"Saying One Thing and Doing Another": Examining the Impact of Event Order on Hypocrisy Judgments of Others

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This study investigated whether the temporal order of people's expressed statements and their behaviors affected others' judgments of hypocrisy, and why. It was proposed that hypocrisy would be greater when a statement establishing a personal standard preceded a behavior violating that standard as opposed to the reverse order. This order effect occurred in three studies, generalizing across two topic areas (healthy living and safe sex) and for both normative and nonnormative statements (pro/anti–safe sex). Mediation analyses indicated that the reverse order mitigated against hypocrisy because the target's inconsistency was attributed to dispositional change. The discussion addresses additional variables likely to affect hypocrisy and the relationship of this research to hypocrisy paradigms in dissonance.

Keywords: *hypocrisy; order effect; attribution; social judgment; impression formation; person perception*

The notion of hypocrisy comes originally from the Greek word *hypokrisis*, which means the act of playing a part on a stage (Mish, 1993). Indeed, being a hypocrite is similar to being an actor in that both portray one persona for an audience, which may differ from the behaviors performed when not in front of that audience. Thus, the root *hypokrisis* reflects, in part, the more typical contemporary meaning of hypocrisy as saying one thing in public and doing another in private (i.e., when not observed by others). Hypocrites taken from classic literature and real life reflect the key elements that make up this complex judgment. The classic play *Tartuffe* (Moliere, 1667/2002) is centered around a hypocritical priest who, after giving great speeches of piety and self-sacrifice, is found to be stealing his benefactor's fortune and trying to seduce his benefactor's wife. Contemporary cases include William Bennett, former secretary of education and national drug czar, who, after being a regular speaker on morality and author of the *Book of Virtues*, was found to have gambled away an estimated $8 million (Associated Press, 2003).

The examples of *Tartuffe* and William Bennett include two components that make up the archetypical case of hypocrisy: the public saying element and the private doing element. The key component of the "saying" element is the public communication of a personal standard. The "doing" element of hypocrisy is a behavior that is inconsistent with the personal standard established in the statement and is hidden from the public eye. Thus, throughout this article, the terms "saying" or "statement" will refer to the personal standard that is established publicly, and the terms "doing" or "behavior" will refer to the private behavior that is inconsistent with the expressed personal standard.

Although hypocrites have long been the topic of literature and public discourse, researchers have largely ignored the psychological and situational factors that

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lead to judging others as hypocrites. Instead, efforts have been focused on hypocrisy of the self, including research on dissonance (Stone, Wiegand, Cooper, & Aronson, 1997) and moral hypocrisy (Batson, Thompson, Whitney, & Strongman, 1999). Hypocrisy of the self contains the same two basic elements as perceived hypocrisy of others. For example, in the area of dissonance, hypocrisy has been induced by having participants establish a personal standard in front of an audience (e.g., giving a videotaped procondom speech, signing their name on a poster for water conservation) and then having them think about past private behaviors that were inconsistent with that standard (e.g., times they did not use a condom or conserve water; Dickerson, Thibodeau, Aronson, & Miller, 1992; Stone et al., 1997). Similarly, in moral hypocrisy research, hypocrisy is based on the inconsistency between participants publicly agreeing to be fair by flipping a coin to determine their next activity and the private behavior of cheating on the coin flip to obtain the preferred activity (Batson et al., 1999). Thus, hypocrisy of the self appears to resemble hypocrisy of others at least in terms of the two basic elements of the statement and the behavior. However, little is known about perceived hypocrisy of others, and the current research is the first to investigate this topic.

Order of Statements and Behaviors

When a person says one thing in public but does another in private, there is personal inconsistency, and this perceived inconsistency and our dislike of inconsistent individuals (Tedeschi, Schlenker, & Bonoma, 1971) undoubtedly contributes to negative perceptions of hypocritical others. But does it matter if the person says one thing and then does another versus does one thing and then says another? In each case, the statements and behaviors are identical and equally inconsistent. Thus, at first glace, it is not clear why there should be any differences in perceptions of hypocrisy. Indeed, the first goal of the current research is to investigate whether the order of public statements and private behaviors has any impact on the perceived hypocrisy of others.

There is some suggestion in common language that order may matter. Specifically, hypocrisy is most frequently described as "saying one thing and doing another" rather than "doing one thing and saying another." In fact, the conventional ordering of statement and behavior in language is much more frequent in usage than the reverse order.[1] In addition to being much more frequent in usage, linguistic analysis suggests that the conventional ordering is meaningful in that it implies the temporal order in which the saying and doing take place. Linguists have found that the word *and* often operates asymmetrically, implying a temporal order so that the preceding element occurs before the following element (Schmerling, 1975). For example, the phrase "John robbed a bank and went to Mexico" implies a different temporal order than the phrase "John went to Mexico and robbed a bank." Thus, according to a linguistic analysis alone, the *and* in the phrase "saying one thing and doing another" implies that the clearest cases of hypocrisy should occur when the saying precedes the doing. Although previous examples and linguistic analysis suggest that the conventional order represents the archetypical case of hypocrisy, there are no empirical studies examining the impact of order on hypocrisy. That is, there is no research that systematically varies the order of statements and behaviors to assess the impact on either hypocrisy of the self or hypocrisy of others. In addition, there is no research that indicates why order should matter, if indeed it does.

However, by returning to our earlier examples, it is possible to assess the potential of order to affect the perceived hypocrisy of others. What if William Bennett had lost $8 million gambling and then had given speeches and wrote a book on the virtues of living a moral lifestyle? This reversing of the statement and behavior might not make Bennett appear as hypocritical even though the statement, behavior, and inconsistency are identical. One possible reason for this is that the reverse order (i.e., behavior then statement) raises the possibility that William Bennett has changed his ways for the better. In the same way, if Tartuffe had tried to seduce his benefactor's wife and steal his benefactor's fortune and only afterward had made speeches about self-sacrifice and religious piety, this also might seem less hypocritical.

