CURRENT RESEARCH IN SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY

BODY IMAGE AND EXPECTED FUTURE INTERACTION

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ABSTRACT

This study examined impression formation as a function of anticipated future social interaction among women with varying body image perceptions. Seventy-four women participated in a get-to-know-you interview with a female confederate, and either did or did not anticipate additional interaction. When participants anticipated future interaction, more negative body image predicted less positive relationship expectations. However, when not expecting future interaction, negative body image predicted positive relationship expectations. This effect was partially mediated by an increased focus on the self and partner as a collective unit. Results suggest a qualification to previous research conclusions about negative interpersonal perceptions among stigmatized individuals.

INTRODUCTION

When individuals have negative evaluations of their bodies, even the most mundane conversations may become stressful if they turn to body-related topics, such as restaurants, sports, food, or exercise. Those with negative feelings regarding their bodies may wonder if a friend's comments imply that they should exercise more or eat less, or they may believe that a companion feels that they are unattractive. When people expect to know a new person for just a short period of time (i.e., they know that they will never see that person again), such concerns may be minimal. However, when an extended relationship is expected, those with negative body images may be more concerned that their image may yield social rejection in the future.

Psychological studies have shown that when people possess negative, socially devalued characteristics, they are more likely to view others more negatively, as well as feel that they themselves are being judged negatively (Fenigstein 1984; Major and Gramzow 1999; Smart and Wegner 1999; also see Kramer 1998). However, past research in the psychological literature has not reached a conclusion about how situational characteristics, such as the prospect of future interaction, will influence how individuals interpret the actions and reactions of interaction partners. The present study supports this goal by examining the extent to which focus on the self and partner as a collective unit influences the negative expectations that stigmatized individuals develop of their interaction partners.

Body Image as Stigma

Although characteristics may not be inherently stigmatizing, people often are aware that certain characteristics (e.g., those related to a particular race or physical disability) are devalued by society in general (Goffman 1963). The extent to which individuals are aware of their social stigmas can increase their perceptions of being judged negatively because of the stigma (e.g., Pinel 2002, 1999). Specifically, Pinel examined how individuals' increased consciousness of their own gender or homosexuality may influence their perceptions of discrimination. Individuals who belong to these groups may not attempt to refute stereotypes traditionally characterizing their stigmatizing status, but they may instead attend to social information that reaffirms such stereotypes. In addition, Santuzzi and Ruscher (2002) found that as stigma salience increases, self-conscious concern and judgment biases about others' evaluations of them are also likely to increase. Thus research has demonstrated that bearing a social stigma may induce a more negative interpretation of self-relevant social information; however, different types of stigmas may lead to different interpretation outcomes. For example, research has indicated that stigmas for which individuals may be held accountable, such as being overweight, may yield self-blame rather than negative inferences about others (e.g., Crocker, Cornwell, and Major 1993).

Of particular importance to the present study, research has suggested that body image influences how individuals view social interactions. Women's feelings of attractiveness may influence their confidence such that those who see themselves as being more attractive have greater confidence in regards to interactions with other people. As a result, a more positive body image is likely to make people feel more satisfied with their interpersonal interactions (Nezlek 1999).

In a classic series of psychological studies, Kleck and Strenta (1980) demonstrated that when individuals believed themselves to be physically stigmatized (e.g., with an ostensible facial scar), they were more conscious of behaviors exhibited by their interaction partners (e.g. staring at the face or nervous behaviors) and were more likely to interpret neutral behaviors as meaningfully related to the stigma. Individuals who felt that they were stigmatized focused more on the stigma, felt that their partners' behaviors were reactions to the stigma, and believed that their partners had more negative personality traits. The series of experiments indicated that the mere expectation of being socially stigmatized (i.e., with a negative physical appearance) leads to a perception bias. Individuals who believe that they bear appearance-related stigmas are likely to view others' behaviors as relevant to their negative characteristics.

Stigma and Social Interaction

Recent research highlights contextual factors as playing primary roles in understanding behaviors among actors who are engaged in social interaction (see Heatherton et al. 2000). For instance, Crocker and Quinn (2000) discuss situational factors, such as past experiences, present personal construals of past and present experiences, and collective or shared meanings between stigmatized and nonstigmatized individuals, as primary influences on a stigmatized individual's beliefs about herself or himself. From the perspective of a stigmatized individual, various facets of any given situation, and the construal of those facets, may contribute to the stigmatized individual's perception of self and self in relation to others during social interaction. Similarly, expectations for future social interactions with nonstigmatized others may be constructed from past social experiences and construals of those experiences. The content of future expectations should predict expectations for both the self and interaction partners in such future interactions.

