



Contents lists available at SciVerse ScienceDirect

## Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes

journal homepage: [www.elsevier.com/locate/obhdp](http://www.elsevier.com/locate/obhdp)

## The persuasive “power” of stigma?

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## ARTICLE INFO

## Article history:

Received 28 July 2010

Accepted 9 August 2011

Available online 1 September 2011

Accepted by Madan Pillutla

## Keywords:

Persuasion

Attitudes

Stigma

Interactions

Interracial relations

## ABSTRACT

We predicted that able-bodied individuals and White Americans would have a difficult time saying no to persuasive appeals offered by disabled individuals and Black Americans, due to their desire to make such interactions proceed smoothly. In two experiments, we show that members of stigmatized groups have a peculiar kind of persuasive “power” in face-to-face interactions with non-stigmatized individuals. In Experiment 1, wheelchair-bound confederates were more effective in publicly soliciting donations to a range of charities than confederates seated in a regular chair. In Experiment 2, Whites changed their private attitudes more following face-to-face appeals from Black than White confederates, an effect mediated by their increased efforts to appear agreeable by nodding and expressing agreement. This difference was eliminated when impression management concerns were minimized – when participants viewed the appeals on video.

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## Introduction

The admirable goal of increasing diversity in organizations has led, inevitably, to an increase in interactions between members of majority groups and members of historically underrepresented or stigmatized groups. Problematically, interactions between members of such groups are fraught with opportunities for things to go awry: stigmatized individuals must worry that non-stigmatized individuals hold prejudiced attitudes which can lead to discriminatory behavior, while their non-stigmatized counterparts worry about appearing prejudiced (Sommers & Norton, 2006; Vorauer, Main, & O’Connell, 1998). Indeed, a large body of research has documented non-stigmatized individuals’ concerns about doing something “wrong” or behaving inappropriately in such interactions (Richeson & Shelton, 2003; Shelton, 2003; Stephan & Stephan, 1985; Vorauer & Turpie, 2004). While these concerns too often serve as an excuse to avoid interactions with stigmatized individuals (Snyder, Kleck, Strenta, & Mentzer, 1979), research demonstrates that once “stuck” in situations in which their discrimination would be obvious – such as when the only bystander in view of a Black person in need of help – Whites can be more

likely to behave positively towards Blacks (Gaertner & Dovidio, 1986; Pearson, Dovidio, & Gaertner, 2009).

As a result, while members of majority groups are generally motivated to avoid interactions with members of stigmatized groups, desires to appear unbiased can lead members of majority groups to behave with excessive positivity and friendliness when such interactions do occur (Shelton, Richeson, Salvatore, & Trawalter, 2005). We propose – and the studies below demonstrate – that these impression management concerns can, ironically, afford stigmatized individuals persuasive “power” in face-to-face interactions.

Our prediction – that non-stigmatized individuals may be more persuaded by stigmatized individuals – stands in seeming contrast to a large body of research which has generally suggested that people’s ingroups have a stronger impact on their attitudes than outgroups (Cialdini & Goldstein, 2004; Mackie, Worth, & Asuncion, 1990). However, in contrast to studies of passive persuasion involving reading persuasive communications (Petty, Fleming, & White, 1999; White & Harkins, 1994; Wilder, 1990), group identities appear to play a different role in persuasion during active face-to-face interactions: People’s attitudes towards Black Americans and disability-relevant issues, for example, become more positive in the presence of Blacks and the disabled, respectively (Kleck, Ono, & Hastorf, 1966; Lowery, Hardin, & Sinclair, 2001). We suggest, however, that the impact of stigma on persuasion extends beyond specifically stigma-relevant issues. Research suggests that people exhibit a general tendency to try to make a good impression on unfamiliar others in face-to-face interactions, and such efforts

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with unfamiliar individuals – from strangers to members of different social groups – often take the form of greater impression management (Dunn, Biesanz, Human, & Finn, 2007; Frable, Blackstone, & Scherbaum, 1990; Norton, Sommers, Apfelbaum, Pura, & Ariely, 2006; Shelton, 2003; Shelton et al., 2005).

