

Implicit and explicit attitudes towards asylum seekers in Australia:
Demographic and Ideological Correlates

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Abstract

Objective: Attitudes toward asylum seekers that have been reported in Australia are negative and pervasive. To date, this body of literature has explored only measured explicit responses. This paper is the first to explore their implicit counterpart.

Method: Two cross-sectional studies measured explicit and implicit attitudes towards asylum seekers. The first study used a community sample (Study 1; $N = 183$, $M_{\text{age}} = 24.98$ years, 115 females) and the second used a sample of students (Study 2; $N = 106$, $M_{\text{age}} = 22.75$ years, 87 female). The sample in Study 2 also responded to scales measuring levels of ideological orientations toward social dominance orientation (SDO), right-wing authoritarianism (RWA), and principle of social justice.

Results: In Study 1, an exploration of demographic variables revealed that gender predicted explicit attitudes, but gender and religious affiliation predicted implicit attitudes. In Study 2, an exploration of ideological variables revealed that higher levels of social dominance orientation and right-wing authoritarianism predict negative explicit attitudes, and macrojustice principles predict positive explicit attitudes, but only social dominance orientation predicts implicit attitudes.

Conclusions: The evidence presented reveals discrepancies between factors that predict explicit and implicit attitudes toward this socially vulnerable group, and the findings are interpreted as evidence for a dual-construct model of attitudes toward asylum seekers.

Keywords: asylum seekers; ATAS; go/no-go association task; implicit attitudes; refugee.

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Implicit and explicit attitudes towards asylum seekers in Australia: Demographic and Ideological Correlates

Policy pertaining to the treatment of asylum seekers continues to be a contentious issue in Australia. The Australian population has reported increasingly negative attitudes toward this group across the last several decades (Haslam & Holland, 2012), and evidence of the negative outcomes of Australian policy on the matter are accumulating (Hocking, Kennedy, & Sundram, 2015). While the general body of literature surrounding this topical issue is growing, researchers have yet to consider the role of implicit cognitions when assessing these attitudes. As such, this paper is the first to explore implicit attitudes toward asylum seekers. Specifically, this paper explores demographic factors (Study 1) and ideological variables (Study 2) that are typically associated with social attitudes.

The Global and Local Asylum Seeker ‘Crisis’

The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) have recently stated they are monitoring an estimated 13 million displaced people who have been forced to leave their home country due to persecution or conflict¹. This is the highest this figure has been since 1996 (an increase of 2 million in 12 months; UNHCR, 2015). Around one in ten displaced people who have fled their homeland (approximately 1.27 million) are awaiting official resettlement. This subgroup are asylum seekers (i.e., their refugee status is still being processed). Once their application for asylum has been approved, these asylum seekers become classified as refugees.

Refugees and asylum seekers are still typically hosted by poorer countries of the world, (even though there has been a marked increase in the number of asylum applications to industrialized countries; UNHCR, 2014). However, it could be argued that countries in economic positions to be providing aid and support to these groups of vulnerable people are not carrying their share of this global burden. For example, approved asylum application levels in Australia continue to remain below those recorded by many other industrialized and non-industrialized countries around the world (Australian Human Rights Commission [AHRC], 2013). Specifically, as of July

¹ A further 27 million remain displaced within their home countries; this group are referred to as internally displaced people.

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2014, Australia hosted under 34,503 of the world's refugee population ($N_{global} = 12,212,863$), of which 14,223 were asylum seekers ($N_{global} = 1,262,488$; UNHCR, 2015). Beyond this, current policy in Australia mandates that asylum seekers who arrive or seek refuge in Australia will be detained offshore while processing occurs (Gleeson, 2015). Such punitive policies have the potential to negatively impact community attitudes towards this social group. While the global refugee situation can undoubtedly be labeled as a crisis, it would be misrepresentative to argue that this label could be accurately applied to the local level.

Despite their limited presence on Australian soil, the negative attitudes of Australians towards asylum seekers prevail, and a rapidly developing body of literature is attempting to understand the negativity directed toward this socially vulnerable group. Much previous research has focused on examining media constructions of asylum seekers, and has identified that notions of legitimacy, illegality, threats to national identity, and threats to border security are themes dominating the public discourse (Gale, 2004; Grewcock, 2009). Moreover, notions about the constructions of asylum seekers, and then the perceived threat that they pose to Australia or to the Australian people have been linked to prejudicial attitudes toward asylum seekers (Schweitzer, Perkoulidis, Krome, Ludlow, & Ryan, 2005; Suhnan, Pedersen, & Hartley, 2012). Less well understood are the demographic and ideological determinants of attitudes toward this group. It is worth noting that the existing literature is based on cross-sectional data, and that there is a marked absence of longitudinal data on this topic. This literature will be reviewed below.

Attitudes Toward Asylum Seekers

Demographic Factors Related to Attitudes

Like most targets of prejudice, a range of demographic characteristics have been linked to negative attitudes toward asylum seekers. The links between several key demographic factors and negative attitudes were first established by Pedersen and colleagues (2005). In this survey, they established that being male, having a right-wing political orientation, having stronger levels of national identification, and being older were predictive of negative self-report attitudes toward, and false beliefs about, asylum seekers. Studies replicating these findings have also suggested that these factors are predictive of these attitudes (for a review, see Haslam & Holland, 2012).

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Many studies have linked religious affiliation with higher levels of prejudice, however, this link between religion and attitudes toward asylum seekers has not been adequately established. One recent exception is a study by Perry, Paradies, and Pedersen (2014) who demonstrated that religious affiliation was related to negative attitudes toward asylum seekers. However, they simultaneously revealed an important caveat to this finding; using mediation models these authors demonstrated a suppression effect. They provided evidence that the Christians in their sample were suppressing their positive attitudes because of the conflict caused by their high levels of authoritarianism. Religion has often been considered a key variable in understanding prejudice (e.g., Allport, 1954), so it is somewhat surprising that this important demographic variable (which impacts large portions of the general population) had been overlooked until recently, and has yet to be further explored. Clearly, the relationship between religious affiliation and these attitudes warrants further consideration. The literature on demographic differences in attitudes toward asylum seekers forms the basis for Study 1.

