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Interpretation of Interaction: Responsiveness to Verbal and Nonverbal Cues

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> Members of a dominant and of a dominated group often live in distinct worlds.
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> **—Leyens, Demoulin, Désert, Vaes, and Philippot (2002, p. 138)**

One of the common outcomes of interactions involving stigmatized and nonstigmatized individuals (e.g., nonobese and obese individuals) and/or dominant and nondominant groups (e.g., White and Black interactants) is for the participants to emerge with very divergent experiences and perceptions of themselves, their partners, and the interaction. As the opening quote suggests, these divergent interpretations may be the basis for the different social realities, or the "distinct worlds," that members of the different groups tend to experience, live in, and maintain. This chapter explores these different realities by discussing specific processes that create them and the ways in which these distinct worlds are reinforced.

Mixed interactions, involving members of dominant and nondominant or members of nonstigmatized and stigmatized groups, are highly susceptible to misunderstandings because social norms of egalitarian treatment may only partially mask cues of aversion and prejudice that commonly characterize intergroup orientations. However, mismatches between the verbal and nonverbal behavior expressed by members of nonstigmatized groups may also result from processes not reflecting the feelings of antipathy that typically characterize prejudice. Whereas other chapters in this volume (see Shelton, Dovidio, Hebl, & Richeson's chapter) focus on prejudice as an important determinant of mismatches in verbal and nonverbal displays of members of dominant groups, the present chapter examines factors other than prejudice that contribute to mismatches between the verbal and nonverbal behaviors of members of dominant or nonstigmatized groups in mixed interaction and influences that systematically shape the responses of members of nondominant or stigmatized groups. The combination of different forces influencing the expressions of verbal and nonverbal behaviors and their interpretation often lead mixed interactions astray.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROBLEM AND THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Communication is a complex phenomenon that involves factors associated with the sender (e.g., communication skill, temporary affective states, intentions), the message (e.g., the style of delivery, content, and communication channels), and the recipient (e.g., expectations, affective states). Communication also involves relational factors (e.g., intragroup or intergroup contexts) and responses contingent on interpretations of the other person's behavior (Patterson, 1995). Given such complexities, there are many channels through which intergroup misunderstandings can develop. For instance, messages that are intended one way by the sender may be interpreted another way by those who receive the message.

Take for example a statement made by U.S. Senator Joe Biden about Senator Barack Obama, a popular Black candidate in the 2008 Democratic primary

elections. Senator Biden commented, "I mean, you got the first mainstream African-American who is articulate and bright and clean and a nice-looking guy," he said. "I mean, that's a storybook, man" (Joyner, 2007). As soon as this quote was reported, a variety of accusations of racism erupted, expressed vociferously by many Black leaders. One focus of these accusations was that the phrase "articulate and bright and clean" indicated the operation, and perhaps endorsement by Senator Biden, of traditional racial stereotypes of Blacks as uneducated, unintelligent, and dirty—just the opposite of the words Senator Biden uttered. Soon after that, Senator Biden issued an apology, saying: "I deeply regret any offense my remark in the New York Observer might have caused anyone. That was not my intent and I expressed that to Senator Obama" (Thai & Barrett, 2007). This incident illustrates how the meaning of a message can be interpreted quite differently—apparently oppositely in this case—by a speaker and an audience.

Communication between members of different groups is particularly difficult and likely to arouse misunderstandings for several possible reasons. For instance, speakers may be aware of only some of their motives (their conscious intentions) and be insensitive to other (their unconscious) motivations that can also shape their behavior. In contrast, audiences do not have access to a speaker's intentions, only to the message itself. The interpretation of this message is guided by the audience's expectations and previous experiences, not simply associated with this speaker but with other members of the speaker's group. That is, whereas interactions between two people from the same group are likely to be experienced by both as an interpersonal exchange, reflecting mutual individuated responses to each other, communication across group boundaries is generally experienced as an intergroup exchange, in which the interactants are conceived to some extent as representatives of their group.