But how do these efforts to manage the impression one is making lead to persuasion? When individuals interact with a stigmatized target, we predicted that their heightened impression management concerns would be expressed in the form of more agreeable behaviors (such as nodding and expressing agreement) in an effort to communicate a desired impression (Baumeister, 1982; Leary & Kowalski, 1990). Previous research demonstrates that engaging in behaviors which *imply* a favorable attitude can lead to enhanced *actual* endorsement of that attitude (Albarracín & Wyer, 2000; Bem, 1972; Festinger & Carlsmith, 1959); for example, both moving one's head up and down while listening to persuasive arguments and being induced to smile by clenching a pen in one's teeth while perusing cartoons lead to more favorable evaluations (Briñol & Petty, 2003; Strack, Martin, & Stepper, 1988; Tom, Pettersen, Lau, Burton, & Cook, 1991; Wells & Petty, 1980).

The above reasoning therefore led to our two hypotheses. First, we predicted that efforts to make interactions proceed smoothly should lend stigmatized individuals persuasive “power” not just for stigma-relevant issues, but for any issue they espouse. Second, we predicted that the impact of stigma on persuasion would be mediated by members of majority groups' increased efforts to appear agreeable in interactions with members of stigmatized groups.

#### Overview

We conducted two experiments using two different stigmatized groups – disabled individuals and Black Americans. In a field experiment, confederates seated in wheelchairs or in regular chairs solicited donations to a range of charities, both stigma-relevant and irrelevant; we expected confederates seated in wheelchairs to be more effective (Experiment 1). In Experiment 2, we predicted that participants would engage in greater impression management with Black than White confederates in face-to-face interactions and would therefore be more persuaded by appeals from Black confederates; in addition, we assessed impression management behaviors – nodding and expressing agreement – in an effort to test whether these efforts mediated these persuasion effects. Finally, because our account holds that increased persuasion is driven by active impression management efforts, we expected that these effects of race on persuasion in face-to-face interactions would be eliminated when participants watched the same appeals on video.

Our investigation extends previous research documenting cases in which members of majority groups behave positively towards members of majority groups in face-to-face interactions. Dutton (1971), for example, showed that underdressed Black patrons were more likely to be admitted to a restaurant – in violation of the establishment's dress code – than underdressed Whites; similarly, Black and Indian door-to-door solicitors were more effective at inducing Whites to make charitable contributions than were White and Asian solicitors (Dutton, 1973; see also Dutton & Lake, 1973). First, we replicate results from some 40 years ago, examining whether the desire to appear unbiased spurs similar effects despite changes in intergroup relations in the intervening decades (Norton & Sommers, 2011). Second, we explore *when* the power of stigma is most likely to emerge – in face-to-face interactions, but not on video – offering a crucial moderator of these earlier findings. Third, we both propose and assess a potential mechanism underlying the impact of stigma: the active self-presentation efforts that such interactions engender. Finally, we explore whether the persuasive

power of stigma could extend beyond immediate face-to-face contexts; Experiment 2 examines whether appeals by members of stigmatized group leads to attitude change even when attitudes are reported in private after interactions have ended.

#### Experiment 1: charitable solicitations from individuals with disabilities

In a field experiment, participants were randomly assigned to interact with a White male confederate – seated either in a wheelchair or in a standard chair – who sold “awareness pins” for one of four charitable causes, and also offered to affix the pins to participants' clothing. One of the charitable causes was stigma-relevant (increased transportation options for the disabled), two were not stigma-relevant but plausible (donations to victims of the Myanmar cyclone or donations to poor Chinese people due to a rice shortage there), and the final cause was implausible (donations to middle-class Americans due to the rice shortage in China; see Appendix A for a description of the charities). The experiment thus had a 2 (confederate: wheelchair or standard chair) × 4 (issue: disabled transportation, Myanmar, rice shortage – China, or rice shortage – US) between-participants design.

We expected participants to be more likely to buy pins for the charities when the confederate was in a wheelchair versus in a standard chair, and also to be more likely to actually walk away wearing the pin affixed to their clothing. We expected these effects to emerge across all four charitable causes due to a general desire to make such interactions proceed smoothly.

#### Method

##### Participants and procedure

One hundred and one commuters (51 male,  $M_{age} = 32.9$ ,  $SD = 15.1$ ) were approached at a train station and were asked to take part in a short survey in exchange for \$3.

Two White male undergraduates served as confederates for the experiment. We trained the confederates to behave consistently whether they were seated in the wheelchair or in a standard chair. The first confederate – who was always standing – was responsible for recruiting participants into the experiment by approaching them in the station. This confederate made no mention of either the charitable causes or the second confederate until after participants had agreed to take part in the experiment, such that participants were unaware that they would be interacting with the second confederate when they agreed to participate. If participants agreed to take part in the experiment, the first confederate handed them a clipboard with a demographic survey. The first confederate then gave participants \$3, pointed to the second confederate, who was seated a short distance away, and directed them to take their clipboard to the second confederate to complete the experiment.