Based on these examples, we suggest that the reverse order opens up the possibility that the inconsistency occurred because the person sincerely changed, whereas the conventional order does not. That is, statements that fall second seem to be more readily interpreted as dispositional change than are behaviors that fall second. Making a public statement is a clear way to indicate dispositional change. On the other hand, when a private behavior falls second, it may not signal dispositional change as clearly because behaviors derive from a number of causes (e.g., situational norms, habits). Thus, the behavior just seems inconsistent with the person's professed statement, leading to hypocrisy as the salient explanation. According to this account, the reverse order appears less hypocritical than the conventional order because it opens an alternative explanation for the inconsistency, namely, that an individual has changed. In the current research, we first establish that order matters and then turn to our second goal of examining whether attributions of change are responsible for the order effect.

Overview of the Present Research

The proposed view of hypocrisy of others suggests that the ordering of a public statement and a private behavior should affect hypocrisy judgments such that when the statement establishing a personal standard precedes the inconsistent behavior, this should result in greater perceptions of hypocrisy than when the same statement follows the behavior. We examine this issue in three studies. Study 1 tests the notion that order is an important antecedent to perceiving hypocrisy in others. Study 2 tests the generaliziability of this phenomenon to negative statements and positive behaviors. Finally, Study 3 investigates whether the reduced perception of hypocrisy in the reverse order occurs because this order increases the attribution that the individual has sincerely changed.

STUDY 1

Study 1 was exploratory and designed to answer three questions. The first and most important is whether hypocrisy judgments are greater in the conventional order (statement first, behavior second) as opposed to the reverse order (behavior first, statement second). A second question is whether order has a specific relationship with hypocrisy. According to the proposed view, the order of the statement and the behavior has specific consequences for trait judgments of hypocrisy. As reviewed earlier, the temporal order of saying and doing may be critical to the meaning of hypocrisy but not other negative traits (e.g., hostility). Thus, it is predicted that order will affect hypocrisy to a greater extent than negative traits unrelated to hypocrisy.

If order affects hypocrisy judgments, the final question is whether order also will produce an impact on global evaluations. Certainly, this seems likely given that global evaluations of people are often based on the characteristics that individuals are perceived to possess (e.g., Anderson, 1971). Furthermore, judgments of hypocrisy have been associated with negative consequences for literary (e.g., Tartuffe) and real-life figures (e.g., William Bennett) and in prior empirical research on self-hypocrisy (e.g., Batson et al., 1999; Stone et al., 1997). Thus, if the conventional order elicits greater judgments of hypocrisy, then it also should elicit more negative global evaluations. Finally, given the specific relationship between order and hypocrisy, it seems likely that any impact of order on global evaluations will be explained by hypocrisy.

Method

PARTICIPANTS

A total of 137 introductory psychology students at Ohio State University voluntarily participated in partial fulfillment of a course requirement.

PROCEDURE

Target information. Participants were provided with a packet including all of the experimental materials and were instructed to read each page and complete any responses before moving on to the subsequent page. Instructions indicated that they would be learning about an individual who was the leader of a campus organization at The Ohio State University. The second page included a radio transcript in which a disc jockey (DJ) asked the target (Pat Clark) about the Commit to be Fit organization (a real Columbus group). In addition, it included an investigative report describing Pat's private behaviors. In the transcript, Pat made a statement promoting a healthier lifestyle (i.e., "This week I agreed to be the Commit to be Fit liaison on The Ohio State University campus. Overall, Columbus is the fifth least healthy city in the country in terms of diet and exercise, so I think that it is critical that we do something proactive about it in our daily lives"). In the conventional order condition, this radio transcript was followed by an investigative report indicating that 2 weeks after making the statement, Pat engaged in an inconsistent behavior (i.e., "Pat hardly ever left the couch and kept ordering pizzas and watching TV; he must have gained five pounds"). In the reverse order condition, the investigative report occurred 2 weeks before the radio interview and the report appeared above the transcript on the page.

Participants then completed measures of their attitudes, spontaneous impressions of Pat, and traits they believed Pat possessed. The attitude measures came first, which should provide the maximum opportunity for global evaluations to affect all negative traits if a halo effect was operating. Thus, this ordering provides a stringent test of the notion that a specific relationship exists between order and hypocrisy judgments. Following the judgments, participants were debriefed and thanked for their participation.

INDEPENDENT VARIABLE

Participants were randomly assigned to receive information about the target in either the conventional hypocrisy order (statement then behavior) or in the reverse order (behavior then statement). The order manipulation consisted of both the order of presentation on the page and the explicit chronological order in which the events occurred. Thus, in the conventional order, the statement preceded behavior on the page and the text indicated that the statement occurred 2 weeks before the behavior. In contrast, in the reverse order, the behavior preceded the statement on the page and the text indicated that the behavior occurred 2 weeks before the statement. Thus, the information is received in the order in which the events occurred. This procedure was chosen to strengthen the overall manipulation of order and

to prevent any confusion that might occur if earlier events were presented later on the page. Otherwise, target information was identical across the two order conditions.

DEPENDENT MEASURES

Attitude measure. In addition to the transcript and the investigative reporting, the second page contained two items assessing global attitudes toward the target. The instructions read, "Please circle your evaluation of Pat on the two scales below." This was followed by two 9-point semantic differential items (*extremely like/extremely dislike*, *extremely good/extremely bad*). The two attitude items were highly intercorrelated ($\alpha = .93$) so they were averaged to form an overall attitude index.

Trait measures. The third page contained a spontaneous trait measure of hypocrisy, which instructed participants to fill in three blank spaces with the first traits that came to mind in describing the target. If one of the three blanks provided included the words *hypocrite*, *hypocrisy*, or *hypocritical*, this was scored as a 1; otherwise it was scored as a 0. The fourth page contained trait judgments where participants indicated on a 7-point scale (*not at all/absolutely*) the extent to which each trait applied to the target. These scale ratings included one trait item of hypocritical as well as three negative traits that were unrelated to hypocrisy (i.e., stingy, reckless, hostile). A hypocrisy index was formed by standardizing the spontaneous hypocrisy item and the hypocritical scale item and then averaging them together ($\alpha = .62$).