In the example of the comments about Senator Obama, Senator Biden's message was interpreted in the context of an extended history of racism in the United States (see the chapter in this volume by Jones, Engleman, Turner, & Campbell). In face-to-face interactions, the nonverbal cues across different channels that accompany the verbal message are a particularly salient aspect of the communication context. We propose that, first, a variety of influences in addition to prejudice are likely to produce mismatches between verbal and nonverbal behavior in mixed interactions and, second, the differential sensitivity of senders and recipients to mismatched messages contributes systematically to intergroup misunderstandings.

In particular, in this chapter, we focus on how the additional complexities associated with mixed interactions can shape different perceptions and understandings of the same exchange by members of stigmatized groups. These biases associated with different group realities can operate in ways that reinforce "distinct worlds" for stigmatizers and targets. In the next section we explore factors other than prejudice that can contribute to mismatches in the behavior of members of dominant or nonstigmatized groups in mixed interaction; in the section after that, we describe processes that systematically influence how members of nondominant and stigmatized groups interpret these mismatches, often in ways that further contribute to misunderstandings. This literature reinforces the central point of the example we presented at the beginning of the chapter—the message intended to be communicated and its interpretation are often far from the same.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND RESEARCH SUPPORT: MISMATCHES AND THEIR INTERPRETATION

In mixed interactions, communicative behaviors are expressed through a variety of channels, including verbal content, facial expressions, and body posture. In this chapter, we propose that it is useful to think about mismatches as originating from two sets of behaviors. The first involves verbal behaviors or a combination of what we and others have referred to as overt behaviors, explicit measures, and/or formal types of behavior (Hebl, Foster, Mannix, & Dovidio, 2002). The second set involves nonverbal behaviors, or more implicit and subtle measures, and interpersonal types of behavior (Hebl et al., 2002). The differences between these sets of behaviors may not always be so clear. For instance, some nonverbal behaviors (e.g., aggressively pushing another) can be considered quite overt and explicit, whereas some verbal behaviors (e.g., asking fewer questions and giving shortened responses) can be considered more subtle interpersonal behaviors. Yet, we maintain the distinction between verbal and nonverbal in this chapter because they generally divide the categories of explicit and implicit responses that are important in mixed interactions. Although mismatches in the verbal and nonverbal behaviors may occur among members of stigmatized groups, our focus is on the mismatches of members of nonstigmatized groups in mixed interactions.

MISMATCHES ASSOCIATED WITH THE STIGMATIZER'S BEHAVIORS

There are a number of factors that relate to mismatches between a stigmatizer's explicit/verbal/formal behaviors and that same person's implicit/nonverbal/interpersonal behaviors. The chapter by Shelton et al. earlier in this volume emphasized the role of prejudice. For instance, stigmatizers who are aware of their negative biases may feign positive explicit responses toward targets to appear in a socially desirable or politically correct manner; hence, they may alter their explicit responses in a positively enhanced way (see Crandall & Eshleman, 2003; Gaertner & Dovidio, 1986). Their "true" negative attitudes may be conveyed through nonverbal "leakage." Similarly, members of dominant or nonstigmatized groups who believe that they are not prejudiced but who have unconscious negative attitudes will likely show a mismatch in their behaviors, with verbal behaviors, which are overt and more controllable, being more positive than nonverbal behaviors, which are more spontaneous and less controllable (Dovidio, Kawakami, & Gaertner, 2002; Dovidio et al., 1997).

It is important to further recognize, though, that situational factors can moderate the extent to which these types of mismatches occur. We briefly identify two aspects of situations that moderate mismatches by influencing the degree to which bias is explicitly expressed, situational constraint and cognitive demand.

Whereas more situational constraint typically creates larger mismatches between explicit/verbal/formal behaviors and implicit/nonverbal/interpersonal behaviors, greater cognitive demand tends to reduce these mismatches.