From a slightly more intrapersonal perspective, Kramer's (1998) paranoid social cognition model exemplifies the importance of understanding the person in the situation. According to this model, stigma-related cognitions are initiated by a situational factor that causes some level of psychological discomfort, generally in the form of self-consciousness. This state of discomfort may trigger an enhanced awareness of and focus on the situation, as well as an increased tendency for the person in the situation to dwell on the incident long after it occurs. Focusing on the situation in this manner may elicit interpretive errors. For example, individuals may make inferences about negative personality traits possessed by an interaction partner when evidence of such traits is at best ambiguous, In addition, individuals may be highly focused on comments made during interactions and might interpret what is said as being in direct reference to them even if it is not intended to reference them. As implied by the evidence presented earlier, such interpretations are especially likely when individuals view themselves as belonging to a socially devalued, or stigmatized, category and when this category makes them socially distinct from others who are taking part in the interaction. We expected that these interpretative biases would be more pronounced when individuals feel that they bear a stigmatizing characteristic (e.g., unattractive body) and an initial social interaction is extended or expected to be extended.

Prospect of Future Interaction

Research that has examined the effect of the prospect of future interaction (Graziano, Brothen, and Berscheid 1980) has demonstrated that individuals who anticipate future interaction with an

interaction partner typically evaluate that partner as being more positive than in situations where there is no prospect of future interaction. However, Graziano and colleagues (1980) qualified the effect by separating individual perceivers into repressors and sensitizers. Repressors appeared to be more affected by negative evaluation in short-term or temporary situations, whereas sensitizers seemed to be affected negatively when there was prospect of future interaction. For persons with a social stigma, the prospect of future interaction might influence evaluations of social interaction partners to become more negative rather than positive, similar to the profile of a sensitizer. Individuals who enter social situations with the expectation of being negatively evaluated (perhaps due to past experience) are likely to demonstrate this pattern. For example, sensitizers seem to be more threatened by an evaluator when the possibility of future interaction exists. Similar to many individuals who are socially stigmatized, sensitizers might have developed coping strategies to deal with immediate, temporary situations that would pose a threat to the individual who is not practiced in stigma management (Miller and Myers 1998).

Although the plethora of research that has addressed the effects of bearing a socially stigmatizing characteristic on one-time social interactions (typically in a laboratory setting) is greatly informative, an examination of the effect of expecting future social interactions or longer-term interpersonal relationships on stigmatized individuals' perceptions of interaction partners may be more directly relevant. Some studies of relationships have shown that individuals are more comfortable disclosing stigma-relevant information in more developed relationships than in newer relationships (French 1984). However, this work focused on the effects of stigmas within relationships that existed prior to one partner's acquisition of a stigmatizing characteristic, rather than the effect of bearing stigma during the initial development phase of a relationship.

Some discussion in the social psychological literature has addressed the suspected role of stigma in potentially awkward social interactions between stigmatized and nonstigmatized individuals (Hebl, Tickle, and Heatherton 2000). When meeting new nonstigmatized individuals, stigmatized individuals might expect social rejection, feel negatively about themselves because of their stigmas, and perhaps as a consequence, overinterpret feedback from social interaction partners as negative and stigma-relevant (also see Santuzzi and Ruscher 2002). Due to negative expectations, stigmatized individuals might interpret social feedback as more negative and have more negative outlooks for relationships with nonstigmatized interaction partners. Even if not intended, individuals with pre-existing stigmas might hinder the development of interpersonal relationships with nonstigmatized others.

Empirical research only indirectly addresses the impact of a pre-existing stigma on the initial phase of a developing relationship. The interpretation of the events during the first interaction with a social partner predicts the interaction outcome and expectations for what will happen in future interactions (e.g., Sunnafrank and Ramirez 2004). Thus, if the prospect of future interaction exists, individuals may use the information conveyed during social interaction to determine whether they would feel comfortable with the interaction partner in the future. If individuals are driven by negative expectations, they are likely to see themselves as less comfortable and getting along less well with social interaction partners in future interactions. One explanation for this negative expectation may be a shift in interpersonal focus from the individual characteristics of the new partner to the more collective characteristics that relate to

what it is like having a relationship with the new partner; the anticipation of a future interaction may trigger this shift in perspective.