Results

Trait measures. All dependent variables were analyzed using a one-way, between-subjects ANOVA on the order condition. For the hypocrisy index, this analysis indicated that the conventional ordering, where statements preceded behaviors, elicited greater judgments of hypocrisy ($M = .28$, $SD = .88$) than the reverse ordering ($M = -.25$, $SD = .73$), $F(1, 135) = 14.56$, $p < .001$.

Separate analysis of the two hypocrisy items produced identical and significant order effects.[2] A higher proportion of participants spontaneously mentioned hypocrisy in the conventional ordering ($M = .41$, $SD = .50$) as compared to the reverse ordering ($M = .11$, $SD = .31$), $F(1, 135) = 18.03$, $p < .001$. Thus, participants were 30% more likely to spontaneously mention that the target was a hypocrite when the statement preceded the behavior than when the order was reversed. Furthermore, the spontaneous nature of this measure indicates that judgments of hypocrisy occur without specific prompting. For the scale item of hypocrisy, the conventional ordering elicited significantly higher judgments of hypocrisy ($M = 4.71$, $SD = 2.06$) than did the reverse ordering ($M = 3.90$, $SD = 2.23$), $F(1, 135) = 4.84$, $p = .029$. By contrast, each of the unrelated negative traits elicited the same level of endorsement in the conventional and reverse order, respectively, including stingy ($M = 2.08$, $SD = 1.39$; $M = 1.94$, $SD = 1.32$), reckless ($M = 2.25$, $SD = 1.40$; $M = 2.05$, $SD = 1.27$), and hostile ($M = 2.07$, $SD = 1.51$; $M = 1.89$, $SD = 1.48$; all Fs < 1). Together, these results indicate that order has a specific impact on hypocrisy, which does not extend to unrelated negative traits.

Attitude measure. The target was evaluated more negatively in the conventional ordering when the statement preceded the behavior ($M = 3.81$, $SD = 1.72$) than in the reverse order ($M = 5.25$, $SD = 1.93$), $F(1, 135) = 21.29$, $p < .001$. This indicates that order had consequences for global evaluations as well as hypocrisy judgments.

Mediational analyses. The final issue that this study was intended to address was whether the impact of order on global evaluations was in fact mediated by trait judgments of hypocrisy. This seemed likely given the specific impact of order on hypocrisy and the negative impact of hypocrisy on the evaluation of past figures (e.g., Tartuffe and William Bennett). Mediation was examined in a series of regression analyses as outlined by Baron and Kenny (1986).

The analyses were conducted using the order manipulation as the independent variable, the attitude index as the dependent variable, and the hypocrisy index as the mediator. The ANOVA analysis above established that order affected the attitude index. Next, hypocrisy was regressed on the order manipulation. The order manipulation was found to be a significant predictor of hypocrisy ($b = -0.31$, $p < .001$). Finally, attitude was regressed on the order manipulation and hypocrisy. Hypocrisy significantly predicted attitudes ($b = -0.57$, $p < .001$). In addition, although the order manipulation was still a significant predictor, the coefficient was significantly reduced ($b = 0.19$, $p = .007$). The Sobel (1982) test was conducted and results established that the reduction in the path from the order manipulation to attitudes was significant when hypocrisy was included in the regression equation ($z = 3.46$, $p < .001$). This suggests that hypocrisy does mediate, at least in part, the relationship between order and attitudes toward the target.

Discussion

Study 1 investigated three specific questions about the impact of the order of statements and behaviors on judgments of hypocrisy, unrelated traits, and global evaluations. In each case, the results were consistent with the proposed view of hypocrisy judgments of others.

First, our results showed that the conventional order (statement before behavior) resulted in more spontaneous mentions of hypocrisy and increased trait ratings of hypocrisy as compared to the reverse order. Perceptions

of hypocrisy were not absent in the reverse order and were not universal in the conventional order. Nevertheless, participants were 30% more likely to spontaneously apply the label of hypocrite to the target in the conventional order. These results provide the first evidence that order is indeed an important antecedent of hypocrisy judgments. Of importance, this finding is consistent with the proposed view that hypocrisy will be greatest when the statement establishes a personal standard before the behavior violates that standard.

Another question Study 1 was intended to address was whether order of the statement and behavior would have a negative impact on global evaluations. The results indicated that conventional ordering elicited more negative evaluations than reverse ordering. Thus, order has consequences that extend beyond trait judgments of hypocrisy.

A third question was whether the impact of order would affect all negative traits. This might be expected if the order effect was the result of people reacting negatively to the most recent information presented (which was negative) or if a general negative "halo" effect was operating (Nisbett & Wilson, 1977). However, the results were not consistent with this possibility because the order manipulation did not affect unrelated negative traits (i.e., stingy, reckless, hostile).

Finally, it may be important to note that although Study 1 clearly showed that a statement followed by a behavior led to greater perceptions of hypocrisy than the reverse, the specific example we used had a normatively positive statement (i.e., "commit to be fit") and a negative behavior (being lazy), in line with the majority of examples of hypocrites (e.g., Tartuffe, William Bennett). Is this required for perceptions of hypocrisy or would the same results hold if a positive behavior followed a normatively negative statement? This is examined in Study 2 using entirely different statements and behaviors for added generalizability.