The explicit behavior of stigmatizers may be heavily guided by the extent to which certain situations are constrained. For instance, when situational constraints clearly define appropriate behavior and any deviation could readily be interpreted as bias, members of nonstigmatized groups often choose to act in nondiscriminatory ways in mixed interactions. Under these circumstances, in mixed interactions members of nonstigmatized groups appear friendly, egalitarian, and unbiased in their explicit, more controllable behaviors, but their underlying negative feelings are still being conveyed through nonverbal and subtle behaviors (see Shelton et al.'s chapter). However, when the situation is less constrained and the actions of the stigmatizers can be justified in many different ways, this mismatch between controllable, overt actions and negative feelings associated with stigmatization may be reduced. In these situations stigmatizers' overt behaviors will reflect their stigmatized attitudes, as well as their nonverbal behaviors. For instance, in a study by Snyder, Kleck, Strenta, and Mentzer (1979), nondisabled individuals were asked whether they wanted to watch a movie playing in a room with a disabled individual or a room by themselves. When told the exact same movie was playing, stigmatizers chose to watch the movie with the disabled individual. However, when stigmatizers were told that different movies were playing in the two different rooms, providing an opportunity to justify their avoidance of the stigmatized person on the basis of their movie preference, they consistently chose to watch the movie that was playing in the room opposite from the disabled individual.

Even when situational constraints are strong, the mismatches that typically occur between overt (e.g., verbal) and subtle (e.g. nonverbal) behaviors can be reduced by demands in the situation that erode people's cognitive resources for controlling explicit behavior. Because cognitive demands reduce the resources stigmatizers need to control their behavior to appear unbiased, stigmatizers' explicit and implicit behaviors will tend to show greater correspondence—both will reflect the negativity of stigmatization.

A number of studies have shown that many stigmatizers begin to display an increase in prejudice and discrimination when they are given high cognitive load (e.g., with tasks requiring individuals to divide their attention between multiple tasks or goals; Sweller, 1988). Thus, asking stigmatizers to evaluate and/or interact with intergroup members while also asking stigmatizers to engage in complex cognitive tasks often makes the display of their genuine attitudes more likely or increases cognitive errors as they work to suppress their biases. As Gilbert and Hixon (1991) have shown, once stereotypes have been activated, cognitive load increases the likelihood of the application (i.e., use) of those stereotypes.

Whereas the research on prejudice has focused on mismatches in which verbal responses are more positive than nonverbal behaviors (which more directly reflect one's "genuine" attitude; see Shelton et al.'s chapter), mismatches may also occur in mixed interactions for people who are unbiased in their attitudes toward members of socially stigmatized groups. In particular, there are times when members of nonstigmatized groups have truly positive intentions but may not have experience in mixed

interactions or are insufficiently skilled at interacting with members of a certain out-group. In these cases, these people may show mismatches in their behavior as they try to convey their favorable intentions but also display behaviors indicating anxiety and, potentially, aversion. Research by Plant (2004), for instance, has found that egal-itarian non-Black individuals who are afraid of appearing prejudiced actually feel the most discomfort in mixed interactions. Furthermore, it is the lack of previous positive experiences with outgroup members that is thought to be responsible for the negative expectancies that non-Black individuals often have (Plant & Devine, 2003).

A number of studies have also shown that stigmatizers who believe they are potentially going to be viewed along a prejudicial dimension often report feeling a great deal of anxiety—they do not want to appear prejudiced (Dovidio & Gaertner, 2004; Plant, 2004; Richeson & Shelton, 2003; Richeson & Trawalter, 2005). This anxiety may result in stigmatizers actually appearing more prejudiced than they really are. For instance, Leyens, Demoulin, Désert, Vaes, and Phillipot (2002) found that, when instructed to be "color-blind" rather than "color-conscious," White students in Belgium not only experienced greater anxiety but also had more difficulty communicating their emotions facially and appeared less friendly when they posed emotions for a Black photographer. Leyens et al. proposed that the uneasiness associated with inhibiting biased responses in the color-blind condi-tion led even participants who typically do not express high levels of prejudice toward Blacks to appear less open and less friendly with a Black person. Similarly, Shelton (2003) demonstrated that Whites who were instructed to try not to be prej-udiced during an interracial interaction reported experiencing more anxiety com-pared to those who were not given these instructions. This anxiety may very well interfere with effective communication and contribute to intergroup misunder-standings. Finally, Vorauer and Turpie (2004) also found that evaluative concerns lead individuals who typically had favorable responses toward outgroup members to "choke" or exhibit prejudicial responses.

