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## Reconstruing intolerance: abstract thinking reduces conservatives' prejudice against nonnormative groups.

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#### **Abstract**

Myrdal (1944) described the "American dilemma" as the conflict between abstract national values ("liberty and justice for all") and more concrete, everyday prejudices. We leveraged construal-level theory to empirically test Myrdal's proposition that construal level (abstract vs. concrete) can influence prejudice. We measured individual differences in construal level (Study 1) and manipulated construal level (Studies 2 and 3); across these three studies, we found that adopting an abstract mind-set heightened conservatives' tolerance for groups that are perceived as deviating from Judeo-Christian values (gay men, lesbians, Muslims, and atheists). Among participants who adopted a concrete mind-set, conservatives were less tolerant of these nonnormative groups than liberals were, but political orientation did not have a reliable effect on tolerance among participants who adopted an abstract mind-set. Attitudes toward racial out-groups and dominant groups (e.g., Whites, Christians) were unaffected by construal level. In Study 3, we found that the effect of abstract thinking on prejudice was mediated by an increase in concerns about fairness.

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