Individual and Collective Perceptions

Classic sociological writings have noted the importance of developing perceptions of self, interaction partner, and what the interaction partner believes of the self during social interaction (Cooley 1902; Goffman 1959; Mead 1934). More recent empirical work makes a formal distinction between self-perceptions (first-order expectations) and perceptions about what interaction partners believe of the self (second-order expectations or reflected appraisals; Moore 1985; Troyer and Younts 1997). Importantly, these different perceptions have been shown to be directly related (Miyamoto and Dornbusch 1956; Moore 1985). Taken together, this research confirms not only the importance of considering both self-perceptions and perceived perceptions that others have of the self during social interaction, but also the importance of the relationship between these perceptions. For instance, if an individual has a negative evaluation of the self, she might believe that others in general also would see her as negative. Within the current context, an individual who feels negatively about her body might expect that an interaction partner feels the same way, yielding a more negative evaluation of that interaction partner and negative expectations for any potential relationship with that partner.

Although this approach contributes a key conceptual framework for describing the social interaction experience, some of the complexities of social interaction remain unexamined. For instance, many investigations of this topic treat the relevant social information that forms self-perceptions and perceptions of others as though it is shared among social interaction partners. Although some contexts may encourage the sharing of all relevant information among social interaction partners (e.g., work teams or close relationships), some information remains unique to each individual. Furthermore, each individual may have a unique interpretation of the shared information due to the held unique information or other individual differences such as self-esteem (see Campbell and Fehr 1990). Thus, intrapersonal as well as interpersonal processes should be considered when examining the formation of self-perceptions and perceptions of what others believe of the self.

From the perspective of person perception researchers, both individual (intrapersonal) and dyadic (interpersonal) sources that influence interpersonal judgment and evaluation help to explicate the complexities of social interaction (Kenny 1994). For instance, the social relations model (Kenny and La Voie 1984) identifies the extent to which an individual's evaluation of a target person is influenced by several factors, including the evaluator's personality or response set, the target's typical evaluation by others, and the unique relationship between a particular evaluator and a particular target. All of three sources have been shown to influence interpersonal evaluation. Thus, both intrapersonal and interpersonal factors seem to affect impression formation.

Unfortunately, the person perception literature has yet to formally examine whether there are changes in the relative impact of intrapersonal and interpersonal factors. Yet, informally, others have argued for changes in individuals' perspectives of their interaction partners that may affect impression formation and relationship expectations. Kenny (2004) proposed that as we learn more and more information about others with whom we regularly interact, the role of an

interpersonal relationship perspective should increase with acquaintance. Similarly, Aron and his colleagues (e.g., Aron, Aron, and Smollan 1992) have found evidence that with increased closeness, individuals move from thinking of their relationship partners as separate individuals to thinking of them as important aspects of the self. As evidenced by research using their Inclusion of Other in Self Scale, even people who have short-term interactions in a lab can develop views of the self that incorporate their relationship with the other person (e.g., a sense of we-ness; Aron et al. 1992). Although addressing relationship perception in slightly different ways, the two approaches share the notion that interpersonal perception involves both the self and the interaction partner, and that the extent to which an individual's perception includes both self and partner as a collective unit may predict the individual's positive or negative expectation for the relationship. Thus, it seems likely that as individuals anticipate extended social interaction with a partner, their relationship expectations should be directed increasingly by a collective perception.

The present study formally addresses this suggestion by examining the extent to which individuals who believe they are negatively evaluated use a collective perception when forming expectations of potential relationships. Specifically, an individual who has a negative body image should be especially pessimistic about his or her fit in a relationship with another individual when anticipating a future interaction with that person compared to situations that are expected to be temporary. The extent to which the individual perceived the dyad as a collective unit should drive this relationship.

Hypotheses

The present study examined how the stigma of negative body image may influence the initial phase of a developing relationship. Individuals who held more negative evaluations of their body images were expected to show more negative expectations of interaction partners in the form of negative relational expectations--seeing themselves as fitting poorly with the interaction partner. As people are likely to be more invested in extended interactions than in those dialogues where they do not expect to speak with their acquaintance again, stronger relations among these variables should appear when there is the prospect of future interaction (i.e., prospect of interaction x body image interaction). Finally, an increased collective (rather than individual) focus on the social situation should have a mediating effect on the described interaction effect.

