target population, we contacted the people in charge of various associations that represented the collectives involved in our study. In the case of the Latin American immigrants, we contacted the Asociación América-España, Solidaridad y Cooperación, AESCO-Columbia [America-Spain Solidarity, and Cooperation Association] (AESCO). For Romanian immigrants, we contacted the Federación de Asociaciones de Rumanos en España [Federation of Associations of Romanians in Spain] (FEDROM). For people with HIV, we contacted the person in charge of a specific social network for people with HIV, and in the case of gays and lesbians, the Federación Estatal de Lesbianas, Gays, Transexuales y Bisexuales [State Federation of Lesbians, Gays, Transsexuals and Bisexuals] (FELGTB). We explained the goal of the investigation, the method to be used, and the time required to fill in each questionnaire to the people in charge of the respective associations. Participation was voluntary and we guaranteed the confidentiality of the participants’ data. The questionnaires were designed in two formats: on-line (61.1 %) and pencil-and-paper (38.9 %). The former were applied through the websites of each one of the associations. The pencil-and-paper questionnaires were administered by social workers of the different collaborating associations.

3.3 Instruments

3.3.1 Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Discrimination

The multidimensional scale of perceived discrimination (hereafter, MSPD) proposed in this article is made up of 20 items that measure four aspects of perceived discrimination: blatant group discrimination (BGD), subtle group discrimination (SGD), blatant individual discrimination (BID), and subtle individual discrimination (SID). The items that make up each subscale can be consulted in the “Appendix”. Participants were requested to respond on a 5-point Likert scale, indicating the degree to which they agreed with the statements presented. Some of the items had been used previously in an investigation carried out with people with HIV ((Molero et al. 2011), and others were an adaptation of the items from the scale of Meertens and Pettigrew (1992), which measures subtle and blatant prejudice expressed by the majority population towards immigrants.

3.3.2 Stigma Consciousness

To measure stigma consciousness, we used the 10-item scale created by Pinel (1999), the stigma consciousness questionnaire (SCQ). This scale measures the extent to which the members of different social groups expect to be stereotyped by others. An example item is: “Most people have a problem viewing … as equals.” Responses ranged between 1 (Strongly disagree) and 5 (Strongly agree). In our study, the reliability of the scale was good (Cronbach’s alpha = .74).

3.3.3 The Positive and Negative Affect Schedule (PANAS)

The positive and negative affect schedule (Watson et al. 1988) is a short and easy-to-use instrument that has been extensively used in diverse areas of psychology, as well as in social and medical sciences to measure the emotional components of subjective well-being. This is a 20-item measure that evaluates positive (10 items) and negative (10 items) affect...
In our study, the reliability (Cronbach’s alpha) of the subscale of positive affect was .71, and that of the subscale of negative affect was .67. The negative affect score was subtracted from the positive affect score to obtain a measure of affect balance. A positive score reflects a predominance of positive over negative affect. This was the case in our study, both in the general sample and in each one of the subgroups.

### 3.3.4 Self-Acceptance

The construct of self-acceptance is very similar to self-esteem (Chamberlain and Haaga 2001), which is the best predictor of subjective well-being in individualistic cultures (Heine et al. 2001). In this investigation, self-acceptance was measured by means of a 4-item sub-scale included in the Scales of Psychological Well-Being (SPWB; Ryff 1989), and it is referred to as “becoming aware of and accepting both one’s strengths and limitations.” Higher scores on this dimension reflect greater positive psychological functioning. In our investigation, the reliability of this scale (Cronbach’s alpha) for the total sample was .71.

### 3.4 Statistical Analyses

To obtain evidence of construct validity, we carried out confirmatory factor analysis of the scale, testing its four-factor structure. Despite the fact that the scale is novel, we decided to use a confirmatory tool to study its dimensionality. Although exploratory factor analysis can be very valuable in substantive areas about which little is known, when there are plausible hypotheses about the structure of a model, as in this case, the use of confirmatory factor analysis is justified (Bollen 1989).