The sum of the stigmatizers' behaviors, both explicit and implicit, paints at least two overall pictures of the stigmatizers. The first view—the less rose-colored view—portrays members of nonstigmatized groups as being negatively biased against members of stigmatized groups but are constrained externally by social norms and context or internally by personal standards from expressing these biases openly or to even admitting these biases. Although these people may limit their displays of biases overtly and formally, their underlying negativity "leaks out" in more subtle ways, often nonverbally in mixed interaction. An alternative, more rose-colored view, suggests that members of nonstigmatized groups may have good intentions and may put forth good-faith efforts. They want to be nonprejudiced and they try to act accordingly. However, because of factors such as not being well attuned to their verbal-nonverbal mismatches, being insufficiently skilled in mixed interactions, hav-ing large pressures to appear egalitarian, and being under cognitive loads or having anxiety, they simply fail in translating their intentions into a consistent behavioral response. They may emit negativity in their nonverbal behaviors, repeatedly have awkward moments in which they behave in the very way they tried so hard to avoid (see Hebl, Tickle, & Heatherton, 2000), or in some other way demonstrating an inconsistency that can be perceived as reflecting prejudice and discrimination.

MISMATCHES AND TARGETS' ATTRIBUTIONS

From the perspective of members of stigmatized groups, general expectations of being stigmatized, distrust of potential stigmatizers, and ambiguity of action can all contribute to negative attributions about the behaviors of members of nonstigmatized groups. For example, Vorauer and Kumhyr (2001) demonstrated that stigmatized targets are particularly vigilant for negative nonverbal behaviors because they may be interpreted as truly signifying biases held by stigmatizers. Thus, these targets may be attuned to detect mismatches between stigmatizers' verbal and nonverbal behaviors generally and weigh the negative cues more heavily than the positive cues.

These negative attributions, in turn, can lead to negative reactions among members of stigmatized groups that can then be interpreted by members of nonstigmatized groups as negative orientations toward them in mixed interactions. Attunement to mismatches and greater weight given to negative information may lead to heightened anxiety on the part of members of stigmatized or nondominant groups in mixed interaction. That is, if they are constantly being vigilant and mindful as a way of coping with potential prejudice, members of stigmatized groups may show high levels of anxiety and arousal (Hyers & Swim, 1998). Consistent with this possibility, Tropp (2003) demonstrated that ethnic minorities who had reason to believe their White interaction partners were prejudiced against their group experienced considerable anxiety in anticipation of the interaction. Also, Shelton (2003) showed that Blacks who were led to believe that their interaction partners might be prejudiced, compared to those not given this information, displayed greater levels of their own negative nonverbal behaviors associated with anxiety (fidgeting) during the interaction. This resulting set of negative nonverbal behaviors that emerges on the part of targets may reinforce the status quo of stigmatizer–target misunderstandings. Thus, miscommunication and misunderstanding can initiate a spiral of negative relations between members of different groups.

Both situational and individual differences may moderate the attributions that members of stigmatized groups make when encountering mismatches in others' behaviors. In terms of situational influences, this defensive bias in attribution may be particularly likely to occur in contexts that are attributionally ambiguous (Crocker & Major, 1994). Daily encounters with potential discrimination may lead ethnic minorities to interpretations that confirm and reconfirm that prejudice exists and to label ambiguous behaviors as discriminatory (Jones et al., this volume; Operario & Fiske, 2001; Sellers & Shelton, 2003).

With respect to individual differences in attributions among members of stigmatized groups, the attitudes of nondominant group members toward the dominant group often have a strong reactive component (Monteith & Spicer, 2000; Livingston, 2002). Shelton, Richeson, and Salvatore (2005) found that the more targets held chronic prejudiced perceptions of Whites or were led in a particular situation to expect prejudice from Whites, the more negative experiences that they reported during interethnic interactions.

Attributions shaped by chronic stigmatization may also be guided by metastereotypes, which refer to a target's beliefs about the stereotypes that stigmatizers

hold about the target and the target's group (Vorauer, Main, & O'Connell, 1998; see also Yzerbyt, Judd, & Muller, this volume). Such beliefs are different from stereotypes (i.e., members of stigmatized groups' direct characterization of members of nonstigmatized group); instead, metastereotypes are the stereotypes that the targets believe others hold toward them. The implications for such beliefs on the verbal and formal aspects of interactions are immense and result in negative outcomes for both the target and the stigmatizer. Vorauer et al. (1998) have shown that metastereotypes are associated with the target's lower anticipated enjoyment of an interaction with potential stigmatizers and greater anticipated negative emotion during this interaction. If targets believe that certain members of nonstigmatized groups hold negative beliefs about the target's group, they may avoid interactions with these perceived stigmatizers or, in anticipation of being rejected, preemptively display negative behaviors toward members of nonstigmatized groups.