METHOD

Participants

One hundred twenty-one undergraduate women at Tulane University participated in this experiment in exchange for extra credit in their introductory psychology course. Participants were randomly assigned to a future interaction condition such that they were led to believe that they would or would not be meeting the confederate after the experiment.

Procedure

The experimental situation comprised an initial questionnaire session, followed by a short get-to-know-you interview with the confederate. During the first phase, one of five female

experimenters administered a short questionnaire that assessed demographic information as well as body image perceptions. A three-item questionnaire (taken from Smart and Wegner 1999) that was administered during the initial part of the experimental session measured degree of negative body image. These items were: 1) I am terrified of being overweight, 2) There have been times when I have vomited or taken laxatives after eating in order to purge, and 3) I am always concerned with a desire to be thinner. The three-item measure utilized Likert-type response scales ranging from 1 (not at all true) to 7 (very true) and showed adequate reliability (alpha = .79). The mean of the three responses represented the negative body image score.

After completing the questionnaires, the experimenter brought the participant to a second room where one of two female experimenters (i.e., Experimenter 2) was waiting. Experimenter 2 seated her at a table behind a portable opaque divider. The divider was in place to prevent the participant from seeing the female confederate who later joined her at the table. Once seated, Experimenter 2 explained to the participant that she will play the role of an interviewer and gave her a script of questions to read to her partner. Then, Experimenter 2 gave the participant an audiocassette of instructions to listen to while waiting for her partner to arrive. Experimenter 2 instructed the participant to listen closely to the taped instructions and to look over her script.

The use of audio-taped instructions allowed the experimenter to remain unaware of the assigned experimental condition. The tape contained the following instructions:

"Many research projects in social psychology look at how different kinds of people interact with one another. In this experiment, you will simply take part in a short get-to-know-you interview with another participant. You will need to read off each question on your script as it as printed and wait for your partner to respond. Ask only the questions on your sheet. Do not add your own questions to the conversation. After you finish asking your questions, your interview partner will be asking you the same set of questions. "

These instructions were followed by one of the following condition-specific explanations:

Future Interaction: "You and your partner will meet in the same room after the interview to perform a short task together."

No Future Interaction: "You and your partner will be put in separate rooms at the end of the interview to complete a short, independent task. You will not meet at any time."

The participant's script contained 15 questions asking general get-to-know-you type information (see Appendix A). The confederate asked the participant the same questions after she answered all 15 questions.

After giving the participant the instruction tape and the script, Experimenter 2 left the room for five minutes to allow the participant to familiarize herself with the instructions and the script. Then, Experimenter 2 escorted the female confederate into the laboratory and seated her on the other side of the divider where the participant could not see her. Experimenter 2 explained to the pair that they would be having a short conversation in order to get to know one another. She instructed the participant and confederate to ask and answer the questions that they were given.

Purportedly because she arrived first, the participant was the interviewer for the first half; the women were instructed to switch roles for the second half. Experimenter 2 instructed the confederate, who was seated closer to the door, to retrieve her when they completed the interviews. After the instructions were presented, Experimenter 2 left the room to allow the dyad to complete the conversation.

Without the participant's knowledge, the confederate's responses also were scripted (see Appendix B). These responses included ambiguous statements that were stigma-relevant and elicited varying interpretations by participants depending on their level of negative body image. Seventeen judges who were from a similar population and unaware of the hypotheses had rated these responses on a 7-point Likert scale (1, very negative, to 7, very positive). The mean ratings for the 15 responses ranged from 1.24 to 5.41 with standard deviations ranging from .76 to 2.61. Thus, the responses appeared to elicit ambiguity in interpretations across judges. The confederate used the same script in all sessions.

When the interview was finished, Experimenter 2 returned to the room and asked the participant to complete open-ended and scaled item measures. The Relational Expectations Measure comprised six Likert-scaled items that assessed the participants' evaluations of their expected fit with the confederate in a dyad (see Appendix C). A five-point response scale that ranged from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree) accompanied each item. Showing good internal consistency (alpha = .80), the mean of the items formed a single relational expectations score.