The second confederate – who was seated either in a wheelchair or in a standard chair – delivered one of the four scripts in Appendix A, explaining to participants that he was raising money and awareness for one of these four causes, and asked participants if they would buy a \$1 smiley-face pin which he referred to an “awareness” pin. Finally, the second confederate asked participants who had purchased the pin if he could help them affix it to their clothing.

##### Dependent variables

*Pin purchasing.* We assessed whether participants were willing to pay \$1 to acquire a small yellow smiley-face pin; the pin was identical across the four issues. We donated all proceeds to charities that supported each of the four causes.

**Pin wearing.** For those participants who purchased a pin, confederates first asked if they could affix the pin to the participants' clothing and noted whether participants agreed; for participants who refused, confederates noted whether participants affixed the pin themselves.

## Results

### Pin purchasing

Overall, some 79% of participants purchased a pin in the wheelchair condition, while only 58% did so in the no wheelchair condition,  $\beta = -.51, p < .03$  (Fig. 1). This pattern of results was similar in magnitude regardless of the specific charity; as a result, there was no effect of charity,  $\beta = .07, p > .77$ , and no interaction,  $\beta = -.17, p > .46$ . These results offer support for the general impact of stigma rather than impact specific to the stigma-relevant issue, transportation for the disabled. Indeed, this impact extended even to a somewhat implausible cause, donating money to middle class Americans due to a rice shortage in China.

### Pin wearing

Overall, some 28% of participants who purchased a pin wore the pin in the wheelchair condition; in contrast, just 4% did so in the no wheelchair condition,  $\beta = -1.26, p < .04$ . As with pin purchasing, there was no effect of charity,  $\beta = .58, p > .24$ , and no interaction,  $\beta = -.03, p > .96$ . Of the 28% who wore the pin in the wheelchair condition, 15% let the confederate pin it on, while 13% put it on themselves; in the no wheelchair condition, just one participant let the confederate put the pin on, and none put it on themselves.

## Discussion

Experiment 1 demonstrated that the demands of face-to-face interactions led participants to donate more of their money to buy pins from wheelchair-bound confederates, even when those pins signified awareness for stigma-irrelevant (or unrealistic) charities. In addition to increased donations, we also observed a more subtle effect of stigma on persuasion, such that participants were more likely to allow wheelchair-bound confederates to help them affix their pins; ironically, though stigma is associated with physical avoidance, participants were more likely to allow confederates in wheelchairs to touch them. These results provide evidence for the literal “stickiness” of this persuasion effect, in that participants were more likely to walk away with an awareness pin stuck to them when offered by a stigmatized individual.

Our account suggests that these changes in behavior are driven by the desire of majority group members to make interactions with members of majority groups proceed smoothly. It is possible, however, that it was not stigma in particular that led to greater effectiveness, but rather mere difference between our confederates and our participants. To offer support for the unique role of stigma, we conducted a follow-up experiment using a less-stigmatized difference. Two confederates (one male, one female) engaged in the same procedure as in Experiment 1, approaching commuters in a train station in the northeastern United States ( $N = 50$ ; 28 male,  $M_{age} = 21.2, SD = 7.8$ ) to sell pins to raise awareness of the cholera outbreak in Haiti. Confederates – blind to our hypotheses – alternated between an American and Canadian nationality, by saying “I’m collecting money to address the outbreak of cholera in Haiti. You’ve probably heard of this, right?” with an American accent or “I’m collecting money to address the outbreak of cholera in Haiti. You’ve probably heard of this, eh? You can probably tell I’m from Canada” with a Canadian accent. The Canadian nationality (88%) and American nationality (81%) were similarly effective,  $\chi^2(1) = .42, p > .51$ . In addition, and in contrast to the wheelchair condition in Experiment 1, not a single participant allowed our

confederates to help them affix their pin; just 11% of participants put the pin on themselves, and this did not vary by condition,  $\chi^2(1) = .23, p > .63$ . These results provide evidence for an important boundary condition on our effects: simply belonging to a *different* group does not appear to confer persuasive power.