The confirmatory factor analysis used requires the absence of missing data. To prevent introducing artifices in the investigation and in view of the high number of participants, we decided to eliminate from the study all the subjects who had not responded to all of the questions, instead of using an imputation procedure. The final sample analyzed was made up of 747 participants. The sample size was sufficient in view of the fact that the ratio of the number of subjects to the number of items was higher than 20:1 (Bentler and Chou 1987; Bollen 1989; Tanaka 1987).

As the observed variables of the models are ordinal (responses to test items), we analyzed the polychoric correlation matrix (calculated with PRELIS 2.30), using the diagonally weighted least squares (DWLS) extraction method. This procedure provides correct error estimations in large samples (Joreskog 2002). As $\chi^2$ cannot be used to assess the fit of the model—because this test is very sensitive to sample size—we assessed the fit with a combination of indexes. As absolute fit indexes, we used the goodness of fit index (GFI), the adjusted goodness of fit index (AGFI), and the standardized root mean square residual (SRMR); for the first two indexes, values over .9 are considered an indicator of good fit (Bollen and Long 1993; Byrne 2001), whereas for the last index, values lower than .10 are required (Kline 1998). As incremental fit indexes, we used the normed fit index (NFI), the nonnormed fit index (NNFI), and the comparative fit index (CFI). Although, in early investigations, a value over .90 was considered to represent a good fit (Bentler 1990), subsequent reviews recommended values near .95 (Hu and Bentler 1999).

The differences in perception of discrimination among the diverse stigmatized groups were assessed with a MANOVA, and Tukey’s test was used for multiple comparisons because it is more powerful than the rest of the tests when many means must be compared. Likewise, the $t$ test was used to compare the group-individual and blatant-subtle dimensions. The relations between the perception of discrimination and the rest of the variables were measured.
by means of Pearson’s product moment correlation analysis. We used PRELIS 2.30 and LISREL 8.54 programs for the analysis of the dimensionality of the scale, and SPSS 19 for the study of reliability, group differences, and correlations between variables.

4 Results

4.1 Confirmatory Factor Analysis

To ensure the identification of the model, the factor loading of an item on a subscale must be fixed. In this case, the loading of Items 1, 8, 11, and 18, which belong to the BGD, SGD, BID, and SID subscales, respectively, were fixed at 1. Figure 1 shows the path diagram of the proposed model, including the standardized regression coefficients and their standard error, as well as the estimated correlation between the factors. The standardized values of the regression coefficients are adequate, as the factor loadings are high and significant. The correlations among the subscales are high (between .60 and .82), which was expected in view of the conceptual proximity of the different types of discrimination. With regard to the global fit indexes assessed, they yield adequate results: GFI = .99, AGFI = .99, SRMR = .055, NFI = .97, NNFI = .97, and CFI = .97.

4.2 Reliability

The precision of the scale of perceived discrimination is very high (α = .94). By subscales, the reliability (Cronbach’s alpha) of the four subscales is good (BGD = .88, SGD = .79, BID = .89, and SID = .84).

4.3 Descriptive Data

Table 1 presents the means and standard deviations for the total scale and for the subscales that confirm it.

With regard to the four dimensions of perceived discrimination, higher scores were obtained for the entire sample in the subscales of perception of group discrimination than in perception of individual discrimination, both in blatant discrimination (M = 3.16 vs. M = 2.72, respectively), t(747) = 16.16, p < .001, Cohen’s d = .48, and in subtle discrimination (M = 3.46 vs. M = 2.93, respectively), t(747) = 17.05, p < .001, Cohen’s d = .55 (see the first column of Table 1). This pattern is repeated in all the groups. This result confirms Hypothesis 1, which affirmed the discrepancy between individual-group discrimination. In line with Hypothesis 2, we also observed that the perception of blatant discrimination was lower for the entire sample than the perception of subtle discrimination, both in the case of group discrimination (M = 3.16 vs. M = 3.46, respectively), t(747) = −11.28, p < .001, Cohen’s d = −.34, and of individual discrimination (M = 2.72 vs. M = 2.93, respectively), t(747) = −7.77, p < .001, Cohen’s d = −.21. As in the former case, this pattern is repeated in all the groups.