Similar to feelings of chronic stigmatization, some targets experience rejection sensitivity, or expectancies that they will be rejected because of their membership status (Mendoza-Denton, Purdie, Downey, & Davis, 2002). Individual differences in rejection sensitivity has been traditionally measured by asking targets to indicate their expectations about the extent to which others' desires to help, like, and interact with targets are influenced by the membership status. The measure also focuses on the levels of anxiety and concern in intergroup interactions experienced by members of stigmatized groups. Those with such expectations may be predisposed to more quickly perceive and intensely react to such rejection. This rejection, in turn, can lead targets to feel insecure and contemplate the validity of their own achievements, and can also negatively influence intergroup interactions (Mendoza-Denton, Pietrzak, & Downey, 2008).

Although rejection sensitivity has mostly been examined in the context of Black targets' experiences with White interactants, this construct is highly relevant for other types of intergroup and mixed interactions. For instance, individual differences in which members of stigmatized groups expect to be stereotyped by others have been described in terms of stigma consciousness (Pinel, 1999). Such targets do not necessarily internalize the stereotypes but they may have very strong implications for intergroup outcomes. Targets who are high in stigma consciousness are more likely to avoid stereotype-relevant situations, and are more likely to perceive and find evidence for prejudice and discrimination directed toward them and their groups. Obviously, overperceiving reflections of prejudice can have harsh consequences for intergroup interactions, leading stigmatizers and targets to distrust and dislike each other.

Analogous to our earlier argument that mismatches in the behaviors of members of dominant and nonstigmatized groups can occur without prejudice, biases in the attributions of members of nondominant and stigmatized groups can occur without negative attitudes toward the group. Because of their feelings of vulnerability, they often report experiencing intergroup distrust (Dovidio et al., 2002). As a result of this distrust, members of stigmatized groups may be generally wary of exposing themselves, and be especially vigilant for signs of deception or antipathy. As a consequence, they will be particularly attuned to negative behaviors and weigh the negative component of behavior in mismatches more heavily than positive ones.

SUMMARY OF TARGETS' ATTRIBUTIONS

The vast majority of these processes contribute to targets' attention to stigmatizers' nonverbal behaviors and the verbal–nonverbal mismatches that arise. Many of the processes described in this section reveal that targets undergo functional adaptations that sensitize them to future interactions. These adaptations (e.g., rejection sensitivity, stigma consciousness) suggest that targets form their attributions on the basis of implicit outcomes more than on explicit outcomes. This strategy, it seems, may allow targets to accurately discern friend from foe, and interpersonal danger from safety.

ILLUSTRATIONS OF MISMATCHES BY DIFFERENT TYPES OF STIGMAS

In the preceding sections, we have identified some of the processes that influence targets and perceivers in social interactions, explained why mixed interactions are likely to elicit mismatches in verbal and nonverbal behaviors by members of nonstigmatized or dominant groups, and described the influences that shape how members of stigmatized or nondominant groups interpret mismatched messages and contribute to intergroup misunderstandings. In this section, while acknowledging the distinct qualities of different forms of stigmatization, we illustrate the operation of processes we have identified in five types of mixed interactions, involving participants who are (a) Black and White, (b) obese and nonobese, (c) disabled and nondisabled, (d) heterosexual and gay/lesbian, and (e) pregnant and nonpregnant.

Black–White Interactions

As Shelton et al. describe in their chapter in this volume, in the United States, Whites' attitudes toward Blacks are generally characterized by nonprejudiced explicit (conscious, self-reported attitudes) but negative implicit attitudes (often assessed with response latency techniques). This dissociation of explicit and implicit attitudes contributes directly to mismatches in Whites' verbal and nonverbal behaviors in interactions with Blacks. In particular, Dovidio et al. (2002; see also Shelton et al. in this volume) found that Whites who reported less explicit prejudice were more positive in their conscious and controllable interpersonal behavior, their verbal friendliness, during their interactions with Black (compared to White) partners. However, Whites' implicit racial attitudes (not their self-reported prejudice) predicted bias in their less controllable and monitored nonverbal behaviors. Thus, Whites' verbal and nonverbal responses were typically mismatched in their interactions with Blacks.