## Experiment 2: face-to-face versus video appeals from black confederates

To test the generalizability of these results, in Experiment 2, we examined the persuasive power of a different stigmatized group: Black Americans. Additionally, we examined the mechanism underlying the persuasion effect by both manipulating and measuring impression management. According to our theoretical perspective, encounters with members of stigmatized groups should lead members of non-stigmatized groups to engage in impression management and be persuaded by appeals only with the pressure of face-to-face interactions, but not when removed from such situations (i.e., when viewing persuasive appeals on video). We assessed participants' impression management efforts in face-to-face interactions, which we defined as agreeable public behaviors such as nodding and expressing agreement. Importantly, whereas the impact of stigma was assessed via public behavior in Experiment 1, Experiment 2 tested our prediction that the impression management behaviors in which Whites engage while in the presence of Blacks can lead Whites to change not only their public behavior but also their private attitudes – as assessed *after* the interaction had ended.

Participants were assigned to interact with or watch a video of a Black or a White confederate. In all cases, confederates delivered arguments in favor of instituting comprehensive exams at their university (modeled after Petty et al., 1999). The experiment thus had a 2 (race of confederate: Black or White)  $\times$  2 (format: interaction or video) between-participants design. We expected participants to be more persuaded by Black versus White confederates when interacting face-to-face but not in the video condition. In addition, we anticipated that the predicted persuasion effect in face-to-face interactions would be mediated by the increased impression management efforts made by participants in interactions with Black confederates.

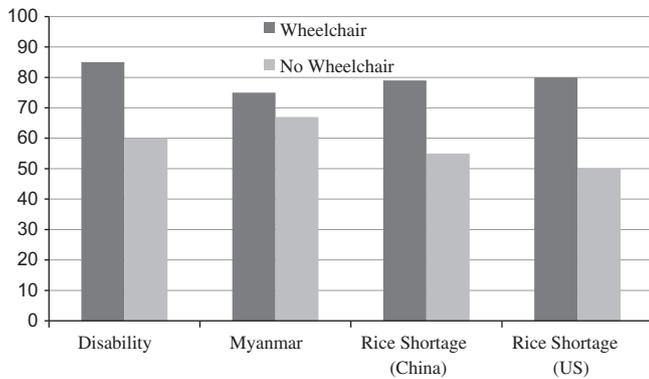
## Method

### Participants and procedure

One hundred and eight White undergraduates (57 females) drawn from a private university in the Northeast and a public university in the Southern United States participated in return for partial course credit or payment.<sup>2</sup> Four Black female and six White female undergraduates served as confederates for the experiment and were trained to deliver the arguments in the same standardized way across all interactions; confederates were blind to our hypotheses.

Participants assigned to the interaction condition were introduced to the confederate and told the two would be in an interaction in which one would play the role of “speaker” and the other “listener.” Participants were told that the speaker would be asked to tell the listener their opinion on whether comprehensive exams should be instituted at the university. The students ostensibly

<sup>2</sup> We examined whether university impacted our results by entering this variable into the 2 (race of source: Black or White)  $\times$  2 (format: interaction or video) ANOVA on our attitude measure. We observed only a main effect of university, such that participants were more persuaded overall at the Southern than the Northeastern University ( $p < .01$ ). Importantly, this variable did not interact with any other variables (all  $ps > .33$ ), and did not impact the critical race of confederate  $\times$  format interaction (which remained significant,  $p < .05$ ), so we do not report it further.



**Fig. 1.** Participants are more likely to buy a pin from confederates seated in wheelchairs than in standard chairs, across a range of charitable causes.

drew lots to determine their roles (the lottery was rigged and participants always drew the listener role). The experimenter told the confederate that she would have a few minutes to review a fact sheet regarding the issue and to think about her opinion before sharing it with the listener. After a few minutes, the confederate returned, sat down across from the participant and delivered a script in which she described her attitude in favor of comprehensive exams (Appendix B). The confederate left the room and participants completed the post-experimental survey as the “last part of the experiment” (so named to ensure that participants knew they would not see the confederate again) which assessed their support for comprehensive exams. Confederates also rated participants’ behavior during the interaction.

Participants in the video condition watched a video of a Black or White confederate delivering these same arguments. To create these videos, we recorded four of the same confederates used for the face-to-face interactions (two Black, two White) while they delivered the same script. After watching one of these four videos, participants completed the same post-experimental survey assessing their attitudes toward comprehensive exams.

#### Dependent variables

**Attitude index.** We used the same measures of attitudes toward comprehensive exams as Petty et al. (1999) in which participants rated their agreement with the institution of comprehensive exams on a scale from (1) *do not agree at all* to (11) *agree completely*, then indicated their feelings toward comprehensive exams on four 7-point semantic differential scales anchored with the words *good-bad*, *beneficial-harmful*, *wise-foolish*, and *favorable-unfavorable*. We created a composite attitude index (Cronbach’s  $\alpha = .94$ ).