Ideological factors related to attitudes

Research exploring ideology-based individual differences in social attitudes often uses Duckitt and Sibley's (2010) dual process model of prejudice (DPM). The model proposes that dual processes of threat and competition drive prejudice, and that these processes respectively relate to a preference for hierarchical social structures (i.e., social dominance orientation, SDO; Sidanius & Pratto, 1999) and an authoritarian personality (i.e., right-wing authoritarianism, RWA; Altemeyer, 1991). Recent research has drawn on the DPM to provide evidence for the links between SDO, RWA, and attitudes toward asylum seekers in Australia, and has reliably shown that these factors independently predict negative attitudes (e.g., Anderson, Stuart, & Rossen, 2015; Louis, Duck, Terry, Schuller, & Lalonde, 2007; Nickerson & Louis, 2008).

Recent work by Anderson and colleagues (2015) explored the role of social justice principles in accounting for variance in attitudes toward asylum seekers beyond that accounted for by the DPM. The social justice principles are individual difference factors that differentiate a microjustice orientation from a macrojustice orientation (Zdaniuk & Bobocel, 2011). A microjustice orientation operates from equity principles in which members of society are allocated relevant outcomes in a

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meritocratic style, based on their individual contributions to society. Conversely, a macrojustice orientation operates from equality principles in which a holistic focus on societal well-being and cohesion is the focus of distributive justice. In this work, these authors found that both RWA and SDO independently predicted negative attitudes toward asylum seekers, and that beyond this macrojustice principles predicted positive explicit attitudes toward asylum seekers, while microjustice principles did not predict attitudes. While the relationships between attitudes toward asylum seekers and ideological factors is becoming better established, there is a lack of replicated results in the literature and this research is yet to consider theoretical and conceptual advances in methods of measurement (as will be discussed below). The literature on ideological factors forms the basis for Study 2.

The Assessment of Attitudes Toward Asylum Seekers

Researchers have identified that social cognitions are comprised of controlled and automatic components (e.g., Devine, 1989). To date, research that has explored cognitions towards asylum seekers has only considered the controlled components, which manifest as *explicit attitudes*. Explicit attitudes are captured using self-report instruments (surveys, semantic differentials, feeling thermometers, etc.), and can be defined as the tendency to psychologically favour or disfavor attitude objects (Eagly & Chaiken, 1993). The research in this domain consistently shows that a significant portion of the Australian population hold explicit attitudes toward asylum seekers that range from ambivalent at best through to overtly hostile (see Haslam & Holland, 2012). Explicit attitudes are advantageous because of simple administration and scoring protocols, however, attitude researchers are not blind to the host of problems associated with them. For example, explicit attitudes are available for introspection, and thus susceptible to deliberate or accidental modification, before being reported. An increasing necessity to conform to social norms of egalitarianism (e.g., Plant & Devine, 1998) and to appear non-prejudiced (e.g., Crandall, Eshleman, & O'Brien, 2002) has created a perfect environment for the under-reporting of explicit attitudes towards certain target groups and under certain conditions. As such, community attitudes might be even more hostile towards asylum seekers than have been reported in the literature.

Attitude researchers have become interested in developing alternative methods of measurement that can circumvent issues with capturing the controlled component

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of attitudes by capturing the automatic components (Devine, 1989; Nosek & Banaji, 2001). These measures of implicit cognition are based on the logic that well-rehearsed pairs of cognitive associations allow better task performance than less-well used or incongruent associative pairs; discrepancies between congruent and incongruent cognitive associations allows researchers to measure the strength of implicit associations for each pairing, and then infer an implicit attitude. Thus, *implicit attitudes* can be defined as biased representations that are learned over time and stored in memory, and then automatically accessed in the presence of the attitude-object. These attitudes are believed to be inaccessible to conscious distortion, intentional processes, or introspection (Fazio, Chen, McDonel, & Sherman, 1982; Greenwald & Banaji, 1995). Contemporary conceptualizations posit dual-constructs - that explicit and implicit attitudes have different origins and are predictive of, and predicted by, separate factors (i.e., dual-attitude models; Wilson, Lindsey, & Schooler, 2000). Of particular importance to understanding attitudes towards asylum seekers is evidence which suggests that implicit attitudes often predict attitude-related behaviours better than explicit attitudes (Egloff & Schmukle, 2002; Fazio & Olson, 2003; Greenwald, Poehlman, Uhlmann, & Banaji, 2009). Indeed implicit attitudes have previously better predicting voting behaviours than explicit attitudes (Arcuri, Castelli, Galdi, Zogmaister, & Amadori, 2008). Thus, behaviours such as voting for public policy and demonstrations of support for asylum seekers might be better related to implicit attitudes towards this target than explicit attitudes. In line with evidence for these models (e.g., Nosek, 2007) this paper adopts the position that implicit attitudes toward a target are related but distinct complements to their explicit counterparts.

Overview of Studies

This paper presents a series of cross-sectional studies that explore implicit attitudes toward asylum seekers. The major aim is to allow a comparison and discussion of the similarities and differences between implicit and explicit attitudes. As such, each study presented here independently assesses both explicit (i.e., conscious) and implicit (i.e., automatic) attitudes. Theorizing that posits explicit and implicit attitudes as independent constructs (Nosek & Smyth, 2007), suggests that the measurement of both is essential in the development of a nuanced understanding of prejudice. Study 1 explores demographic characteristics as predictors of attitudes in a community sample, specifically exploring the roles of national identification, age,

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political orientation, gender, and religious affiliation. Study 2 explores the ideological factors as predictors of attitudes in a student sample, specifically exploring the roles of SDO, RWA and the social justice principles.

Study 1

This study explores the role of participant demographic characteristics as predictors of explicit and implicit attitudes towards asylum seekers. Based on the literature reviewed above, this study explores the role of national identification, age, political orientation, gender, and religious affiliation in the attitudes of a community sample. Specific predictions are that higher levels of national identification, being older, political conservatism, being male, and affiliation with a religion will be predictive of negative attitudes towards asylum seekers. Based on typical findings for other social attitude-objects, weak-moderate correlations between the explicit and implicit attitudes are expected.