These mismatches further produced divergent experiences for White and Black interactants. Because Whites relied on the components of their attitudes and behaviors that were most accessible to them—their explicit attitudes and verbal behaviors—they perceived themselves to be generally friendly and saw the interaction positively. In contrast, Blacks, who tend to be attuned to cues of bias,

based their interpretations and attributions on the more negative nonverbal behaviors, seeing the White interactant as relatively unfriendly and the interaction as less satisfying. White and Black interactants were also unaware of the others' different experiences. Thus, even in the absence of Whites' negative explicit attitudes toward Blacks, intergroup misunderstandings characterized these mixed interactions.

The present chapter further emphasizes the active role of members of stigmatized groups in the communicative process in mixed interaction. Supportive of this theme, additional research by Shelton et al. (2005) illustrates how these divergent realities can be reinforced by the responses of Blacks in mixed interactions. Immediately before mixed interactions with Whites, Black college students were primed by reading a newspaper article to expect prejudice from Whites or primed about a different type of prejudice (toward elderly people). The perceptions and behaviors of the White and Black participants in mixed interaction were then explored.

With respect to the effect of the prejudice prime on perceptions of Black and White interactants, the researchers found, consistent with the previous work that shows that members of stigmatized groups weigh cues of potential prejudice heavily in their perceptions, Black participants liked their White partner less and experienced the interaction less positively when they were primed to expect racial prejudice than when they were primed about another type of prejudice. Thus, beliefs about Whites' prejudice, whether inferred from attunement to subtle cues of bias (as in Dovidio et al., 2002) or made salient by priming before the interaction (as in Shelton et al., 2005), significantly shaped Blacks' experiences in interracial interactions.

As in Dovidio et al. (2002), Whites' experiences were significantly more positive than those of Blacks in these interactions. Shelton et al. (2005), however, identified an additional factor that contributed to these divergent realities—the behaviors of Blacks in response to anticipated bias. Specifically, Blacks who were primed with Whites' prejudice, compared to those who were not, compensated for anticipated stigmatization by behaving in a more verbally and nonverbally engaged manner during these interactions. White interactants' liking for the Black partner and enjoyment of the interaction were directly related to the level of Black engagement overall. As consequence, Blacks expectations of bias from Whites in this study led to more negative experiences for Blacks but, ironically, more positive experiences for Whites.

Obese–Nonobese Interactions

Two recent studies highlight some of the common behavioral mismatches that occur between obese and nonobese individuals. Both of these studies reveal the acumen in targets' sensitivity to nonverbal behaviors and in the negative outcomes that can result for both targets and stigmatizers. In the first study, King, Shapiro, Hebl, Singletary, and Turner (2006) examined the discrimination that confederate and actual obese shoppers faced relative to nonobese shoppers. Consistent with the explicit–implicit mismatch, they found across lab and field studies that customer service representatives did not formally discriminate against obese shoppers in any way—they greeted all of the customers and offered help

to each of the customers requesting it, regardless of body size. However, the customer service representatives did engage in interpersonal discrimination toward the obese relative to the nonobese shoppers. That is, obese shoppers identified nonverbal negativity that was independently corroborated by confederate observers and additional independent coders listening to audiotapes of the store interactions in two experimental studies. Furthermore, according to the observers and independent coders' ratings of the obese shoppers themselves, the effect was not driven by the obese shoppers' behaviors or expectancies.

The authors argued that the customer service representatives were not attempting to show formal/interpersonal mismatches; instead, they appear to have intended to treat the customers well. However, due to a number of potential unconscious processes on the part of both the stigmatizer (explicit or implicit prejudice, cognitive load) and the target (i.e., attunement to negative information, rejection sensitivity), targets identified discrimination. In another experiment in their report, King et al. (2006) found that the implications of this discrimination not only influence the targets' behavior but also have negative bottom-line consequences for the organizations. Those who had experienced interpersonal discrimination reported lowered customer loyalty, purchasing behavior, and intentions to return to the store in the future. Together, these studies confirm the importance of examining subtle discrimination and its pernicious effects.