STUDY 2

The hypocrisy example used in Study 1 was like virtually all examples of hypocrisy (e.g., Tartuffe, William Bennett) in that it combined a public statement that was viewed positively by society (i.e., committing to be fit) with a private behavior that was viewed negatively (i.e., spending a week on the couch eating). Similarly, previous empirical research on hypocrisy of the self has employed positive statements (e.g., agreeing to flip a coin to be fair, promoting condom usage) and negative behaviors (e.g., cheating on a coin flip or not using condoms; Batson et al., 1999; Stone et al., 1997). This practice suggested a view that hypocrisy required a violation of normative standards. The procedures used in this past research activated normative standards and influenced participants to adopt these standards personally by making statements in line with normative standards. Thus, research on hypocrisy of the self has confounded personal and normative standards. As a consequence, it is unclear which standard was critical for hypocrisy or if both were necessary.[3]

In contrast with previous research, which confounded normative and personal standards, the proposed view holds that the violation of a stated personal standard alone is sufficient to elicit perceptions of hypocrisy in others, independent of whether it is normative (although adding violation of a normative standard might increase hypocrisy compared to violating a personal standard alone). This leads to the prediction that the effect of order on hypocrisy should generalize across valence to normatively negative statements and positive behaviors. Reversing the valence for Study 1, this suggests that someone that made a commitment to living an unhealthy lifestyle and then snuck out to exercise would be seen as more hypocritical than someone that did these things in the reverse order.

Method

The methods used in Study 2 mirror those in Study 1 with a few modifications to the scenario to test the generality of the order effect. In the new scenario, Mike Schmidt[4] establishes a personal standard that is normatively negative (making a statement against using condoms) and then violates it with a behavior that is positive (actually using a condom during sex). According to the proposed view, even though normative standards are not violated, the conventional order should again be more hypocritical than the reverse order. Of course, if perceptions of hypocrisy require violation of normative rather than personal standards, then order of statement and behavior will not matter in this study.

PARTICIPANTS

A total of 184 introductory psychology students at Ohio State University voluntarily participated in partial fulfillment of a course requirement.

PROCEDURE

Target information. Instructions and packets were handled identically to Study 1 with the exception of changes to the scenario. The only other change was that the instructions indicated that the target was a fellow student rather than a campus leader. In the scenario for Study 2, the radio transcript indicated that the DJ was interviewing the target (Mike Schmidt) as part of a segment where they ask students what views they want to promote on campus. In the transcript, Mike makes a statement against using condoms (i.e., "I decided I will not use a condom when having sex, even with unfamiliar partners. Not using a condom is more enjoyable and students

should not be so concerned with preventing the spread of sexually transmitted diseases or protecting their health"). In the conventional order condition, this radio transcript was followed by an investigative report indicating that 1 month after making this statement, Mike engaged in an inconsistent behavior (i.e., "One night in mid-October, Mike was at a party and met a girl he was very attracted to. Later that night, even though they had just met, Mike and the girl ended up having sex and he chose to use a condom to protect himself"). In the reverse order condition, the investigative report occurred 1 month before the radio interview and the report appeared above the transcript on the page.

INDEPENDENT VARIABLE

As in Study 1, participants were randomly assigned to receive information about the target in either the conventional hypocrisy order (statement then behavior) or in the reverse order. The order manipulation consisted of both the order of presentation on the page and the explicit chronological order in which the events occurred.

DEPENDENT MEASURES

Trait measures. The bottom of the second page contained the same fill-in-the-blank measure of hypocrisy used in Study 1, which was scored in the same manner.

The third page contained trait judgments where participants indicated on a 7-point scale (*not at all/ absolutely*) the extent to which each trait applied to the target. These trait judgments included "hypocritical" as well as two negative traits that were unrelated to hypocrisy and different from those used in Study 1 (i.e., annoying and clumsy). A hypocrisy index was again calculated by standardizing the spontaneous hypocrisy item and the hypocritical scale item and then averaging them together ($\alpha = .56$).

Results

Trait measures. A one-way ANOVA comparing the two order conditions indicated a higher score on the hypocrisy index in the conventional ordering when the statement preceded the behavior ($M = .123$, $SD = .82$) as compared to the reverse ordering ($M = -.123$, $SD = .83$), $F(1, 182) = 4.09$, $p = .045$. This supports the notion that the order of the statement and behavior is important for hypocrisy judgments even when the statement is normatively negative rather than positive.

An ANOVA conducted on the unrelated negative trait ratings indicated no difference between the conventional and reverse orders, respectively, for both annoying ($M = 4.28$, $SD = 1.78$; $M = 4.00$, $SD = 1.76$) and clumsy ($M = 2.72$, $SD = 1.53$; $M = 2.86$, $SD = 1.65$; both Fs < 1.2). Thus, these results replicated the finding in Study 1 that the impact of order on hypocrisy is a specific relationship, which does not result from a more general, negative halo effect (Nisbett & Wilson, 1977), which would show an impact on unrelated negative traits.

Discussion

Similar to virtually all examples of hypocrites (e.g., Tartuffe, William Bennett) and prior research on hypocrisy (Batson et al., 1999; Stone et al., 1997), Study 1 employed a normatively positive statement and a negatively viewed behavior. As a result, there was no way to know whether this pairing was a requirement for hypocrisy judgments. Study 2 addressed this issue by reversing the valences so the target was described as making a normatively negative statement (i.e., against using condoms) and engaging in a normatively positive behavior (i.e., using a condom). Because the proposed view holds that the violation of a personal standard is sufficient to produce perceptions of hypocrisy, it was predicted that the order effect observed in Study 1 would generalize to this new valence combination.

The results of Study 2 indicated that even when valence was reversed, targets were judged to be more hypocritical when the statement preceded the behavior as compared to the reverse order. Thus, Study 2 established that the order effect generalized across normative valence, which is consistent with the notion that order of statements and behaviors is critical for enhancing judgments of hypocrisy. In addition, the effect of order on trait judgments was specific to hypocrisy judgments and did not generalize to negative trait judgments unrelated to hypocrisy.

The results of Study 2 also provided a critical test of whether contrast (Sherif & Hovland, 1961) was responsible for the order effect in Study 1. By reversing the valence of the statement and behavior, contrast and the proposed view lead to the exact opposite predictions for how order should affect trait judgments. A contrast effect leads to the prediction that hypocrisy, similar to other negative trait judgments, should increase when a positive anchor (e.g., the behavior) precedes a negative target (e.g., the statement). The results failed to confirm this prediction because hypocrisy judgments were lower when the behavior preceded the statement. Thus, Study 2 provided clear evidence ruling out a simple contrast alternative for the order effect.