Method

Participants.

Student research assistants recruited 220 volunteers from an Australian community sample to participate in this research as part of a unit on research design and statistics. They recruited from within their personal networks using snowball sampling techniques. To keep the sample homogenous, participants who were born outside of Australia were excluded ($n = 19$), and a further 18 were excluded for excessive errors on the implicit measure (i.e., performance equal to or below chance within or across experimental blocks).

The final sample comprised 183 Australian-born volunteers (age range: 18 – 63 years, $M = 24.98$, $SD = 10.16$; 115 females). The majority of the sample identified as Caucasian ($n = 150$), with a smaller amount of participants identifying as Asian, Indian, Middle Eastern, African-American, or 'other' ($n_s = 13, 6, 3, 1,$ and 10, respectively). Also, the majority of the sample identified as religious ($n = 123$; 106 Christians, 2 Buddhists, 1 member of the church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and 14 'others'), with the remainder of the participants identifying as non-religious. Finally, the sample was fairly well educated with 79 participants having received some tertiary education. The sample responded to a single item about their political orientation (on a scale ranging from 1 [*completely conservative*] to 7 [*completely*

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progressive]) and responded with an average neutral political orientation (see Table 1).

Measures.

Implicit measure.

The go/no-go association task (GNAT; Nosek & Banaji, 2001) is a computerized speeded-classification in which participants are asked to simultaneously identify words that might belong to one target category or one target attribute per block. For each block, the target category and attribute are labeled in the top right- and left-hand corner of the screen. Participants are instructed that words will be presented rapidly in the center of the computer screen, and if that word represents either the category or attribute named in the top left or right corner of the screen that they should press the spacebar key (i.e., a “go” response). However, if the word does not belong to either of the named targets, they should make no response (i.e., a “no-go” response) and the next word will appear. Prior to each block, participants are presented with a complete set of target words to attenuate learning curves. .

Stimuli. Eight words represented the target category of asylum seekers (e.g., ASYLUM) and eight words served as distractor stimuli (e.g., CITIZEN)². Target and distractor stimuli were matched for word length (target stimuli: $M = 7.00$ characters, $SD = 1.10$; distractor stimuli: $M = 7.33$ characters, $SD = 1.75$). Attribute stimuli were eight words with a positive valence (e.g., JOYFUL) and eight words with a negative valence (e.g., DISLIKE). When one set of words served as target attributes, the other served as distractor attributes. Attribute stimuli terms were selected so that each list of terms would have similar properties for word length and frequency (i.e., positive terms: $M = 5.83$, characters $SD = 1.48$, average frequency = 76.0; negative terms: $M = 6.00$ characters, $SD = 2.10$, average frequency = 93.2; Francis & Kucera, 1982). Word stimuli were presented in white 24-point uppercase Arial font, and were presented against a black background screen.

Design. A 2-block GNAT assessed implicit associations between the target category of asylum seekers with positive, and then negative attributes (randomized).

² Target category stimuli and distractors were piloted on a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (*does not represent asylum seekers*) to 5 (*completely represents asylum seekers*) to ensure suitability ($M_{target} = 4.83$, $SD = 0.39$; $M_{distractor} = 1.31$, $SD = 0.56$; $n = 23$). Stimuli and pilot data are available from the primary author.

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Each block comprised 20 practice trials and 80 experimental trials, randomized so that approximately half were “go” trials and the remainder were “no-go” trials. Each trial had a response deadline of 600ms, separated by an interstimulus interval of 200ms. Feedback followed every trial with a green “O” following correct responses, and a red “X” following incorrect responses. The reliability for blocks in Study 1 was acceptable (RaSSH scores ranged from .81 to .89) using the method described by Williams and Kaufmann (2012).

Scoring. Implicit associations were calculated using the procedure recommended by Nosek and Banaji (2001). Specifically, scores for each block were calculated using the signal detection theory index of d' (e.g., Green & Swets, 1966), based on the ratio of correctly identified targets and incorrectly identified distracters. An implicit attitude score was calculated by subtracting the d' for the negative block (e.g., ASYLUM SEEKER + NEGATIVE) from the positive block (e.g., ASYLUM SEEKER + POSITIVE). Thus, higher scores represent more positive implicit attitudes towards asylum seekers.

Explicit measures.

The *Attitudes Towards Asylum Seekers* scale (ATAS; Pedersen et al., 2005) uses 18 statements about asylum seekers to measure explicit attitudes in an Australian context (e.g., “If asylum seekers are not happy, send them home.”). Participants endorsed statements on a scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*). After reverse-scoring relevant items, an average score was computed for each participant. Higher scores indicated more negative attitudes towards asylum seekers.

The 7-items previously used by Pedersen and her colleagues (2005) were used to measure how much participants identified with being Australian (e.g., “I feel strong ties with Australian people.”). Participants endorsed statements on a Likert scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*). Average score was computed for each participant. Higher scores indicated stronger national identification.

Procedure.

Student researchers sourced potential participants and informed them of the purpose and method of the experiment, in agreement with the protocol set forth by the human research ethics committee of the host institution. If they agreed to participate

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they were provided with a link that directed them to a webpage hosted by Millisecond – an online data collection program (<http://www.inquisit.com/>) that allowed participation in the survey to be anonymous. After providing demographic information, participants responded to the national identity measure and the ATAS scale (presented in a counter-balanced fashion) before responding to the randomized 2-block GNAT. Finally, participants were debriefed and thanked for their time.

Results

Descriptive and Correlational Findings.

Descriptive statistics for implicit and explicit attitudes in this sample are presented in table 1 along with alpha Cronbach and correlations coefficients. Prior to interpreting results, data was screened for assumption violations. Two cases of ATAS scores ($z_s > 3.12$) and four cases of age ($z_s > 3.74$) were treated as outliers (i.e., replaced with $M - 2xSD$; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). National identity scores were negatively skewed and age was positively skewed; issues of normality were successfully corrected using logarithmic transformations; analyses were conducted on transformed data, untransformed data has been reported for ease of interpretation. On average, implicit attitudes were negative and explicit attitudes were ambivalent.