In a separate study, Shapiro, King, and Quiñones (2007) examined training interactions in which trainers initially viewed photographs of female trainees that depicted them as either obese or nonobese and then directed them in a computer task. Then, trainers were asked to provide their expectations of the training interaction and the trainee, and finally proceeded to conduct the training. The results revealed that trainers reported significantly lower expectations of the training session and of the trainees when they were obese rather than nonobese. Furthermore, the results of the study carried over to the actual trainees, who had no knowledge of the picture manipulation and no reason to expect differences in treatment across the conditions. Trainees presumed to be obese, relative to those presumed to be nonobese, evaluated the training and trainer more negatively as well, and those who had inflexible trainers actually performed worse on the task.

The sum of these two studies reveals strong evidence for the ability of targets to discern discriminatory behaviors on the part of the stigmatizer. They also suggest the power of nonverbal, interpersonal discrimination. Whereas the measurement of such behavior was clear in the Hebl et al. (2002) study, the presence of it in the Shapiro et al. (2007) study can be presumed to have evoked the perceptions and reactions from the trainees themselves. Thus, these two studies show us that interpersonal behavior—the nonverbal, more subtle behaviors—displayed by stigmatizers greatly influence the actions of the targets within an interaction.

Disabled–Able-Bodied Interactions

Mismatches between verbal and nonverbal behaviors have also been examined in the way that able-bodied individuals react to disabled and nondisabled individuals

(Kleck, 1968; Kleck, Ono, & Hastorf, 1966). Essentially, able-bodied individuals acting the part of interviewers engaged in an interaction with disabled (or able-bodied) applicants. The interviewers were explicitly positive toward their inter-actants—they distorted their own personal opinions in a direction consistent with those thought to be held by the disabled applicants and they also reported enhanced positive impressions of the physically disabled applicants relative to the able-bodied applicants. However, the nonverbal behaviors of the interviewers revealed negativity—they were more physiologically aroused during the interaction, took a longer time deciding what interview questions to ask, terminated the interview sooner, showed more behavioral inhibitions, and maintained greater interaction distance with the disabled than the able-bodied applicants.

A number of possible processes underlie such mismatches in behavior. One possibility is that the interviewer may have actually felt negatively toward the disabled individual but felt constrained to act positively. Another possibility is that the stigmatizers did not exert control over their nonverbal interpersonal responses. That is, perhaps because of bias, anxiety, or the cognitive load of the interaction, interviewers exhibited a less volitional pattern of nonverbal behaviors that depicted negativity.

Gay/Lesbian–Heterosexual Interactions

Recent studies also clearly show the mismatches that occur in interactions involving gay/lesbian and heterosexual individuals. A study by Hebl et al. (2002) examined the formal discrimination (i.e., hiring measures) and the interpersonal discrimination (i.e., nonverbal behaviors, amount of conversation) that both job applicants (either homosexual or assumed heterosexual) perceived from store employers and store employers actually displayed toward the applicants. In particular, 18 confederates entered stores wearing hats that said "Gay and Proud" or "Texan and Proud," but remained unaware of what their hat said. This study revealed a mismatch in responses of store employees to the confederates whom they assumed to be gay or lesbian. Store employers did not show signs of formal or overt discrimination but did display significantly more negative interpersonal behaviors, reflecting tension or hostility, toward homosexual applicants than toward assumed heterosexual applicants.

Moreover, even though the confederates were not actually members of the stigmatized group, the interpersonal cues of bias by employers significantly shaped their experiences and expectations. Confederate applicants who perceived more interpersonal negativity from store employers believed they were less likely to be called back for further consideration for a job. However, the link between employers' interpersonal negativity and confederates' expectations of being called back was weaker than the association between interpersonal negativity and employers' actual willingness to call the confederate back for possible employment. Although there was a modest correlation between employers' interpersonal negativity and likelihood of the confederate being called back for further consideration ($r = -.23$), the magnitude of the correlation between the employers' negative behavior and confederates' expectations of being called back was significantly greater ($r = -.50$)

Overall, confederates overassumed that employers would not call them back if they were gay.