Finally, the results of Study 2 provide some interesting insight into the type of standard that must be violated to generate judgments of hypocrisy. To date, all research on hypocrisy, and the vast majority of examples of hypocrites, has involved targets whose statements represented two kinds of standards simultaneously: normative standards and personal standards. However, the proposed view holds that violation of a personal standard is sufficient to elicit hypocrisy judgments even without violation of a normative standard. The current results indi-

cate that targets can be judged as hypocritical when behaviors violate personal standards, even when they are nonnormative standards (e.g., promoting unsafe sex). Drawing a parallel to dissonance, this finding is in line with self-consistency theory (see Thibodeau & Aronson, 1992), which holds that the violation of a personal standard is sufficient to elicit dissonance even in the absence of violating a normative standard.

Studies 1 and 2 have shown that the order of statements and behaviors has an impact on hypocrisy judgments across two examples and two different valence combinations. That is, in the conventional order, the statement-behavior inconsistency is more likely to be interpreted as hypocrisy than in the reverse order, but why? Dissonance theory, in old or new versions, does not address this. Certainly, because the statement and behavior are identical, the same degree of self-inconsistency exists between them. Yet, the information is interpreted differently in the two orders. A reason for the reverse order attenuating hypocrisy judgments is examined in Study 3.

STUDY 3

Our findings so far suggest that individuals are viewed as hypocritical when they make a statement establishing a personal standard and then commit a behavior that violates that standard, and it does not matter if that standard is consistent or inconsistent with social norms. Study 3 shifts the focus to the reverse order condition to investigate why it is that committing the behavior before the statement attenuates hypocrisy judgments. As alluded to earlier, one plausible explanation is that the reverse order allows for the possibility that a person has changed. For example, what if William Bennett had lost $8 million gambling and only afterward had given a speech about the benefits of living a moral lifestyle? In this case, an inconsistency still exists between the behavior and the statement; however, the reverse order opens up possibilities other than hypocrisy to explain this inconsistency. Most salient, we suggest that this order raises the possibility that Bennett learned from his past experiences and changed his views. Because true change in views offers an alternative to hypocrisy as an explanation for the inconsistency, the attribution of change should mitigate against hypocrisy.

The reverse order appears to open the possibility of interpreting the inconsistency in terms of change in the examples used in Studies 1 and 2 as well. In Study 1, the reverse condition described Pat sitting on the couch, eating and watching TV for a week, and gaining five pounds. Two weeks later, Pat makes a public statement indicating that people should be proactive in pursuing a healthier lifestyle. This ordering may suggest that Pat has changed to pursue a healthier lifestyle. In Study 2, the reverse condition described Mike choosing to use a condom during a casual sexual encounter. Then, 1 month later, he makes a public statement against using condoms because it is more enjoyable and because we should not be so concerned with sexually transmitted diseases. As with the other examples, this ordering seems to suggest that Mike may have changed his views. Accordingly, it was predicted that the reverse order would increase the likelihood that the inconsistency between the statement and the behavior would be attributed to the target changing rather than to hypocrisy. Having ruled out order of valence as an alternative in Study 2, Study 3 returned to the more typical hypocrisy case with a positive statement and a negative behavior.

Method

Overall, the methods used in Study 3 mirror those in Study 2 very closely, with a few exceptions. By changing a few words, the condom scenario used in Study 2 was modified to reflect the typical hypocrisy valence (i.e., positive statement, negative behavior); that is, the statement was modified to express a procondom viewpoint (i.e., "I decided I will use a condom when having sex") and the behavior was modified to not using a condom (i.e., "Mike and the girl ended up having sex even though they didn't have a condom"). The critical dependent measures were identical to those used in Study 2, with the addition of an item assessing the attribution for the inconsistency. In everyday conversation, dispositional change is often referred to as "turning over a new leaf," so this phrase was used for the item assessing attribution of change. If the reverse order provides an alternative explanation for the inconsistency, namely, that the individual sincerely changed between the behavior and the statement, then this should mitigate against judgments of hypocrisy.

PARTICIPANTS

A total of 53 introductory psychology students at Ohio State University voluntarily participated in partial fulfillment of a course requirement.

PROCEDURE

Target information. The materials used in Study 3 were identical to Study 2 except for the changes to the scenario and the addition of the attribution item at the end.

INDEPENDENT VARIABLE

As in Study 2, participants were randomly assigned to receive information about the target in either the conventional hypocrisy order (statement then behavior) or in the reverse order (behavior then statement).

DEPENDENT MEASURES

The dependent measures and the scoring of the trait measures were identical to that used in Study 2. The same unrelated negative trait judgments were used (i.e., annoying and clumsy). The hypocrisy index was again calculated by standardizing the spontaneous hypocrisy item and the hypocritical scale item and then averaging them together ($\alpha = .49$).

A single item assessed the attribution the participant had for any inconsistency between the target's statement and the behavior: "To what extent do you think any inconsistency between what Mike Schmidt said and did was the result of turning over a new leaf?" Responses were provided on a 7-point scale (*not at all/absolutely*).

Results

Trait measures. A one-way ANOVA comparing the two order conditions indicated higher scores on the hypocrisy index in the conventional ordering when the statement preceded the behavior ($M = .28$, $SD = .72$) as compared to the reverse ordering ($M = -.317$, $SD = .79$), $F(1, 51) = 8.31$, $p = .006$. This further supports the notion that the order of the statement and behavior was critical rather than the order of the valence because the same pattern occurred in Study 2 where the valences of the statement and behavior were reversed.

An ANOVA conducted on the unrelated negative trait ratings indicated no difference between the conventional and reverse orders, respectively, for both annoying ($M = 3.04$, $SD = 1.64$; $M = 2.70$, $SD = 1.95$) and clumsy ($M = 5.48$, $SD = 1.38$; $M = 5.27$, $SD = 1.48$; both Fs < 1). Thus, these results replicated the finding in Studies 1 and 2 showing that the impact of order on hypocrisy is a specific relationship, which does not result from a more general negative halo effect (Nisbett & Wilson, 1977).