The differences between the diverse groups were significant (ps < .001) in all the subscales of perceived discrimination (Table 1 shows the corresponding F values), although, as usual in this type of studies, the proportion of total variability attributable to one factor is small, η² = .2, η² = .13, η² = .04, η² = .06, for the BGD, SGD, BID, and SID subscales, respectively.
Fig. 1 Path diagram of the confirmatory factor analysis of the multidimensional scale of perceived discrimination (MSPD). The subscales are: BGD blatant group discrimination, SGD subtle group discrimination, BID blatant individual discrimination, SPD subtle individual discrimination.
The multiple comparisons of means revealed significant differences in a large number of cases, especially in the subscale of blatant group discrimination. In general, the group of people with HIV perceived the most discrimination, and the group of Romanian immigrants perceived the least discrimination.

4.4 Relation with Other Variables

Table 2 presents the Pearson correlations of the four subscales of the MSPD with stigma consciousness, affect balance, and self-acceptance.

According to the literature, the correlations of the four dimensions of the MSPD with the Stigma Consciousness were positive and the correlations between the diverse subscales of the MSPD and the scales of subjective and psychological well-being (affect balance and self-acceptance) were negative. Table 2 shows that the dimension with the most negative relation to the diverse variables of subjective and psychological well-being is perception of subtle individual discrimination.

In general, this pattern of correlations is seen in all the groups, although there are some group differences worth mentioning. For example, the relations between SID and the affect balance ranged between \( r = .01 \), in the case of the Romanian immigrants, and \( r = -.45 \), in the case of the Gays Lesbians.

| Table 1 | Means and standard deviations (in brackets) of the multidimensional scale of perception of discrimination (MSPD) and its subscales in the total sample and broken down into the stigmatized groups |
|---------|-----------------------------------|
|         | Total sample | Latin American immigrants | Romanian immigrants | People with HIV | Gays | Lesbians | F (4, 742) |
| M (SD)  | M (SD)       | M (SD)                    | M (SD)              | M (SD)         | M (SD) | M (SD) |
| BGD     | 3.16 (.88)   | 3.16 (.82)                | 2.52 (.79)          | 3.65 (.78)     | 3.33 (.80) | 3.49 (.77) | 45.74** |
| SGD     | 3.46 (.89)   | 3.49 (.87)                | 2.93 (.88)          | 3.84 (.84)     | 3.68 (.77) | 3.64 (.82) | 27.06** |
| BID     | 2.72 (.94)   | 2.79 (.92)                | 2.44 (.82)          | 3.14 (.88)     | 2.69 (.98) | 2.81 (.97) | 8.29**  |
| SID     | 2.93 (1.04)  | 3.10 (.97)                | 2.59 (.97)          | 3.46 (.95)     | 3.01 (1.03) | 2.87 (1.09) | 11.44** |
| Total scale | 3.02 (.79)   | 3.07 (.75)                | 2.57 (.74)          | 3.47 (.65)     | 3.11 (.75) | 3.18 (.77) | 26.26** |

The scores were averaged in each item, so their range is from 1 to 5. BGD blatant group discrimination, SGD subtle group discrimination, BID blatant individual discrimination, SID subtle individual discrimination.