**Impression management.** We assessed participants’ impression management efforts to appear agreeable in face-to-face interactions by examining confederates’ ratings of participants’ frequency of nodding, and frequency of expressing verbal agreement. Behaviors were rated on 3-point scales (0: *never*, 1: *occasionally*, 2: *frequently*). The items were correlated,  $r(52) = .33$ ,  $p < .02$ , and were summed to create a measure of total impression management.

#### Results

##### Attitudes

We submitted the composite attitude measure to a 2 (race of confederate: Black or White)  $\times$  2 (format: interaction or video) ANOVA. We observed a significant main effect of format, such that participants were more persuaded in face-to-face interactions ( $M = .15$ ,  $SD = .91$ ) than when watching on video ( $M = -.14$ ,  $SD = .87$ ),  $F(1, 104) = 4.73$ ,  $p < .04$ , and a marginally significant main

effect of confederate race, such that participants were more persuaded by Black ( $M = .15$ ,  $SD = .89$ ) than White confederates ( $M = -.12$ ,  $SD = .89$ ),  $F(1, 104) = 3.46$ ,  $p = .066$ . Most importantly, these main effects were qualified by the predicted significant interaction,  $F(1, 104) = 6.29$ ,  $p < .02$  (see Fig. 2). Participants were significantly more persuaded by Black ( $M = .59$ ,  $SD = .65$ ) than White ( $M = -.14$ ,  $SD = .95$ ) confederates in face-to-face interactions,  $t(50) = 3.06$ ,  $p < .01$ . In contrast, there was no difference in persuasion for participants who watched on video (White:  $M = -.09$ ,  $SD = .84$ ; Black:  $M = -.20$ ,  $SD = .91$ ),  $t(54) = .46$ ,  $p = .65$ .

#### Impression management

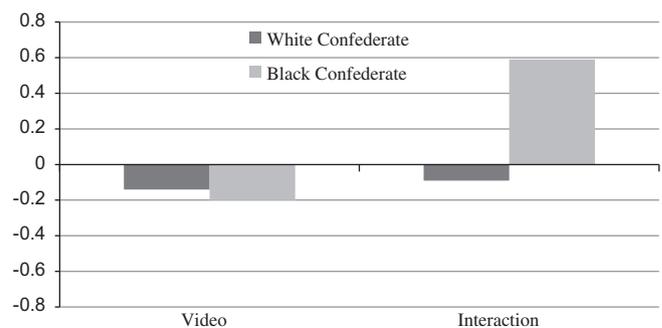
As predicted, participants expressed more agreeable behavior toward Black ( $M = 4.38$ ,  $SD = 1.07$ ) than White confederates ( $M = 3.55$ ,  $SD = .85$ ),  $t(50) = 3.12$ ,  $p < .01$ .

#### Mediational analysis

Our account suggests that interacting with Black (versus White) individuals leads White participants to engage in greater impression management, leading to greater persuasion. Using data from only the interaction condition, race of source significantly predicted attitudes,  $\beta = .40$ ,  $p < .01$ , and predicted the mediator, impression management,  $\beta = .40$ ,  $p < .01$ , while impression management in turn predicted positive attitudes toward exams,  $\beta = .43$ ,  $p < .01$ . When we entered impression management along with race of source into a regression predicting attitudes, race of source was no longer a significant predictor of attitudes,  $\beta = .27$ ,  $p = .055$ , while impression management remained a significant predictor,  $\beta = .32$ ,  $p < .03$ . We tested the significance of the mediation using the bias-corrected bootstrap method (Preacher & Hayes, 2004, 2008), and found that the indirect mediation model 95% CI [.0007, .2660] did not cross zero, demonstrating that impression management mediated the impact of race on persuasion in face-to-face interactions. While the fact that race of source remained marginally significant suggests that there may be additional behaviors – or additional mediators – than the specific impression management behaviors we measured that contribute to the persuasion effects we observe, these results offer support for our prediction that the impact of stigma on persuasion is related to impression management efforts.