Change attribution. When the behavior preceded the statement, this left open the possibility that the experience of not using a condom led to true change in the person and, thus, there was greater attribution to change ($M = 4.06$, $SD = 1.87$) as compared to the conventional ordering ($M = 1.69$, $SD = 1.18$), $F(1, 51) = 28.12$, $p < .001$. This finding supports the notion that order affects the attributions for the inconsistent target information, providing a plausible variable to investigate as a mediator of the effect of order on hypocrisy judgments.

Mediational analyses. A mediational analysis was conducted to investigate whether the attributions to change (turning over a new leaf) mediated the relationship between order and hypocrisy (Baron & Kenny, 1986). The ANOVA analysis above established that order affected the hypocrisy index. Next, hypocrisy was regressed on the change attribution. The change attribution was found to be a significant predictor of hypocrisy ($b = 0.46$, $p = .001$). Finally, hypocrisy was simultaneously regressed on the order manipulation and the change attribution. The change attribution significantly predicted hypocrisy ($b = -0.37$, $p = .021$). In addition, the order manipulation was no longer a significant predictor, ($b = -0.15$, $p = .324$). The Sobel (1982) test was conducted and results established that the reduction in the path from the order manipulation to spontaneous hypocrisy was significant when the change attribution was included in the regression equation ($z = -2.17$, $p = .029$). This suggested that attributions to change fully mediate the relationship between the order manipulation and judgments of hypocrisy (Baron & Kenny, 1986); that is, the mediational results suggested that order affected perceptions of change, which in turn, affected perceptions of hypocrisy (see Figure 1).

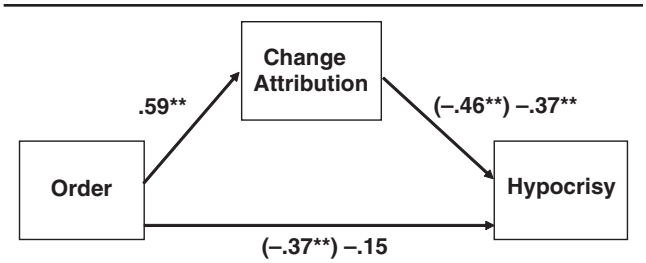

Figure 1 The association between the order of statement and behavior and judgments of hypocrisy, as fully mediated through the change attribution.

NOTE: Standardized betas are reported. Coefficients not in parentheses represent parameter estimates for a regression model containing both predictors.

**$p < .01$.

Discussion

The results of Study 3 replicated the effects of order from Studies 1 and 2; that is, hypocrisy judgments were greater in the conventional order, where the statement preceded the behavior, than in the reverse order. In addition, as in the previous studies, the effect of order did not generalize to negative trait judgments unrelated to hypocrisy. Thus, the findings were again consistent with the notion that hypocrisy is greatest when a statement establishes a personal standard and then an inconsistent behavior violates that standard. Furthermore, Study 3 provided insight into why order influences hypocrisy; that is, in the reverse order, individuals were more likely to believe that the target had changed. Most important, the attribution that the individual had changed fully mediated the effects of order on judgments of hypocrisy.

GENERAL DISCUSSION

Whereas previous research on hypocrisy focused on hypocrisy of the self (e.g., Batson et al., 1999; Stone et al.,

1997), the current investigation was the first to focus on the determinants of hypocrisy judgments of others. As such, this study examined the impact of order on the archetypical case of hypocrisy where a target's public statements are inconsistent with private behaviors. It was proposed that hypocrisy should be greater when the public statement precedes the inconsistent behavior as opposed to the reverse order. In support of this view, empirical evidence from three studies (a) established that the order in which the statement and behavior occur is a critical variable affecting judgments of hypocrisy (Studies 1-3), (b) ruled out the alternative that the order of normative valence was responsible rather than the statement/behavior order (Study 2), and (c) established that the reverse order (statement preceding behavior) attenuates judgments of hypocrisy because it provided an alternative attribution for the inconsistency, namely, that the inconsistency occurred as a result of dispositional change (Study 3). The empirical support for each of these points will be reviewed in turn.

The central finding of the investigation was that hypocrisy was greater when the statement preceded the behavior as opposed to the reverse order. In three studies, the order effect was shown to generalize across valences, applying when the statement was either normatively positive (Study 1 and 3) or negative (Study 2), and it generalized across topics, applying to both fitness (Study 1) and condom usage (Study 2 and 3).

One clear alternative explanation for the order effect was that it occurred as a result of the order of positive and negative information about the target as opposed to the order of statements and behaviors as we have proposed. Different mechanisms could underlie this valence alternative. For example, it could be that the most recent information provided the focus for participants' judgments, or it could be that the target was judged based on the second piece of information contrasting it away from the first. To rule out the valence alternative in general, Study 2 employed a normatively negative statement (i.e., against using condoms) and a positive behavior (i.e., actually using a condom). This shift in valence did not change the direction of the order effect, which again showed greater hypocrisy when the statement preceded the behavior. This finding was both inconsistent with the valence alternative and consistent with the importance of statement/behavior order.

Finally, the investigation turned to the issue of why the reverse order elicited less perception of hypocrisy than the conventional order. In particular, given that the inconsistency remains when the behavior precedes the statement, how is the inconsistency interpreted in a manner other than hypocrisy? Taking Study 1 as an example, when Pat acts like a couch potato for a week and subsequently makes a statement promoting healthier living, the inconsistency in this order could result from a sincere change in views. Thus, the reverse order seems to open up the possibility that inconsistency between the statement and behavior occurred because of a change in views. To the extent that the inconsistency is interpreted as dispositional change, this provides an alternative reason for the inconsistency, so this should mitigate against hypocrisy.

Study 3 directly measured change attributions to test their role as an explanation for the order effect. In the reverse order, when Mike had unprotected sex and then spoke in favor of using condoms, this inconsistency was more likely to be attributed to change than under the conventional order. Most critically, the impact of order on hypocrisy was fully mediated by the attribution of the inconsistency to change. Thus, Study 3 provided direct evidence that the reverse order is seen as less hypocritical specifically because it increases the possibility of attributing any inconsistency to dispositional change.