The F test refers to the group differences

** \( p < .01 \)

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| Table 2 | Pearson correlations between the subscales of the multidimensional scale of perceived discrimination (MSPD) and stigma consciousness, affect balance, and self-acceptance (all Groups) |
|---------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|         | Stigma consciousness | Affect balance | Self-acceptance |
| BGD     | .492**                | -.091*        | -.055          |
| SGD     | .486**                | -.136**       | -.102**        |
| BID     | .498**                | -.176**       | -.180**        |
| SID     | .546**                | -.218**       | -.204**        |

BGD blatant group discrimination, SGD subtle group discrimination, BID blatant individual discrimination, SID subtle individual discrimination

* \( p < .01 \), ** \( p < .001 \)
in the case of people with HIV. The relation of the Self-acceptance scale with SID ranged between $r = -0.056$, in the case of the lesbians, and $r = -0.347$, in the case of the Romanian immigrants.

5 Discussion

There are many investigations that address the perception of discrimination and its effects on the members of stigmatized groups. Most of them have been carried out in the United States and have focused on African Americans. However, the different theoretical origins of the existing instruments used to measure the perception of discrimination make it difficult to compare the results obtained in the different investigations. Moreover, such measures are usually applicable to a certain collective and it is not easy to adapt them for use with people from other devalued groups. The purpose of this investigation is to design a global scale of perception of discrimination that can easily be applied to members of diverse stigmatized collectives and to obtain evidence of its construct validity. On the basis of the literature, a scale of this type should take two aspects into account: the target of discrimination (the group or the person) and the type of perceived discrimination (blatant or subtle). Our scale, designed on the basis of these assumptions, has four theoretical dimensions: blatant group discrimination, subtle group discrimination, blatant individual discrimination, and subtle individual discrimination. The results obtained from a confirmatory factor analysis carried out with people belonging to five stigmatized collectives empirically confirm the existence of the proposed dimensions.

The results also reveal the existence of the so-called personal-group discrimination discrepancy effect. The design of the current investigation does not allow us to determine whether this discrepancy is due to motivational (maintaining one’s self-esteem) or cognitive aspects (biases in information processing) but, in line with the literature (Bourguignon et al. 2006; Crosby 1982; Dumont et al. 2006; Taylor et al. 1994), we found that, in all five groups analyzed, perceived individual discrimination was higher than perceived group discrimination. With regard to the existence of blatant or subtle discrimination, we found that, in accordance with the theories of modern prejudice (McConahay 1986), perceived subtle or indirect discrimination is higher than perceived blatant discrimination in all the groups analyzed. It therefore seems that, in contemporary societies, manifestations of direct rejection of other groups due to ethnic or sexual orientation issues are not as frequent as they were a few years ago; it is therefore not surprising that the members of those collectives perceive less blatant than subtle discrimination. This does not mean that subtle rejection or benign bigotry do not have negative effects for the stigmatized groups; rather, the opposite is true.

The new instrument also allows us to confirm that there are variations among the groups studied in each one of the discrimination dimensions. The collective group that perceives the most discrimination is people with HIV, whereas the Romanian immigrants perceive the least. These results are not unexpected because, it has been noted for many years that people with HIV belong to collectives that are most susceptible to suffer from rejection and discrimination (e.g., Herek 1999; Parker and Aggleton 2003; Fuster et al. 2013). If discrimination is present in society, it is not surprising that members of the stigmatized group perceive it. There may be various explanations for the low perception of discrimination by Romanian immigrants. On the one hand, the entrance of Romania in the European Community in 2007 may have improved the attitudes and behaviors of the Spanish
population towards Romanian immigrants, which consequently would decrease the Romanian immigrants’ perception of discrimination. Other explanations could also be offered, based on the sociocultural characteristics of the Romanian immigrants. Specific studies would be needed to confirm the validity of these explanations. Lastly, we did not observe significant differences in the perception of discrimination by gays and lesbians.

With regard to the relations of the MSPD with other variables, we found very high associations between the four dimensions of the scale and the stigma consciousness construct. If it is considered that stigma consciousness reflects the degree to which people believe others are treating them in a stereotyped way based on their group membership, it is not surprising to observe that stigma consciousness is closely related to the perception of discrimination. This can be considered as confirming evidence in the validity of the MSPD scores and it is coherent with the results found by Pinel (1999) when validating the stigma consciousness scale.