Five open-ended questions (Appendix D) assessed participants' own thoughts and the perceived thoughts of their partner during the interview. Responses to these items allowed participants to express what they were thinking and feeling throughout the interview, what they thought their partner was thinking or feeling, and what they remembered most about the interview. From these responses, the extent to which participants were using a collective perspective was measured by counting the number of first-person plural pronouns (i.e., we, our, and us; see Pennebaker, Mehl, and Niederhoffer 2003).

A final measure checked the durability of the experimental manipulation. Participants indicated if they remembered their taped instructions and whether they expected to meet the interview partner. After the participant had completed the measures, the experimenter fully debriefed and dismissed the participant.

RESULTS

Excluded Cases

If participants could not recall which of the expectations they held during the study, they could not be classified into either condition and their data were excluded from analysis. As a result, the data analysis excluded nineteen participants (1 from the no-future-interaction-expected condition and 18 from the future-interaction-expected condition) who could not recall their assigned experimental condition. We excluded an additional twenty-eight individuals (11 from the no-future-interaction-expected condition and 17 from the future-interaction-expected condition) who suspected that the confederate's responses were scripted. Descriptive and inferential statistics for

study variables were similar for the excluded cases as compared to the cases that were analyzed (see Appendix E). However, the excluded cases could not be conceptually classified as either experimental condition for this study. Thus, the reported results represent data only from the seventy-four participants who did not doubt the integrity of the confederate's responses and correctly recalled the experimental condition at the end of the study.

Descriptive Statistics

The means and standard deviations for Negative Body Image, Relational Expectations, and Collective Perceptions for each experimental condition appear in Appendix F. Collapsing across conditions, participants showed levels of Negative Body Image that were slightly below the scale mid-point (M = 3.71, SD = 1.62; based on a seven-point response scale). Relational Expectations were slightly above the scale mid-point (M = 3.48, SD = .72; based on a five-point response scale). Collective Perceptions (M = .55, SD = .88) were based on counts of collective pronouns; such data are typically skewed with responses near zero being more frequently observed than higher values (Agresti 2002). In fact, 48 cases demonstrated no Collective Perceptions.

Relational Expectations

The first hypothesis for this study stated that participants who had negative body images would exhibit more negative relational expectations. The second hypothesis suggested that participants with more negative body images would exhibit more negative relational expectations when they anticipated extended interactions with their partners. In order to test these predictions, relational expectations were regressed onto future interaction condition, mean-centered body image score, and their interaction.

The regression results provided only partial support for the hypotheses. Unexpectedly, the main effect for negative body image on relational expectations was not significant ($p > .05$). However, the overall regression model, R-squared = .13, $F(3, 70) = 3.57$, $p = .02$, and the interaction between future interaction expectation and body image were significant, Beta = -.34, $t(70) = -3.08$, $p = .003$. Simple effects for body image were examined at each level of future interaction expectation. As expected, when a future interaction was anticipated, negative body image was negatively and significantly correlated with relational expectations, $r = -.40$, $p = .03$. In this case, more negative body images were related to less positive relational expectations. When no future interaction was expected, negative body image showed a marginal positive correlation with relational expectations ($r = .29$, $p = .06$), such that more negative body image predicted more positive relational expectations. Although marginal, this latter simple effect was not expected and will be discussed below.

Collective Perceptions

The open-ended responses were coded for use of collective perceptions. We tallied the number of first-person plural pronouns for each participant's responses. In order to address our third hypothesis, we tested collective perceptions as a mediating variable for the interaction effect described above. According to a traditional approach to mediator analysis using multiple regression (Kenny, Kashy, and Bolger 1998), the relationship between the interaction effect and

collective perceptions was statistically significant, Beta = -.25, t (70) = -2.20, p = .03. When the original model (relational expectations regressed onto future interaction condition, body image, and their interaction) was examined with collective perceptions in the model, the interaction term remained significant, but decreased significantly, Beta = -.22, p = .03 (compared to the original Beta = -.34). The relationship between collective perceptions and relational expectations in this context was significant, Beta = .47, p = .00. The Sobel test for the indirect effect size supported collective perceptions as a partial mediator (ab = -.11, z = -2.06, p = .04). Thus, when participants expected to have an extended interaction with their partner, participants who had more negative body images showed more negative expectations compared to those who had more positive body images. Furthermore, participants who expected to have an extended interaction with their partner and had more negative body images developed fewer collective perceptions; decreased collective perceptions predicted more negative relationship expectations among those individuals.