The current results show that the interpretation of the inconsistency between statements and behaviors depends critically on the order in which they occur. This suggests that in the context of inconsistencies, statements and behaviors are interpreted in different ways. Although the current investigation does not address this issue directly, it suggests that there may be an important asymmetry between statements and behavior information worth investigating in the future. In particular, one may wonder why the behavioral information was not as readily interpreted as reflecting a true change in dispositions as was the statement. This may be especially surprising in light of the fact that the behavior occurred in private, whereas the statement was made in public and private actions may be less likely to reflect impression management concerns. We speculate that observers may be more likely to infer dispositional change from statements than from behaviors because any given behavior may be a one-time occurrence that derives from a number of sources (e.g., situational pressures, habits, etc.), making it more difficult to make a clear determination that any given behavior signals intentional dispositional change. The isolated conflicting behavior seems inconsistent with the person's professed statement leading to hypocrisy as one salient explanation. Furthermore, one's proclaimed statements are typically more general and may be assumed to stem from more careful reflection than any given behavior. Thus, one possible implication of the current findings is that although behaviors can certainly be interpreted as reflecting dispositional change (e.g., Jones & Davis, 1965), statements may be more easily and readily interpreted in this way.

Order and Cognitive Dissonance

One of the most exciting aspects of research on hypocrisy of others is that it can draw on the long history

of dissonance investigations and in turn can generate new questions for dissonance research. For example, in the classic insufficient justification paradigm, pioneered by Festinger and Carlsmith (1959), the presence of a $20 payment provided sufficient justification to eliminate dissonance that would otherwise result from the inconsistency between experiencing a boring task and telling the next participant that the task was interesting. Similarly, hypocrisy should be reduced if sufficient justification is added to the examples used in the current investigation. If Pat, from Study 1, had just lost his father, this would provide a justification for sitting and eating for a week. We suspect that this would attenuate hypocrisy judgments in both orders because it provides an explanation for the inconsistent behavior. This is just one example of how research on hypocrisy of others can benefit from previous cognitive dissonance research.

The current research also suggests some interesting future directions for dissonance research. In the existing dissonance studies investigating hypocrisy, participants have made public statements in the present (e.g., videotaped safe sex message) and written down their inconsistent behaviors from the past (e.g., having unsafe sex; Stone et al., 1997). Typically, the statement precedes the behavior in terms of the person's consideration of it (see Aronson, Fried, & Stone, 1991, for the only exception). However, the behavior from the past precedes the statement in the present with respect to its actual temporal order of occurrence. In the current investigation, these two orders were intentionally confounded so that when the statement occurred before the behavior in time, it also came first in terms of the rater's consideration of it.[5] Perhaps participants in the dissonance research felt hypocrisy because their statement was made salient prior to the consideration of behavior (the order suggested herein to be important for hypocrisy) even though it actually occurred after it. Perhaps the experience of hypocrisy would be magnified further if both the occurrence and the consideration were placed in the same statement-preceding-behavior order. For example, if people were induced to make a public statement and then were induced to choose an inconsistent behavior, the hypocrisy (dissonance effect) might be even larger.

Currently, it is unclear whether hypocrisy of the self and hypocrisy of others operate in the same way regarding order. For example, Aronson et al. (1991) generated dissonance when both the temporal order and order of occurrence reflected the reverse ordering. However, they did not examine both orders to compare. It could be that if they had used the conventional ordering, the dissonance effect would be even larger. On the other hand, if order does not matter in the dissonance pattern, it would suggest that hypocrisy of the self is different from perceptions of others. Because dissonance research has yet to systematically investigate the impact of order on hypocrisy, this remains an open question. In future research, order should be manipulated in dissonance paradigms and hypocrisy of the self and others might be investigated in parallel based on identical scenarios.

Additional Variables That Might Affect Hypocrisy

Deviations from public statement/private behavior case. As the first investigation into hypocrisy of others, the current research focused on the impact of order on hypocrisy that involves a public statement and a private behavior. Although this describes the most archetypical case of hypocrisy, there are other pairs of inconsistent actions that are sometimes labeled as hypocrisy. For example, judgments of hypocrisy occur in cases where the statement and behavior are both public or both private or in cases of two inconsistent statements. In each case, we suspect that moving away from the archetypical case would decrease hypocrisy to the extent that the appearance of deception is decreased.

One deviation from the archetypical case occurs when the statement and behavior are both either public or private. Take for example the public/public case: A student makes a speech in front of his peers about eating healthier and then is seen for the next week in the dining hall eating burgers and fries in clear view of all his classmates. Similar to the current findings, we suspect that this would be more hypocritical than the reverse order, even though everything is in public. However, when the behavior is not "hidden," it may seem less hypocritical overall than when it occurs totally in private. In particular, a hidden behavior may lead to an attribution that the person is fully aware of his or her own inconsistency but is trying to deliberatively deceive others, which may make the hypocrisy more salient.

In the private/private case, consider a person who signs a private contract handed out at school that they will use condoms and then has unsafe sex. Again, it seems that this person would appear more hypocritical than someone who engaged in unsafe sex and then signed the private contract. Nevertheless, the private statement may make the person seem less hypocritical overall than a public one because the private statement would not be associated with a deliberate intent to deceive and thus is less likely to be viewed as hypocritical.

Finally, we come to the case of hypocrisy based on a pair of inconsistent statements. Here, a statement can replace a behavior and serve the same purpose, namely, violating the personal standard set by the first statement. For example, the behavior in Study 1 could be replaced with the statement, "I feel like being a couch potato this week." This case is still somewhat hypocritical but it clearly seems less hypocritical than the statement/behavior

case. As with the two deviations discussed above, this case appears to decrease hypocrisy because it decreases the appearance of deception; that is, the public/private and the statement/behavior distinctions each appear to play a role in enhancing hypocrisy. This may explain why many classic and contemporary cases of hypocrisy involve public statements and private behaviors. Future research is needed to test these predictions.