Likewise, in the same vein as the research literature (Pascoe and Smart Richman 2009; Williams et al. 2003; Paradies 2006), we found a negative association between the dimensions of the MSPD and the two variables of subjective and psychological well-being included in the study: affect balance and self-acceptance. Although the correlations differ as a function of the dimension and the group analyzed, the general pattern indicates that the SID subscale had the highest negative correlation with psychological well-being for all the groups. It is justified to assume that the discrimination suffered by individuals personally will affect their psychological well-being more negatively than the discrimination of their group. However, it is not so easy to explain why indirect or subtle discrimination should be more harmful than direct discrimination. A possible explanation could be the fact that direct discrimination is legally forbidden in many societies and is frowned on by society, so it occurs to a lesser extent and, in any case, it is possible to detect and combat its existence. In contrast, subtle discrimination, which is often concealed in “nonracist” or “nonsexist” arguments, is more difficult to detect and it creates a feeling of helplessness in the members of the stigmatized group because, for example, they do not know whether they were rejected from a job for “objective” reasons or because of their group membership. As indicated by Dovidio et al. (2001), this produces a feeling of mistrust and loss of control among the members of the minority group, which can affect their psychological well-being. Most of the investigations carried out in this sphere have focused on verifying the existence of subtle or aversive prejudice (although it is hard to detect) in the majority population, and the scarcity of studies aimed at verifying the influence of this type of prejudice on the members of the stigmatized collectives is striking.

This investigation presents some limitations that should be addressed in future studies. Firstly, an aspect that should be controlled is whether specifying the moment when the discriminatory behavior took place (last month, last year, or unspecified) could influence the results. Secondly, it is important to conduct a multigroup confirmatory factor analysis to confirm the measure equivalence of the diverse devalued groups. It is also important to specifically address the relation between the perception of discrimination and health, both physical and psychological, and the possible mediating role of other variables, such as group identity or social support. Lastly, it would be very advisable to experimentally study the extent to which people high or low in perception of discrimination behave differently in their interactions with members of the majority group.

Despite these limitations, we believe the scale proposed in this work is an important contribution to the study of discrimination and its consequences. On the one hand, it allows the differentiation of different types of discrimination and, on the other hand, it allows the comparison of the effect of discrimination on diverse stigmatized groups. This would
facilitate the design of specific interventions for improving the quality of life of individuals suffering from discrimination.

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**Appendix**

Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Discrimination (MSPD)

*Subscale of Blatant Group Discrimination (BGD)*

1. In Spanish society, … are visibly rejected.
2. Spanish society treats … unfairly.
3. … suffer from occupational discrimination.
4. … suffer from discrimination in the health sphere.
5. … suffer from discrimination in the legal sphere.
6. … suffer from rejection in their daily social relations.
7. … suffer from discrimination by some private institutions (e.g., banks, insurance companies, etc.).

*Subscale of Subtle Group Discrimination (SGD)*

8. Spanish society mistrusts….
9. Even when people seem to accept…., I think that, deep down, they have some misgivings.
10. Even though there is no express rejection, people treat … differently.

*Subscale of Blatant Individual Discrimination (BID)*

11. I have felt personally rejected for being….
12. I have been treated unfairly for being….
13. I have been discriminated at work for being….
14. I have been discriminated in the health sphere for being….
15. I have been discriminated in the legal sphere for being….
16. I have been rejected in my daily social relations for being….
17. I have been the target of discriminatory actions by some private institution (e.g., banks, insurance companies, etc.) for being….

*Subscale of Subtle Individual Discrimination (SID)*

18. Even when people seem to accept me, deep down, I think they have some misgivings because I am….
19. Even though there is no express rejection, people treat me differently when they see I am….
20. I feel that people mistrust me for being….
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