Correlation analyses were conducted between attitude measures, demographic variables, and national identification. Unexpectedly, the analyses revealed few significant correlations. Explicit attitudes were only associated with gender, while implicit attitudes were associated with gender and religious affiliation. Finally, implicit and explicit attitudes were weakly correlated with each other³.

Table 1 about here

Participant group-differences.

Between-subject ANOVAs using a 2 (gender: female, male) x 2 (religious affiliation: non-religious, religious) design were conducted to explore differences in explicit and implicit attitudes toward asylum seekers. In the case of explicit attitudes, there was a main effect of gender $F(1, 163) = 4.46, p = .036, \eta_p^2 = .03$ to the extent

³ The scoring of the GNAT results in a higher score representing positive implicit attitudes, while the scoring of the ATAS results in a higher score representing negative explicit attitudes; paradoxically, a negative correlation represents findings that explicit and implicit attitudes are related in the same direction).

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that males ($M = 3.56$, $SD = 0.94$) reported more explicit negative attitudes than females ($M = 3.29$, $SD = 0.99$; small effect, Cohen's $d = .28$). There was no main effect of religion ($p = .75$) or higher order interaction ($p = .25$).

In the case of implicit attitudes, there was a main effect of gender $F(1, 163) = 6.45$, $p = .012$, $\eta_p^2 = .04$, males demonstrated more negative implicit attitudes than women. There was also a main effect of religion $F(1, 163) = 13.84$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .08$ to the extent that religious individuals demonstrated more negative implicit attitudes than non-religious individuals. No higher order interaction was found $F(1, 163) = 1.30$, $p < .256$, $\eta_p^2 = .01$. These scores are presented in Figure 1.

Figure 1 about here

Predicting attitudes.

The sample size for Study 1 was deemed adequate based on Tabachnick and Fidell's (2007) recommendations of MRA sample size ($ns > 50 + 8k$; 5 independent variables requires a sample size of more than 90). Demographic variables (i.e., age, gender, religious affiliation, political orientation, and national identity) were regressed against attitudes using a forced entry multiple regression analyses (MRAs) based on ordinary least square regression models. This combination of variables did not predict explicit attitudes $F(5, 161) = 0.79$, $p = .55$, $R = .15$ Cohen's $f^2 = .02^4$. However, this constellation of variables produced a weak, but significant, model which predicted 10.8% of the variance in implicit attitudes $F(5, 161) = 3.92$, $p = .002$, $R = .33$, Cohen's $f^2 = .12$ (coefficients presented in Table 2). Negative implicit attitudes were predicted by affiliation with religion and being male, and these variables accounted for a unique 7.85% and 2.90% proportion of the variance, respectively.

Table 2 about here

Study 2

⁴ Effect size for multiple regressions in this paper were calculated from the observed R^2 using software by Soper (2015) based on the work of Cohen (1988).

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Study 1 explored the role of demographic characteristics in explicit and implicit attitudes towards asylum seekers in a community sample. Study 2 will instead explore the role of ideological variables as predictors of explicit and implicit attitudes towards asylum seekers in a student sample. Based on the findings of Anderson and colleagues (2015), this study explores the predictive roles of the DPM and the social justice principles in the attitudes of a student sample. Specific predictions are that higher levels of SDO and RWA will predict negative attitudes, and that macrojustice principles will predict positive attitudes. Although microjustice is not expected to predict attitudes, the measure was retained for comparability to the existing literature.

Method

Participants.

The study was conducted as a class exercise as part of a social psychology course. Student researchers each recruited a member of the general public to participate in this study. Following the protocol of Study 1, participants born outside of Australia were excluded ($n = 8$), although 2 participants who were born in New Zealand were retained for analysis, as each were long-term residents of Australia (20 and 26 years, respectively). Thirty-four students did not complete the implicit measure; analyses on explicit measures were conducted with and without this portion of the sample, and the results did not differ substantially, thus they were retained. The final sample was comprised of 106 students (age range: 18 – 51 years, $M = 22.75$, $SD = 7.58$; 87 female), who were mainly religious ($n = 65$; 60 Christians, 1 Pastafarian, 1 Buddhist, 1 Greek orthodox, 1 Serbian orthodox, and 1 Muslim). The remainder of the sample identified as ‘non-religious’. On average, the sample were politically neutral and highly nationally identified (see Table 3)⁵.

Measures and procedure.

This Study was run in agreement with the protocol set forth by the human research ethics committee of the host institution. The administration protocol and the explicit and implicit measure were the same as in Study 1, including the anonymous nature of participation in this study. The reliability for GNAT blocks in Study 2 was acceptable (RaSSH scores ranged from .77 to .88) using the method described by

⁵ In Study 2, at the request of the human research ethics committee, student participants were not asked about their ethnicity as this factor was deemed to be unrelated to the research question.

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Williams and Kaufmann (2012). Four additional measures were introduced to measure individual differences in ideological variables. They were presented in a randomized order before the attitude measures. For each of these measures, participants indicate their level of endorsement of statements on a 7-point scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*). After appropriate items were reverse-scored, an average score was computed for each participant for each scale. Higher scores indicate stronger endorsement of the construct measured by that scale. These scales are described below.

The *Social Dominance Orientation scale* (SDO; Pratto, Sidanius, Stallworth, & Malle, 1994) measures individual differences in preference for hierarchy and inequality among social groups across 16 items (e.g., “It’s probably a good thing that certain groups are at the top and other groups are at the bottom.”). The short-form of the *Right-Wing Authoritarianism scale* (RWA; Altemeyer, 1991) measures support for tradition and authority over 14 items (e.g., “What our country really needs instead of more ‘civil rights’ is a good stiff dose of law and order.”). The *Micro Justice and Macro Justice Principles Scale* (Zdaniuk & Bobocel, 2011) measures orientations towards social fairness. Eight items measured social justice preferences based on equity (microjustice: e.g., “People should be rewarded with more income if they have more ability.”) and a further eight items measured preferences based on equality (macrojustice: e.g., “There should be a minimum income guaranteed for everyone”). Items were adjusted to suit the context of Asylum seekers.