Target ambiguity and mitigating circumstances. Order is most likely to influence hypocrisy when the situation does not constrain hypocrisy to be high or low. For example, the reverse order mitigates hypocrisy when it suggests that the target's inconsistency occurred because the target's views sincerely changed. If no ambiguity or mitigating circumstances are present to allow for this attribution of change, this should eliminate the effect of order. For example, if participants were to learn the student leader in Study 1 made his comments solely to look good to others, the reverse order would no longer mitigate hypocrisy. On the other hand, similar to many examples of inconsistency, the scenarios used in the current investigation included ambiguity (e.g., no motivation for the behavior in Study 1, the time lag between statement and behavior) and mitigating circumstances (e.g., inebriation in Studies 2 and 3). This opened up the possibility of interpreting the target in different ways based on order. Finally, if there is an extreme amount of ambiguity or mitigating circumstance, order may fail to influence hypocrisy due to a floor effect. For example, imagine the student leader in Study 1 had eaten five full pizzas but had done so to raise money for the Make a Wish Foundation. This would likely serve as an extreme mitigating circumstance. In such a situation, order may not matter because observers would attribute the behavior to external causes and little hypocrisy would be seen in either order. These examples highlight the importance of exploring the role of ambiguity and mitigating circumstances in future research.

Perceiver's hedonic relevance. Although this investigation has focused on how target variables affect hypocrisy, certainly perceiver variables play a role as well. According to Jones and Davis (1965), perceivers often evaluate targets based on whether a target is promoting or undermining the perceiver's values and purposes. One example of this hedonic relevance occurs when a perceiver's political party either matches or mismatches the party of a political candidate. For example, Democratic Party candidate Senator John Kerry was accused of waffling on the issue of the war in Iraq during the 2004 presidential election. In terms of his behaviors, Kerry had voted to give the President the power to go to war with Iraq, but later during the campaign, Kerry's statements were critical of the war (James & Pearson, 2004). Democratic observers interpreted this inconsistency to suggest that Kerry had turned over a new leaf, that is, he had sincerely changed his views on Iraq. Democrats held this view despite the fact that Kerry changed his position a number of times in the context of different political climates (i.e., during the Democratic Party primary as opposed to the presidential election). Republicans, on the other hand, viewed Kerry as a hypocrite despite the fact that the events occurred in the reverse order (i.e., the vote preceding the statement) and the vote occurred in public, making it less deceptive. Cases such as this, which are full of ambiguity, are exactly the circumstances where personal biases are often found (e.g., Lord, Ross, & Lepper, 1979). The 2004 presidential election was viewed as one of the most divisive in recent memory. This is consistent with the notion that hedonic relevance is associated with increased correspondent inferences that produce more polarized evaluations of the target (Jones & Davis, 1965). Thus, future research should investigate hedonic relevance and hypocrisy. One reasonable hypothesis might be that the more one likes a target, the more likely one is to give the target the benefit of the doubt, particularly when the reverse order introduces ambiguity.

Additional variables. There are clearly additional variables beyond those discussed to this point that could influence judgments of hypocrisy. These include elements that were present in the current studies, such as a target being an authority figure, a behavior appearing to derive from self-interest, a statement relating to issues of morality, and a statement instructing others how to behave. Although the impact of these and other variables on hypocrisy is unknown, we suspect that each would magnify or reduce the overall perception of hypocrisy rather than affecting the order effect (although ceiling or floor effects on hypocrisy could certainly attenuate the impact of order). At a minimum, the current research suggests that the order effect is robust across several of these variables. Many of the classic and contemporary examples of hypocrites (e.g., Tartuffe and William Bennett) held positions that established them as role models. They were hypocrites for failing to live up to the standard of their positions in their behaviors. The current research shows that the order effect holds for these cases, where the target is an authority figure (Study 1), and generalizes to targets such as an ordinary student (Studies 2 and 3).

CONCLUSION

This first foray into hypocrisy of others set up a framework of variables that relate to hypocrisy. Two elements were presupposed as common to most instances of hypocrisy (i.e., a public statement and a private behavior that

are inconsistent). Within this setting, we established that the order of statements and behaviors was a critical variable contributing to judgments of hypocrisy. Finally, we demonstrated that when behavior preceded an inconsistent statement, this order produced less hypocrisy because it suggested that the target had experienced dispositional change. In this way, this investigation has established a number of factors that contribute to perceptions of hypocrisy in addition to suggesting numerous directions for future research. In the end, the current results suggest that it might be more accurate to refer to hypocrisy as "saying one thing and *then* doing another."

NOTES

1. A Google Web search in 2004 using the full phrase in quotes in each case indicated that the conventional order produced 2,292 hits, whereas the reverse order produced only 82 hits. Yahoo, Lycos, and MSN search engines yielded similar results.

2. In all three studies, both the spontaneous and the trait rating measures of hypocrisy produced an order effect in the same direction. The measures were always positively correlated and thus were always combined to form a hypocrisy index. However, the effect of order was always significant for at least one measure in isolation, although this varied by study.

3. Although hypocrisy research on dissonance has not teased out these two standards, both theory and empirical findings in the broader dissonance literature do distinguish between dissonance based primarily on normative as opposed to ideographic standards (Thibodeau & Aronson, 1992).

4. All aspects of the target materials used in Studies 1 through 3 are fictional, including names, characters, places, and incidents, and thus are the product of the authors' imagination. Any resemblance to actual events, locals or persons, living or dead, is entirely coincidental.

5. As noted earlier, this ordering was intended to prevent confusion on the part of participants and to allow the order of consideration to contribute to the strength of the overall order manipulation. It seems likely that the order of occurrence is more critical for hypocrisy of others because this is most clearly related to the attributions of change that mediate the order effects on hypocrisy. Future research is needed to validate this prediction, and it is likely to hold only under circumstances where participants do not confuse the order of consideration with the order of occurrence.

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