#### Discussion

Extending our investigation to a different persuasion context and different stigmatized group, Experiment 2 showed that White participants were more persuaded by Black versus White confederates who delivered identical face-to-face appeals. Importantly, participants reported their attitudes in private, after the interaction had ended and the confederate left the room, suggesting that the



**Fig. 2.** White participants are more persuaded by Black confederates than by White confederates in face-to-face interactions, but not when viewing the confederates on video (Experiment 2).

differences in attitudes we observed are not merely due to public compliance. Consistent with our hypotheses, the effect of race on persuasion in face-to-face interactions was mediated by the agreeable behaviors displayed by Whites. In accordance with self-perception theory (Bem, 1972), behaving in a manner that suggested agreement with an issue – nodding one’s head – led to actual support for that issue. Interestingly, self-perception theory suggests that such effects are particularly likely to emerge when individuals are unaware that their behavior is being caused by the situation; while speculative, these results suggest that our White participants may be unaware of the impact of the confederate’s race on their own behavior.

Finally, and also as predicted, removing impression management demands by showing our Black and White confederates delivering arguments on video caused Black and White sources to be equally persuasive. Thus, using a strategy of converging evidence drawing on both moderation and mediation analyses (as recommended by Spencer, Zanna, & Fong, 2005), Experiment 2 demonstrates that the effect of stigma on persuasion stems at least in part from impression management concerns.

## General discussion

One of the definitional properties of higher status is the ability to exert influence on lower status others, and indeed previous research has shown just this – as with the greater persuasive impact of attractive people compared to unattractive individuals (Chaiken, 1979). The present experiments, however, demonstrate a novel and counterintuitive way in which status differences shape social interactions: stigmatized individuals can, ironically, have greater persuasive impact in face-to-face interactions due to the efforts of members of majority groups to make such interactions proceed smoothly. These results are particularly striking in that people are generally motivated *not* to align their attitudes with members of stigmatized groups (Pool, Wood, & Leck, 1998), a motivation which appears to be trumped by the impact of wanting interactions with members of such groups to go well.

In Experiment 1, confederates seated in wheelchairs were more effective in soliciting donations to charities than those same confederates seated in regular chairs, an effectiveness that extended beyond stigma-relevant issues (handicapped access) to entirely unrelated issues (farm relief). In Experiment 2, we replicated this basic face-to-face persuasion effect while examining responses to a different stigmatized group (Blacks) and a different issue (implementing comprehensive exams) – while showing that the impact of stigma extended beyond public behavior to private attitude change. We also identified a critical boundary condition in Experiment 2, eliminating the effect of stigma on persuasion by exposing participants to the same confederates making the same arguments on video, removing the necessity of impression management that characterizes face-to-face interactions. Mediation analyses confirmed that the effect of race on persuasion stemmed from these impression management efforts: When participants interacted with a Black confederate, they were more likely to engage in agreeable behaviors, which in turn made them more susceptible to the Black confederate’s persuasive appeal.

Experiment 2 demonstrates when the power of stigma is most likely to emerge – in face-to-face interactions, but not on video. Related to the notion of when the power of stigma is most likely to emerge, other research has explored the impact of race in non-interpersonal contexts such as reviewing personality profiles or job applications (Carver, Glass, & Katz, 1978; Dienstbier, 1970; Jussim, Coleman, & Lerch, 1987) and reading persuasive communications in which race is indicated by photographs (Petty et al., 1999; White & Harkins, 1994; Wilder, 1990). We show that the nature of

the charity makes little difference in donation rates in Experiment 1; previous research (Petty et al., 1999) has suggested that the effect of race on persuasion depends critically on whether the arguments offered by that source are of good quality (somewhat akin to our real charities) or poor quality (akin to our implausible charity). We suggest that this seeming discrepancy can be resolved by considering the moderator we identified in Experiment 2: the medium. Our results show that the impact of stigma is crucially dependent on the medium; indeed, had we conducted Experiment 2 using only video, we would have concluded that Black and White sources were equal in persuasive impact. While we can only speculate due to our lack of conditions directly mirroring those of Petty et al. (1999), we suggest that the self-presentational demands of face-to-face interactions may make members of stigmatized groups more persuasive whether presenting weak or strong arguments – such that *any* argument might prove persuasive in such contexts. More broadly, the present research highlights the importance of understanding the role that processes unique to real, face-to-face encounters play in shaping behavior toward stigmatized individuals (Hebl & Dovidio, 2005; Shelton & Richeson, 2006); future research is clearly needed to offer a comprehensive picture of the impact of stigma across different media.