Results

Descriptive and correlational findings.

Descriptive statistics for implicit and explicit attitudes in this sample are presented in Table 3 along with alpha Cronbach and correlations coefficients. A single case of SDO ($z = 3.11$) and microjustice ($z = -3.62$) were treated as outliers (i.e., replaced with $M - 2xSD$; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). Micro justice was negatively skewed, and was corrected using a logarithmic transformation; analyses were conducted on transformed data, untransformed data has been reported for ease of interpretation. On average, implicit attitudes were negative and explicit attitudes were neutral.

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As with Study 1, on average, implicit attitudes were negative and explicit attitudes were ambivalent. Negative explicit attitudes were related to higher scores on factors in the DPM, and lower scores on social justice principles. Negative implicit attitudes were related to higher scores on SDO and lower scores on macrojustice. Again, implicit and explicit attitudes were weakly correlated with each other. The distribution of the sample did not allow exploration of differences as a function of gender or religious affiliation, however correlational analysis revealed that in this sample religious affiliation was related to explicit, but not implicit, attitudes. None of the remaining variables used in Study 1 were associated with explicit or implicit attitudes in this sample.

Table 3 about here

Predicting attitudes.

The sample size for Study 2 was deemed adequate based on Tabachnick and Fidell's (2007) recommendations of MRA sample size ($ns > 50 + 8k$; 6 independent variables requires a sample size of more than 98). Ideological variables (i.e., SDO, RWA, microjustice, macrojustice) age, gender, religious affiliation, political orientation, and national identity) were regressed against attitudes using a forced entry multiple regression analyses (MRAs) based on ordinary least square regression models. Replicating the analysis protocol of Anderson and colleagues (2015), Step 1 of the regression included SDO and RWA, and Step 2 included the principles of micro and macro justice. Regression coefficients and squared semi-partial correlations for analysis are presented in Table 4⁶.

In the case of explicit attitudes, Step 1 accounted for a significant 40.60% of the variance in attitudes towards asylum seekers, $F(2, 105) = 28.67, p < .001$. Step 2 accounted for an additional 12.10% of the variance $\Delta F(2, 103) = 14.86, p < .001$. In combination, predictor variables accounted for 58.20% variance in explicit attitudes towards asylum seekers, which can be considered a large effect (Cohen's $f^2 = 1.39$). SDO and RWA were strong predictors of negative attitudes towards asylum seekers

⁶ The residuals of the ATAS scale produced some heteroscedastic variance concerns. Following the protocol of Anderson et al., (2015), further transformation of the raw data, and robust regression techniques were used to explore this violation (Wilcox, R. 2005), but these did not affect the outcomes.

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in the first step of the model. Both predictors remained significant in the second step (uniquely accounting for 8.52% and 4.75% of the variance, respectively), and principles of macro justice were revealed as an additional predictor of positive explicit attitudes towards asylum seekers (uniquely contributing 11.56% of the variance). Principles of micro justice was a not a significant predictor of explicit attitudes towards asylum seekers.

In the case of implicit attitudes, Step 1 accounted for a significant 14.30% of the variance in attitudes towards asylum seekers, $F(2, 105) = 5.00, p = .01$, which can be considered a small effect (Cohen's $f^2 = 0.17$). Step 2 did not significantly increase the variance accounted for by the model ($\Delta p < .399$), however, the final model was significant ($p = .027$). Only SDO was a predictor of negative attitudes towards asylum seekers in the first step of the model, uniquely accounting for 9.06% of the variance. RWA and the social justice principles were not predictors of attitudes towards asylum seekers.

Table 4 about here

General Discussion

Social psychologists have identified the need to consider both the controlled and automatic components of social attitudes (e.g., Devine, 1989), yet the automatic components of attitudes towards asylum seekers has not yet been explored. This paper explored explicit and, for the first time, implicit attitudes towards this vulnerable social group in a series of cross-sectional studies. The major contributions of this paper include: (a) evidence that implicit attitudes can be reliably measured by the GNAT, (b) that these attitudes are more negative than their explicit counterpart, (c) these attitudes are associated with different demographic and ideological constructs to their explicit counterpart, and (d) that explicit and implicit attitudes towards asylum seekers are distinct constructs, and thus this paper presents evidence for dual-attitude theoretical frameworks.

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Review of the Findings

Findings related to Demographic Factors

At the group-based level, explicit attitudes were more negative from male participants than female participants, matching the existing literature (Pedersen, Attwell, & Heveli, 2005; Schweitzer et al., 2005). None of the remaining variables were related to attitudes. The regression analysis with five independent variables revealed a model that did not predict significant amounts of variance in explicit attitudes. Such a model of prediction has not been tested before. This could be natural variance between this sample and those reported in the literature - for example, a large portion of the existing research has used samples from the Western side of Australia, while the current sample was recruited from the South-Eastern quarter. The preferred (albeit speculative) explanation is that if high self-presentation concerns existed in this sample, this would result in non-accurate (i.e., modified) explicit responses (Fazio & Olson, 2003). Responses which have been modified for social desirability reasons would weaken the ability of a regression model to effectively detect variance in attitudes. Although desirable responding was not measured, the participants were aware of the purpose of this study, and they also knew the research assistants, which would increase the likelihood of socially desirable responding. Alternatively, this null finding potentially reflects a legitimate change in the Australian public's attitudes towards asylum seekers

Implicit attitudes towards asylum seekers were predicted by gender and religious affiliation, which matches the literature on gender differences in explicit attitudes, and the work of Perry and colleagues (2014), who found Christians reported more negative explicit attitudes than non-Christians. None of the remaining variables were related to implicit attitudes; given that they were not predictive of explicit attitudes for this sample, this is of limited concern. As expected, the explicit and implicit measure were weakly correlated in the same direction, matching the existing literature on explicit-implicit correspondence for other targets (Blair, 2001; Hofmann, Gawronski, Gschwendner, Le, & Schmitt, 2005).