Pregnant–Nonpregnant Interactions

Mismatches in the interactions between pregnant women and nonpregnant women and men are shown in a recent field study conducted by Hebl, King, and Glick (2005). In particular, they conducted a field study that investigated hostile and benevolent discrimination toward pregnant (versus nonpregnant) women in nontraditional (job applicant) and traditional (store customer) roles. Female confederates, who sometimes wore a pregnancy prosthesis, posed as job applicants or customers at retail stores. All of the interactions with store employees were rated for formal discrimination as well as hostile and benevolent interpersonal discrimination. Evidence of the formal/interpersonal mismatch was consistent with previous studies (i.e., Hebl et al., 2002; King et al., 2006) in that the researchers found no evidence of formal discrimination but a consistent display of interpersonal discrimination. In particular, compared to nonpregnant women, pregnant job applicants elicited hostility whereas pregnant customers evoked benevolent (but patronizing) discrimination. The results of this research are also consistent with previous findings showing that pregnant job applicants evoke a great deal of negativity (Halpert, Wilson, & Hickman, 1993).

This study provides some of the first behavioral evidence of hostile and benevolent gender discrimination in realistic interactions and suggests that pregnant women, who embody the essence of women's traditional function, can evoke either pole of sexist ambivalence depending on the roles they pursue. It also suggests that stigmatizers may exhibit behaviors of an interpersonal form in an attempt to reinforce gender-conforming sorts of behaviors and extinguish gender-nonconforming behaviors.

IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

In this chapter, we have offered an in-depth look at the reasons why members of nonstigmatized groups and members of stigmatized groups possess different social realities. In particular, we have proposed that in mixed interactions stigmatizers commonly display complex messages, verbally and nonverbally, that reflect a range of different influences. These influences include personal conscious or unconscious bias, anxiety, cognitive demand, and limited skill in communicating across group lines. In general, these forces tend to produce a mismatch between verbal and formal behaviors, on the one hand, and nonverbal and interpersonal behaviors, on the other hand. For stigmatizers the formal behaviors are generally more positive than the informal behaviors.

These mismatches contribute directly to the development and reinforcement of different social realities. To the extent that people are better able to monitor their verbal than nonverbal behavior and see their overt actions as representing their intentions (Dovidio et al., 2002) and the legitimate basis on which they should be judged, stigmatizers often develop perceptions from these mixed interactions that support an unbiased and fair self-image. In contrast, members of stigmatized

groups who are sensitive to rejection, who tend to see these interactions on an intergroup more than an interpersonal level, and who are attuned to negative behaviors of stigmatizers, tend to base their perceptions of the stigmatizers on the nonverbal cues. Thus, their attributions of the stigmatizer may be more negative, reflecting perceptions of the stigmatizer's biases. Moreover, even when stigmatizers are only implicitly prejudiced and unintentionally biased in their behaviors in mixed interaction, members of stigmatized groups are likely to see the stigmatizer as intentionally biased (Dovidio, 2001). Indeed, selective attention to subtle cues may be seen as, and may often be, functional, for members of stigmatized or oppressed groups who have been traditionally victimized by the actions of dominant groups. This confirmation of their expectations of stigmatization, in turn, can produce explicit negative reactions, individually and collectively (as illustrated in the case of Senator Biden's comments about Senator Obama described at the beginning of this chapter) among members of stigmatized groups. Consistent with the theme we articulated at the beginning of this chapter and of the volume generally, even when characterized initially by positive intentions, mixed interactions can easily go astray.

However, mixed interactions do not have to go astray. There is ample evidence that appropriately structured interactions between members of different groups can reduce intergroup prejudice and improve intergroup relations (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006). We propose that, beyond the conditions outlined by Contact Theory (e.g., equal status, cooperative interaction; Pettigrew, 1998), it is important to increase sensitivity to the perspective of the other person in mixed interactions. Mixed interactions are characterized by ignorance of the other person's true motives and attitudes (Shelton & Richeson, 2005) and by projection of one's own needs and worldviews onto the other (see the chapter by Fiske, Harris, Russell, & Shelton in this volume). Moreover, as long as issues related to stigma remain unacknowledged or avoided in mixed interactions, a mutual understanding of the other person's perspectives cannot be achieved (Hebl & Kleck, 2002). It is stigma that divides the worlds and worldviews of stigmatizers from those who are stigmatized, which determines their social realities.

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