Our “Canadian accent” follow-up experiment offers support for our contention that persuasive power should be limited to stigmatized groups against whom discrimination is proscribed, leading members of majority groups to attempt to make such interactions go well. While disabled individuals and Black Americans clearly fall in this category, research suggests that members of other minority groups are not seen as similarly deserving of respect (e.g., the obese; Crandall, Eshleman, and O’Brien 2002). Indeed, in Dutton (1973), Whites were more likely to donate to Black and Indian solicitors than to White solicitors, but *least* likely to give to Asian solicitors – a pattern of behavior directly tied to Whites’ perception that Asians were not the victims of discrimination. To the extent that people do not perceive a minority group as stigmatized, they are likely less concerned about ensuring that interactions with members of that group proceed smoothly; as a result, we would not expect the persuasive power of stigma to emerge. Indeed, consider the case in which a Black individual is the recipient of a persuasive communication from a White individual: research demonstrates that in contrast to Whites – whose primary goal in interracial interactions is to be liked – Blacks’ primary goal is to be respected (Bergsieker, Shelton, & Richeson, 2010). To the extent that Blacks’ different goal leads to different behavior – perhaps a *lack* of head-nodding in order to indicate independence – we would not expect Whites to have the same persuasive influence.

In addition, it is likely that chronically-held motivations regarding race moderate the impact of stigma on persuasion. In particular, future research should explore the role of both internal motivations to be unprejudiced as well as external motivations to appear unprejudiced (e.g., Dunton & Fazio, 1997; Plant & Devine, 1998). Because our account holds that it is the desire of members of majority groups to appear unprejudiced that motivates their efforts to smooth over interactions with members of stigmatized groups, we would expect more externally-directed motivations – desires to appear unprejudiced to others, such as one’s stigmatized interaction partner – to predict the extent to which the persuasive power of stigma emerges. Indeed, recent research suggests that Whites who are motivated to avoid prejudice for external reasons are more likely to experience increased anxiety about their ability to control their prejudice (Butz & Plant, 2009) – precisely the kind of anxiety that we suggest motivates Whites to engage in attempts to make interactions proceed smoothly. At the same time, internal motivations to be unprejudiced also play a unique role in shaping intergroup attitudes and interactions (e.g., Devine, Plant, Amodio, Harmon-Jones, & Vance, 2002); again, future research is needed

to understand the role of individual differences in motivation in the impact of stigma on persuasion.

Our results suggest that stigmatized individuals may have persuasive “power” in some social interactions. We hasten to add, however, that countless studies have demonstrated the negative impact of bias against members of stigmatized groups (Fiske, 1998; Major & O'Brien, 2005), and of course we do not intend to argue that being a member of a stigmatized group is generally desirable. Indeed, the discomfort that Whites experience when attempting to make intergroup interactions proceed smoothly may simply constitute yet another problem for members of stigmatized groups to manage. In addition, overly positive behavior or evaluations from Whites can lead Blacks to devalue that praise due to their suspicion that it is based on their race, rather than their qualifications (Schneider, Major, Luhtanen, & Crocker, 1996). Finally, Whites who nod and express agreement in interracial interactions may continue to send off negative signals through less controlled channels such as their posture and facial expressions (Apfelbaum, Sommers, & Norton, 2008; Dovidio, Kawakami, & Gaertner, 2002; Word, Zanna, & Cooper, 1974), further increasing the discomfort of their Black counterparts.

Finally, our research speaks to the critical role of the opportunity for exit from persuasive appeals. For example, imagine that a team that is marketing resort timeshares must first approach potential clients and invite them to a sales pitch meeting, and then provide a compelling persuasive appeal to individuals who agree to attend the meeting. At the initial opening, stigmatized group members would be disadvantaged in recruiting clients because of the tendency to avoid such interactions when exit is easy (Snyder et al., 1979). Yet, once potential clients have agreed to sit through the sales pitch, thereby making exit difficult, stigmatized group members may actually have a leg up in closing the sale, as long as this appeal occurs in a face-to-face context that activates impression motivation and provides an opportunity for impression construction. In such contexts, our results suggest that the persuasive effect of stigma may be remarkably powerful: Participants in Experiment 1 were fully seven times more likely to walk away wearing charity awareness pins if the pitch for the charity came from a member of a stigmatized group. Similarly, while managers might be motivated to avoid meetings with employees who are members of stigmatized groups, such employees may be particularly likely to elicit positive feedback on their proposals if those meetings occur. Thus, our research underscores the potent, but complex, impact of stigma in persuasion and social life more broadly.