Findings related to Ideological Factors

The pattern of explicit attitudes in study 2 replicated the findings of Anderson and colleagues, also demonstrating that SDO and RWA predict negative explicit attitudes, and that principles of macrojustice (but not microjustice) predict positive

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attitudes. This also aligns with other work that has revealed the variables in the DPM uniquely predict attitudes towards asylum seekers (e.g., Louis et al., 2007; Nickerson & Louis, 2008).

Interestingly, only SDO predicted implicit attitudes towards asylum seekers. This link suggests that implicit representations of asylum seekers for participants in this sample activated competitive world beliefs, and thus this sample have likely learnt over time to implicitly associate notions of asylum seekers with threats to resources and job security. This matches the existing literature linking symbolic and realistic threat to negative attitudes towards this group (e.g., Suhnan et al., 2012). It also aligns with work that more broadly suggests that social hierarchies influence implicit attitudes. For example, previous work has established that high status members demonstrate an implicit in-group bias for other high status members, and to a larger extent than low-status group members (Jost, Pelham, & Carvallo, 2002).

Interestingly implicit attitudes were unrelated to RWA or social justice principles. This suggests that implicit representations of asylum seekers are markedly different from explicit representations. A speculative explanation involves an assumed lack of prior contact with asylum seekers. Given the definition of implicit attitudes as representations stored in memory, an assumed lack of contact between individuals in the sample and asylum seekers suggests that they would have a very specific version of asylum seeker accessible in memory, one driven by media and political representations. These particular representations would relate to SDO, as the media certainly present asylum seekers as a direct challenge, and thus as competition for resources. However, these same media-based representations might not depict asylum seekers in a way that reflect issues related to authoritarianism or social justice. Thus, they are unlikely to relate to RWA or social justice principles in the same fashion.

Self-Presentation Concerns and Explicit and Implicit Attitudes

The findings of this paper highlight several important issues of interest to researchers in this field, but specifically one key issue that is crucial in the interpretation of existing and future research. Specifically, previous research has shown that explicit attitudes towards asylum seekers are susceptible to being modified (e.g., Banse, Seise, & Zerbes, 2001; Fazio & Towles-Schwen, 1999), and seem to be

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modified in the presence of certain contextual factors or as a function of self-presentation concerns. The evidence for this claim presented in this paper is two-fold.

First, the samples in both studies demonstrated implicit attitudes that were negative while reporting explicit attitudes that were neutral⁷. This discrepancy was found in the community sample (Study 1) and the student sample (Study 2). Interestingly, the community sample demonstrated more negative implicit $t(252) = -3.45, p = .001$, Cohen's $d = 1.16$ and explicit attitudes $t(286.612) = 10.179, p < .001$, Cohen's $d = -0.49$ than the student samples. This aligns with existing knowledge that students tend to be more progressive on social issues and that education is negatively related to prejudice (e.g., Steffens, 2005). However, an alternative explanation is that the student sample might be educated into reporting egalitarian social norms and thus could be deliberately attenuating any legitimate negativity in their explicit responses rather than harboring genuinely less negative attitudes.

The second piece of evidence relates to the divergence in the pattern of correlations between explicit and implicit attitudes across the findings of this paper, $r_{\text{total}}(289) = -.262, p < .001$. One previously argued explanation for weak correspondence between explicit and implicit attitudes is that motivational influences affect explicit but not implicit responses (Hofmann et al., 2005). This motivational influence could be the deliberate concealment of negativity, as already discussed, or alternatively the genuine desire not to feel or be prejudiced (e.g., Greenwald & Banaji, 1995). Either way, the lack of correspondence is speculative evidence that socially desirable responding styles are affecting explicit attitudes.

Correspondence with Existing Literature

The evidence presented in this paper for being able to predict attitudes towards asylum seekers is complex. It appears that ideological variables are more reliably associated with explicit attitudes than demographic factors. Indeed, the results of the study including ideological factors by Anderson and colleagues (2015) were perfectly replicated in this paper, and align with other work testing these attitudes and the DPM (e.g., Louis et al., 2007; Nickerson & Louis, 2008). However, the results in this paper

⁷ single sample t -tests revealed that implicit attitudes differ significantly from 0 (Study 1: $t(182) = -11.20, p < .001$; Study 2: $t(105) = -3.238, p = .002$), justifying the label of negative attitudes; explicit attitudes did not differ significantly from the scale midpoint, (Study 1: $t(182) = -1.59, p = .112$; Study 2: $t(105) = -.69, p = .491$), justifying the label of neutral attitudes.

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pertaining to demographic factors did not align well with existing research. In fact, very few correlations with these factors existed in this paper, and those that did exist were not consistent across studies. Speculatively, this could be because extraneous factors that affect people's ability or willingness to accurately report explicit attitudes dilute the statistical power needed to predict explicit attitudes. These factors might supersede the predictive validity of demographic factors, but not ideological variables.

There is no existing literature on implicit attitudes towards asylum seekers to draw comparisons from. Although no comments can be made on the ability to predict implicit attitudes towards asylum seekers, comment can be made on how the findings presented align with the general literature on explicit-implicit correlations. Specifically, the findings of Studies 1 and 2 showed statistically significant but weak relationship between explicit and implicit attitudes. These findings support theoretical conceptions of explicit and implicit attitudes as related but distinct concepts (Nosek, 2007; Wilson et al., 2000) and aligns with general effect sizes reported by a meta-analysis on explicit-implicit prejudice (average $r = .24$; Dovidio et al., 2001, average $r = .29$; Nosek & Banaji, 2002). This can be interpreted as evidence for a dual-construct model of attitudes towards asylum seekers.