DISCUSSION

The concept of body image is often used to define how people feel about various aspects of their physical appearance, whether it is in regards to weight, physical ailments, attractiveness, or body markings (Banfield and McCabe 2002; Kleck and Strenta 1980; Nezlek 1999). As deviant body type has become a common stigma in American society, an understanding of this stigma's contribution to social interaction experiences has become increasingly important.

The present study examined how body image and prospect of future interaction might influence interpersonal relationships. Specifically, it attempted to examine how these variables affect an individual's perception of fit with an interaction partner. The results revealed only partial support for the hypotheses. Contradicting the first hypothesis for this study, body image did not exhibit a statistically significant independent relationship with relational expectations. This unexpected result might be attributed to the low variation and relatively neutral responses on the relational expectations measure across conditions (see Appendix F). Future examinations of relational expectations should consider more precise measurement strategies in order to reduce measurement error and increase the clarity of interpretation.

The interaction between body image and prospect of future interaction was found to be significantly related to relational expectations. Relational expectations in persons with negative body images were more negative than in persons who had positive body images, but only when a future interaction with the partner was expected. The results showed the reverse relationship when no future interaction was anticipated. Thus, knowing that they would never meet their partner again, individuals with negative body images had more positive interpretations of their social interaction experience than those with positive body images. This finding would suggest that persons who felt negatively about their bodies would feel more confident in an interaction when they did not expect a relationship, compared to when they did expect an extended interaction. However, future research should aim to replicate and confirm this speculation.

One important aspect to recall is that the study setting employed an opaque screen that separated the participant and confederate, thus preventing them from seeing one another. Similar to past work in the stigma and prejudice literature, individuals in these temporary and relatively

anonymous situations might believe that they would not be stigmatized (Crocker et al. 1991). Thus, these participants would have formed perceptions and expectations that were more similar to the more optimistic norm as suggested by previous research (Graziano et al. 1980).

Thought of another way, these findings may suggest that individuals who differ in body image use qualitatively different strategies to evaluate and maintain interpersonal relationships. Individuals who hold negative body images may have developed social coping or compensation strategies that allow them to have an optimistic impression for a temporary interaction; however, this strategy may not apply to extended or long-term social situations. For example, individuals might be able to convince themselves that they can endure a short-lived situation without harm. Long-term situations, on the other hand, might be beyond an individual's capacity to cope. Moreover, use of compensation strategies in social situations (e.g., appearing to have extremely high self-esteem) can have negative consequences and may even backfire (Farina, Allen, and Saul 1968; Miller and Myers 1998).

In the laboratory setting, those participants who expected temporary interactions with their partner knew that they would remain protected behind a screen. Participants anticipating a long-term interaction, however, might have suspected that the future interaction with the partner would be face-to-face. This may have caused participants in the future interaction and no future interaction groups to react to their conversations differently than they would have in a typical interaction. Perhaps body image is primarily active in face-to-face interactions. The present study allowed participants to speak to one another only behind a black screen that obstructed participants' views of one another. Persons who are highly conscious of their body image may be less likely to consider it an important stigma during a given interaction when they cannot see their partner (Crocker 1999). Such a situation may be more similar to a phone conversation than to a face-to-face interaction. Importantly, however, the actual body forms for each participant (as rated by condition-unaware judges) did not demonstrate significant relationships with relational expectations, collective perceptions, or body image. As demonstrated in past research (Miller et al. 1995), the perception or belief about one's body as positive or negative was the driving force among the variables that were examined. Future research might consider whether the same pattern of results would apply to face-to-face situations.

Although collective perceptions emerged as one plausible explanation for the interaction effect that was detected in this study, many other factors might have contributed to the results. First, the usable sample size was smaller than ideal. Many cases were removed due to a failed manipulation check or because the participant suspected the truth behind the experimental situation. Future studies might be able to reduce this problem by first providing a more salient manipulation and, second, by creating an experimental situation that does not rely on the use of an experimental confederate.

Additionally, the manipulation used may not have reflected the true circumstances and uncertainty that might accompany the prospect of an extended interaction. Participants may not have considered the extended lab-based relationship to be much longer than the control situation, thus yielding conservative results. Moreover, the likelihood of future interaction was described as inevitable; thus, participants had no control over their situations. Some situations, such as social interactions in the workplace, might present unavoidable social interaction partners (e.g.,

interactions with a supervisor). In some other situations, however, individuals who expect negative evaluation might be able to avoid or at least minimize the possibility of future interaction with evaluators. Future studies might examine the effects of an anticipated long-term relationship in situations where participants expect to be seeing one another frequently over a longer period, as opposed to just a brief meeting after an experimental situation. In addition, research should consider the factors that determine the individuals' perceived likelihood of re-encountering interaction partners and the extent to which they take actions to control this likelihood.