## Acknowledgments

The authors thank Jamie Barden, John Deighton, Rohit Deshpandé, Robyn Mallett, Jolie Martin, Leif Nelson, Todd Rogers, Nicole Shelton, and Sam Sommers for their helpful comments, and Mika Chance, Heather Dotzler, Julie Duncan, Rebecca Dyer, Cecilia Ekperi, Daniel Liss, Brian Lucas, James McGee, Beth Mela, Katherine Mims, Yuqing Ella Qiu, Dean Scaduto, Melissa Shields, and Ashley Witt for their assistance.

## Confederate scripts used in Experiment 1

### Disability

As you may know, there are some, but not many, transportation options for physically disabled people. In addition, the options that do exist are sometimes problematic such as the big gap between the platform and the train which can be difficult for folks in wheelchairs. To fix problems like this, we need money. To get money, we

need to raise awareness. These pins are transportation options for the disabled awareness pins. They only cost \$1. Would you like to buy one? Buying and wearing one generates money and raises awareness at the same time. You are also free to donate as much money as you'd like to the cause. All proceeds will go to the National Council for Support of Disability Issues which is a grass roots organization known to use funds appropriately.

### Myanmar

As you may know, the cyclone that just hit Myanmar is a problem. The country needs aid. To get aid to the country, we need money. And to get money, we need to raise awareness. These pins are Myanmar awareness pins. They only cost \$1. Would you like to buy one? Buying and wearing one generates money and raises awareness at the same time. You are also free to donate as much money as you'd like to the cause. All proceeds will go to the Burma Relief Foundation which reportedly has been successful so far in getting relief to those people in need.

### Rice shortage – China

As you may know, the rice shortage originating in places like China from water shortages is a problem. The poor people in this country need aid. To get aid to the countries, we need money. And to get money, we need to raise awareness. These pins are rice shortage awareness pins. They only cost \$1. Would you like to buy one? Buying and wearing one generates money and raises awareness at the same time. You are also free to donate as much money as you'd like to the cause. All proceeds will go to the World Food Bank so they can help keep rice in the countries that need it or defray cost to countries like Haiti who depend on rice as a meal staple. This organization is reported to use funds appropriately.

### Rice shortage – US

As you may know, the rice shortage originating in places like China from water shortages is a problem. The middle class people in America need to be buffered from this problem. States in the Midwest are particularly affected by this shortage. To ensure the cost of rice stays low for middle-class Americans, we need money. And to get money, we need to raise awareness. These pins are rice shortage awareness pins. They only cost \$1. Would you like to buy one? Buying and wearing one generates money and raises awareness at the same time. You are also free to donate as much money as you'd like to the cause. All the proceeds will be given to an organization called Gleaners which is a food bank in the Midwest which has been reported to use funds appropriately.

## Confederate scripts used in Experiment 2

### Introduction preceding arguments

Hey. Ok, so I guess I'm just supposed to tell you what I think about this proposal to start giving fourth-years comprehensive exams. Umm... I've heard a little about this and I actually do have a pretty strong opinion about it, especially after reading the fact sheet. I really think [university] should institute comprehensive exams.

### Arguments

(Scan sheet) Ummm... Oh, one of the points that I really liked was, um, that [competing university] recently started using the comprehensive exams and they found, that um... (look at sheet)

grades went up like a (glance at sheet) 31% since then, where as other schools that don't have the exam only had like (glance at sheet) an 8% increase in grades.

(Scan sheet) Ummm... Another cool thing to keep in mind is how, um, a lot of schools who have started this comprehensive exam thing have eliminated finals for fourth-years in their final semester. The idea is, uh, that this will give students time to review core requirements for their major in order to pass comprehensive exam.

(Scan sheet) Aahhhh... Let's see, one of the statistics shows that you would be more likely to get into grad school if [university] did this. Um, it said how [competing university], for example, really likes to see undergrads who have passed these comprehensive exams.

(Scan sheet) Humm, okay well, there are statistics that show that alumni donations have increased after implementing these exams, showing that alumni are really pushing for colleges to use this higher standard of testing. So, not only could [university] graduates probably really benefit from these tests but, um, the school itself is more likely to get more money from alumni if they start it.

(Pause and look at sheet) Aaahhh... Oh here's an interesting fact: employers are more likely to offer higher starting salaries for, um, people who graduate from schools with the comprehensive exams. The average starting salary is something like \$4000 more than if you don't take the exam. Uh, along the same lines, the chances of landing a good job are 55% greater. So, it seems pretty clear to me that [university] should start having students take comprehensive exams.

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