Limitations and Future Considerations

This paper is the first to explore implicit attitudes, which unavoidably raises more questions than it can answer. This paper is not without standard limitations (for example, the samples were predominantly young women which is a combination of social groups known to be lower in levels of reported prejudice), however, the questions unanswered by this paper can act as a catalyst for future lines of research along the following research trajectories:

The role of religion.

Although partially inconsistent across the samples in this paper, religion appears to be a factor of interest for both explicit and implicit attitudes toward asylum seekers. Although this is the first time these attitudes have been explored toward this group, this matches the previous work of Anderson and Antalíková (2014) who explored the role of religion in attitudes toward immigrants to Denmark. They found that Danish

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Christians demonstrated more negative implicit, but not explicit, attitudes towards immigrants than non-religious Danes.

The current studies were confounded by religion in two ways. First, they used categorical religious affiliation. Second, the categorization protocol of religious affiliation was rudimentary (i.e., combining different religious affiliations to be 'religious', and not-measuring if the 'non-religious' were atheist or agnostic, etc.). Future research could explore if members of different religions harbor different attitudes, and should consider the use of religiosity (i.e., individual differences in the importance and use of religion) rather than categorical religious affiliation.

The role of evolving social norms.

The data in this sample reported similar levels of explicit attitudes ($M_{\text{total}} = 3.05$, $SD = 0.95$) to recent data (e.g., Anderson et al., 2015; $M = 3.44$, $SD = .95$) but lower than that reported less recently (e.g., Pedersen et al., 2005; $M = 4.66$, $SD = 1.51$). It could be that this represents a legitimate decrease in negativity towards asylum seekers in Australia. However, it could equally be a function of changing social norms around the acceptability of reporting negative attitudes towards this group. Experimental research should explore if the social category of asylum seekers is becoming normatively protected. Also, there is a clear absence of longitudinal data in this field that could help address this question.

Concluding Remarks

Knowledge of the determinants and consequences of attitudes towards asylum seekers is growing, and research into this field continues to expand. Ongoing research is needed to understand why public policies towards this group remain punitive and sometimes are becoming more punitive in an attempt to deter asylum seekers from seeking refuge in Australia. This is evidenced by the reintroduction of offshore processing in 2012 (Gleeson, 2015), and the introduction of the policy that asylum seekers arriving by boat will never be permanently settled in Australia in 2013 (Hall & Swan, 2013). Given that implicit attitudes are often able to predict related behaviours better than their explicit counterparts, it is important to have knowledge of implicit attitudes towards this social group as these will likely inform how people respond to public reactions and vote on policy regarding asylum seekers. As such, the complementary role of implicit cognition in research towards asylum seekers allows

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for a more complete and nuanced understanding that is crucial to allow the development of interventions. This paper is the first to report implicit attitudes towards asylum seekers, and presents evidence for dual-constructs of explicit and implicit attitudes towards this social group in cross-sectional studies comprising community and student samples.

The focus of this paper, like much of the literature before it, remains on exploring what we know about attitudes towards asylum seekers. It is hoped that the developing body of knowledge on what we know about asylum seekers will soon be able to inform research on how these attitudes might be changed to foster greater global levels of tolerance and increase related advocacy. This would allow the improvement of policies and subsequent living conditions for asylum seekers as they attempt to create a new and better life for themselves.

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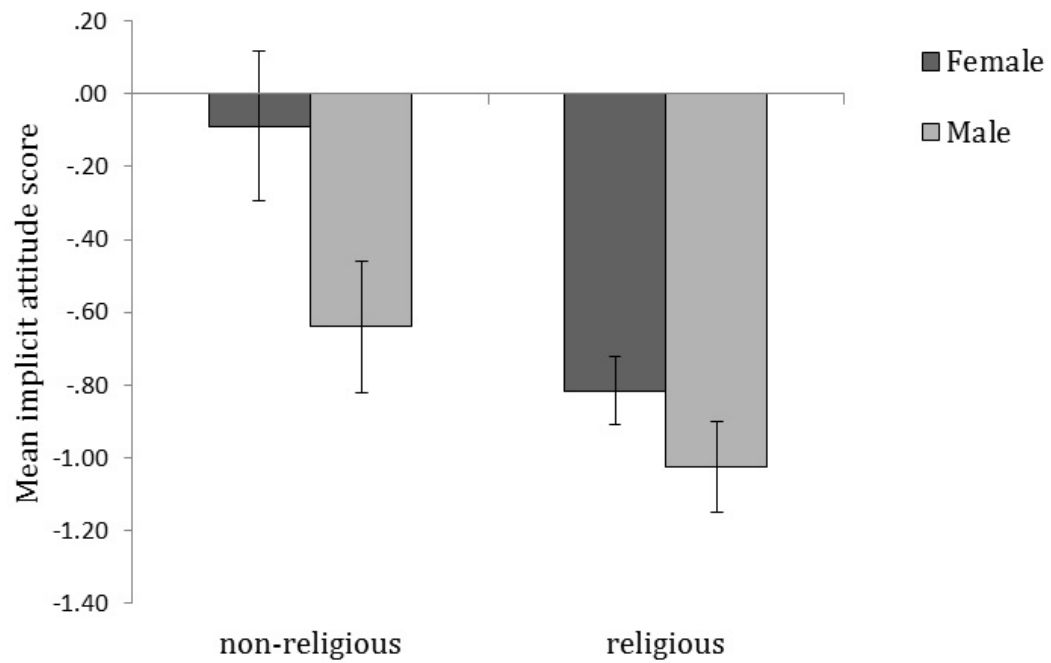


Figure 1. Descriptive statistics of d' difference scores for implicit attitudes toward asylum seekers as a function of gender and religious affiliation (Study 1). Error bars represent ± 1 SE.

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics and Correlation Analyses for Explicit and Implicit Attitudes Toward Asylum Seekers and Key Demographic Variables (Study 1; N = 183).