One final limitation to the generalizability of these results is that negative body image is one of a specific type of stigma. Body image differs from stigmas such as race, gender, and homosexuality in that blame can be attributed to the individual who belongs to this stigmatized category. Many individuals feel that obesity can be personally controlled and the obese person is often confronted with the idea that he or she can change this characteristic of their body, while race or gender cannot easily be transformed. Thus, an individual who has a negative body image likely experiences self-blame for the perceived negative body characteristics. As a result, body image may have a much greater internal focus than other stigmas. Theoretical models such as paranoid cognition as originally proposed (Kramer 1998) might not apply to those stigmas for which the bearer feels personally responsible. In cases in which individuals attribute responsibility to themselves, negative social interpretations may be a function of a self-stigma or negative attitude toward one's own stigma. Research has demonstrated that individuals who feel personally accountable for their stigmatizing characteristic not only enter social situations with negative expectations, but also leave those situations with a low success rate in forming solid peer and romantic relationships (Cash, Theriault, and Annis 2004; Feiring, Rosenthal, and Taska 2000). Thus, the negative relational expectations that were observed in the present study may be specific to individuals who experience self-blame for a social label.

Future research should consider whether the decrease in successful relationships is driven by changes in perspective from an individual to collective focus, as implied above, and whether this may be a function of individual differences, such as self-esteem or attachment style. In addition, the development of future research endeavors should consider the unique qualities of different types of stigma as being important predictors of social experience.

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APPENDIX A

Participant Interview Script

1. Where are you from?
2. What's your family like at home?
3. Are you a freshman?
4. Why did you decide to come to Tulane?
5. What's your major?
6. How do you like your classes?
7. What do you like most about Tulane?
8. What do you like most about New Orleans?

9. What do you miss most about home?
10. What's your favorite restaurant?
11. What's your favorite thing to do here in New Orleans?
12. What are your hobbies?
13. Do you enjoy going out dancing?
14. Do you have a favorite movie?
15. What's your favorite holiday?

APPENDIX B

Confederate Response Script

1. Connecticut.
2. I live with both my parents and two sisters. We also have a dog.
3. No, I'm a sophomore.
4. I wanted to move away from home, learn how to live on my own, and I figured New Orleans would be pretty different from where I grew up. It's a great city. There's so much to do. I love the music, all the entertainment, the restaurants. I love all the opportunities here. Of course I also liked the school, the campus. It's a lot warmer here than it is at home, which is really nice. I was very ready to move out of a cold place into someplace nicer. And the people seemed nice too. Since the scholarship they gave me was pretty good, I thought this would be a good place to try out.
5. I'll be in the Business School next year. I'll probably major in finance, or maybe accounting.
6. They're alright. Different than I'd expected. It's a lot of work sometimes. I'm looking forward to actually taking business classes next year.
7. I don't know. It's kind of hard to say. I like how different it is from home, so many new opportunities. I can do so many things I couldn't do before. I'm finally able to go exercise all the time. I love the gym at Reilly. I love to go and swim or go running or whatever. I might start lifting weights too. I'm from a really small town, and I've never had access to anything like that before. I've always wanted to get in shape, to look good, you know what I mean, so it's nice to finally be able to spend as much time as I'd like doing that.
8. Hmm... I know this isn't exactly unique to New Orleans, but, I like that it's warm a lot of the time. I mean, where I'm from, winter seems to last forever, so you have to stay all bundled up in winter clothes all the time, which I've never really liked. Winter stuff is so heavy and bulky and I've always loved summer clothing so much more. It's much smaller and cuter, and it just makes me look so much thinner than I do in other clothes. I enjoy wearing them! Besides, I love being out in the sun and getting a tan, and I get to do that for a lot longer here than I can at home.
9. I miss my family sometimes, but I probably miss my mom's cooking the most. We always used to have such good dinners together every night. I loved having huge dinners, like spaghetti and meatballs, or homemade chicken soup. Everything we had seems so good compared to what I have now. You know how cafeteria food is, and I don't cook nearly as well as my mom did, so I really miss having really good food all the time!
10. Hmm... It's really hard to say. There is so much good food here, and of course I love food in general. I think everyone does, really. But anyways… I guess I'd say that Court of Two Sister's is my favorite. I went there once, and it was kind of expensive, but the food was so amazing. I had the most amazing dinner. The dessert was so wonderful! I really went all out and stuffed

myself. It was great. I don't know if I had ever had anything that good before! I can't wait to go back and try some more of the food there.