	1	2	3	4	5	6	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
1. Implicit attitudes	-						-0.72	0.87
2. Explicit attitudes	-.17*	(.89)					3.39	0.98
3. National identity	-.00	.02	(.84)				4.13	0.69
4. Age (years)	-.10	.01	.02	-			24.98	10.16
5. Political orientation	.02	-.06	.14	-.10	-		3.48	1.29
6. Gender	-.14*	.16*	.21*	.08	-.10	-	-	-
7. Religious affiliation	-.23*	-.02	-.13	.07	.13	-.10	-	-

Notes: * $p < .05$, significant correlations are presented in boldface; positive correlations with gender indicate a point-biserial correlation with being male and positive correlations with religious affiliation indicate a point-biserial correlation with being religious. Cronbach alpha coefficients are presented in parentheses. Higher implicit attitude scores represent positive implicit attitudes; higher explicit attitude scores represent negative explicit attitudes.

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Table 2

Unstandardised (B) and Standardised (β) Regression Coefficients, and Semi-Partial Correlations for Predictors in Regression Models Predicting Explicit and Implicit Attitudes Toward Asylum Seekers in Study 1 (N=183).

	Explicit attitudes				Implicit attitudes			
	<i>B</i> [95% CI]	<i>SE B</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>sr</i> ²	<i>B</i> [95% CI]	<i>SE B</i>	β	<i>sr</i> ²
National identity	-0.04 [-2.01, 1.93]	1.00	-0.00	-.00	0.04 [-1.67, 1.75]	0.87	0.00	.00
Age	-0.05 [-1.18, 1.09]	0.57	-0.01	-.01	-.026 [-1.24, 0.73]	0.50	-0.04	-.04
Political orientation	-0.04 [-0.16, 0.08]	0.06	-0.06	-.06	0.03 [-0.08, 0.13]	0.05	0.04	.04
Gender	0.38 [-0.04, 0.59]	0.16	0.14	.14	-0.32 [-0.59, -0.04]	0.14	-0.17	-.17
Religious affiliation	0.09 [-0.26, 0.44]	0.18	0.04	.04	-0.57 [-0.87, -0.27]	0.15	-0.29	-.28

Note: * $p < .05$, ** $p < .001$, significant coefficients presented in boldface. Higher scores of explicit attitudes represent negative attitudes, while higher scores of implicit attitudes represent positive attitudes. Dummy coded variables: Gender (0=female, 1=male); Religion (0=non-religious, 1=religious). Constants for explicit attitudes = 3.45 ($SE = 0.99$); constants for implicit attitudes = 0.04 ($SE = 0.87$).

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Table 3

Descriptive Statistics and Correlation Analyses for Explicit and Implicit Attitudes Toward Asylum Seekers, and Social Dominance Orientation (SDO), Right-Wing Authoritarianism (RWA), and Micro and Macro Social Justice Orientations (Study 2; N = 106).

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	M	SD
1. Implicit attitudes	-										-0.31	0.81
2. Explicit attitudes	-.32*	(.81)									3.45	0.81
3. SDO	-.38*	.61**	(.92)								2.47	0.98
4. RWA	-.23	.51**	.52**	(.81)							3.18	0.83
5. Micro Justice	.18	-.42**	-.31*	-.25*	(.78)						5.01	0.81
6. Macro Justice	.25*	-.53**	-.24*	-.12	.39**	(.80)					4.61	0.99
7. National identity	-.15	-.10	-.06	-.11	-.12	.02	(.94)				5.67	1.08
8. Age	.11	-.02	-.07	-.12	-.05	-.14	-.04	-			22.75	7.58
9. Political orientation	.05	-.11	-.18	-.20	.22*	-.02	-.25*	.14	-		3.22	1.64
10. Gender	.19	-.03	-.26*	-.05	-.01	-.03	.05	-.07	-.18	-	-	-
11. Religious affiliation	-.15	.20*	.19	.29*	.05	-.01	.15	-.23*	-.05	.19	-	-

Notes: * $p < .05$, ** $p < .001$, significant correlations are presented in boldface. Cronbach alpha coefficients are presented in parentheses.

Positive correlations with gender indicate a point-biserial correlation with being male and positive correlations with religious affiliation indicate a point-biserial correlation with identifying with a religion. Cronbach alpha coefficients are presented in parentheses.

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Table 4

Unstandardised (B) and Standardised (β) Regression Coefficients, and Semi-Partial Correlations for Predictors in Regression Models Predicting Explicit and Implicit Attitudes Toward Asylum Seekers in Study 2 (N=106).

	Explicit attitudes				Implicit attitudes			
	<i>B</i> [95% CI]	<i>SE B</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>sr</i> ²	<i>B</i> [95% CI]	<i>SE B</i>	β	<i>sr</i> ²
<i>Step 1</i>								
SDO	0.04 [0.02, 0.05]	0.01	0.47	.40	-0.29 [-0.24, 1.34]	.012	-0.35	-.30
RWA	0.02 [0.01, 0.04]	0.01	0.27	.29	-0.05 [-0.52, -0.06]	0.14	-0.05	-.04
<i>Step 2</i>								
SDO	0.03 [0.01, 0.04]	0.01	0.35	.29	-0.26 [-0.50, -0.02]	0.12	-0.31	-.26
RWA	0.02 [0.01, 0.04]	0.05	0.27	.22	-0.05 [-0.32, 0.23]	0.14	-0.05	-.04
Microjustice	-0.06 [-0.17, 0.04]	0.05	-0.10	-.09	0.02 [-1.81, 1.84]	0.91	0.03	.00
Macrojustice	-0.03 [-0.04, -0.02]	0.01	-0.37	-.34	0.14 [-0.08, 0.35]	0.11	0.17	.15

Note: * $p < .05$, ** $p < .001$, significant coefficients presented in boldface. SDO = Social dominance orientation, RWA = right-wing authoritarianism. Constants for explicit attitudes : Study 1 = 7.18 ($SE = 0.27$), Study 2 = 7.79 ($SE = 0.39$); constants for implicit attitudes : Study 1 = 0.56 ($SE = 0.40$), Study 2 = -0.29 ($SE = 6.84$). Final models: explicit attitudes, $F(4, 103) = 26.79, p < .001$; implicit attitudes, $F(4, 103) = 2.96, p = .027$.