11. Some of my friends and I will go out on the weekends, try out a new restaurant that none of us have been to, then go out dancing, or to a concert. We just like to go out, meet people, and experience this city. We like to just go do something new whenever we can. I mean, you know what it's like here. There's so much to do. I want to experience everything I can while I'm living here.

12. Lots of things! I like going out running, dancing, swimming, watching movies... but most of all, I like going out with my friends shopping. You know what it's like, just trying to find the right clothes that just make you look good. We'll spend hours going from store to store and trying on clothes until we find the perfect outfits to wear out later. We always stop and get some fries and a milkshake in the middle of our shopping trips, and I turn out feeling horrible about it afterwards. Anyways, it's just a lot of fun to go around looking for new stuff, even if I don't turn out buying anything.

13. Yeah, I do, most of the time. I mean, I really like dancing. It can be a lot of fun. I'm just not always sure what I think about the bars and clubs and stuff here. You know how this city is. It's kind of dirty. And the bars are just way too smoky for my taste a lot of the time. I don't like cigarette smoke, and really don't like to drink that much, so I'm not always all that fond of the environment.

14. it's hard to say... there are so many good movies. I watch them all the time. I guess, I'd have to say Moulin Rouge is my favorite right now. I finally saw it, and I loved the story and the music. The costumes were great too. And Nicole Kidman was so good in it. I've always liked her, and it made me like her more. And I wish I could look like she does. She's so beautiful. And she was just so good in the part, like it was made for her. Anyways, it was just a good movie.

15. Definitely Thanksgiving. Although it is disgusting to have a holiday that is spent just stuffing ourselves with more food than we've ever needed. But I do love it anyways. I just can't help but enjoy it. The food is great, and my entire family gets together, and we get to spend half the day cooking. We all have little jobs to help prepare dinner, and it always turns out tasting so good! I love food, and it's one of the biggest meals my family has during the year. And there's always desert. My grandma makes the best pumpkin pie. I spend the entire year looking forward to it! I'm always so full that I don't think I'll ever be able to eat again afterwards, but that feeling always goes away and I turn out helping with the leftovers the following week.

APPENDIX C

Relational Expectations Measure (alpha = .80)

The interview partner and I seem to have similar interests.
The interview partner and I would get along well.
The interview partner gave responses that made me think about myself.
The interview partner gave answers that were similar to my own answers.
The interview partner would like me.
The interview partner had admirable interests.

APPENDIX D

Open-ended Questions for Collective Perceptions

What were your thoughts during the interview?
What was it about the interviewee that you remember the most?
What are your thoughts about the interviewee's responses?
What do you think the interviewee was thinking during the interview?
Did you notice anything else during the interview?

APPENDIX E

Means, Standard Deviations, and Correlations by Expected Future Interaction Condition for Excluded Cases

	No Expected Future Interaction		Expected Future Interaction	
Variable	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Negative Body Image	3.42	1.65	3.71	1.69
Collective Perceptions	.25	.62	.37	.60
Relational Expectations	2.71	.57	3.31	.83

Note: N = 12 excluded cases for No Expected Future Interaction condition; N = 35 excluded cases for Expected Future Interaction condition.

APPENDIX F

Tables of Means, Standard Deviations, and Correlations by Expected Future Interaction Condition

No Expected Future Interaction (N = 44)

			Correlations		
Variable	Mean	SD	1	2	3
1. Negative Body Image	3.70	1.61			
2. Collective Perceptions	.50	.85	.26		
3. Relational Expectations	3.41	.67	.29	.60*	

Note: * indicates statistical significance with $p < .05$.

Expected Future Interaction (N = 30)

			Correlations		
Variable	Mean	SD	1	2	3
1. Negative Body Image	3.72	1.64			
2. Collective Perceptions	.63	.93	-.25		
3. Relational Expectations	3.59	.79	-.40*	-.44*	

Note: * indicates statistical significance with $p < .05$.

AUTHORS' NOTE

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